

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 21st October, 1930.

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

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYED, FRESH MILK.

Mr. H. W. MANN asked the Minister for Industry: 1, Will he instruct the officers responsible for distribution of provisions to unemployed married men to arrange for a supply of fresh milk to the families receiving relief in place of the tinned milk supplied through the grocers' list at the present time? 2, Is he aware that many young children and infants are in ill-health through the inability of the parents to get fresh milk? 3, Is he aware that there is a surplus of nearly 2,000 gallons of fresh milk per day available from the dairying industry in the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY replied: 1, The Government have under consideration the calling of tenders for staple food commodities. Meantime, where desired, arrangements will be made for families receiving unemployment relief to obtain orders for fresh instead of tinned milk. 2, No. Orders for fresh milk are given where a milk diet is ordered. 3, I understand this is the peak period of milk supply and that the surplus is sent to butter factories.

QUESTION—SHEARERS' STRIKE.

Police precautions.

Mr. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Police: 1, How many ordinary police are engaged in escorting men associated with work in shearing sheds? 2, How many special constables have been sworn in since

the 1st September, 1930? 3, Do the Government intend to bear the cost of policing the shearing sheds? 4, Is the cost of carrying police to the North-West by aeroplane being borne by the Government? 5, If so, what is the cost to the department for the services of the aeroplane?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE replied: 1, Police are engaged in various centres in connection with the present shearing trouble, as deemed necessary to meet circumstances as they arise. 2, Special constables have been appointed by local magistrates under powers conferred on them by Section 34 of the Police Act. 3, Yes. The Government will provide police protection at shearing sheds where such protection is deemed necessary. 4, Yes. 5, £276.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Entertainments Tax Act Amendment.
 - 2, Entertainments Tax Assessment Act Amendment.
 - 3, University Buildings.
- Introduced by the Premier.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.43] in moving the second reading said: 'This Bill refers to stamp duty payable on sweep tickets, to which matter I referred when generally introducing the taxation Bills. Hon. members are aware that many sweep tickets are issued in this State. It is now proposed that tickets in sweeps drawn within the State shall bear a stamp duty of 1d. for every half-crown or part thereof, and that tickets in sweeps drawn outside the State, such as Tattersall's and the Golden Casket, shall bear a stamp duty of 3d. for each half-crown or part thereof. Tattersall's tickets, I know, are not issued here; what is the position with regard to Golden Casket tickets

I do not know. It is provided, therefore, that a receipt must be given for the money deposited in respect of tickets in sweeps drawn outside the State and the receipt is to be stamped at the same rate as the ticket.

Mr. Marshall: More people send away for tickets than purchase them here.

The PREMIER: I did not know that. In that case they may escape. We must see if we can get hold of them.

Mr. Marshall: I shall send away for my tickets in future.

The PREMIER: I am afraid that the postage will cost more than the stamp duty, and besides there will be delay and risk involved in posting. It is a fair thing that tickets on sweeps drawn within the State should be stamped, and that we should obtain more revenue from tickets in sweeps drawn outside the State. I fear prizes do not often come our way from the East, so that we send away far more money than we receive.

Mr. Marshall: Then there are the church raffles.

The PREMIER: I do not think the churches conduct raffles. At all events, they would be in a good cause, and so ought to be exempt. The churches have often protested against gambling, and I can hardly believe they would sanction it.

Mr. Willcock: Some churches do.

The PREMIER: Then it must be for a good cause, and so those raffles should be exempt. It will be noted that the stamp on a ticket sold within the State must be impressed, whilst on tickets in sweeps held without the State the stamp may be an adhesive one. The estimated revenue from this tax is £5,000 per annum, and for this year £3,500. I will look into the matter of imposing a tax on church raffles. It was not in my mind when I framed the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. P. Collier, debate adjourned.

BILL—BEES.

Received from the Council and read a first time.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.47] in moving the second reading said: This is quite an old friend, one that year after year for many years past we have known quite well. Each year we have passed a measure providing that the duty on transfers shall be 5s. per £25. The original Act provided a duty of 2s. 6d. per £25. For some 16 years we have annually passed a Bill authorising the charging of stamp duty at double the rate provided in the original Act. I think the time has come when we should make this permanent, for it is ridiculous to have it year after year.

Hon. P. Collier: This is for the same rate as that imposed last year?

The PREMIER: Yes. So far as that goes, it is the Bill we have had before us each year.

Hon. P. Collier: But now you are making it permanent.

The PREMIER: I think it ought to be permanent. It is ridiculous to have to bring it down every year; and it means some cost, too.

Hon. P. Collier: We might not want the money after this year.

The PREMIER: I think we shall want it for a long time to come. Another proposal in the Bill relates to the transfer of shares of incorporated companies. Whilst I am unable to reduce the rate per cent., in order to facilitate the transfer of small parcels of shares I am asking the House to agree that the impost should be reduced from 5s. per cent. for £25 worth to 1s. per cent. for every £5. The transfer of a small parcel of shares to-day would mean a duty of 5s., whereas if the Bill passes, we shall make the charge 1s. for every £5. It is not a very big thing.

Mr. Willcock: Quite a lot of capital is registered outside this State because of the tax.

The PREMIER: Yes, and it has been so for many years past.

Mr. Willcock: Swan Brewery shares for instance.

The PREMIER: That is so. At any rate this will bring some measure of relief to holders of small parcels of shares.

Mr. Willcock: It is time the whole thing was looked into.

The PREMIER: Yes, I agree, but it has existed for many years without alteration. I do not suppose it will make much difference now, when there are very few share transactions, but in normal times it may make a good deal of difference. Another provision in the Bill relates to forfeitures to the Agricultural Bank. Members know that the Agricultural Bank can only advance against a first mortgage. Very often there is a second mortgage. In order that the bank, if it wishes to make a further advance, may register a second mortgage, the Bill provides that the discharge of the second mortgage may be registered exempt from stamp duty. Members will see that that is advisable.

Hon. P. Collier: Its discharge by the second mortgage?

The PREMIER: Yes, discharged in order that the bank may register its mortgage. Not only may the second mortgage be discharged, but it may be re-registered without additional stamps. That is very desirable, to meet the convenience of the Agricultural Bank and to meet that provision in the Act which says that the bank's mortgage must be a first one. This can only be done, of course, with the consent of the second mortgagee, but there will be no additional charge for stamps or for registration where the second mortgagee, as a matter of convenience, permits the temporary discharge of his mortgage, and its re-registration. It has been found difficult to meet the situation in the past. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Willcock debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th October.

HON. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [4.55]: This is the annual Bill which imposes a land tax and income tax for the year. I must say I am surprised beyond expression to find that it perpetuates what has been alleged to be the unpardonable sin of the late Government during the last six years.

The Premier: Yes, it was then a very deadly sin.

