

that the granting of the privilege is not met by the £2,500, but that the cost, according to the report of the Commissioner of Railways, is £36,000. The Minister said it was quite a good thing that all the railway employees should have the free run of the lines so that they might acquire a knowledge of the business of the railways. He instanced a Mr. Thornton who took charge of the Canadian National Railways, and said that the first thing he did was to go over the whole of the railway system. That was quite a proper thing for him to do. It is the proper thing for the Commissioner, the General Traffic Manager and the heads of the railways to make themselves conversant with the working of the system. No one expects them to pay, but nobody can tell me it is necessary for the porter at Mullewa, his wife and family, to travel free over the railways once a year at the holiday period. Then there are the thousands of men at Midland Junction, blacksmiths and others. What justification is there for them, with their wives and families, to travel the railways free every holiday when the railways are making such a huge loss?

Hon. G. W. Miles: Ministers are still using the Ministerial cars.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Perhaps they are entitled to travel in that way, but it is a form of extravagance that should not be indulged in, especially at times like the present. The point I emphasise is that at present, with the loss on the railways, all the privileges outside what I may term necessary privileges ought to be abolished. Passes to civil servants, trotting associations, porters, blacksmiths and their wives and families should be stopped, so that the Commissioner may be given a reasonable opportunity to make his expenditure and income balance, and not be compelled to force up freights against people on the land who are endeavouring to retrieve the fortunes of this country. I hope members will agree to the motion, because all it asks is that the unnecessary privileges shall henceforth be discontinued.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.42 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 19th November, 1930.

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

QUESTION—BUTTER SUPPLIES, GOLDFIELDS.

Mr. BARNARD (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways: Has his attention been drawn to a telegram that appeared in the "West Australian" this morning regarding the carriage of butter over the railways, wherein it was stated that the butter had arrived in poor condition? If so, will he endeavour to provide proper transport facilities so as to limit the importation of butter from the Eastern States, which, as stated in the telegram, consists of 200 cases of butter per week.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: I noticed the statement in the "West Australian." On investigation I found that the fault did not rest entirely with the Railway Department. The butter manufacturers in the Eastern States send their butter to the goldfields in wooden boxes and surround them with wet sacks. During the extreme heat, the boxes are packed in ice. The Western Australian manufacturers send their butter to Kalgoorlie in wooden boxes. They do not take any other steps to protect their consignments from the heat, as is done by the Eastern manufacturers, with whom they are in competition. If the goldfields people obtained their butter, say, from the Narrogin factory, the journey would occupy about 25 hours, which is a big saving in transit

over the railways, as compared with the time occupied over the trans-line. On the other hand, the Eastern States manufacturers are able to send their supplies across Australia by the trans-line in a satisfactory condition. Personally, I am not satisfied that the statements made are quite correct, and I am afraid much of the complaint arises on account of prejudice against the local article.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Potato Export Prohibition.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. P. D. Ferguson — Irwin-Moore) [4.35]: Yesterday the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) asked whether I would make a statement regarding the prohibition placed by New South Wales on the importation of potatoes from this State, and also with reference to the transport of stud bulls from the South-West. With regard to the latter, the question has already received attention from the Premier, who is the Minister in charge of group settlement matters, whose statement appeared in the "West Australian" to-day. I shall not deal with that phase. Regarding the potato question, the position is as follows:—

On the 10th September the Agricultural Department received official notification from New South Wales pointing out that a proclamation was then in force prohibiting the importation into New South Wales of potatoes, unless they had been grown in districts free from lucerne flea. Since then, repeated efforts have been made by wire and by personal interview by the Under-Treasurer (Mr. G. W. Simpson) when in Sydney, to have this embargo removed, but without success. On the 5th November permission, however, was granted for a small consignment of washed potatoes to be exported to Sydney, provided they arrived there prior to the 17th November, and on receipt of these, consideration was to be given as to whether modification of the proclamation was justified. Yesterday (18th November), in response to a wire for a decision on this point, a reply was received stating that the proclamation must be adhered to even for washed potatoes. Though our representative in Sydney (Mr. G. W. Simpson, Under-Treasurer) was unable to ascertain that there was any suspension of the proclamation, and though no word to that effect was received from the Department of Agriculture, Sydney, there are grounds for believing that the proclamation was suspended until the 17th November. Further inquiries about this are now being made. Since the notice of the embargo upon potatoes

from this State was received, consignments as under have been sent from this State under the certificate which was in use prior to the proclamation:—

| | Adel. | Melb. | Sydney |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|--------|
| | tons. | tons. | tons. |
| 1/11/30—s.s. Karoola .. | 264 | 45 | .. |
| 8/11/30—m.v. Westralia | 133 | 110 | 190 |
| 15/11/30—s.s. Katoomba | 354 | 180 | 107 |

In addition, on the 8th November 74 crates—approximately 4 tons—of washed potatoes—were sent by the m.v. "Westralia" in accordance with special permission granted for this consignment. It is stated that the 190 tons sent to Sydney on the 8th November were sent as ship's stores and at "purchaser's risk." Of the shipments sent forward on the 15th November, approximately half was in accordance with the new proclamation; that is, that the potatoes were grown in districts free from lucerne flea, and the balance was a ship's stores and at "purchaser's risk."

I have a statement giving a resume of the matter, and I shall lay the papers on the Table of the House.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

Alleged injury to Stud Bulls.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.40]: The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) raised the question of the alleged injury to stud bulls transported to the South-West. I have already given an interview to the Press regarding the matter, and I have with me a statement I could make to Parliament dealing with the matter. I will lay the paper on the Table of the House, and if hon. members care to peruse it, they will see there is not much to complain about. I do not propose to read the statement, but I will inform hon. members that not one of the bulls was seriously injured.

Mr. Panton: Then the report in the "West Australian" was incorrect?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Panton: Remarkable for the "West Australian" to be incorrect!

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the undermentioned Bills:—

- 1, Main Roads.
- 2, Education Act Amendment.
- 3, Wagin Hospital Validation.

- 4, Roman Catholic New Noreia Church Property Act Amendment.
- 5, Land Tax and Income Tax.
- 6, Inspection of Scaffolding Act Amendment.
- 7, Stamp Act Amendment (No. 1).
- 8, Stamp Act Amendment (No. 3).
- 9, Metropolitan Market Trust Road.
- 10, Agricultural Bank Act Amendment (No. 2).

BILL—EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT.

First Reading.

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

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND (CONTRIBUTIONS).

Introduced by the Minister for Health and read a first time.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.

Third Reading—Amendment, six months—defeated.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [4.46]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [4.47]: I desire to offer a final protest against this measure being placed on the statute-book, as in my judgment it is deceiving the public and will not attain the end claimed by the Government. It will not help the needy and sick; it will help a sick Treasury. While the rate of 1½d. in the £1 is the same rate as was proposed by the previous Government, this Bill will help hospitals to the extent of only £192,000, provided that all the anticipations of the Government are realised. The Bill of last session would have helped the hospitals to the extent of £347,000. The Minister has claimed throughout the discussion that this

Bill will do for the hospitals as much as the Bill introduced by the member for Hannans would have done. So far from that being a fact, the hospitals will fare worse to the extent of £165,000, and the measure will benefit the Treasury to the extent of £105,000. To let it go out of the people that the Bill is one to finance the hospitals and put them on a better footing is pure hypocrisy. The Treasurer knows full well that such is not the fact. The Fremantle Hospital will be at least £4,000 worse off, while under the Bill the great bulk of the people will be called upon to pay the tax and also pay for hospital accommodation. The previous Bill gave everybody the right to hospital treatment.

The Minister for Health: Up to 6s. per day.

MR. McCALLUM: But this measure does not give relief, except to married men receiving less than £230 a year and single persons receiving less than £156 a year. The Minister has reiterated his statement that it is a similar measure to that which was introduced last session. I do not want it to go out to the people that this Bill in any way approaches what we attempted. This Bill is designed to relieve the pressure on the State's finances, and has not as its objective the financing of the hospitals and helping them to a better footing. The people will be taxed for hospitals and will also have to pay for hospital treatment. From this side of the House protests have been raised against the Bill at every stage, and in this final stage I wish to make it perfectly clear that it is not anything like the Bill brought down by the previous Government, that it will not achieve anything like what the previous Bill would have done, and that it will not afford hospitals any relief whatever. The only thing it will do will be to relieve the Treasury to the extent I have stated.

MR. PANTON (Leederville) [4.51]: The hospitals of this State to a large extent are conducted by committees who, I think the Minister will agree, give valuable service to the Government by relieving them of that work. The committees are entitled to know what the Minister has in mind as regards the financing of the hospitals, in view of the fact that the Bill will mean a large reduction in the amount available for hospitals. I do not wish to be charged with tedi-

ous repetition, but I must repeat that the Perth Hospital, at the lowest estimate, will lose £19,000 per annum if this Bill becomes law. So far the Minister has successfully evaded every question asked from this side of the House as to how he proposes to make good the £19,000. The hospital committees are entitled to know how the deficiency will be made good. Immediately the Bill becomes law, the Perth Hospital Board will have to consider their position. We have to meet our commitments every month. The business people are not prepared to go on supplying the Perth Hospital, any more than they would supply private people, if we cannot pay. If we do not know how we are going to finance the institution, we must consider the question of closing portion of the hospital. That would be distinctly unfair to the people and also to the board, who are doing valuable work on behalf of the Government. The people interested in hospitals want to know the position, and they look to the Minister to indicate how he proposes to overcome the difficulty occasioned by the losses. I emphasise what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition has stated that notwithstanding the contention of the Minister that men receiving less than the basic wage will obtain free hospital treatment for themselves and their families, it will not be so. The Minister may think it is correct, but those people can receive treatment only to the extent of the accommodation available to them at the Perth Hospital. As I have pointed out, the accommodation at present is overtaxed to the extent of 142 beds, and the position is becoming worse every day. Owing to the large number of men out of work and the large number working half-time or less than half-time, a greater number of people will become eligible to enter the Perth Hospital. Consequently the demand for accommodation will be greater than ever. Yet, under the Bill, the hospital will sacrifice £19,000 a year and have a much bigger demand for beds. I ask the Minister, in fairness to the board, to indicate how the shortage is to be made up. If we are told that we shall not be the losers, but that our subsidy will be increased from £37,000 to the extent of the loss, we shall be able to carry on, but I assure the Minister that not one of his hospital committees is prepared to shoulder all the responsibility. The Minis-

ter should make a plain statement as to how the loss will be made good, not only to the Perth Hospital but to practically every hospital in the State.

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [455]: I protest against the passing of the Bill because it is a mischievous and unjust measure. It is purely a taxation measure and was not introduced to benefit any section of people. It is intended to relieve the Consolidated Revenue. The hospitals will receive the same subsidy as in the past and will have to make up the other amount necessary to carry on their operations. This will be the cause of grave discontent. I cannot conceive of honorary committees undertaking the responsibility of conducting hospitals and submitting to all the criticism from people who are asked to subscribe. Though the Bill is called a Hospital Fund Bill, the name is not correct. It should be called a hospital tax Bill, for it is purely a taxing measure. It seeks to impose taxes on the wage earners and salaried men of the community, and is alleged to give hospital benefits to married persons who receive less than £230 and to single persons who receive less than £156 a year. As the member for Leederville pointed out, the necessary hospital accommodation is not available, and there is not the slightest possibility of additional accommodation being provided to meet the needs of the people for whom the measure is supposed to cater. Thousands of people will pay the tax and will receive no benefit at all. They will be asked to subscribe as much as they subscribed previously. Salary and wage earners will be called upon to pay about double the amount previously required for the upkeep of hospitals. It it were provided that the people who paid the tax should receive some benefit in return, the measure might be justified, but here the people are asked to pay for an alleged benefit without receiving it. Could any legislation be a greater fraud or more mischievous than that? A man pays the tax and seeks hospital treatment, and because he is a married man and is receiving more than £230 a year, he can receive no benefit at all. What about those in the country, and those in the mining areas, the men who work underground and who earn on an average more than £230 in the year? The

miners in Kalgoorlie, Wiluna, Leonora, Meekatharra, Mt. Magnet and other mining territories earn more than the amount of the exemption that is allowed, but they earn it in localities where the cost of living is higher and the disadvantages are greater.

Mr. McCallum: The more they earn the more they have to pay.

Hon. M. F. TROY: One Minister said that the cost of living at Youanmi was higher than in any other part of the State. In that locality, where the living is most costly, the wages need to be higher, and yet the people will pay this tax and get nothing for it. There is nothing to justify the Bill, except a desire on the part of the Government to relieve Consolidated Revenue of money that was previously paid to hospitals. If that is the intention of the Government, it should be stated. On the other hand they pretend that the people will receive advantages through this measure, but that is only a pretence, because they will not get such an advantage. I wish to enter a strong protest against the Bill. It is a most mischievous piece of legislation, and a snare and a delusion. I have never seen anything more unfair. The Government pretend that it is to assist them in carrying on the hospitals of the State, but it is merely an additional tax while the people will be denied the benefits of those things for which they are being taxed. The House would be well advised to defeat the Bill on the third reading.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.3]: It is seldom that the opportunity is taken to delay the passage of a Bill on the motion for the third reading. This is the first occasion on which I have opposed the third reading of any measure. I do so because I had not the opportunity to speak on the motion for the second reading, and because of my dislike for this piece of legislation. I desire to be a little more vigorous in my denunciation of the Bill because of what happened last evening in Committee. I endorse all that has been said in hostility to the measure. When we find that the Government can stoop to the level of political degradation—I do not say this offensively—and tax the sustenance that people are receiving, in order to raise money in this fashion, I cannot be forcible enough in the language I use. I have other grievances against the Government. They are

playing upon the passions of the people to secure reinforced finance for the Treasury under the pretence that the money is required for hospital maintenance generally. I stand in a unique position in that I have attacked every one of these Bills and voted against them.

The Premier: You did not attack and vote against them all.

Mr. MARSHALL: I did. I disapprove of the principles embodied in those Bills and especially in this one, which is more vile than any of the others. The Government tell the people that this money is for the purpose of helping hospitals; actually, however, they desire to take into Consolidated Revenue £105,000 out of the money they will receive. Under that disguise they say this is a hospital measure. I disagree with the principle of a flat rate tax; it is most unjust and unfair to those people who are on the minimum rate. The man who is earning £1 a week or £52 a year, and has to pay a tax of 6s. 6d., will be worse off than he who earns £5 a week, or £256 a year. The more we compare the higher rates with the minimum rate, the more apparent are the injustices contained in the Bill. That is one of the principles I opposed in two other measures. Both were entirely wrong and unfair. The last hospitals measure we dealt with had some redeeming features, in that it proposed to subsidise our hospitals on a sound and fair basis. This Bill proposes to offer nothing of a concrete nature in the way of subsidies. It merely says that from the fund hospitals will be subsidised for certain purposes. It does not say what each hospital shall get. I assume that every institution will stand upon its merits. Much will depend upon the best tale-teller as to what subsidy is granted. The previous Bill laid down a definite basis of payment. Even that basis, allowing 6s. per day per bed, did not cover such hospitals as those at Meekatharra and Wiluna. In those places we are called upon to maintain a staff and a doctor in anticipation of accidents. There are times when one hospital has only one or two patients in it, but at other times the beds are all full. We would have been in a bad way under the previous Hospital Bill, but we will be a thousand times worse off under this one, which offers nothing to outback hospitals. It has been suggested that districts should be created, and that the tax

collected in such districts should be used for the local hospitals. Even that is not acceptable to the Minister. He wants to control all the funds raised by the tax. Although the Bill gives a good idea of how and from whom it is proposed to collect the money, we do not know how it is proposed to distribute it. Representing the electorate I do, I cannot possibly support such a measure. It bristles with anomalies and with the most grave impositions ever attempted in this Chamber. One can only do one's best to fight it at every opportunity. In Wiluna we have a medical fund, which will not be exempt. The Minister says that everyone who earns at least £1 a week must pay the tax. In Wiluna the people are taxing themselves to the extent of 2s. 2d. a week, or £5 10s. a year. The Government say notwithstanding this voluntary contribution, these people must pay another 30s. a year, but they will receive no consideration or care for that additional contribution. Do the Government look upon these people as fools? Should the Bill become law I propose to visit my electorate, and wherever possible to have all the patients in our hospitals put on the train, sent to the Minister's office in Perth, have the staffs dispensed with, the places locked up, and the keys sent to his secretary. For years the people of my electorate have penalised themselves in amounts ranging from 1s. to 2s. 2d. a week. By voluntary effort they have subscribed anything up to £300 a year. The Minister now says no matter what they are doing in this way they must pay an additional 30s. a year, probably to maintain hospitals somewhere else. Every effort was made in Committee to induce the Minister to listen to reason, but he refused. On every occasion, no matter what the amendments were, although they were designed to give redress to the people affected, he stood solidly against them. He knows as well as I do that every hospital, beyond a few in the metropolitan area and in some country centres, is largely maintained by voluntary subscriptions. Had it not been for these local efforts, no hospitals would exist there, or they would be maintained solely by the State. The obligation is cast upon the State to maintain them if the people refuse to do so. Notwithstanding the initiative shown by these people, the Minister seeks to impose a tax upon them to coerce them into relaxing the efforts they have put forth in the

past. I appeal to the Minister to take cognisance of the arguments that have been advanced from this side of the House, and have the necessary amendments made in another place. I doubt, however, if another place can pass this Bill.

Mr. Panton: Not if they run true to form.

Mr. MARSHALL: They would stultify themselves if they did pass it, in view of their action on a previous occasion. I cannot understand how such a tax as this can be advocated on these lines. With our eyes open we are allowing hundreds of thousands of pounds to leave the State for the purchase of lottery tickets. When we attempted to relieve our hospitals by means of that kind, many members of this Chamber, as well as of another place, opposed the idea. Another place even defeated a Lotteries Bill, and also threw out a far better measure than the one now before us. I wish to express my utter disgust at a measure of this character having been introduced. I would not have minded had the measure been framed similarly to the last Bill, which brought in people who were not helping themselves as outback people have helped themselves. The present Bill tells people who will not help themselves, "Never mind what the people outback have done; we will put you on the same plane as we put them on." I believe this is the first time in the history of the Commonwealth and probably in the history of the world that a Minister has adhered to the principle of taxing people on sustenance, people practically on charity. So gross an injustice to people thus unfortunately circumstanced can hardly be found anywhere else. Men, women and children are starving. Last evening I heard of a married man with a wife and two children, and earning 22s. 6d. or 23s. per week, 14s. of the amount being in the form of sustenance, who will be subjected to this tax. The equal of that can hardly be found in any civilised country. It stands to the credit or disgrace of the Government that they insist upon passing this measure. I hope the third reading will be negatived.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.18]: I oppose the third reading, and shall test the feeling of the House by moving an amendment. The measure has numerous bad points. Notwithstanding the discussion on second reading and in the Committee stage,

the Government have refused to allow even a small alteration to be made. Had they been reasonable, perhaps the measure would not encounter the opposition it is receiving now. Persons earning less than £230 are to receive free treatment at hospitals. Very likely the person earning less than £230 and receiving free treatment may be a married man without children. On the other hand, a man taxed under the Bill, to pay for hospital accommodation, may have numerous children. Such a position is not right. The Minister has never ceased saying, "This was in the previous Bill." Under the previous Bill everyone taxed would have received some benefit, even the man on a high salary. Again, there is the clause dealing with the man earning less than £52 a year. It is a disgrace to the Government that they will not adhere to the principle that anyone earning less than £52 a year shall be exempt from taxation. They camouflage the position by inserting a provision for refund. Even the "West Australian," which the Government generally stick to strictly, and the advice of which they generally follow, states that this is not the time to impose a hospital tax. The paper says that in its opinion a hospital tax should not at this stage be imposed. I move an amendment—

That the word "now" be struck out, and "this day six months" added to the motion.

MR. MUNSIE (Hannans—on amendment) [5.21]: I support the amendment. I cannot add much to what has already been said in this brief discussion concerning the iniquities of the Bill. To-day I have a little additional information. The position, as I now see it, is that the Health Department, under the present Minister, believe that everybody who is contributing in existing circumstances will have to go on contributing towards the maintenance of hospitals when the Bill has been enacted. The Premier is known as one of the greatest optimists in this country—more power to him for being optimistic—but if the Minister for Health believes that the people will be induced to go on contributing after the Bill has been enacted as they did before, he is a greater optimist than the Premier; in fact, the Premier is a pessimist in comparison. The Minister for Health knows he will not get the money.

The Minister for Health: If we collect all the revenue that is expected from this tax, there will be a fair amount of money.

Mr. MUNSIE: Take the case of the Perth Hospital. At that institution no collection is made from any person in receipt of £5 a week or under. Last year the institution received from people earning low salaries, down to 15s. a week in the case of office girls, £5,400 under the free treatment scheme. Of those people, 99 per cent. will be entitled to free treatment.

The Minister for Health: How much did that £5,400 cost to collect?

Mr. Panton: Very little.

Mr. MUNSIE: Certainly it did not cost much more to collect than this hospital tax will. Does the Minister believe that persons receiving from 15s. to £2 10s. a week will continue to contribute the present 3d. per week for the purpose of getting free treatment when the Bill gives them the right to free treatment upon payment of the tax? I still live in hopes that if the third reading of the Bill is carried, another place will justify its existence by putting it out of the window as members there have done with many other Bills.

Mr. Wilson: You mean, "Thank God for the Upper House!"

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison—on amendment) [5.23]: I would not have risen but for the Minister's interjection to the effect that if the Government get all the revenue they expect from this tax, there will be a fair amount of money available. That is the truest utterance the Minister has made regarding the Bill. He will get contributions to the Consolidated Revenue of the State, but not contributions towards the upkeep of the hospitals. At last the Minister has confessed what the real nature of the Bill is.

The Minister for Health: To the best of your satisfaction, I suppose.

Mr. MARSHALL: One might assume that this was a measure introduced by other Ministers possessing as much knowledge of it as the Minister for Health has.

The Minister for Health: I would not be insulting.

Mr. MARSHALL: I sincerely hope that publicity will be given to the Bill before it passes another place. I feel confident that if the measure survives the amendment and receives the same publicity as other measures, it is doomed to the fate which it deserves, and which no doubt the Government themselves will experience two years after next March.

MR. WILLCOCK (Geraldton—on amendment) [5.25]: I hope the Minister for Health will outline to the House and to the people who are doing splendid work for the community by running committee hospitals—they are in a fever of resentment as to the present Bill—how hospitals are to finance in future. From letters I have received, and from other sources of information, it is plain that amongst the committees running hospitals there is a feeling that the only thing to do when this Bill is enacted is to resign, because they will not have the necessary funds to carry on.

The Minister for Health: If I were allowed by the Standing Orders to make a statement, I might do so; but I do not see how I can.

MR. WILLCOCK: I do not wish to delay the passage of the Bill for one second if the Minister is prepared to make a statement which will ease the minds of people who are now not only resentful but fearful in regard to what will occur in the case of committee-run hospitals supported by voluntary contributions. In the mining industry, contributions are not voluntary but a condition of employment. Those contributions will go by the board now. Nobody will contribute to a hospital fund when he is already contributing by way of tax. It would be a case of two contributions with only one object. Throughout Western Australia the committees running hospitals cannot see how they will get on under this measure.

Member: They will hand over the institutions to the Government.

MR. WILLCOCK: I do not think that is desirable. The committees in question have done excellent work for the State and for the people of the various localities. They have done more work than can reasonably be expected from people acting in an honorary capacity. Their opinion is that the enactment of this Bill will make the position so difficult that it will be no use attempting to carry on. We shall be placed in a very serious position. If the Minister is prepared to make an explanation, I am prepared to sit down immediately. In the event of the Bill going through, the committees running hospitals should receive some assurance from the Government. If, as seems clear, there will be no way out for the hospitals, I can imagine every hospital committee in the State asking members of another place to throw out the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. C. G. Latham—York—on amendment) [5.31]: I do not know how, under the Standing Orders, I can speak comprehensively when the amendment is merely to strike out one word; but we have gone right through the whole ramifications of the Bill and discussed it very fully, despite the remarks of the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall), who was absent while the Bill was being discussed. I assure members that under the Bill the hospitals will be better off to the extent of £42,000 per annum as against last year—allowing for their collecting the same amount of money.

Mr. McCallum: How can they do that?

Mr. Willcock: There is no possible chance.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Do you want me to make an explanation? If not, I will sit down.

Mr. Panton: You ought to sit down if you cannot do better than that.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If I am to make a speech on the subject, I must be given the opportunity. It is not anticipated that the full amount of money collected last year will be collected this year, but even so there will still be considerably more in hand than the amount represented by any reduction in the collections. I am afraid many members lose the idea of a hospital tax and its purpose.

Mr. Millington: Oh no, we don't.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Let us understand what it is. Public hospitals throughout the State are established and maintained for the purpose of helping the poor sick. Many members forget that. Now the purpose is to tax the public generally for the upkeep of those hospitals; and for the benefit of those on the lower rung of the ladder of wage earners we propose as a special consideration that they shall have the right of free entry to those hospitals, and free treatment therein.

Mr. Kenneally: If they can get in.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That obstacle is with us to-day, and has been for some time past. It is nothing new. One would think the Governments of the past had been neglectful of the sick of this State. I seriously challenge any such suggestion. I deny that any Government in this State has been neglectful of the sick, despite what some members may say. Let me give the House the assurance that if the revenue

forthcoming is insufficient for the purpose, the Government are not going to let the sick die without care and attention. But I issue this warning, that we are determined that hospital accommodation is going to be maintained by the people in their own districts as nearly as possible.

Mr. Panton: Then there will be no more patients coming down from the country to the Perth Hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Hospitals have been built in local districts. If the Government had been building hospitals, there would not have been so many built, and probably more efficient equipment would have been provided. But the people of a district, having a pride in their district, decided to establish hospitals in close contact with each other.

Mr. Panton: Even under the Bill major operations must come to Perth.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We need not pause to consider that just now. Having established those hospitals in country districts, and with their own money—because nearly all the hospitals of recent date have been built from money subscribed locally, the balance being found by the Government—I do not think the people will allow them to be neglected. As for the distribution of the fund, members will have a right to challenge me if that distribution is not on a fair and equitable basis throughout the whole of the hospitals. To the member for Murchison, who speaks very wildly and does not intend that his remarks shall convey what they do to his hearers, I want to say the hospitals in the outer goldfields areas have received very liberal treatment in the past—I am not taking any credit for that—and it is only to be expected that they will have to be given liberal treatment in the future. Members should appreciate that we have not brought down any inflated estimate. The estimate is a very conservative one. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) has said that from the same source he was going to get £217,000. We say we expect to get only £156,000. Probably we shall get a little more. Whatever it may be, of the amount collected every penny will be used for the benefit of the hospitals. But I want the people in any given district to look after their own local hospitals. I want to see established a close touch between the general community and

the sick, particularly in country districts. In the past there has not been a sufficiently close relationship between the local people and the sick in Government hospitals. The member for Hannans can claim credit for having created a much better feeling between the general public and the hospitals. The way it was done was by instituting committees that have taken a keen interest in their hospitals and raised considerable money for those hospitals by providing rational amusements. That, I think, ought to be encouraged, despite what the member for Murchison said. As for the miners and timber workers contributing to their own hospitals, they do it on the basis that they are going to receive something for their contributions; just as I pay into a friendly society benefit fund. This tax is to help those that cannot help themselves. Everybody will contribute alike to it. It is not going to help the Treasury at all. It is admitted that £104,000, which was provided from Consolidated Revenue last year, will not be provided when this Bill becomes law. I think we can do without it.