Hon. P. COLLIER: For many years I was never able to get this Bill through without having to submit to a very strong attack from members of the Opposition. All the woes of the farmers were presented to me, and the burdens that were heaped upon them by the doubling of the land tax and the removal of the exemptions. Everywhere I have travelled through the agricultural districts for years past I have had put to me by members and their organisations from one end of the State to the other the iniquity of doubling the land tax on the farmers and removing the exemption.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I think I have heard the Minister for Works on it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, he was most eloquent. And the former Leader of the Country Party and every member of that party railed at the Government for increasing this tax. And not only that, but it was one of the solemn pledges given to the voters in the agricultural electorates during the recent elections that the first act of the present Government would be to reduce the tax to the old rate. I do not think there was one Nationalist or Country Party candidate in any country electorate that did not make that solemn promise. Now the member for Sussex (Mr. Barnard) puts up his finger to indicate that he did not.

Mr. Marshall: He never did anything.

Hon. P. COLLIER: This is what the member for Sussex said during the elections—

If the Nationalists were returned to power, they would speedily put an end to the present state of affairs. The Government's action in doubling the land tax and, later, practically doubling the valuations, without exemption, was a severe blow to the agricultural community, and should not be permitted to continue

Mr. Barnard: You have made that up. I did not say that, exactly.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I have not made it up; I have spent a little time in searching the election speeches of members. But even there the statement was not correct, because the late Government did not double the valuations. We were responsible for doubling the land tax and removing the exemptions, but not for doubling the valuations. Of course a little latitude like that might be allowed at election time. The hon. member said the existing state of affairs could not

be permitted to continue any longer. I think I have some other members on my list. The member for Beverley (Mr. J. I. Mann) said this—

The next Government should consider ways and means of bringing down taxation to the lowest point possible. The Country Party would move in this matter in the next Parliament.

He was referring, of course, to the land tax, and he would move in the matter in the next Parliament. Then the member for Greenough (Mr. Patrick) said this—

To enable producers to carry on and produce values, taxation must be reduced. There should be a 50 per cent. reduction of the land tax, and a re-introduction of the exemptions, and the provision that farmers should pay either land tax or income tax, whichever was the higher, was necessary.

That was the member for Greenough's solemn pledge to the electors. And, of course, the Premier himself—well I have innumerable quotations from the Premier regarding this tax.

The Premier: I am just getting yours from "Hansard" now. We will exchange.

Hon. P. COLLIER: None of mine on this Bill, at any rate.

The Minister for Lands: It is expected that all your followers will support the Premier.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I want to know what the Country Party intend to do about it. Of course, we shall be told that the position is entirely changed and that the financial condition of the State has altered.

Mr. Doney: Quite right; that is the point.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is a very blunt point, because the pledge given to the people was unconditional. It was not qualified by the statement that members would reduce the tax if the finances of the State permitted. The pledge was given without any qualification or reservation whatever; it was quite an unconditional pledge. In this House for some years past the Premier and his supporters have announced that at the first opportunity the land tax on farmers would be reduced.

Mr. Doney: The first opportunity has not arisen yet.

Hon. P. COLLIER: If ever the farmer was in need of relief from taxation, it is the present time. He was in a position to pay the higher tax in the years when members opposite protested against it. If ever

there was a time when the farmer needed relief from taxation, it is the present. In the years when the tax was increased and when members opposite were protesting so strenuously, the farmers were enjoying good seasons and good prices. Those were the years when wool was bringing 2s. to 2s. 6d. per lb., and when wheat ranged from 4s. 6d. to 5s. 6d. and even 6s. per bushel. Even then, we were told that notwithstanding those high prices the unfortunate farmer was not in a position to meet this increased burden. To-day, however, when he is receiving not a quarter of the price for his wool and only about half the price for his wheat, he is still to pay the tax, and the tax is being imposed by the Government and the party who pledged themselves at the first opportunity to reduce it.

Mr. Doney: You mean he won't pay.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why not?

Mr. Doney: Because he cannot.

Mr. Marshall: Is that the excuse for the Bill?

Hon. P. COLLIER: He will have to pay on his income, but he will have nothing after he has paid his creditors.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Before the election, he was to be protected, after the election he can protect himself.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Members opposite, secure in their seats for the next three years, surely do not intend to abandon the unfortunate farmer during a period of stress like the present. Surely they are not going back on all they said in the past about the need for giving the farmer relief. The farmer needs relief to-day more than ever he did in the years when members opposite complained. I take the liberty to say that the Government gained thousands of votes from the agricultural districts because of their condemnation of the late Government for having increased this tax and because of their own pledge to reduce it at the first opportunity.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They won their seats on it.

The Minister for Lands: This is not the first opportunity.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is the first opportunity. The Bill is before us and now is the day, now is the hour.

The Premier: You made an excellent speech in support of the tax last year.

Mr. Munsie: Of course, and at that time you said the farmer could not pay it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Let me remind the Premier that in my speech I supported the policy I believed in, but he, in supporting the tax now, is opposing the policy he believed in. I said the tax was fair and equitable, but the Premier opposed it because he considered it was not fair and equitable. Notwithstanding that he believes it an unfair tax, he is now attempting to justify it. My attitude was consistent and logical; the Premier's was not.

The Premier: Are you going to support it now?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I intend to divide the House. I consider that the position has entirely changed. The farmer cannot now afford to pay this tax, though when I imposed it, he could afford to pay it, and it was a fair thing. Now I shall vote for a reduction because the farmer at this stage cannot afford to pay the tax. The position has changed entirely in the last four or five months. I should not be doing a fair thing if I did not attempt to assist the farmer.

Mr. Barnard interjected.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Sussex sits back, secure in his seat.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: He got the farmers' votes on the strength of it.

Mr. Barnard: You have developed a wonderful lot of sympathy for the farmers since you went out of office.

Mr. Doney: You do not say that this is the time and the opportunity to reduce the tax?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Why all this humbugging talk about the time? The hon. member seeks to excuse himself that this is not the time, because conditions have changed. In 24 hours everything has changed! It is an excuse to enable members opposite to go back on the pledges they gave the electors. The hon. member did not say anything about an opportune time. Right or wrong, the urgent need of the farmers was for a reduction of this taxation. That was the pledge the hon. member and his friends gave the farmers.

Mr. Doney: Are you quoting me now?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I could quote the hon. member also.

Mr. Doney: Where from?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Last year's "Hansard." Every one of the opinions I have indicated are in "Hansard." The hon.

member will not say I am making an incorrect statement.

Mr. Doney: I would not say that.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member does not deny that he opposed the rate of tax last year.

Mr. Doney: I am recalling my exact words.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The question is that of the increased tax, and the hon. member opposed it last year.

Mr. Doney: But there are changed conditions.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Last year there was a division on the question of the rate of tax.

Mr. McCallum: And the then Opposition beat us on the first division.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; I recall now that last year we were actually beaten. We were caught in Committee, and had to recommit the Bill.

The Attorney General: And you were very annoyed about it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There was strenuous opposition to the recommittal, and we had to fight the battle over again.

Mr. Doney: I was not in the House that night.

Mr. Panton: Otherwise we would not have been defeated!

Hon. P. COLLIER: Surely the member for Williams-Narrogin does not contend that he was opposed to the tax?