Mr. Panton: The hospitals can do with more.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Of course the hospitals can become just as extravagant as any other organisation.

Mr. Panton: They have not had much chance.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: While I am there I am not going to have extravagance. They have to live down to bedrock, the same as anyone else, particularly while the financial position of the State is so bad.

Mr. Panton: They cannot be any lower than they have been during the last few years.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I admit there have been economies effected even in the hospital on the board of management of which the hon. member has a seat and plays an active part.

Mr. Panton: And those economies have prejudicially affected the efficiency of that hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They have not interfered with the efficiency of the hospital at all.

Mr. Panton: I think I know rather more about that than the Minister does.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I have already given the House the very fullest information regarding the Bill. I did

not treat the House disrespectfully, as one hon. member has suggested. I will admit the Bill was framed by the Government. It would be useless for us to bring down legislation if we were not prepared to stand up to it. As for the unfortunate man who is on, say, £1 per week now and again, I do not expect there will be any great trouble about him. If it were a large sum of money it would be different, but the amount is so small, only 1½d. for every pound. I can give members the assurance that city hospitals will have increased financial benefit as the result of this piece of legislation, but at the same time they will have to keep control of their expenditure. They have to render service to the people and, if they do that, the Government will see to it that none of them lacks financial assistance.

MR. McCALLUM (South Fremantle—on amendment) [5.42]: The Minister was asked for a statement that would give some consolation to those committees in the country who will be called upon to run the hospitals. Instead of offering them consolation, his statement can only be received as a cold douche. He tells them in plain language he is going to impose a tax on them, but they will still have to maintain their own hospitals. He said the tax would be imposed on everyone, notwithstanding which the people in each district would have to finance their own local hospital.

The Minister for Health: I say the whole of the money they are getting from the Government to-day will still be provided for them, and also there will be an additional amount available.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Minister said there would be available to the hospitals £42,000 more than they received last year. He admitted that was by calculating on their still receiving in collections the £36,000 they received in that way last year. Nobody but the Minister would contend for one moment that there is any likelihood of their receiving the same aggregate amount of collections this year as they received last year. Instead of the hospitals collecting £36,000 this year, they will be lucky indeed if they get the £6,000. It is utterly unreasonable to think the various organisations throughout the country collecting for the hospitals each week will continue to pay in when they will now be taxed on their wages. The Minister has on the Notice Paper an Order of the

Day that will take from the hospitals the money provided by the entertainments tax. That money he will take away from them. How, then, can he argue that the hospitals will have the same amount of revenue as they had last year? The Minister must be the only man in the community who believes that the hospitals will collect this year just as much as they collected last year. Take the £5,400 collected for the Perth Hospital last year; nobody expects that that will continue this year. It would be unreasonable to expect the committee of management of a hospital to send round collectors if the tax were being paid. The different organisations that are now contributing, and assisting in the raising of funds, will stop their efforts and no further collections will be made once the tax is imposed. The hospitals will be worse off, and the whole thing will kill the spirit of the committees that are working so well in the interests of these institutions. The Minister now tells these people they must continue to finance their own hospitals. They must provide the means whereby they will pay the tax and also go on with their appeals for further funds. If the Bill becomes law the hospitals will indeed be in a bad way. I sincerely hope the amendment will be carried, and that we shall hear no more of the Bill.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson—on amendment) [5.47]: I said on the second reading it appeared to me that the same old cadging system would have to be carried on despite the tax. By way of interjection the Minister denied that. Now on the third reading, he says definitely that the committees will have to find the same amount of money by way of collections that they had to find before on behalf of their hospitals. He places the onus upon those people who are not in possession of Government hospitals to continue to support them. If the Minister is sincere in his desire to look after the sick, why does he not make these institutions all Government hospitals? Why does he favour one section and not another, and help institutions such as the York, Busseton, Bunbury, Northam, Katanning, and many other hospitals? It does not matter whether the people contribute a penny, the Government will see to the maintenance from revenue of these particular institutions. We who are not so favourably situated,

and have only committee-run hospitals, must go on cadding to keep them open. This is a fine spirit amongst the community, but surely the Minister knows that, once contributors are called upon to pay this tax, there will be no more public collections. Many people in the Nelson district have asked me to support this Bill. They look upon it as a means of getting them out of their trials and tribulations, and enabling them to keep the doors of their hospital open without further trouble on their part. Every person will be taxed. I support the third reading because I promised the party I would do so, but I do not know how the hospital I speak of is to be carried on.

The Minister for Health: It will receive money out of the fund.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We shall not get three-halfpence worth of advantage. We shall be expected to do in the future what we have done in the past, but I am afraid the spirit of giving will be broken. When a popular girl competition is held to raise funds for the hospital, people will no longer buy tickets because they will be paying this tax. I fail to see why one section of the community should be favoured more than another. The first thing the Government should do is to bring all the hospitals into line, and make them either committee-run or Government-run institutions, so that Russelton will not be favoured against Bridgetown, Bunbury against Pinjarra, and so on. I shall oppose the amendment and will support the third reading although I know my people will be disappointed, as I am, about the tax.

Amendment (six months) put and a division taken with the following result:—

| | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 18 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 24 |

Majority against .. 6

AYES.

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mr. Corboy | Mr. Munsie |
| Mr. Cunningham | Mr. Panton |
| Mr. Hegney | Mr. Sleeman |
| Mr. Johnson | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Kenneally | Mr. Walker |
| Mr. Lutey | Mr. Wansbrough |
| Mr. Marshall | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. McCallum | Mr. Withers |
| Mr. Millington | Mr. Wilson |

(Teller.)

NOES.

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Angelo | Mr. McLarty |
| Mr. Barnard | Sir James Mitchell |
| Mr. Brown | Mr. Parker |
| Mr. Davy | Mr. Patrick |
| Mr. Doney | Mr. Plesse |
| Mr. Ferguson | Mr. Richardson |
| Mr. Griffiths | Mr. Sampson |
| Mr. Keenan | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Latham | Mr. J. H. Smith |
| Mr. Lindsay | Mr. J. M. Smith |
| Mr. H. W. Mann | Mr. Thorn |
| Mr. J. I. Mann | Mr. North |

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

| AYE. | NOES. |
|-------------|--------------|
| Mr. Collier | Mr. Wells |
| Miss Holman | Mr. Teesdale |

Amendment thus negatived.

Question (third reading) put and a division taken with the following result:—

| | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 23 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 18 |

Majority for .. 5

AYES.

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Angelo | Sir James Mitchell |
| Mr. Barnard | Mr. Parker |
| Mr. Brown | Mr. Patrick |
| Mr. Davy | Mr. Plesse |
| Mr. Doney | Mr. Richardson |
| Mr. Ferguson | Mr. Sampson |
| Mr. Griffiths | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Keenan | Mr. J. H. Smith |
| Mr. Latham | Mr. J. M. Smith |
| Mr. Lindsay | Mr. Thorn |
| Mr. J. I. Mann | Mr. North |
| Mr. McLarty | |

(Teller.)

NOES.

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mr. Corboy | Mr. Panton |
| Mr. Cunningham | Mr. Sleeman |
| Mr. Hegney | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Johnson | Mr. Walker |
| Mr. Kenneally | Mr. Wansbrough |
| Mr. Lutey | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Marshall | Mr. Withers |
| Mr. McCallum | Mr. Wilson |
| Mr. Millington | |
| Mr. Munsie | |

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

| AYES. | NOES. |
|--------------|-------------|
| Mr. Wells | Mr. Collier |
| Mr. Teesdale | Miss Holman |

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—TENANTS, PURCHASERS, AND MORTGAGORS' RELIEF.*Suspension of Standing Orders.*

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [5.58]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable this Bill to pass through all remaining stages at this sitting.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and find there is an absolute majority of members present.

Question put and passed.

Report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Scaddan—Maylands) [5.59] in moving the third reading said: May I explain that, in accordance with a promise I gave, I have consulted with the Parliamentary Draftsman upon the point raised by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) that upon the expiration of any protection order the mortgagor or landlord may forthwith call up the whole of the money which has accumulated during the period when the order was in operation. The Parliamentary Draftsman has advised me that such is the case. I have directed him to draft an amendment to Clause 11 enabling the commissioner to impose a condition for the repayment of such accumulated amount. I have also consulted with the hon. member, who has agreed that the amendment shall be submitted when the Bill reaches another place, in order to avoid any undue delay at this stage.

Mr. Kenneally: And what about the interest on rents?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The other point was in regard to the charge of interest on rents. I propose to submit for the consideration of another place an amendment to provide that such interest charge may be imposed by the commissioner, but this will not be made mandatory. I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL — ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [6.5] in moving the second reading said: In connection with the Hospital Fund Bill a tax is proposed which in a full year will produce £156,000. It is further proposed that the hospitals shall retain the collections which have hitherto gone into revenue; £36,000 went into Consolidated Revenue from hospitals collections last year. I understand that for some time the amount has been at the rate of £40,000 per annum. In future it will be retained by the hospitals, which will receive in all £192,000. Last year the hospitals received £104,000, plus £36,000 from entertainments tax, or a total of £140,000. Therefore, when the taxes are collected for the full year, the hospitals will receive £52,000 a year more than they have done. The whole matter has been discussed so fully that I do not think it necessary to say anything more about the collections. This small Bill merely provides that the entertainments tax, instead of being set aside to assist hospitals, shall in future be paid—on an increased scale, by the way—into Consolidated Revenue. The matter is very simple, and there is nothing else to explain. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. MUNSIE (Hannans) [6.7]: I admit that the Bill is very small. Unfortunately it is highly important. In my opinion it is a great pity that the other Bill, distributed at the same time as this one, was not introduced first. Then we should have a somewhat better idea of the subject. Seeing that the Premier has been good enough to distribute both Bills simultaneously, I want hon. members to give attention to the second measure, also dealing with the entertainments tax, while keeping the present Bill also in mind. This Bill simply provides for taking from the hospitals the entertainments tax they have had in the past. Seeing that the present Government have introduced the Bill, and that in introducing it the Premier admitted that in the past the entertainments tax had gone to the hospitals, I hope the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson) will at last be convinced.

The Premier: Not in the way you suggest.

Mr. Sampson: Are you sure you heard the Premier correctly?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. The Act as it stands provides that all moneys collected from the entertainments tax shall be paid into a trust fund at the Treasury and be utilised for the purpose of maintaining hospitals. The Bill repeals the provision for payment into a trust fund to be used for hospital purposes. Clause 3 of the Bill admits that the money, instead of going to the hospitals, shall go into Consolidated Revenue.

The Premier: It always has done so.

Mr. MUNSIE: I admit now, as I have always been prepared to admit, that inasmuch as the expenditure of £37,000 resulting from entertainments tax did increase, by popularising the hospitals and enabling them to give better facilities, the amount of revenue received from Government hospitals to the extent of about £3,000 a year, this £3,000 a year represented a saving or benefit to the Treasury resulting from the entertainments tax.

The Premier: You paid hospital matrons out of the tax.

Mr. MUNSIE: Is not the salary of a matron part of the maintenance of a hospital, just as are the salaries of nurses? Towards the salaries of matrons of Government hospitals, a total of £5,733, the previous Government paid £1,390 out of the proceeds of the entertainments tax. Nurses and domestics employed in Government hospitals cost the State £30,773, and of that amount we paid £8,051 from the entertainments tax. Contingencies cost £36,797, and of that amount we paid £9,501 from entertainments tax proceeds last year. Last year's gross expenditure from Consolidated Revenue on public hospitals and assisted hospitals such as the Perth and Fremantle Hospitals and the Children's Hospital was £68,146, of which £18,189 was paid from the entertainments tax. That is how the money was spent last year, all of it going towards the maintenance and upkeep of hospitals. In the coming year the Treasurer will have to pay out of the £156,000 he proposes to raise from a direct tax on the people of the State—and I greatly question the hon. gentleman's statement that he got £36,000 last year—

The Premier: That represents the balance.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have a right to my own opinion. Last financial year the actual reve-

nue of the Medical Department was £40,572, and from homes there was a revenue of £21,011, making a total of £61,000 odd. The amount here specified is £40,572, and a footnote explains that this "includes receipts from Government and assisted hospitals now paid to a hospital fund." That is to say, these sums will be paid into the hospital fund if the Bill goes through. However, even last year the revenue was only £40,000. This year the Premier anticipates a collection of £36,000. Out of the £40,000 mentioned, the Commonwealth paid over £6,000.

The Premier: They will pay it again.

Mr. MUNSIE: They will not pay a penny.

The Premier: Why not?

Mr. MUNSIE: Not a pennypiece; and even if they do, the Premier cannot put the money into the hospital fund. The £40,000 representing collections from Government hospitals includes the whole of the amount paid by the Repatriation Department to the Perth Hospital for the maintenance of the Repatriation Ward. The Government cannot get that amount for Consolidated Revenue. The £40,000 likewise includes the total amount paid by the Commonwealth Government for the treatment of venereal disease throughout Western Australia. That amount cannot go into Consolidated Revenue either. I question very much whether the Treasurer will receive the £36,000 he anticipates. Last year he did not get £36,000 in collections. As the member for South Fremantle (Mr. McCallum) said this afternoon, the Premier will be lucky if this year he gets £6,000, let alone £36,000, from Government hospitals. Members of this House have told me candidly that they thought the £36,000 represented the total collections by way of patients' fees from hospitals in Western Australia. It represents nothing of the kind. It represents merely the collections from 32 Government hospitals, and not the collections from the Perth Hospital, the Fremantle Hospital, or the Children's Hospital, or any committee hospital in this State. As the Government have the numbers, there is no use opposing the Bill; but I do wish to enter a protest against the action of the Government in taking away a sure £39,000 or £40,000 of annual revenue from the hospitals and giving them a very doubtful £36,000 in its place. That is really what is happening. The Bill merely repeals Sections 13 and 14 of the principal Act, and

thus takes money from the hospitals and puts it into Consolidated Revenue.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

MR. PANTON (Leederville) [7.30]: I am rather surprised that it is proposed to use the amount to be derived from the entertainments tax for Consolidated Revenue purposes. I can understand it not being devoted to the hospitals because of the imposition of the hospital tax. I would like to inform the Premier of something of which he is not aware. The imposition of an entertainments tax in Western Australia was made possible by those interested in the charitable institutions in our midst.

The Premier: I thought it was done by Parliament?

Mr. PANTON: The story is worth relating. Those who were responsible for the affairs of our charitable institutions were faced with financial difficulties, and, in consequence, we held a meeting to consider ways and means of raising funds. Mr. Bruce, then Prime Minister of Australia, was on his way back from England, and it was decided to wait upon him while he was in Perth with a view to urging him to relinquish the Federal amusement tax so that the Western Government could impose it in order to provide funds for the various charities. We were unable to see Mr. Bruce, but arrangements were made for us to wait upon Sir George Pearce and discuss the matter with him. We had previously waited upon the then Minister for Health, Mr. Munsie, and he was present with us when the deputation was held. The result of our movement was that the Federal Government decided to relinquish the amusement tax up to 2s. 6d. Then there was a hitch. I had always been under the impression that the member for Hannans was not Scotch, but was of another nationality. The fact remains that he introduced a Bill and took the whole of the tax, made available as the result of the work of the deputation, for hospital purposes, and the charities were left in the position they are in to-day. In view of the fact that those institutions are in a worse plight to-day than they were at the time I speak of, I suggest that instead of the money to be raised under the Bill being paid into Consolidated Revenue, it should be devoted to the assistance of charitable institutions and thus conform to the original

intention when the Federal Government relinquished part of their tax. I am an executive officer of four of the institutions affected and I know the difficulties experienced in these times. The Treasurer will probably not take kindly to my suggestion, but it would certainly assist many deserving charities if he could see his way clear to divert the money so that it could be applied for the purposes originally intended.

Mr. H. W. Mann: You apparently did not impress your own Minister.

Mr. PANTON: No. That Minister put one well across us! I was at Menzies at the time and I received a number of telegrams dealing with the position. When I returned, it was too late to do anything, not that my presence here would have made much difference. Like the present Treasurer, Mr. Munsie wanted to get the money for the hospitals, but, in this instance, the money is to go direct to Consolidated Revenue. I shall not oppose the second reading of the Bill, but I hope the Treasurer will consider rendering assistance to the charitable institutions by diverting the tax to them instead of paying it into Consolidated Revenue.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [7.36]: We have heard a good deal during the discussion on the Hospital Fund Bill, and again on the present Bill, regarding the responsibilities of Government. There can be no question as to the responsibility of Governments regarding hospital services. That is an essential task for every Government to undertake, and I have yet to learn that Governments have failed to provide funds for the hospitals. I do not know that it is material whether the amount provided is paid into Consolidated Revenue or into a special hospital fund, because, in the final adjustment, the Government must see that the money required is provided either from a special tax or from Consolidated Revenue. No one can look ahead and say arbitrarily whether the fund will be sufficient for hospital purposes. It is a matter for estimating, and it is hoped that the Hospital Fund Bill will provide sufficient money to enable what is necessary to be done.

Mr. Munsie: You have not considered the position of the hospitals very much, or you would not say that.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the hospital tax proves insufficient, then the Government must provide additional funds.

Mr. Munsie: That is a different thing.

Mr. SAMPSON: That always has been so. If the tax proves insufficient, then an argument can be advanced for the provision of other funds. I commend every Government that gives consideration to hospital services. That is always done by any Government possessing a sense of responsibility. Up to the present, there has been far too much reliance on public charity and on street appeals.

Mr. Munsie: They will go on just the same.

Mr. SAMPSON: Even so, that will make the task of the Government the less difficult. We all realise that the Government are facing a difficult situation. Apparently we had money to burn a little while ago, because I find that last year the Government produced a book at a cost of £3,358, and we got back £189 only. It would not be difficult to prove that the money involved could have been used to much better purpose in the erection of much-needed additions to one of our main hospitals. I shall not labour the question. It is our duty to co-operate with the Government to raise the funds necessary, and while I have been reluctant to agree to anything in the shape of additional taxation, I shall stand by the Government in this instance.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [7.41]: I was interested in the story told by the member for Leederville (Mr. Panton) regarding the genesis of the entertainments tax. I agree with his contention that the money derived from the Bill should be used for our charities and hospitals. I think that is what will happen. We had a statement from the Minister for Health to-day—the Treasurer was sitting alongside him and therefore impliedly endorsed his statement—that if the hospital fund, which is estimated to produce £156,000, did not prove adequate, extra money would be found out of Consolidated Revenue. Probably the entertainments tax will be used in that direction. In addition to that, if hon. members throw their memories back a few days, they will recollect that large sums were passed for charitable purposes.

Mr. Munsie: Not for hospital purposes.

Mr. ANGELO: No, but the Minister has promised that if the hospital fund does not produce sufficient money, then what is required will be taken from Consolidated Revenue. In addition to that, there is the Char-

ities Department, for which money is made available as well. After hearing the statement by the Minister to-day, any doubts I had as to the future of our country hospitals were swept away. I am prepared to trust this big-hearted son of the soil who is in charge of the Health Department, and I am positive the country hospitals will not suffer.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—New Section. Entertainments tax to be paid into Consolidated Revenue:

Mr. PANTON: I move an amendment—

That all words after “into” in line 4 be struck out and “a trust fund for the purpose of assisting charitable institutions” inserted in lieu.

It is not necessary for me to go over the whole of the ground again.

The PREMIER: I hope the hon. member will not persist with the amendment. As a matter of fact the Treasury is very much in need of all the consideration that can be given to it. The hon. member knows we are letting go the equivalent of this tax.

Mr. Munsie: Not quite all the way.

The PREMIER: I can only tell the hon. member that the one amount will balance the other. Certainly I will see to it that the hospitals are not allowed to go short of money. They will be treated as they have always been treated. I am well aware that the hon. member was most enthusiastic in carrying out his duties as Minister for Health, and his many other duties also. Owing to the depression the entertainments tax is not likely to be very large this year. Still, the hospitals will not be allowed to go short of money, indeed they are likely to have far more in future than they have had in the past. Since we are making a fair exchange, the hon. member ought not to persist with his amendment.

Mr. MUNSIE: The Premier has said that, in his opinion, owing to the depression the entertainments tax this year will not be as large as it was last year. I believe that, notwithstanding the depression, the amount received by way of entertainments

tax will increase this year. In the past the three principal sources of entertainments tax in this State were the three big picture shows in Perth. That is where we got the bulk of the tax from last year and for the early part of the current year, although we were then getting none of the upstairs revenue in those theatres, all of which went to the Commonwealth. But two months ago those theatres reduced the price of admission to their upstairs accommodation, in consequence of which, in future, it will be for the State instead of the Commonwealth to tax that revenue. So I say that from entertainments tax we shall get a larger sum this year, because we shall be deriving a considerable amount that previously went to the Commonwealth. As to the amendment, I admit that the story the mover told of getting the Commonwealth Government to agree to relinquish portion of the entertainments tax was true. When first I introduced the Bill I was of opinion that the charitable institutions all came under the tax. Subsequently I learnt of my error. At all events, the previous Government classified the Home of Peace to come under the hospitals tax as a hospital, and thus relieved the Treasury of an annual grant of £900 for that institution. Thereafter that £900 came out of the entertainments tax, and so the Treasury was relieved of that amount.

Mr. PANTON: What will happen to the £900 now?

Mr. MUNSIE: I suppose it will be paid out of the hospitals tax. Financially many of our charitable institutions are in a deplorable position to-day, owing to the fact that times are bad and they cannot collect.

Mr. SAMPSON: I, too, appreciate the serious position of many of our charitable institutions. There is, for instance, the Parkerville Home. There a devoted band of sisters have spent a considerable fortune of their own on the care of children of the State from babyhood. I am prepared to accept the implied promise given by the Premier that consideration will be extended to these charitable institutions.

Mr. McCALLUM: I cannot agree with the viewpoint of the Premier when he says that while transferring this money from the hospitals to Consolidated Revenue, he is releasing a similar amount.

The Premier: That is the actual position.

Mr. McCALLUM: The amount the hon. member is transferring to the hospitals is a diminishing one, whereas the amount he is taking into Consolidated Revenue is an increasing one; for, as the member for Hannans has said, the prices of admission to the leading theatres have been reduced, and so the Premier will now gain a considerable amount that has previously gone to the Commonwealth.

The Premier: I hope it is as the member for Hannans says. Are you sure the price of tickets has been reduced?

Mr. McCALLUM: Everybody knows it; it is two months since the prices were reduced. When the Premier says he is giving away an amount equal to what he is taking, he assumes that we will overlook the fact that the one amount is increasing while the other amount is decreasing. That is in respect of the Bill before us. But the Premier has another Bill, and the estimate of what he will get under that Bill greatly exceeds what he got last year. This afternoon I said the £36,000 that was collected for hospitals last year will probably be reduced to the odd £6,000 this year.

The Premier: No.

Mr. McCALLUM: On the other hand, he will take this money which will probably shown an increase of from 20 to 30 per cent. on last year's revenue. The Premier has the big end of the stick and it is not a fair exchange, because he will pass on to the hospitals a very problematical amount. I predict that the hospitals will receive a very small sum as compared with last year and, as there will be greater demands on the hospitals, they will have to seek assistance from the Treasury if they are to meet the needs.

Mr. PANTON: I am worried regarding two institutions with which I am associated, the Victoria Institute for the Blind and the Braille Society. The combined institutions obtain £2,800 a year on a pound for pound basis, and it has been impossible to carry on with that amount. The men have to be kept working if they are to be made contented. They are on half time at present.

The Premier: Cannot they sell their brushes?

Mr. PANTON: No. We shall be unable to collect the usual amount and, failing that, we shall not get the £2,800 from the Treasury.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Run a sweep.

Mr. PANTON: The sweep tickets would be taxed. Charity is being taxed all the time.

Mr. McCallum: I think there will be an unlimited number of sweeps now.

Mr. PANTON: People suffering the greatest disability in life—the loss of their sight—should not be the first to be attacked, but that is what is happening. If the Premier will promise not to let the Government subsidy fall below the £2,800, even if we collect £200 or £300 short, I shall be satisfied.

The Premier: Of course not.

Mr. PANTON: In order not to put the Government in a false position, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL — ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [8.5] in moving the second reading said: The amount of the tax is really the matter to be discussed. This evening I have heard a good deal more than I knew as to what has happened regarding some forms of entertainment. I had no idea that the amounts were being reduced and that the revenue would probably increase considerably regardless of whether we imposed additional taxation. One can understand that people would now patronise cheaper seats, but apart from that I understand the charges for admission have been reduced.

Mr. Munsie: In many instances where they were 3s. 3d. during the week, they are now 2s. 2d.

The PREMIER: I do not know much about that.

Mr. Munsie: The Commonwealth were getting it before. You will get it now.

The PREMIER: I am afraid the hon. member is over-estimating the prospects of the change.

Mr. Munsie: What do you estimate you will get under this measure?

The PREMIER: For a full year £56,000.

Mr. McCallum: You got £36,000 last year with half the tax. There is no limit to this, whereas you stopped at 2s. 6d. previously.

The PREMIER: There is no chance of getting as much this year as we got last year. Entertainments are not doing anything like the business. I am told that many of them are not being satisfactorily attended.

Mr. Munsie: Is the £56,000 the total amount of revenue you anticipate or the increase?

The PREMIER: The total amount, because of the fall in attendances everywhere. If we were back to normal times we should get £56,000 from the new tax, but we are not likely to reach normal times for a while. It would be useful if we could get £56,000 in addition to the £36,000.

Mr. Munsie: I think you will get much more than you estimate.

The PREMIER: I shall be happy if that occurs, but I do not think there is the slightest chance of it.

Mr. McCallum: For admission to race-courses you charged only on 2s. 6d., and now you will collect a tax on every shilling.

The PREMIER: Yes, but even there attendances have fallen off. Previously we did not get taxation on admission charges in excess of 2s. 6d., which amount covers the charge for a great many entertainments. Still, there is a falling off in attendances everywhere.

Mr. McCallum: This will duplicate the Commonwealth tax everywhere.

The PREMIER: It will duplicate our own tax and impose a new tax. There will be a new tax on admission tickets to race-courses, equal to what the Commonwealth charge.

Mr. Panton: The poor old sports will catch it.

The PREMIER: On a ticket of not less than 9d. or more than 1s., the present tax is 1d., and the new tax will be 2d. On a ticket exceeding 1s. but not exceeding 2s. 5½d., the present tax is 1d. for the first 1s. and ½d. for each additional 6d. or part of 6d. The new tax will be 2d. on the first 1s. and 1d. on each additional 6d. or part of 6d. On a ticket of 2s. 6d., the new tax will be 2½d. On a ticket exceeding 2s. 6d., the new tax will be 2½d. on the first 2s. 6d. and ½d. on each additional 6d. or part of 6d. The reason for the apparent discrepancy in the rates below 2s. 6d. and for 2s.

6d. upwards is that the Federal tax commences to operate at 2s. 6d. and consequently the existing rate of tax from that onwards will be duplicated. We shall be super imposing our tax on the Federal tax.

Mr. Kenneally: The effect will be to double the lot.

The PREMIER: It will double our own tax for our own benefit, but the benefit to the State on the higher priced tickets will not be doubled.

Mr. Munsie: You are doubling the tax on tickets up to 2s. 6d. and imposing the same tax as the Commonwealth on tickets above 2s. 6d.

The PREMIER: Yes. The member for Hannans has suggested that the Bill should not be taken into Committee to-night.

Mr. Munsie: Yes, give us a chance on this one.