Mr. Doney: I am not called upon at the moment to say what my attitude was.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am saying it for the hon. member and he cannot deny it.

Mr. Doney: Will you say I am wrong?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Without doubt, he opposed the tax. I did not bring a quotation from the hon. member's speech, because I thought he would be the last man who would deny his attitude on that occasion.

Mr. Doney: I am not denying it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I was ready for the member for Sussex, because I thought he might deny it, but I did not dream for a moment that the member for Williams-Narrogin would do so.

Mr. Doney: I am not denying it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will procure an excerpt from the hon. member's remarks as reported in the Press and "Hansard," and quote it later on.

Mr. Doney: I am admitting the attitude I adopted.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I thought that the hon. member, by interjecting, was denying it.

Mr. Doney: No, I was endeavouring to show the reason for my attitude.

Mr. SPEAKER: This conversation between the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Williams-Narrogin is entirely out of order.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The member for Williams-Narrogin is seeking refuge in an explanation that the times have altered. I say that this is the time when the farmer cannot afford to pay the tax. Whatever may be the financial position of the State to-day he cannot afford to pay the tax. The farmer cannot afford to pay his tradespeople or anybody else, and if ever there was a time when the reduction of the tax was justified, it is the present, and the reduction ought to be made. Whilst I shall not oppose the income tax and land tax which must be imposed, I think we ought to see where members stand on the question of the rate of tax, and judge how far the conditions have altered to justify a complete change of front regarding the land tax paid by farmers.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Grant of land tax and income tax for the year ending 30th June, 1931:

Mr. McCALLUM: I intend to test the feeling of the Committee on the rate of tax. Every year members opposite attempted to secure a reduction of the tax, and during the election they denounced us from one end of the country to the other and said they certainly would reduce the tax. The Premier, in his policy speech, made a point that he would reduce taxation the moment he was returned to office. Yet we have a long list before us of Bills to impose new taxation. I do not suppose there has ever been a Government in the history of the State who have repudiated every one of

their election pledges in so short a time as the present Government have done.

The Minister for Lands: All Governments have had to do it.

Mr. McCALLUM: Although members opposite denounced us at every opportunity, divided the Committee on the rate of tax and supported the Legislative Council's interference with a money Bill, now, when the opportunity occurs and after the people have given them authority, they swallow all they said in past years and seek to re-enact the law they do so strongly denounced. During the last six years the farmer was prosperous as compared with the present. Now it is quite obvious that he will have little income out of which to pay taxation this year. Land values have fallen considerably. There is no industry in the State which has been so severely affected by the depression as that associated with agriculture. We were told it was unfair, while things were good, to have this taxation, and yet, although we are in the present plight, the Government intend to impose the tax. Members opposite should stand up to their election pledges. The Premier and all those associated with him undertook to reduce taxation. The subject was made a feature of the election by the party which assumed office. The Government are now searching every corner in order to impose increased burdens upon the people. They are after money from every possible source. The right thing for the Premier to do is to carry out his undertakings with the people, and stand up to the pledges he made. He should live up to the trust imposed upon him. I move an amendment—

That in Subclause (1), line 1, the word "twopence" be struck out, and "one penny" inserted in lieu.

The PREMIER: I am surprised at the speech of the member for South Fremantle. Everyone knows the position of the finances to-day. Last year when the matter was considered it was expected there would be a credit balance on the year of £100,000, instead of which there was a deficit of £500,000. Actually, taxation will be reduced this year by £150,000, which represents an enormous amount to add to the deficit of last year.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Is that land tax?

The PREMIER: It will come off dividend duties, and all sorts of taxes. Last year some member opposite said this tax would not hurt the farmer, that it would be borne mostly by the city people.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Proportionately greater than by the farmer. The Commissioner of Taxation gives that in his report.

Hon. P. Collier: The percentages are 40 and 60 respectively.

The PREMIER: If one wanted any justification for the imposition of the tax in its present form, it would be found first in the fact that taxation generally will return £150,000 less this year than last year, and, secondly, that we have to make good the loss on last year's revenue transactions. We are obliged to impose many forms of taxation in order to balance the Budget. When there was to be a credit balance of £100,000, every member sitting opposite said the tax should be imposed in its present form. Now that the year has ended with a considerable deficit, they say the tax should be reduced. If they voted for the tax believing there would be a surplus for the year, they must have felt that the tax was a good thing to impose. Theirs is an illogical attitude. It is unfortunate that we have to tax the people, but we must make ends meet. We can spend only from day to day what comes in from day to day. Loan moneys are cut off, and the position is that we have mighty little money to spend. Members know well how we stand. This year we shall have £380,000 from the Federal Government to spend on roads, against £1,100,000 that we received from the same source last year. In every direction revenue is falling. The advantages to the Treasury of loan expenditure have gone. No matter how we may desire to reduce taxation, it is a time when we cannot do so. I hope members will be reasonable and agree that I would be wrong if I did not bring down this taxation. I would enjoy wiping out the tax altogether if I could. We must balance the ledger this year, and that will be difficult enough without any loss of taxation.

Mr. Sleeman: I thought you promised a reduction in taxation.

The PREMIER: Of course I did.

Mr. Sleeman: Why do you not carry out that promise?

The PREMIER: I will when the opportunity occurs. I have not done so because

the hon. member and those associated with him have made it impossible for me to carry it out. What arrant humbugs members can be, supporting a tax when it was not wanted because a tremendous credit balance was expected, and now changing their views when the tax is very much wanted. Their attitude is illogical and wrong. They who were pledged to taxation are perfectly willing to desert their pledges, and take away from us the little bit of money that will come in. It will be very difficult to get in the taxation for which we budgeted this year.

Mr. Willcock: How has this party made it impossible for you to carry out your promise? We have had nothing to do with it.

The PREMIER: The hon. member had a lot to do with it the other day.

Mr. Willcock: In what way?

The PREMIER: I suppose it is not right to make his party responsible for the general depression.

Mr. Willcock: Apparently you are now implying that. You indicated that, but for us, you could reduce taxation.

The PREMIER: I said that members opposite were anxious for us to reduce it.

Mr. Willcock: You said this side of the House was responsible for your not doing so.

The PREMIER: Members opposite are responsible, and everyone else is. I have to make good the shortage of last year.

Mr. Willcock: Are we responsible for that?

The PREMIER: Yes. The Leader of the Opposition knows it is almost impossible for us to meet our daily obligations. I cannot blame the hon. member for the fact that we shall get £150,000 less this year than we did last year.

Mr. Willcock: You should not expect a surplus in bad times.

The PREMIER: Members should help the situation rather than intensify it by their proposed action. I hope they will not persist in this amendment, but will agree that the tax is more necessary to-day than it was last year.

Hon W. D. JOHNSON: If the elections had not been held this year, when the Premier and those associated with him knew exactly the state of the finances and the general outlook for Australia, one could understand his pleading.

The Premier: No one did know.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is different for those Governments that have been in power for two or three years. There has been no change of any note since the Premier and his party gave a definite pledge to reduce taxation. The Leader of the Opposition, however, emphasised the need for rigid economy, for maintaining existing taxation, the difficulty of getting loan funds, and prepared the people for what was to come. He was opposed by those who ridiculed his warnings and said there was no need to maintain existing taxation, and that the Leader of the Opposition had no right to have deficiencies. The Premier himself said there should be no deficiency. It suited his book to magnify whatever deficiency there might be under the administration of the Leader of the Opposition. All this has occurred within the last few months. Members of the Country Party, to a man, emphasised the need for amending the tax at the earliest opportunity. If, during the elections, there was justification for a review of the tax, it is even more clear to-day that the taxation on land is out of all proportion to land values. There has been an enormous decrease in land values within recent times, due to a reduction in returns from agricultural production. Despite that fact, the high valuations still remain. We have at present a land tax grossly out of proportion to land values. When the Leader of the Opposition as Premier last session, supported a similar Bill, he was attacked because, it was asserted, he was getting it two ways—high tax and high valuations. It would be hard to assess the value of agricultural land to-day, but I should say the value is at least 50 per cent. less than it was at election time. Now the present Government persist in imposing what they, when sitting in Opposition last year, regarded as unduly high taxation based on unduly high valuations. If the valuations could be dealt with, the position would be better, because I do not object to a land tax of 2d., which I do not regard as excessive. I take it that the Leader of the Opposition and the Deputy Leader raised this matter more particularly to assist Country Party members, because of what was obviously an oversight on their part. Now that their attention has been drawn to it, I am sure Country Party members will remember their election pledges and act accordingly. I can understand new

members following the lead of old members. The present Minister for Works was always strong on this point. The member for Williams-Narrogin knew the position exactly, although I can quite understand that the member for Beverley was not au fait with it. The Leader of the Opposition has reminded members of promises made during the elections. Those promises were unaccompanied by qualifications and now the member for South Fremantle has told hon. members how the position can be rectified. Country Party members should be grateful. The member for Greenough had no hesitation in saying what should be done. His speeches during the election showed that he was a man to reform Parliament, and demonstrate to the farmers what kind of representatives they had had in the past. It will be interesting to see how hon. members will act now that they have the opportunity. I can understand the Premier forgetting promises, because he is an old hand, and knows how to win elections.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I feel keenly on this question, because I was subjected to more attacks and misrepresentation regarding the land tax than on any other subject during the last two general elections. Country Party members were not satisfied with making a special feature of the increased tax and the removal of the exemptions, but I was charged with being responsible for the revaluations. Although I denied responsibility on innumerable occasions in this House, I am glad to say that some of those former members, who persisted in repeating the charge, are not with us now. It was alleged that the Labour Government increased taxation paid by the farmers by 400 per cent., and had increased valuations to the extent, in some instances, of three-fold. That was true, but I was not responsible. The revaluations had been going on for 12 months before that.

The Premier: They are always going on.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The revaluations had commenced 12 months before under an arrangement by which the Commonwealth Government value our lands. That work was in progress when I came in, yet I was charged with being entirely responsible for having commenced the revaluation. That point was made by the member for Sussex, and it was said by other candidates as well.

Mr. Barnard: On a point of order. I did not make that statement, and I defy the Leader of the Opposition to produce evidence that I did.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What I have quoted was taken word for word from the hon. member's speech as it appeared in the "West Australian."

Mr. Barnard: I have just read it, and what you say is not contained in it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is in it.

Mr. Barnard: It is not.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It is taken from what I read in the "West Australian."

Mr. Panton: And it would not have appeared in the paper if the hon. member had not written it himself.

Hon. P. COLLIER: What does the hon. member suggest? That I wrote it myself?

Mr. Barnard: Yes.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member is joking I hope. Whatever he did say was written for him and he read it; it was not his own production. The hon. member will not charge me with having invented it.

Mr. Barnard: I know it is not there.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I will find it. Anyway, the hon. member is not entitled to say that I concocted it. I have not reached the stage of manufacturing speeches to put into the mouths of members. What I have said appeared in the paper, and of course if the hon. members says he was misreported I will accept his statement. But that is how it read in the newspaper. Up and down the country I was charged with having increased the valuations notwithstanding that I repeatedly denied the accusation in this House and explained the position. But that did not prevent some members from continuing to repeat the statement in the country. I met it everywhere, not only at the recent elections, but at the previous elections.

Mr. Patrick: That statement was not made in my electorate.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I am pleased to know that. I am not accusing any of the new members with having circulated the statement, but most of the old members did repeat it. One could excuse new candidates for making the statement because I suppose they heard their leader saying it and they themselves were not aware of the facts. All they would know, if they were

land holders, would be that the valuations had been increased very considerably during our term of office and they might conclude that we were responsible. But the old members who knew better kept on repeating the statement.

The Premier: The valuations were being carried on all the time.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Not in the country districts. Those who hold land in the country will say that the only re-valuations or alterations made were made during the past six or seven years.

The Minister for Works: Every five years they are made.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There has been only one re-valuation in the country districts during the past five or six years.

Mr. Patrick: It was really the first re-valuation of country lands.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, the old valuation stood for many years.

The Minister for Works: For 20 years.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Undoubtedly those valuations were too low, or at any rate very low. The Minister for Works knows that in his districts the valuations were only about 7s., and they went up to 25s., or 300 per cent.

The Minister for Works: Up to £4.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I know that a deputation from Dalwallinu waited on me to protest against the valuation which I think was £4, and the hard feature was that the local road board had rated on the departmental valuations, so that the land holders were hit a second time. I want to know whether the Premier has been influenced or not but most certainly there should be a re-valuation now. The valuations mentioned by the member for Guildford-Midland are double the actual valuations at the present time.

Mr. Patrick: Would not the Act have to be amended?

Hon. P. COLLIER: I think not; I think it could be arranged with the department. The Commonwealth does our work by arrangement with the State and I think it could be done without an amendment of the Act. It would not be necessary for officers to go around the country valuing the land; they could easily do it by calculating the fall of values that has taken place dur-

ing the past 12 months, and they are known to everyone.

The Attorney General: The trouble is that they are not known.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In the country districts it is pretty safe to say that values have fallen 50 per cent.

The Attorney General: Quite safe.

Hon. P. COLLIER: We can see that by the land that is offered for sale from day to day and for which there are no buyers.

The Minister for Lands: Except forced sales.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And even then there are no buyers except when a property is offered at a sacrifice. Press valuations are altogether excessive. The same thing applies to city land. There has been a considerable fall in values there too. With the present price of wheat and wool, income tax will not worry the man on the land. The Treasurer will not be able to collect any income tax because he cannot get it from the people if they have not income. Even if the Government do collect money in the form of taxation, it will have to go out again in the form of assistance to those engaged in wool and wheat production. I do not wish to let the opportunity pass without reminding my friends of the Country Party generally and the older members in particular, of the position. I have now the extract from the newspaper which shows what the member for Sussex is reported to have said on the 10th March last:—

The Government's action in doubling the land tax and later practically doubling the valuations without exemptions was a severe blow to the agricultural community, and should not be permitted to continue. The time is ripe for a change of Government.