The PREMIER: I shall make inquiries along the lines indicated by the hon. member. If I find that the tax will yield such a wonderful harvest, I shall consider the matter, but I think the hon. member will find that the falling off in attendances at all places of entertainment will be so great that we shall realise little more than the £56,000 estimated.

Mr. Panton: You will make it upon the miniature golf courses now.

The PREMIER: I understand there is no chance of getting the tax from that source, that it is like a game of billiards; the people pay for the game and not for admission. It is an excellent thing for the House that we have members who know so much about those things.

Mr. Panton: I merely saw a poster in the street.

The PREMIER: The hon. member seems to know all about miniature golf courses. I thought they were frequented by young ladies.

Mr. Panton: If they were, you would know more about them than I do.

The PREMIER: I really thought they were for young ladies.

Mr. Panton: Old ones too.

Mr. Angelo: I have seen ladies of 70 and 80 playing it in Sydney.

The PREMIER: Like the member for Leederville, I should prefer to watch the young ones playing it.

Mr. Panton: That is something we have in common.

The PREMIER: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Munsie, debate adjourned.

BILL—HOUSING TRUST.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [8.16] in moving the second reading said: I feel sure this Bill will meet with a far better reception than the last one I had the opportunity of bringing down. Probably every member will agree that this is a worthy object. The Bill appears to be rather an extensive one, but it contains only two principles. Members have been so exacting towards my colleague, the Attorney General, that, instead of many things being done by regulation in connection with this housing scheme, the Bill provides for practically everything that is required. The object of the measure is to provide for the building of cheap houses, for people who find they cannot provide a home for themselves. The houses will be built for two classes of tenants, one the life tenants, representing people who will live in these cottages entirely free, that is to say, free of interest, rates and taxes, insurance, etc.; and the other class of tenants will be the purchasers.

Mr. Sampson: It sounds like the millennium.

Mr. Panton: It sounds too good to be true.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The purchasers will be those who find themselves unable to provide their own homes. A purchaser may be a man in a delicate state of health or a woman in a delicate state of health, but with a big family. It is proposed to rent the houses that are being purchased at a fee of 5s. per week. That will include all the charges I have mentioned, rates and taxes, insurance, etc. The only condition is that these tenants will purchase the houses at the end of 30 years. The premises will then be theirs.

Mr. Panton: At 5s. a week?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. It will clearly be understood that the money available will limit the number of houses we can build under this scheme. The Bill was forecast by the Premier in June last, when Mr. and Mrs. McNess handed to that hon. gentleman £5,000 to be used at his discretion for the benefit of those who were out of work. The Premier felt that this was the most worthy object to which he could devote the money, for by that means he could provide employment through the erection of the cottages, provide homes for the people who were not able to afford such a comfort for themselves, and further by reason of the money that was being repaid it would be possible to start the nucleus of a fund for the continued erection of such cottages. It is proposed to build four-roomed places to cost approximately £250. As I have said, the occupants will be able to purchase these at the rate of 5s. per week. The scheme will not only give those who are in difficult circumstances, comfort and an independence they do not now possess, but will be the means of providing work for carpenters and those engaged in the timber industry. The only things we propose to purchase are galvanised iron and nails.

Mr. Munsie: I take it these cottages will be built in more than one particular spot.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The amount of money that will be repaid will not be very large because it will be repaid at the rate of 5s. a week, and this will include rates and taxes, insurance, etc. The capital that will come back will therefore be relatively small. As the money is repaid it will be made available for a further programme of building.

Mr. Kenneally: What amount of money will be available in the first instance?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will tell the hon. member. These concessions will not be confined to the metropolitan area, but will be spread throughout the State. The money we find ourselves possessed of at the moment is £20,000. Of this, £5,000 represents the very generous donation of Mr. and Mrs. McNess. The remaining £15,000 was taken out of the fund that was provided for the Commonwealth Government or unemployment in this State. This makes up the total of £20,000. We believe that we are right in using the £15,000 for this object, because it means providing em-

ployment in the erection of these cottages, using our own timber, and producing a much more tangible asset than would be the case if the money were spent on road construction. It is estimated we can build 80 cottages with the capital we have in hand.

Mr. Kenneally: Does the £15,000 come out of the £192,000?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. We received £65,000, but this amount was reduced by the contribution to South Australia. The total amount we received was therefore £32,000, of which £15,000 will go towards the building of these cottages. It is intended to allot them to widows and deserving applicants with the proviso and essential qualification that the unfortunate circumstances of the applicant shall not have arisen through any cause within his or her control. If a person deliberately set out to lose his money and then applied for assistance he would not get preference over anyone else. If the applicants are sick, aged, or unable to earn sufficient to pay rent on the ordinary scale, they may be eligible to apply for a cottage. The idea is to allot homes to qualified aged or infirm applicants free of any payment except a small sum to cover rates and taxes and insurance, in the case of those cottages that are taken up on the purchase basis. Those cottages that will be sold will be paid for at the rate of about 1s. 6d. a week, which will represent the nucleus of a capital for the construction of additional cottages. The remainder of the weekly payment will represent rates and taxes, insurance, etc. It is provided that the administration of the scheme shall be by a trust. Colonel Collett and Mr. Alfred Carson have been good enough to offer their services in an honorary capacity to administer the trust. The reason the Government thought it advisable to appoint a trust is that such a body will be free from departmental control, and these two gentlemen have been given the position of managers of the trust. It will be for them to make the allotment of houses. No charge for any service will be made by the Government. The Workers' Homes Board will come in because the secretary will carry out the administrative work, and will make the collections. The conditions applying to this scheme have been drafted by the trust and approved by Cabinet.

Mr. Kenneally: Will the properties be rateable by local governing bodies?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They will be exempt from any rates and taxes, but if they are not exempt, the payments will be made out of the fund.

Mr. Angelo: And water supply as well?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That will be free.

Mr. Panton: I would like to get one and have a garden there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The main thing the trust will have to concern themselves about is the granting of these cottages to the most deserving cases known at the time. Already 342 applications have been received for the 80 homes. The trust will occupy an exacting position, but this will be their chief concern. Travelling expenses will be allowed to members of the trust. The cost of managing the scheme will be borne by the State, and will not be debited to the trust funds. The Workers' Homes Board will hold any funds in the name of the trust. It may be thought that there is no necessity for members of the trust to travel about. It must be remembered that we propose to build these cottages in various parts of the State. Rather than that applicants should be brought to Perth to see the trust, it is better that the members should visit the districts concerned. They will then come directly into touch with the applicants, who will not be subject to departmental investigation. When Mr. and Mrs. McNess made their generous donation of £5,000, they said the money could be used at the discretion of the Premier in the direction he thought would be best for providing work for unemployed. I think the House will agree there is no better way to perpetuate the memory of the donors than by the establishment of homes such as these. This is a new departure in the history of Australia. The repayment system will mean that for all time we shall have before us the names of those who made this generous gift to the community. I hope that will be regarded as an incentive to others who desire to make presents of land for building purposes to the trust when subdivisions are taking place. If people feel generous, they will realise there is no worthier object for their generosity than the provision of comfortable homes for persons who cannot afford to build them. In pursuance of this policy Colonel Collett and Mr. Carson have announced several preliminary conferences

which have been held in the Workers' Home Board office. In July last matters were well in train. We have anticipated the approval of Parliament to this legislation, and have already built quite a number of cottages which are occupied to-day. Unfortunately this is one of those pieces of legislation which have a retrospective clause but I think the House, having regard to the nature of the measure, will take a kind view of the clause in question.

Mr. Munsie: There is no need to worry about this House; but what about our friends up above?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think there will be much trouble in another place, seeing that money has been so generously donated by Mr. and Mrs. McNess, and that additional money has been made available from the other fund. It is stipulated that the cottages to be built under the authority of the trust shall not be built in clusters, so that the institutional stamp of houses may be obviated. In the Old Country it is usual to build houses of this nature in clusters; here, however, it is proposed to separate them as much as possible in order to prevent the locality from being named an institutional locality.

Mr. Angelo: Have the Government given any thought to using shingles instead of galvanised iron?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think so. Shingles would hardly be satisfactory in some parts of the State. The object is to give the people the best that can possibly be supplied at a reasonable price. In other cottages being built to-day asbestos sheets are being used, because these are made in this State. The cost of land in the metropolitan area, with the entailed obligations of sewerage or special drainage provision, must restrict the building operations of the trust in such districts. We have had one or two applications from Fremantle, but the cost of the additional work makes the expense so great as to render the proposition almost impracticable. I hope that before long legislation will be introduced to enable some of those difficulties to be overcome. In order to facilitate the object of the trust, local authorities have been invited to suggest areas within their boundaries suitable for building the class of cottages contemplated, and the local bodies have also been invited to co-operate in exempting trust

cottages from exacting by-laws. The probabilities are that when the matter is investigated, some of the difficulties indicated will be overcome. It is also hoped by the trust that the local governing bodies will assist by bringing to notice cases in their districts deemed suitable for consideration. The statement I have given to the House covers generally the preliminary ground leading to the creation and initial activities of the trust. The construction of 19 cottages has already been authorised by the trustees, but owing to the cost being high and objections being taken to the type of cottage by the Geraldton council the trust is somewhat hampered in that respect. It has, however, been possible to proceed with the erection of cottages in other districts. Authorisations to erect cottages have been issued in Albany, Belka, Bowelling, Bunbury, Busselton, Cottesloe Beach, Fremantle, Geraldton, Katanning, Kwoollyn, Manjimup, Merredin, Narrogin, Northam, Osborne Park and York—one in York. In some of the districts named, cottages are already occupied. It will be seen that they are spread pretty widely through the State.

Mr. Munsie: Evidently there is no chance of their being built in clusters.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The nature of the cases approved is not without interest. One is that of a comparatively young married man, with six children ranging from 13 years to infancy, who was most seriously injured in an accident, and whose record over a long period of service as an employee in a country workshop was exemplary, but whose wage was barely sufficient to provide shelter and food for his young and growing family. The accident totally incapacitated him from any further physical labour, notwithstanding his sincere wish to do everything he could to help. His townspeople rallied to the help of the family, and provided them with many essentials in different ways. Local efforts to raise funds also helped to tide them over their troubles. It was found possible to pay the family 5s. per week, and their gratitude can well be imagined. They are now housed in a cottage, and this will enable quite a large amount of the charitable fund to be directed to food and clothing instead of to rent. That is a case which I feel sure will appeal to hon. members. Another case is that of a part-

caste family with an excellent standing for behaviour in their town. I think the man married a half-caste woman at Kwoollyn. He has been stricken with paralysis. There is a family of six children, ranging from 10 years to one month. It is proposed to build them a house because of the very bad conditions under which they are now living. The man is a returned soldier, and I think hon. members will agree that this is a very worthy case. Another applicant, considerably advanced in years, has been deserted by her husband. The family are all grown up, and have serious responsibilities of their own. The old lady is dependent on a very slight income in the form of pensions to enable her to live and care for an invalid adopted son. To quote only one other instance, there is an old-age pensioner who is a widow and bedridden; she is dependent upon the assistance of neighbours, and has a daughter who is both deaf and dumb and is in turn entirely dependent upon a slender pension. In this last case a friend has not only contributed the land, but a substantial sum to add further comforts and improvements to the cottage. Undoubtedly every one of the people will be most grateful to Mr. and Mrs. McNess for their contribution towards making the lives of these unfortunate persons somewhat happier. The Bill itself will interest hon. members, particularly because it is a departure from the usual run of legislation. It will be admitted that no better scheme to perpetuate the great generosity of Mr. and Mrs. McNess to the people of this State could be devised. I trust that hon. members will read the Bill carefully, and that there will be no unnecessary delay in passing it. As I have said, Parliamentary approval has been anticipated, and the measure will legalise some steps that have already been taken. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. M. F. Troy, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [8.38] in moving the second reading said: This is a companion piece of legislation to the Bill of which the

second reading has just been moved. It is only a short measure, rendered necessary to enable land to be set aside for, and disposed of by, the housing trust under the Housing Trust Bill. The Land Act contains no power enabling land to be set apart for this purpose, nor is there power to dispose of town or suburban lots in fee simple unless they are submitted to public auction or competition. It is proposed to set aside blocks of land wherever the trust desire it, for the purpose of erecting the cottages referred to in the previous Bill. Much depends upon whether a cottage is to be subject to a life tenancy or is to be leased. In the latter case, at the end of the term the block of land will have to be paid for as well as the cottage. In the event of a person holding land with a cottage on it and proposing to sell the property, the intending purchaser will have to pay for the land. At present the Government propose to set aside land for the trust, with power by regulation to enable the trust to charge for the land if the property is sold. The object of the housing trust would not be met by submitting the land to auction, as it is necessary under the Land Act to be in a position to dispose of the land to persons selected by the trust, without payment of any consideration. However, it may be necessary in future to charge legatees or successors in occupation of land disposed of under the Housing Trust Bill the value of the land. Therefore this Bill provides for the framing of regulations to meet the position, and to prescribe the form of Crown grant to be used. The Government propose to have this piece of legislation following the Housing Trust Bill through the Legislature, so that the two may be connected. This Bill contains nothing beyond what I have explained already. It will enable the Minister for Lands to transfer to the housing trust land without its being submitted to auction or competition. If the Housing Trust Bill does not become law, it will not be necessary to pass this Bill; but the Government feel that it is essential to keep the two measures together, so that what is desired may be carried out. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. M. F. Troy, debate adjourned.