Mr. Barnard: That is as I stated it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The hon. member said that this Government—the Mitchell Government—if they got into power would reduce the land tax.

Mr. Barnard: What I charged the hon. member with having done was the doubling of the land tax and the valuations.

Hon. P. COLLIER: All right. We will say that the hon. member went round the country and was reported to have said what I have read.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The commodity produced by the farmer has a reduced value,

and one would imagine that the Premier and his party would find a reduction of taxation a means of going to the assistance of the farmers. This is all the more to be expected because when the Premier was on this side of the House he insisted upon it so often. On every occasion he stressed the great need there was for a reduction of taxation. He spoke of it also in the country; in fact he rarely spoke anywhere without referring to the great need there was for reduced taxation. Here he is now imposing the same tax that he opposed in this House. As far as the Country Party members are concerned this is their opportunity to fulfil their promise. At every conference they condemned the Collier Government for what they termed the double land tax. The columns of the "Primary Producer" were full of tirades against the Collier Government for increasing the land tax. We were described as enemies of the farmers. Now we have the opportunity for hon. members opposite to show that they are the friends of the farmers. We can appeal to the Premier, the Minister for Lands, and the Minister for Works and to all Country Party members who made so much use at the elections of the need there was to reduce taxation. They were never tired of drawing attention to the iniquity; This is the opportunity for them to fulfil their promise and for that reason, more than for any other, I propose to support the amendment.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It seems to me rather playing the part of the hypocrite for the member for South Fremantle to move an amendment to this clause when we know that it was purely by the efforts of those on this side of the House that the tax was increased to what it is at the present time. Circumstances alter cases and members supporting the present Government are placed in an invidious position that if they vote against the taxation proposal, it may mean the defeat of the Government. Then one has to consider the other side of the question, one's definite promise to the electors. At Northam the present Premier distinctly stated that this would be the first action of the party if returned to power. The ex-member for Katanning, Mr. Thomson expressed himself to the same effect at Katanning, having the present Attorney General with him on the platform at the time. We on this side of the Cham-

ber told the electors that the first thing that would occur in the event of a change of Government would be reduction of land tax. As regards the five-years period there seems to be a good deal of confusion. Some assessments have become six or seven times greater than previously, while the rate of tax has doubled. Still, the Government must get revenue from some quarter. The Government tell us that next year they will fulfil the promises made at the general election. A difficulty I foresee is that they will not be able to collect the land tax. When the assessments were made by the Federal Government and accepted by the State, primary products were at a peak period. The Premier must disillusion himself; the farmers will never be able to pay this tax. However, the action of the member for South Fremantle is hypocritical, seeing that his Government were the responsible people in this respect. I shall vote against the amendment. If next year the promises are not fulfilled, I shall no longer be able to give the Government my support.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I should have liked to support the amendment, but the member for South Fremantle knows the position as well as any member of the Chamber knows it.

Mr. McCallum: I knew it as well as you did when you made the promises.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Since then the position has changed considerably. At that time the members of the present Government had no idea that so small an amount would be received from income tax. The position of the farmers then was all right.

Mr. McCallum: Why not give them some relief now?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the amendment is carried, difficulties will ensue. The Estimates provide for £293,000 on account of child welfare and outdoor relief.

Hon. P. Collier: That is for unemployment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The amount is to come from revenue. If revenue is to be taken away, will the Government be able to carry out what the State demands? As was said last year in similar circumstances, if the amendment is carried city land-owners will be relieved of much taxation.

Mr. McCallum: You know that country values have dropped considerably.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are not interested in valuations just now. We do not fix the valuations; a tribunal does that.

Mr. McCallum: You did not say that during the general election.

Hon. P. Collier: A former Leader of the Country Party said that I was responsible.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I complained of the Taxation Department making the valuations, fixing the tax, and then being the tribunal for appeal.

Mr. McCallum: You said in this Chamber that the previous Government were receiving an increased tax on increased valuations.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The revenue returns show how the receipts have increased. In 1923-24, the last year preceding the Collier Administration, the revenue was £71,449. For 1924-25 the revenue was £113,867. For the year 1928-29 it was £196,301. So the amounts did increase.

Mr. McCallum: No one denies it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The tax was doubled.

Mr. McCallum: Now the valuations have dropped, and not a bid can be obtained for country lands.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the valuations have dropped, the taxes will drop.

Hon. P. Collier: No; because the lands have not been re-assessed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I can appeal to-morrow in respect of my own property.

Hon. P. Collier: No, you cannot.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Undoubtedly I can. The unfortunate aspect is that the man who makes the valuation imposes the tax. The department cannot increase a valuation, but I am not sure that they cannot bring it down. Those who vote for the amendment will be inconsistent. Last year the farmers paid two taxes—income tax and land tax. This year, I regret to say, they will not.

Hon. P. Collier: They will have no income this year.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Under the old Act they were not relieved of both taxes.

Mr. Panton: In the metropolitan area thousands will not pay income tax either.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am surprised and pleased to find that the city landowner has such champions opposite. It was always thrown up to us when in Opposition that we were assisting the city landowner. The Government have never wilfully broken any promise. They will fulfil their promises in this connection as soon as they possibly can. When they made those promises, they had no idea of the position of the finances or of the condition into which the country would fall. At the beginning of June this year we were led to believe that £2,200,000 was available from Loan. When the present Premier made his policy speech at Northam, he had no idea of what was ahead of him. Neither had the present Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. Collier: I knew enough to make me careful.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. gentleman is always careful, and so is the present Premier. This year we have to provide £123,440 more for outdoor relief than last year. If the amendment is carried, some other provision will have to be made for finding that money.

Mr. McCallum: Where is the work for all?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is a mere parrot cry.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. M. F. TROY: During the tea hour I have been reading some of the election speeches, and I want to remind the Premier of some of his own statements at the elections. Among other things, he pointed to the difference there was to be found between promises and performances. On that occasion he was referring to something that Mr. McCallum had said, and he was denouncing the Collier Government generally for their promises. But the Premier in his policy speech to the electors was reported in this way—

The speaker's policy was to reduce the land tax to the rate that obtained in 1921, and to restore the exemptions.

That was his distinct promise, and in the Bill before us we have his performance. In the Bill he is providing the same rate of land tax as was provided by the Collier

Government. The Premier is further reported as follows:—

High taxation is the real cause of Australia's troubles. If returned to office, I will undertake to provide work for everyone, and that will mean comfort and happiness. For the farmer, I have promised to reduce taxation.

The Bill is the fulfilment of the hon. member's promise of a few months ago. During the elections nearly every member now on the Government side said he was opposed to taxation. Even you, Mr. Chairman, promised the electors of Subiaco a reduction in taxation.

Mr. McCallum: He was the most reckless of the lot.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Here are your own words, Mr. Chairman:—

There is no reason for a slump in Western Australia. If the country is to develop and continue, the cost of living must be reduced. The first step must be a reduction in taxation. The Nationalist Party propose to reduce the land tax and the income tax.