BILL—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. N. Keenan—Nedlands) [8.42] in moving the second reading said: This is a very short Bill which, unfortunately, the circumstances of the time we are passing through render necessary. It is practically a re-enactment of the statute passed in 1914 for the purpose of dealing with circumstances somewhat similar to those now prevailing, and which brought about the same difficulties as this Bill deals with, but by no means in the same degree as they exist now, because the war, although a very calamitous affair, did not produce any hardship in the form of unemployment comparable with that obtaining to-day. The object of the Bill is contained in Clause 3, which reads—

Notwithstanding anything in the principal Act or in the rules of any society, it shall be lawful for the committee of management of any society to suspend, wholly or partially, at any time and from time to time, the liability of any member to make all or any of the contributions required by the principal Act or the rules of the society, for such period as to such committee shall seem fit; but the benefit of any suspension (a) shall only be granted to a member so long as he is in necessitous circumstances owing to unemployment; (b) shall not at any time be available to more than one-tenth of the members of the society; (c) shall not be granted to any member except with the approval of the registrar; (d) may be limited to contributions of any particular kind; (e) may at any time be removed and determined by the committee or the registrar, notwithstanding that the period fixed for the duration thereof has not expired.

Clause 4 explains the effect of suspension. Hon. members will see that it enables the party to whom the suspension is extended to enjoy the same benefits as he would be entitled to if, not being a person in necessitous circumstances owing to unemployment, he was able to pay his fees or dues. Clause 4 provides—

A member of any society, whilst he is entitled to the benefit of any suspension, shall not be called upon to pay to the society any contributions to which the suspension applies; but after the end or determination of the suspension he shall, except in so far as the society by resolution passed at a general meeting of the members decides otherwise, be liable to pay all such contributions as would have been payable by him, if he had not been granted the benefit of the suspen-

sion, at such time and in such manner as the committee may decide.

In discussing this Bill with the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, he asked that some information should be given as to the extent to which the benefits of the society would be granted to such a member. On making inquiry I find that it is the intention to grant all the benefits, including the benefit in case of sickness of a small grant of money to enable medicines and so on to be purchased.

Mr. Kenneally: And in case of death?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The usual amounts, of course. It may be suggested that that is possibly going too far, but I would inform the House that the Bill has practically been drafted by the grand secretaries of all the societies, with the assistance of the Registrar of Friendly Societies. In addition, the Bill has been approved by their grand councils. Thus we are dealing with a Bill supported by the consensus of opinion of all parties interested in connection with the friendly societies.

Mr. Marshall: Could they not do this without the necessity for a Bill?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, because under their rules any one member—it is done to-day, as hon. members will have noticed—can apply to the court for an injunction to restrain the committee of his society from taking action. It is to avoid the possibility of that being done that the Bill is introduced. Further, the Bill is along the lines of that of 1914.

Mr. Kenneally: Are the operations under the Bill made subject to the consent of the Registrar?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: All important operations are. He is to be a party to the granting of suspension, to the amount of benefits to be granted, and so on. I speak without the slightest hesitation when I say that the Registrar will refrain from any interference, unless there seems to be to him good grounds for so doing. Unless that should happen, the societies will exercise the right that should be theirs to deal with their own property as they deem best, and the Registrar will refrain from any interference unless he should consider some grave breach of a society's authority is contemplated. The Bill is a short one and in Clause 7 we ask the House to ratify what the Bill authorises to be done as from the 1st August last. Un-

fortunately, there are a great number of instances in which the various societies have already acted, and the action taken by them would be illegal unless ratified in accordance with the provisions of the Bill. That is why we ask that the Bill shall be retrospective to the 1st August. Clause 8 fixes the duration of the measure, and is an exact copy of the corresponding section in the Act of 1914. It would be impossible to say the exact date to which the Act should be made to continue, and, on the other hand, we do not want to make it permanent. Therefore we suggest that the duration of the measure shall continue until terminated by the issuing of a proclamation. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Kenneally, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [8.51] in moving the second reading said: The Bill comprises one clause and the object is to make it possible for the Government to sell any of the State trading concerns. To-day the law provides that Parliament must approve of any such sale.

Mr. Sleeman: More money wanted?

The PREMIER: The hon. member knows it is wanted.

Mr. Marshall: And always will be, while you are Treasurer.

The PREMIER: The Bill merely gives the Government power to sell a trading concern, instead of Parliament. Hon. members will realise that it is impossible to negotiate the sale of a trading concern under existing conditions. As the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) knows, it is impossible to sell a business, even when conditions are favourable, if all the inner workings were disclosed to the public.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why do you want to sell any of them?

The PREMIER: Under such conditions, it would be most difficult to conduct any business dealings and the discussion in Parliament would tend to delay matters still further. The capital cost involved in the

State trading concerns is very large, and the working capital is necessarily heavy. Some of the concerns have paid, while some have not. A total amount of £2,338,306 is invested in the trading concerns as capital and is distributed as follows:—State Sawmills, £369,136; State Shipping Service, £510,648; Implement and Engineering Works, £245,427; Wyndham Meat Works, £1,044,277; Brickworks, £55,089; Boya Quarry, £36,485; State Hotels, £64,803; Ferries, £12,432. The capital in connection with the sawmills, hotels and ferries has been reduced by the amount of the sinking fund contributions, consequent upon the signing of the Financial Agreement. By the cancellation of debentures and securities held in that fund by those concerns, the amounts contributed by them were credited to them, and the amount of their capitalisation reduced accordingly.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That would apply in every instance.

The PREMIER: No: the three I have mentioned specifically are the only ones that have contributed anything to the sinking fund. The hon. member knows there is a different arrangement in connection with some of them. On top of that capitalisation there are overdrafts, which represent a total of £542,030. Those overdrafts, of course, represent working expenses. These are distributed as follows: State Sawmills, £163,208; Shipping Service, £132,958; Implement and Engineering Works, £40,520; Wyndham Meat Works, £205,114; Ferries, £228. In the case of the sawmills, the amount of the overdraft would probably be covered by the stocks held, and, in fact, the value of those stocks will possibly more than provide for the overdraft. So with the implement works, the overdraft will probably be covered to some extent by the machinery already manufactured. Again, it takes about £300,000 to operate the Wyndham Meat Works for a season, and we shall probably get £205,000 of that amount as a result of the sale of the balance of the meat from the works this year. At any rate, it takes £300,000 in cash to operate the works for a season, and if they are to operate next year, it will have to be done with the aid of outside financing, because our trust funds, from which we have financed operations in the past, have been exhausted and we cannot find the necessary amount from our ordinary resources for

next year's operations. I shall endeavour to make special arrangements for an overdraft elsewhere so as to carry on operations, because if the works remain idle we shall lose the interest, whereas if they operate we shall be able to do a considerable amount of good and lose no more. I offer that explanation because I want hon. members to realise that the sawmills and meat works, and, to some extent, the engineering and implement works, will more or less provide for the overdrafts from the disposal of the stocks on hand. The sawmills have made a profit of £273,774 during their existence, whereas the shipping service made a loss of £550,884. The implement works have shown a loss of £182,641, and the Wyndham Meat Works, a loss of £949,997. The brickworks have shown a profit of £26,332, the Boya quarry a profit of £5,280, the hotels a profit of £113,571, and the ferries a profit of £14,444. Thus, there has been a profit from the profit-earning concerns of £433,403 and a loss on the various losing concerns, including nearly £1,000,000 on account of the Wyndham Meat Works, of £1,683,522. It will be seen that the concerns, as a whole, represent a loss of £1,250,000, of which £950,000 has been incurred in connection with the Wyndham Meat Works. That represents a terrific loss that has to be borne by the people generally. For the last 12 months the brickworks showed a loss of £412, although a profit has been disclosed since their inception; the quarries, a profit of £881; the meat works, a loss of £80,615; the sawmills, a profit of £5,240; the ferries, a profit of £475; the hotels, a profit of £8,619; the implement works, a loss of £12,692; and the shipping service, a loss of £46,819. During that 12 months the total profits derived from the profit-making concerns amounted to £15,215, and the losses on the losing ventures, to £140,538, which leaves a net loss for the year of £125,000. I doubt if through these concerns we have found employment for more men than would have been employed if we had never started the concerns. Certainly had we never started them we might have put the money they have cost us into other avenues which would have provided a great deal of work. I am bound to confess that the State Shipping Service, like our railways, is providing transport for outlying parts of the State, as for instance, the North-West.

Member: We don't want to get rid of them.

The PREMIER: The State Shipping Service is providing transport to the North-West and North, and to the coast of Java and to Singapore. It is fairly certain that some day a considerable trade will be built up between Western Australia and Java and Singapore. The pity is that we cannot at present get continuous supplies. Some of our merchants are endeavouring to increase the export trade in local produce and stock, but unfortunately the service we can run is altogether inadequate, and the result is we are not getting the trade that we should get. Still our ships have served to develop that trade, which some day will be very much greater than it is at present.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You can increase that trade.

The PREMIER: I am not a shipping authority, but it looks as if the trade could be increased.

Mr. Angelo: We have lost the back trade in oil.

The PREMIER: Still, our ships are doing something. There are several features operating against us; one is the lack of continuity of supplies, and another is the getting of sufficient freight to fill the ships. However, they are providing for the North-West a transport service which is essential if we are to keep that territory. The Wyndham Meat Works have been costing altogether too much and will continue to show a considerable loss until beef becomes much more valuable in the world's market. A very slight rise in the price of that commodity would make a wonderful difference between a great loss and a moderate loss on those works. We hope the day will come when the price of beef will rise, but in the meantime we must lose on those works, whether we operate them or not. Coming to the State Implement Works, the fact must be realised that there is a tremendous importation of agricultural machinery into Western Australia. It is going on all the time. For the last 20 years probably the greater part of the annual increase in the area of land under cultivation in the Commonwealth has taken place in Western Australia, and so the market here for agricultural machinery has been a particularly good one. To-day one-fourth of the area under wheat in Australia is in this State. The necessary implements should be made here now, but ap-

parently they cannot be made and never will be made under governmental control. If these works were sold we could stipulate that the men now employed, and even men to a greater number, should continue to be employed at the works. When we come to the manufacture of agricultural machinery there are many things to be considered. A proper implement factory is very different in design from the factory we have there. The trade in Western Australia certainly justifies considerable improvement. One attempt has been made to establish a branch of the Sunshine factory here, and I hope that sooner or later it will be established here. However, our State Implement Works are only a losing proposition, and the trade is not as good as it was. As I have said, the State Brickworks have returned a profit and continue to show a profit. I do not know that the bricks are turned out any more cheaply than they were when the works were first established. I doubt if they are. One cannot argue that Government controlled concerns can do things as well as or as cheaply as works controlled by private people. It may be that the State Brickworks have held the prices steady, but I doubt if it is so. Bricks cost more now than ever before. I do not know what the price was when the works were established, or how it compares with the existing price. For the moment work is very slack there, because very little loan money is being expended on buildings.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Material is required for the new Commonwealth bank.

The PREMIER: Yes, that is so, but there have been difficulties in the way. The State hotels have shown some profit. Of course each hotel is the only hotel in a country town.

Mr. McCallum: What do you propose to do with them?

The PREMIER: Sell them.

Mr. Marshall: Can you not sell them now, with the consent of Parliament?

The PREMIER: Yes, but not without the approval of Parliament. One could imagine what would happen if somebody came along with an offer for one of the State hotels. We would start negotiations probably in January, and those negotiations would continue over a little time. Six months later, when Parliament sat, a Bill would have to be put through after much discussion during which probably the whole of the negotiations

would have to be revealed. I do think Parliament might well trust the Government to do what is right and best for the State.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is just the one thing we cannot trust any Government with. The world is full of illustrations of that.

The PREMIER: The hon. member who has just interjected was largely responsible for starting these trading concerns.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And I am proud of it.

The PREMIER: The hon. member was largely responsible for the initiation of these various enterprises, which of course have proved very costly to the State. If he can show that the continuation of these trading concerns is of advantage to any section of the community, I have yet to learn of it. None of these concerns can be economically managed under Government control. All the workmen engaged are engaged under Arbitration Court awards. Timber can be shipped and is being shipped from the State, but the trade is not flourishing and it must depend on the overseas orders. I have no belief at all in State trading. I do not think Ministers are equipped for the work of controlling State trading. I doubt if any Minister knows enough about it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You can say exactly the same about the railways.

The PREMIER: You can, but they are very different from competitive trading. The railways are a monopoly.

Mr. McCallum: Each of these things has a manager.

The PREMIER: Of course, but Ministers are directing them.

Mr. McCallum: The Minister has not much say in the management.

The PREMIER: But he has to see that the manager is right and that not very much is lost. From our own funds we cannot operate these concerns next year. We will have to get a special advance for that. And certainly we cannot continue to make losses. We shall probably lose for all time the £125,000 lost last year, because interest will have to be paid on the money that has been lost.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are not paying interest on the profits taken into Consolidated Revenue.

The PREMIER: I told the hon. gentleman the profits that had been made.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You were talking about interest on the losses, but you say nothing about the profits.

The PREMIER: The losses are the net losses, over 1½ millions. The State Saw-mills have made a considerable profit.

Mr. McCallum: They have returned all their capital.

The PREMIER: Not all of it, but a considerable portion of it. However, that is the position. The question of losses is a serious one, particularly in the times we are passing through, when we are pressed for money, and with the Financial Agreement as it is, which means amalgamation not only in the control of loan finance, but also in respect of revenue finance to an extent, as interest must be paid. We are not in the position we occupied when we were free. We cannot go on making losses on trading concerns.

Mr. Marshall: It will be a sorry day when we get rid of them.

The PREMIER: The hon. member may think it will be a sorry day when we get rid of them, but I think it would be a happy day for the State if we could get out of them at cost. Certainly they are of no advantage to the State to-day. They are losing and must continue to lose £125,000 a year. I repeat that they are not paying any of the people employed any more than would be paid by a private employer, while work is less certain with some of our concerns than it would be if private employers were running them. As an instance, I mention the Implement Works. Some people argue that private enterprise will not set up works in competition with the State. I do not know why it should be so, because they ought not to fear competition. Still, that is the position. There should be no display of feeling in discussing the Bill. I am totally opposed to State trading. I cannot see that any single individual in the community can benefit by State trading, but if members opposite hold different views they must still approach the question from the financial standpoint. Can we continue to lose money on trading concerns? If I sat with members opposite, I would ask myself that question. I would also ask, what good are we doing by continuing the trading concerns? I should certainly come to a decision looking squarely at all the facts.

Mr. Marshall: As Treasurer of the State you go on losing and still continue.

The PREMIER: Just imagine what the position would be if the hon. member were Treasurer!

Mr. Marshall: You must confess I could not do any worse.

The PREMIER: We are not discussing the hon. member's position and my position at present. We are discussing the advisableness or otherwise of disposing of State trading concerns. I should be very pleased if we could get rid of the whole of them. Of course, we could not sacrifice them.

Mr. Sleeman: It all depends on what you call sacrifice.

Mr. Kenneally: You will sacrifice them if you get a chance.

The PREMIER: We should have to provide for the protection of the workers, and there should be a stipulation that the works would be continued and, if possible, increased.

Mr. McCallum: Do you seriously say you will stipulate that they have to be continued?

The PREMIER: Yes, I should stipulate that works must be set up in Western Australia. I should most certainly stipulate that.

Mr. McCallum: What would you do if they had to close down?

The PREMIER: The hon. member probably knows more about them than I do, because he controlled them for a long time. We should have to arrange that parts of machines already sold would still be supplied. I do not know whether we could get an offer for the concerns, but I hope offers will be forthcoming. We should stipulate that work must be provided for as many men as are employed now. I need not say much more about the proposal.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do you wish to put the Bill through to-night?

The PREMIER: No, I never seek to hurry.

Mr. Marshall: You will have a sleepless night if you attempt it.

The PREMIER: I want members to treat the proposal seriously.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We shall deal with it on its merits.

The PREMIER: I am perfectly certain the hon. member is incapable of dealing with it on its merits. He started the concerns, and he does not care whether we are making losses on them, or whether men continue

to work there or do not continue. Right or wrong he says they should be retained. The hon. member started them without the slightest authority. He did not get a vote from Parliament. He started them with funds from the Treasurer's advance, spent a tremendous amount of money, set them going during the recess, and now he comes here and asks members to believe that though the Government of that time started the concerns without consulting Parliament, the present Government should not be able to dispose of them without consulting Parliament. The hon. member is thoroughly wrong and inconsistent in that attitude.

Mr. Marshall: You will do with them as Bruce did with the woollen mills.

The PREMIER: I ask the member for Guildford-Midland to consider whether it is not possible he was wrong in starting the trading concerns.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I have no regrets in that regard.

The PREMIER: The hon. member ought to have serious regrets that he ever touched trading concerns, because they have done a tremendous amount of harm and not a scrap of good. I hope the House will agree to the amendment to give the Government power to sell them.

Mr. Sleeman: To give them away.

Mr. Marshall: Just part with them, as Bruce did with the woollen mills.

The PREMIER: Not give them away. No one suggested that the member who started them paid too much for this kind or that kind of gear. The hon. member did not submit to Parliament a request to be permitted to buy £150,000 or £200,000 worth of machinery. Not he! For him there was to be no control. He was to be an autocrat, doing as he pleased in setting up these concerns. Yet when it comes to selling them, he insists that Parliament should be consulted. Imagine what would happen if we had to consult Parliament about the sale of any one of them!

Mr. Sleeman: Too much light would be thrown on the transaction.

Mr. Kenneally: Just imagine what might happen if you got authority to part with them without consulting Parliament.

Mr. Marshall: As Bruce did the woollen mills.

The PREMIER: I do not know how Mr. Bruce parted with the woollen mills. Some of the returned soldier members may know

about it. I believe the woollen mills were sold to soldiers.

Mr. Sleeman: Sold! Given away.

Mr. McCallum: They were old soldiers who bought them.

The PREMIER: Western Australia got no present when it bought the trading concerns. It was no credit to the State that the member for Guildford-Midland should have started them. Quite the reverse. I do not know what the woollen mills cost. They were started in war time, presumably to manufacture cloth for soldiers' uniforms, and probably cost much more than our trading concerns. Ours, however, small as they are, represent a capital outlay of £2,300,000, and we have written off £715,000. I say we have written-off that amount, but there is really no such thing as writing it off. What we have done and all we were able to do was to transfer the debt owing to our creditors from the trading concerns to the Treasury. The interest is not now debited to the trading concerns, but that is all that happened. Every penny of capital put into those concerns was borrowed capital. The House must determine whether the continuance of the trading concerns is for the good of the State, and whether we can submit to losing on them year by year. It is for the House to decide whether the Government are to be trusted with the sale of the trading concerns, just as a previous Government were trusted with the creation of the concerns now operating.

Mr. McCallum: Is the Government Printing Office included in these concerns?

The PREMIER: I do not know that the printing office is in competition with other traders. I think it is a monopoly, like the railways and harbours. Trading is all right for the Government when they have a monopoly, but as soon as they come into competition with other traders, they begin to lose money. As far as I know, the printing office is not in competition with outside people to any extent.

Mr. Sleeman: Outside printers would like to see it closed.

The PREMIER: There is no question involving the printing office, railways, tramways, ferries or any of the transport facilities. Some reference was made to ferries but they are now being run as the trams and railways are run. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

BILL—TOTALISATOR DUTY ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [9.27] in moving the second reading said: This is a very simple Bill.

Mr. Panton: Another little one! It will not be worth while going to the races soon. One is taxed to go in, taxed when in, and taxed coming out.

The PREMIER: It is not worth going to races at any time because one always loses. The totalisator is run under license, and to-day we collect a duty of 6 per cent. on the gross takings of every totalisator, 6 per cent on the net takings which remain undistributed after every dividend is declared, and 6 per cent. on the fractions, or unclaimed dividends. It is proposed to increase the tax to 7½ per cent. The Bill also authorises a deduction of 13½ per cent. instead of 12½ per cent. from the gross takings for totalisator commission.

Mr. Marshall: I must have a look at the Act.

The PREMIER: It is easy to understand. We are merely increasing the percentages.

Mr. Panton: What are you going to do with all the money you will get from increased taxation?

The PREMIER: Assist some of the charities in which the hon. member is interested. Last year the Treasury derived a benefit of £61,000 from totalisator duty, and it is expected that the increased percentage will produce another £10,000. I dare say the member for Hannans will tell me there has been a falling-off in attendances at race courses, so I suppose the amount invested will gradually becomes less. The effect of the Bill will be that investors will get a little less than they are getting now. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. McCallum, debate adjourned.

BILL—BEES.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council, giving reasons for not agreeing to the amendment made by the Assembly, now considered.

In Committee.

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

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This House inserted a new clause as follows:—

The Governor may appoint officers necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.

The Council disagreed to the amendment and said it was unnecessary because the Government had given an assurance that one officer would be sufficient for a number of years. As there is no necessity for this clause to be included in the Bill, I am prepared to agree to its excision. If the industry should expand at a later date, so as to necessitate the appointment of additional officers, a provision of this nature can be inserted in an amending Bill. I move—

That the Assembly's amendment be not insisted upon.

Mr. McCALLUM: I wish to raise an objection against the slipshod manner in which Bills are brought down. I have spoken two or three times this session upon the subject. When this side of the House has pointed out that certain things have not been as they should be, the statements have been denied by Ministers, but in another place the representative of the Government has brought down a long list of amendments. We are told that Clause 4 of this Bill is unnecessary.

The Minister for Agriculture: There is no immediate necessity for it.

Mr. McCALLUM: It provides for the administration of the Act. Money is on the Estimates for the purpose, but the Minister now says no appointment need be made. Bills are brought down without proper consideration, and this Chamber is stultified. Ministers take no notice of points that are presented to them here, but their mistakes are rectified in another place. They are afterwards admitted to be mistakes.

The Premier: There is some merit in the admission.

Mr. McCALLUM: These mistakes should be rectified before the Bills are presented to us. The insignificance of this Chamber and the importance of another are continually being forced upon us. I protest against the long list of amendments that comes from another place for us to pass. We know that two pages of the business sheet were occupied by Council's amendments on the Traffic Bill. This shows that the measure was ill digested, ill considered, and crudely drafted.

The Minister for Lands: The previous Government were not free from those things.

Mr. McCALLUM: We did not indulge in them in that way. We agreed in this Chamber that the clause was an essential part of the Bill, and now the Minister denies that it is necessary.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is not essential now.

Mr. SAMPSON: I doubt whether the Minister is acting wisely in not pressing for the retention of the clause. Bee conferences have pointed out there is need for additional inspectors or apiculturists at certain seasons of the year. If the Minister meets another place we shall be putting off the day when full administration can be given to this ever-developing industry. I hope he will not give way. I am sure the department will not appoint officers unless it is necessary to do so. We should insist upon the clause, which is an essential part of the Bill.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I presume when the clause was inserted the Minister had a definite reason for putting it in. The Bill is designed to cope with diseases in bees, and the clause was provided so that in the event of an outbreak officers could be appointed to deal with it. Another place assume that if the Government are given this power they will establish some big department, whereas there is no such need or intention. The power to deal with the situation in case of emergency has been cut out by the Council, and the Minister agrees with their action. We should insist that the Bill shall not be spoiled in this way. The Government are responsible for the economic administration of departments, and not the Legislative Council. Apparently another place desires to insist upon economies by delivering this snub to the Government. If

we want the Bill at all, let us have in it the necessary machinery to cope with difficult situations.

The Premier: Did you draft this Bill?

Mr. MILLINGTON: No, but it has been asked for by beekeepers often enough. Why has the Minister shown a disposition to fall in with the wishes of another place when he knows that the clause is a necessary part of the Bill? There is no need to give in to the Legislative Council at the first sign of opposition, and let another place administer the Agricultural Department.

Mr. SAMPSON: I make a special appeal to the Minister, as the matter affects my electorate very much. There are great possibilities of honey production in the Swan electorate, and at certain times officers are needed so that disease may be controlled. I know the Government Apiarist to be an excellent and hard-working official, but every conference of beekeepers held in this State has stressed the fact that at certain periods one officer cannot do the work. The message from another place involves a charge of incapacity against the Agricultural Department. By approving of the Council's amendment we shall, in effect, say that the viewpoint of another place is right and that there is no need for the appointment of an additional officer. For any member of Parliament to set himself up as a bee-keeping authority against the Agricultural Department is a piece of unfairness, to say the least.

The Premier: Only one officer is wanted; is that not so?

Mr. SAMPSON: There are times when one officer can do the work easily, but for about three months of the year an additional officer is essential if disease is to be looked after and the area is to be properly cared for and controlled.

Mr. Millington: It might be necessary to set up quarantine conditions.

Mr. SAMPSON: The worst disease here is foul brood. The Minister knows, and every beekeeper knows, that the disease requires a great deal of care. The beekeepers are highly pleased with the work that has been done in respect of this measure, and I hope the Committee will not approve of the interference of another place in a valuable piece of legislation. I am prepared to stand by the Minister if he is prepared to stand up to another place. The industry

warrants serious consideration. The cost involved is small, and the whole efficiency of the measure will be affected if the Council's amendment is agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am at a loss to understand the attitude of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and some other members denying to one section of Parliament the right to make an amendment in a Bill. The Legislative Council has as much right to amend this measure as the Legislative Assembly has. Notwithstanding the remarks of the member for Mt. Hawthorn and the member for Swan, agreeing to the Council's amendment will not in any way affect the value of the measure.

Mr. Sampson: Can one man do the work?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: At present there is an apiarist, whose salary is provided for on the Estimates. For the time being he is quite capable of doing all the work likely to be involved in the administration of the measure. The Beekeepers' Association have requested me to appoint an assistant, and I have definitely refused, believing the apiarist to be quite capable of carrying out the duties attached to the position. If an epidemic renders the appointment of other officers necessary, the position will be covered by the definition of "officer," which provides that the term shall also include any person acting with the authority in writing of the Director of Agriculture. That should set at rest the mind of the member for Swan. In the circumstances the Committee are amply warranted in agreeing to the Council's amendment.

Mr. KENNEALLY: In my opinion the Minister's reply is woefully weak. The information he now gives the Committee was in his possession at the time he agreed to the new clause. Why does he now ask members to believe that the clause is unnecessary? He says that the definition of "officer" protects the position, as in the event of an epidemic temporary officers could be appointed. But if he agrees to the amendment, he will not have the right to appoint temporary officers.

The Minister for Agriculture: I never at any time said the new clause was essential.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Minister cannot have it both ways. He must be impeached on one ground or the other. This whole bee business is a somewhat sorry business, and does not reflect much credit on the Minis-

ter's attitude. This Chamber should reserve to itself the right to administer the measure independently of any action by another branch of the Legislature.

The Premier: That is another matter. That is why you are arguing against the amendment of another place. You do not like another place.

Mr. KENNEALLY: My views on that aspect, I think, are well known. I accepted the Minister's word that a certain clause was essential.

The Minister for Agriculture: I never said that.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Minister had the support of this Chamber for the new clause. I presume he knew what he was asking for.

The Premier: Is this the first time a Bill has been amended by another place?

Mr. KENNEALLY: No; but I ask the Minister to stand up and say that when legislation is necessary the Government shall have the right to administer it. No Government should be prepared to give in to another part of the Legislature, to go down on their bended knees to another place. I trust the Committee will insist upon the new clause.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If the Minister agrees to the amendment of another place, he may as well drop the Bill. What is the use of passing a measure if there is not authority to administer it? Bee-keeping has been fostered by the Government through one officer for a considerable time, but now it is proposed in the interests of the industry that certain additional activities shall be undertaken for the purpose of rendering still greater service. For that purpose the Bill was introduced. Now the Government say they do not want any officers to administer the legislation. Surely that is making a farce of Parliament. If they do not want officers to administer the measure, they do not want the Bill. The Minister should insist upon the amendment. If not, he should drop the Bill.