Mr. Withers: He was speaking only personally.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Minister for Lands has said that when members on the Government side made all those promises, they did not have a proper regard for the financial difficulties in the way of fulfilment of those promises. But Mr. Glasheen, a Country Party member of another place, during the elections said—

The Country Party goes before the people with no illusions regarding the great economic difficulties of the future. We do not intend to insult the electors by promising the millennium. Whichever party is returned to power will find itself in the grip of world-wide economic conditions.

The Minister for Lands: The position now is even worse than was anticipated then.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The member for Katanning said the policy of the party would be the immediate reduction of the land tax, the restoration of the exemptions, and the provision that the farmer should pay either land tax or income tax, whichever was the greater amount. If we are to take any notice of the promises made by members on the Government side, we should have every expectation that a majority of them would vote for the amendment. I have here also the remarks of the Minister for Works when he opened his election cam-

paign. He, too, condemned the Collier Government for the increase of land tax.

The Minister for Works: Quite right.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Well, what about your vote to-night?

The Minister for Works: I will tell you directly.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Premier during the elections made a great number of promises, some of them as astute as anything I have ever heard. Now, however, he has no regard for any of the promises he made. The least we might expect from members of Parliament at election time is a little honesty. Successful candidates should have a proper regard for the promises made during the elections. Yet members on the Government side have entirely disregarded their electioneering promises. It seems to me the Premier has never had much regard for any of his promises. I can give plenty instances of that. Venturing to prophesy, I will say that before this Parliament expires, in the concluding session, the Premier will come down with a Bill to reduce the land tax.

The Minister for Works: Before that, I hope.

Hon. M. F. TROY: His object in doing that will be to leave his successor short of that much revenue, and to be able to say, "Behold, we reduced the land tax." Those are his methods. The Committee would be justified in refusing him the revenue he seeks in the Bill, and so insisting upon his fulfilling his promise to the electors.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The discussion appears to be, not as to whether this tax is required, but as to what was promised during the elections. I remind members that last year the Budget was based on an estimated surplus of £105,000. There was not in that any indication of the financial calamity that has fallen upon us. The then Premier knew nothing of the coming catastrophe, and if he didn't, how could other members know? Last session the then Premier, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said as follows:—

It might be said that in view of the fall in prices, we ought to bring down taxation. When a fall in prices takes place it affects the revenue of the State in so many directions that this is the very time when it becomes impossible to reduce taxation. It is when prices are high and the State is prosperous, and when money comes into revenue from many sources,

that it is much easier to reduce taxation than at a time when prices are low and the season unfavourable.

That was the then Premier's statement in October of last year. And, judging by the Loan Estimates, last year there was spent £3,600,000 from loan. We finished up the year with a deficit of £518,000. The Loan Bill that we brought down this session amounts to £2,000,000, and revenue has alarmingly decreased. So this is not the time to consider a reduction in taxation. Rather have we to increase taxation in order to balance the Budget. It is true we promised to reduce taxation, and certainly we will endeavour to carry it out, but we cannot do it this session. The promises I made to the electors were made on the information then available. I believed that the then Treasurer knew more about the financial position than I did, and the latest information I had was that furnished by the then Treasurer's Budget. Although this is not election time, a number of the members of the Committee in their speeches to-night have been talking to the electors, instead of dealing with the finances of the State. At a time like this it is absolutely impossible to reduce taxation.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: A pity you did not say that during the election. You might not have been here to-night.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Last session the then Premier refused to reduce taxation, but to-night he is in favour of a reduction. Therefore we are in good company. The Leader of the Opposition last year said he would not reduce taxation. Yet to-night he asks us to do it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: He wants you to stick to what you promised. You beat your opponent by promising to reduce taxation. Do it!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One does make promises at elections. We have always fought against the increased tax, but I agree with the opinion expressed by the Leader of the Opposition that when prices are low and times are bad, taxation cannot be reduced.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a classic.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and I want the Committee to understand it. Those words were uttered in October of last year. The Leader of the Opposition then said that the time to reduce taxation

was when things were prosperous and prices were good. Things are not prosperous and prices are not good at present, and this is not the time to reduce taxation.

Mr. MILLINGTON: What interests land owners is not so much the rate of tax as the inflated values on which the tax is levied. The Minister for Works said it did not matter what promises were made during an election.

The Minister for Works: I did not say that.

Mr. MILLINGTON: After an election all that is necessary is to have regard for the needs of the hour. So long as that is understood, we shall be in a more comfortable position in future, because we shall be able to promise anything so long as an "if" is attached to it.

The Minister for Works: I did not say that.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Members opposite attached no "if" to their promise. They said taxation would be reduced. Whenever the present Leader of the Opposition was introducing a measure to re-impose taxation such as this, the present Premier always insisted that the extra revenue was not required. According to him, all that was needed was proper administration. Now the position is reversed. All of us have some regard for the difficulties confronting the Government. We are told we must shown appreciation of and sympathy for their difficulties.

The Premier: And a little consistency on your part.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I used to be of that opinion, but I had experience as a member of the Legislative Council during the war, when we were endeavouring to recover from a most disastrous drought. The then Government led by the present Minister for Railways, introduced a taxation measure, and this is how the Hon. H. P. Colebatch spoke of it—

He would absolutely oppose the taxation proposal, and would not give the profligate Government one penny-piece more to squander.

The Bill was defeated on the second reading. That is the sort of sympathy shown in those days. Now we are told we must be sympathetic and not level criticism at the Government.

The Premier: Who said so?

Mr. Munsie: Most members on your side who have spoken to-night have said that, yourself included.

The Premier: No.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I had some experience of the land tax question while electioneering in country districts. I visited Narrogin, Wickepin, Kulin, and the intervening towns, where a leaflet had been broadcast, and in each place I was cross-examined as to why the Labour Government had doubled the land values and the land tax. The people in the country knew all about the temporary defeat of the Labour Government on the question of the land tax. I had to explain that the Labour Government had had nothing to do with the assessments, but the people would not believe it.

The Premier: What did you say?

Mr. MILLINGTON: I admitted that we had doubled the land tax, and took full responsibility for it, but we were not responsible for the increased land values.

The Premier: You said I was responsible.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I do not know whether the Premier was responsible, but it was stated by those who broadcast the electioneering propaganda that we were responsible. That influenced many land owners to vote against the then Government.

The Premier: You represent land owners.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I explained that the Labour Government had granted rebates of railway freights to the country which the city people did not get. I thought we had a pretty good case on land taxation, and that if anyone had a grievance, it was the city landowners. Country electors said they could not see any advantage in the railway rebates. It is well to have a stocktaking at this stage. It is mean tactics to use such propaganda as was used on this question. The Government and their supporters have had their lesson now, and in future, when reasonable taxation is sought, doubtless reasonable views will be expressed by the Opposition. One of the greatest calamities that can happen to a country is that land values should be inflated during times of temporary prosperity. Then, when depression comes, we have to face not only the depression, but the disastrous position of falling values. Men who have purchased land at a given price find it assessed at double the value for taxation purposes.