The PREMIER: The Bill will be administered. Last year the Labour Government passed a measure that has never been administered and, in fact, it is as dead as Julius Caesar. Many of the Acts on the statute-book are never administered. There are enough officers in the Agricultural Department already to interest themselves in connection with matters affecting bees. They

are travelling round the State at the country's expense in motor cars, many of them overlapping each other's activities. Their services will be used in connection with the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is not administration; that is waste!

The PREMIER: It is ridiculous to say the measure cannot be administered. Opposition members seem to suggest that we require an army of officers to look after the queen bee. I can assure them the honey will still continue to be made by the bees, without the necessity for a big staff of officials. Members opposite talk as though this was the only Bill that had ever been amended by the Legislative Council.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The part I am interested in, and which makes me fail to understand the lamentable weakness of the Premier and the Minister for Agriculture, arises from the alleged reason advanced by the Legislative Council, who declare that the amendment is unnecessary because the Government say one officer will be sufficient for a number of years. The Minister for Agriculture seriously introduced the legislation in this House, but evidently an assurance has been given to the Legislative Council that the amendment is not necessary. Are we to be governed by assurances?

The Minister for Agriculture: The Minister in another place gave that assurance.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That makes it worse.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Here we have a Bill, and side by side with it a sequence of assurances given by Ministers.

Mr. McCallum: Where was that particular assurance given; here or in another place?

Mr. MILLINGTON: I think it was in the street. Certainly it was given on behalf of the Government. I am not satisfied with the explanation of the Minister for Agriculture. He makes excuses for the Legislative Council and sets up certain reasons why the Council were justified in rejecting the clause he inserted. His anxiety should be to defend his own action in inserting the clause. The member for Swan, who is also a vice-president of the Beekeepers' Association, had better get an assurance that the Bill, if passed, will not become a dead letter. In all seriousness I say that when the Legislative Council disagrees with a clause inserted by

the Minister for Agriculture, the Council should at least submit a satisfactory reason for that disagreement.

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

| | | | | |
|------|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | 21 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | 15 |

Majority for .. 6

AYES.

| | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Angelo | Mr. McLarty |
| Mr. Barzard | Sir James Mitchell |
| Mr. Brown | Mr. Patrick |
| Mr. Davy | Mr. Plesse |
| Mr. Doney | Mr. Richardson |
| Mr. Ferguson | Mr. Scaddan |
| Mr. Keenan | Mr. J. H. Smith |
| Mr. Latham | Mr. J. M. Smith |
| Mr. Lindsay | Mr. Thorn |
| Mr. H. W. Mann | Mr. North |
| Mr. J. I. Mann | |

(Teller.)

NOES.

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Mr. Corboy | Mr. Munle |
| Mr. Hegney | Mr. Sampson |
| Mr. Johnson | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Kenneally | Mr. Wansbrough |
| Mr. Lutey | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Marshall | Mr. Withers |
| Mr. McCallum | Mr. Wilson |
| Mr. Millington | |

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

| AYES. | NOES. |
|--------------|----------------|
| Mr. Parker | Mr. Cunningham |
| Mr. Wells | Mr. Collier |
| Mr. Teesdale | Miss Holman |

Question thus passed; the Assembly's amendment not insisted upon.

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

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. P. D. Ferguson—Irwin-Moore) [10.21] in moving the second reading said: I assure members that no very drastic amendments are proposed to the existing Act, but only those that experience of the working of the Act has taught us are absolutely necessary. The vermin branch of the Department of Agriculture have been engaged in an active campaign of assistance to the local vermin boards and farmers and pastoralists all over the State in attempts to secure the extermination of the

many pests with which they have to contend, pests that are causing very serious devastation to the flocks and herds of the State, which means great loss to the individual farmer and pastoralist and considerable economic loss to the State. The first proposal in the Bill relates to the definition of a holding in Section 4 of the Act. When the Act was amended previously to provide for the creation of a central board for the payment of bonuses on wild dogs, foxes, and eagles, it was agreed to exempt leases under the Mining Act from the scope of the Vermin Act. By that exemption mining leases enjoy the consideration that was extended to areas of less than 160 acres and to townsite and suburban areas. The result of that has been that considerable areas of land held for farming purposes but taken up under the Mining Act in districts such as Ravensthorpe have been exempted from the rates levied by the local vermin board. That concession was never intended to apply to properties used for farming purposes, even though taken up under the Mining Act. The exemption of holdings under the Mining Act of 1904 was intended to relieve only genuine mining leases from the vermin rate collected by the Taxation Department and under the central fund for the destruction of vermin. They were already free from the tax levied by the local vermin boards. However, the amendment to the Act went further than was really intended by the Minister who introduced the Bill, and relieved agricultural holdings under the Mining Act. There was no justification at all for that. If the amendment proposed in the Bill be agreed to, mining leases will still be exempt both from the tax collected by the central board and also from the rate levied by the local board, but other properties that are used for purely farming purposes will be called upon to pay. Section 45 of the Act also needs amending. This section permits the adoption of road districts as vermin districts. Since that provision was made, in various instances the names of road districts have been altered, and the Department of Agriculture have had to go through a long rigmarole to get the name of the vermin board altered to coincide with that of the road district. If the amendment be agreed to the name of the vermin board will be automatically altered to that of the road district. The manner of making the rate

is set out in Section 60 of the Act, and Clause 5 of the Bill seeks to amend that section by adding the words "and be due and payable" at the end of Subsection 1. There is a proviso to the same section that no proceedings may be taken by any local board for the recovery of a rate which has become due and payable until the 30th September in the year in which the rate was made. These alterations will bring the law into line with the Roads Districts Act, permit of uniformity of rating and simplify bookkeeping. A further alteration with the same object in view is contained in Clause 6. This refers to Section 63 of the Act, under which the local board is compelled to charge interest on rates that are 12 months in arrears. It is felt that local vermin boards, who are the elect of the ratepayers in the particular districts in which they function, should have discretionary power to determine whether interest should be charged on overdue rates or not. It should not be compulsory to charge interest as is provided under the existing Act. Especially in these times of stress, when the ratepayers of local governing bodies experience great difficulty in making both ends meet should that discretion be allowed to their elected representatives. It is proposed to make several amendments to Section 100 (a) of the Act, which deals with the levying of the special rate collected by the central board for the destruction of vermin. One clause provides in the case of local vermin boards for the exemption of leases under the Mining Act from payment of rates to the central fund for a period of two years from the commencement of the lease. Another proposal is to amend another subsection, as amended by the Vermin Act Amendment Act of 1926, to provide for the payment of expenses incurred by the central board. In the past, although certain expenses have been paid by the board, the legality of the expenditure has been questioned, and it is desired that this should now be put on a satisfactory basis by giving definite power in the Act for the board to incur certain expenditure in addition to the payment of bonuses for the destruction of dogs, foxes and eagles. The board, rightly and properly in my opinion, insist on all scalps being forwarded to Perth for destruction, and certain expense has been incurred for the railage of scalps amounting to something like £100, and the board are

not sure whether they are entitled to meet that expenditure. There has also been an expenditure of a few pounds for expenses of members of the board attending meetings in Perth, which are held quarterly, and it is considered fair and equitable that those expenses should be met out of the fund. To show how necessary it is that scalps should be forwarded to the central board for destruction in order to prevent fraud, I should like to point out that in South Australia for many years scalps could be destroyed in various parts of the State. Between 1921 and 1928 the authorities there paid for no fewer than 191,270 scalps, or an average of 23,900 per annum. At the beginning of 1929 they made inquiries to find out the procedure adopted in this State. They were then informed that we insisted on the scalps being sent to Perth for destruction. They adopted our method, and in 1929 and 1930 the average number of scalps they paid for dropped to 12,558. This showed that the Government of that State were being bled for bonuses through having the scalps destroyed in the country districts.

Mr. McCallum: The Government were being scalped.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Approval is sought in the Bill for a new line of action in regard to the extermination of pests. Authority is sought for the employment and appointment of trappers to operate in certain districts. There are cases where dogs or half-breeds are in small number and more or less isolated, but are doing a considerable amount of harm to stock. The local people are not able to catch them. It is felt that if experienced trappers are appointed and paid out of the fund, they would probably be able to track these dogs to their lairs and trap them.

Mr. Marshall: It takes an experienced trapper to catch a good dog.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member knows how cunning a dog becomes, and that very often the farmer or pastoralist does not care to devote much time to catching it. If experienced professional trappers could be employed to devote all their time to the tracking down of these animals, they would be much more likely to catch them, and would save the growers many pounds represented by destruction in their flocks. There are boards in the South-West which contribute considerable amounts

to the fund, but are not getting the benefits received by other boards in the northern and eastern districts. It is felt that the South-West boards should receive more benefit from the money they contribute to the fund, and that they will get this if the central board are empowered to appoint two or three trappers who will concentrate in those districts where the dogs, whilst not numerous, prove very costly. Another amendment is to alter the name of eagle hawk to that of wedge-tailed eagle. It was never intended that hawks that were not as destructive to sheep or lambs as wedge-tailed eagles should be paid for. We found that, owing to the definition being somewhat vague, boards in distant parts were paying for other than the wedge-tailed eagle, which is the big destructive eagle, and in many cases were paying for hawks which were very little larger than parrots. In that way a very considerable sum of money was being wasted. Scalps have been sent to the central board and the bonus has been refused, because they were not the scalps of wedge-tailed eagles, and disappointment has been caused to boards in outback districts. If the wording of the Act is altered to read "wedge-tailed eagle" this will obviate a good deal of disappointment. It is also proposed that the Commissioner of Taxation may, with the approval of the Minister, write off arrears of rates assessed and due under the Act. At present the Commissioner has not power to do this. He has perforce to leave these rates, which he may know cannot be collected, on his books from year to year. It is considered it would be a wise provision if he were enabled, with the approval of the Minister, to write off the rates he knows cannot be collected. Another amendment is to the Second Schedule of the Act which lays down the description of fence that must be erected. It is proposed to strike out that definition and insert a new one. It is provided that if a holding or group of holdings is wholly enclosed with a vermin-proof fence to the satisfaction of the Chief Inspector, the owner shall not be liable for the payment of the rate. When that provision was made, the fence required by the Chief Inspector, and recommended by the Road Boards Association, was 6 feet, with 2 feet overhang at an angle of 45 degrees. That is known as a verandah fence, and has been regarded as the most suit-

able from the point of view of dingoes and foxes. Owing to the many legal objections that have been raised to this fence, it has been found not to be practicable to have it established all over the State. It is now proposed to put in a new definition making the fence 78 inches above ground instead of 72, and to bring the standard of fence in the schedule up to that of the exempted fence. There is nothing to prevent any farmer or pastoralist putting on a verandah if he chooses. It has been held that, if any accident occurred as a result of the verandah, the owner would be liable. In the circumstances, therefore, it is not fair for the department to insist upon the verandah fence. It is not feasible to insist upon it and it is not proposed to do so. I wish to inform members as to the state of the fund for the destruction of vermin. The maximum rate of tax permissible is 1d. in the pound on pastoral holdings, and ½d. on farm lands. The maximum amount that can be obtained on that rate of tax is £47,000. Against that amount the annual expenditure for the three years for which bonuses have been paid has been: 1927-28, £35,141; 1928-29, £40,151; 1929-30, £51,175. It will thus be seen that the maximum rate provides only sufficient for the annual expenditure. It is admitted there has been a considerable surplus at the Treasury since the fund was first collected. That surplus is due to the fact that the first year's rating overlapped the rating by the local vermin boards for the same purpose, and in consequence no expenditure was incurred from the fund for the first year and a credit balance arose. To adjust the position, the rate of tax last year was reduced to ½d. and ¼d. in the pound respectively, and the amount collected was £23,500. The revised rate of tax resulted in the surplus being reduced by £27,675 and on the 30th June last there was a credit balance of £28,607 at the Treasury. I am inclined to think that owing to the amount of bonuses necessarily paid, there will not be any credit balance at the expiration of the current financial year. Probably there may be a shortage. During the 12 months ended on 30th June last, the following vermin were paid for: wild dogs 14,850, showing a decrease of 2,135 as compared with the previous financial year; foxes 11,039, showing an increase of 7,370 as compared with the previous financial year; eagles 10,859, showing an increase of 5,924. During the

quarter from 1st July to 30th September last, bonuses were paid on 3,126 dogs, an increase of 137 as compared with the corresponding period of the previous financial year; 1,724 foxes, an increase of 737; and 3,705 eagles, an increase of 395.

Mr. Willcock: How will the difference in the interpretation of "hawk" affect those figures?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I should say, considerably; but in view of the fact that the bonus is only 5s. the amount paid will not be very great. As the balance to the credit of the fund is diminishing, it has been considered advisable to review the scale of bonuses. Hitherto the bonus has been 40s. per head on all dingoes and foxes, and 5s. on hawks. I have altered the bonuses for this year to the following figures: grown dingoes 40s., pup dingoes 20s., all foxes 20s., eagles 5s. It is believed that those rates will enable us to finish up the year without much of a debit balance. In view of the fact that foxes are increasing considerably, and moreover increasing in many new districts, but are easier to cope with than dingoes, the reduction of the bonus on foxes to 20s. is felt to be fair and equitable. I trust that the amendments proposed will meet with the approval of hon. members, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Millington, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 20th November, 1930.

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LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. E. H. H. Hall (for Hon. H. Stewart) leave of absence granted to Hon. W. T. Glasheen (South-East) for six consecutive sittings on the ground of ill-health.

PAPERS—PUBLIC SERVANTS, ADDITIONAL EMOLUMENTS.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.57]: Some time ago Mr. Lovelock asked for certain information concerning additional emoluments paid to civil servants. I have much pleasure now in laying the papers on the Table of the House.

BILLS (2)—REPORT.

- 1, Roads Closure.
- 2, Reserves.

Reports of Committee adopted.

BILL—COMPANIES ACT—FURTHER AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: Last session an amendment of the Companies Act was made to prohibit companies from calling themselves co-operative companies unless they complied with certain conditions. Since then two co-operative companies have decided to enter into a mutual partnership, and they desire to call them-