That anomalous position prevails throughout the State, because of the inflation of values during prosperous times. I have the utmost sympathy with the man who has to pay land tax on values that have depreciated. It is a pity the Government are not in a position to keep their promise, because at no time was relief so urgently needed. However, I imagine the Government will be more careful in future, and will hedge their promises with reservations. When party leaders go to the country, they will have to say that they propose to do certain things provided our financial advisers agree. No Government will be in a position to say definitely what they will do or not do, because all Governments are subject to outside control. I do not think the present Government will be so cocksure when they again face the country or will promise to do this, that, and the other if returned to office. They have had their lesson, and so long as they profit by it, I shall be satisfied.

Mr. ANGELO: This seems to be a storm in a teacup. According to figures given by the present Leader of the Opposition last year, very little land will be charged at the rate of 2d. Nearly the whole of our land is improved and therefore comes under the 1d. rate.

Hon. P. Collier: But the improved rate, now 1d., was formerly $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Mr. ANGELO: Let me quote what the hon. member said last year—

Our land tax compares very favourably with similar taxes in the other States. I am taking the improved value because that is where the 1d. rate operates. On the unimproved land the rate is 2d. Practically the whole of our agricultural lands come under the 1d. rate. On page 12 of the Taxation Commissioner's report, it is shown that the amount of country lands that come under the 1d. rate, that is as improved land, represents a value of £16,037,147. Those that come under the 2d. rate, the unimproved lands, represent a value of £706,000.

That means for every acre that will be taxed at the rate of 2d., nearly 20 acres will carry the 1d. rate.

Hon. P. Collier: That has always been so. If the 2d. rate is reduced by half, then the 1d. rate will be reduced by half.

Mr. ANGELO: The member for South Fremantle wishes to reduce the 2d. rate to

1d., and has made it appear that it is a serious impost on the farmers.

Hon. P. Collier: That will be followed by reducing the 1d. rate to $\frac{1}{2}$ d. This one comes first.

Mr. ANGELO: I am aware of that. Those were the arguments used by the then Premier for retaining the 2d. rate last year. Surely if his argument held good then, it holds good now. I could quote another extract from his speech, and one could imagine that the present Premier had made it to show the impossibility of squaring the ledger unless he was granted the whole of the taxation for which he was asking. The opposition must be more in the form of a huge joke than anything else.

Mr. McCALLUM: The member for Gascoyne did not think this was a storm in a teacup last year.

Mr. Angelo: I did not speak upon the matter.

Mr. McCALLUM: The hon. member voted for an amendment similar to the one I have just moved.

Hon. P. Collier: That was a joke.

Mr. Angelo: What the Premier of the day told us about the hard times has proved to be true.

Mr. McCALLUM: How the hon. member can square his attitude to-night with his attitude before I do not know. He and his party made all these promises and now disown them. The Leader of the Opposition told members what the position was, and how serious the financial predicament that lay ahead. He said he had exhausted all available trust funds and that the Treasury was empty. In the face of all that, members opposite during the elections promised a reduction of taxation. Are we to take the statement of the member for Gascoyne as an admission that his party simply deceived the people, or was he serious in what he told them?

Mr. Angelo: We were told there would be a surplus.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Leader of the Opposition told the people that in face of the position he could not favour a decrease in taxation. He declined to make any promise on that score. The Premier of to-day said that was all bunkum, that there was enough money in the Treasury to do all that he

wanted, that he could find work for all, and so forth. The Minister for Lands now says if the amendment is carried there will be no money for the unemployed. The most unemployment cost us in any year was £40,000, and the Government to-day are spending a quarter of a million a year. This is the party that promised to find work for all. They told the people what they could do and now they are spending a quarter of a million a year on the unemployed.

The Premier: We are feeding them, at any rate.

Mr. McCALLUM: The Premier knew well what the position was, but he said he would reduce taxation immediately he assumed office. The position is no worse now than it was when we set it out. The only thing that has altered since is the price of wheat. If that has altered the situation, it has altered it in favour of the amendment I have submitted, which aims at relief being given to the wheat growers. No one can see any signs of an improvement in the price. Six months ago the Minister for Works promised a reduction in taxation. This is how he stands up to what he told the people. The Mitchell Government were to reduce all forms of taxation. No Government in the history of Australia so early after the elections have so completely broken every promise that was made to the people, from the financial issue down to work for all. There are ten times more people out of work to-day than ever. If the Minister for Works and his colleagues had stood up to the promises they made we should not be attacking them to-night. Because they said it was all rubbish, that the forecast of the Leader of the Opposition was incorrect, and because they made rash promises and deceived the people, we are submitting this amendment to test them out to-night. It is not for us to say how the Government propose to get out of their difficulties. It was their policy to get over them. We want them to put their policy into force. They said they could do these things and we want to see them done. We told the people the party now in power could not do them. Let them fulfil the promises they made. I hope the amendment will be carried.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The Minister for Works made a miserable excuse to-night for his attitude on this question.

The Minister for Works: Be reasonable.

Hon. M. F. TROY: He said that when he condemned the late Government and made the promises he did, he did not know what the figures actually were. I will quote what he said—

Despite the large revenue the Collier Government have received, the deficit last year was £275,000, and the figures of the current year show that for the first seven months the deficit was proportionately greater. The economic position demands that every economy shall be practised.

And yet he says he did not know what the position was. He also said that the Government should give a lead to the people, that the legislation of the Labour Government had increased the cost of production, that the Labour Party had increased the land tax and removed all exemptions, thereby increasing the tax from £71,000 to £310,000. He went on to say that the vermin tax had been used as a source of revenue, which was a gross injustice to agriculture. The last-named statement was untrue. It never was used as a source of revenue. The Minister for Works knew all the time what the position was for he told his constituents all about it. He said there had been plenty of money, but that there had since been mal-administration. Look at the spectacle we have before us. These people have come hot from the elections and are repudiating every promise they made. We are entitled to draw the attention of the people to the type of men they sent here and the men they have actually got. If any other member says he did not know what the position was I think I can prove from the file I have here that he did know it.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 6—agreed to.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—PARLIAMENTARY ALLOWANCES AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th October.

HON. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [8.15]: There has been a great cry in recent months, particularly on the part of anonymous writers in the newspapers, for a reduction in Parliamentary allowances. It is claimed there is great need for a reduction in wages and salaries all round, and that we should commence at the top. I do not subscribe to that idea. There has been a good deal of insincerity behind that cry, and many people who seek to reduce salaries and wages do so with the idea of preserving their own incomes, which are drawn from sources other than salaries and wages. Of course, the Bill is to be followed by another that singles out as this does, a certain section of the community for special taxation. I am opposed to that policy, whether it is to be applied to members of Parliament or to civil servants. The principle of singling out a section of the people for special taxation because of the financial difficulties of the State, while leaving untouched a large number of citizens who are in receipt of equal salaries and income but who are employed outside the Government service, seems, to my mind, to be unjustifiable.

The Premier: They are not untouched; they are suffering reductions, too.

Hon. P. COLLIER: They are untouched.

The Premier: No, their incomes have been reduced.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There has been no alteration in the wages or salaries fixed by tribunals.

The Premier: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Arbitration Court, whose awards govern a large proportion of the wages paid to the workers, have not varied their determinations. There has not been any such reduction anywhere yet, either regarding wages or salaries, except it may be that some who work for private firms may have had their salaries reduced. I do not know what that position may be.

The Premier: They have been reduced.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It may be that other persons have had their incomes reduced—incomes that they receive from other

sources—but, unfortunately, a large number of people have lost their incomes altogether because of unemployment. That, however, does not affect the position. The policy of taxing a section of the community who are in receipt of certain allowances is not justifiable.

The Premier: It was done during war-time. The hon. member himself reduced salaries to the extent of 7 or 8 per cent.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Many things were done in war-time that cannot now be justified. If we take the salaries earned by people in receipt of £200, £300 or upwards, and merely because they happen to be employed in the Government service call upon them to pay a special tax, whereas persons employed outside the service are to have no such special taxation levied upon them, then it is wrong.

The Premier: But you applied that principle of taxation once.

Hon. P. COLLIER: When?

The Premier: In 1914.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That was done by a Government dominated by the Premier's Minister for Mines and I warn him against that Minister.

The Premier: Not dominated, led by that hon. member.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That was not the only thing that that particular Government did that was wrong. I admit that I was a member of that Government. I have no doubt that if the Premier switched his mind back, he could mention one or two other things done by that Government, which could not be justified.

Mr. H. W. Mann: The State Hotels, for instance.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes; perhaps that and several other things, too. I do not say that the Labour Government, led by the present Minister for Mines, made no mistakes.

Mr. McCallum: But that Government did not inaugurate the State Hotel system.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No.

Mr. McCallum: Sir Walter James started the first State hotel.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, that was years before, although we may have extended them. The policy of singling out certain sections for special taxation is not fair.

The Premier: But you did it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I did not do it. I fancy that in view of the influence of the Minister for Mines when he was leader of the Government at the time the hon. member refers to, it is possible that the Minister for Mines to-day is responsible for the Premier advancing this proposal.

The Premier: No; I think you are responsible.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I do not think so. It is a popular practice on the part of the public to imagine that members of Parliament enjoy all kinds of privileges. There has been much exaggeration indicated in articles published in the Press regarding members' allowances. It has been stated that not only do members enjoy free railway travelling for themselves, but they also have that privilege for their wives and families as well, so that they can travel over the railway lines every day in the week. That is not correct at all. It was even said in one newspaper that members had the privilege of travelling free, with their wives and families as well, on the State ships. That is entirely wrong.

Mr. Angelo: Members generally have not that privilege.

Hon. P. COLLIER: No; except members representing North-West constituencies, and even then they have to pay for their sustenance while on board, although they do not have to pay any fares.

Mr. Angelo: That is so.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That statement appeared in the newspapers.

The Premier: The newspapers say all sorts of things.

Hon. P. COLLIER: There seems to be an idea abroad that we have unlimited privileges.

Mr. Angelo: Lots of people think we get our meals here for nothing.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Quite a large proportion of the people think that, and think we get our refreshments free, and so the cry has gone forth regarding the privileges enjoyed by members of Parliament. To my mind, the proposal to reduce the Parliamentary allowances by 10 per cent. is particularly unfair, even if we compare the position with the proposed reduction in the salaries of civil servants. Let us consider the position of a civil servant in receipt of a salary of £600 per year. That salary is net to him; his £600 is his own. On the other hand, the allowance of £600 paid to a

member of Parliament means that half of the amount does not come to him at all. He has to travel all over the State if he is to make himself acquainted with the State and its needs, as he ought to do. He has to meet all his expenses out of his allowance, and in many instances he has to maintain two homes; particularly does that apply to those who represent country districts.

Mr. Angelo: Just explain that statement about two homes; it might be misunderstood!

Hon. P. COLLIER: Perhaps the hon. member is like Caesar's wife, and is above suspicion! The member in the position I have alluded to has to maintain himself in the city and travel backwards and forwards between the city and his constituency. Those representing outlying districts may have to spend weeks of the year travelling in that way, and members so situated know what the cost represents to them. All those expenses have to come out of a member's allowance. Despite that fact, the reduction of 10 per cent. is to be on the total amount paid to him of £600, just as though the whole amount were his own, without any expenditure attached to his position. On the other hand, the civil servant who receives £600 a year has no additional expenditure such as I have indicated applies to members of Parliament, and should a civil servant have to proceed away from his home to a country district, he is paid a travelling allowance. There are many other calls upon members of Parliament besides those I have indicated, and if the reduction should be decided upon, I see no reason why the amount should be greater than that proposed in regard to civil servants.

Mr. McCallum: The civil servant's reduction on £600 is 7½ per cent.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes.

The Premier: On £12 a week, I think the reduction is £8 15s. per cent.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I forget the particulars exactly, but they are embodied in the schedule.

The Premier: If that is the only objection, it is rather paltry.

Hon. P. COLLIER: At any rate, I have indicated a discrepancy. Let me cite the position of a member of Parliament who is engaged in farming. I admit that if he were to pay something additional under the heading of income tax, it would be a different proposition. But take the position

of the member who is engaged in farming. It may well be that this year his losses on the farm will exceed his Parliamentary allowance.

Mr. Parker: Why not apply the same argument to speculation in shares?

Hon. P. COLLIER: Yes, and in many other directions. I am taking the position of a member engaged in farming because it is pretty certain that this year he will sustain a loss. Should a member in that position suffer that loss, he would have no income at all this year. He would be on the wrong side of the ledger altogether, and would not have to pay any income tax because he would have no income at all, yet under the Bill he will have to pay the special tax of £60. What is applicable to a member engaged in farming operations may no doubt be applicable to those employed in other occupations as well. I do not think that salaries paid to members of Parliament ought to be reduced; they are not excessive by any means. There are many people who belittle Parliament as an institution and belittle members of Parliament, and hold that they are the first that should be attacked. They describe hon. members as a number of men who receive large salaries and allowances, but do nothing for the money paid to them by the State; they say hon. members enjoy no end of concessions and privileges and therefore should be the first attacked. I do not subscribe to that idea at all. There is no justification for those assertions which are made by people who are not acquainted with the facts. They have no idea whatever of the expense involved in the representation of constituencies in this House. Those expenses are heavy enough where members representing city constituencies are concerned in these days, when there are so many calls made upon them that they ought not to be expected to shoulder. With country members, that position is continuous because the representation of a country constituency with the expense involved in travelling to and fro between the city and the constituency, as well as visits to various centres throughout the constituency two or three times a year, means that the allowance paid is reduced by quite 50 per cent. I do not propose to labour the question. I simply say I cannot support the Bill, and I do not believe in the principle of imposing a special tax on a section of the community only.

MR. MUNSLIE (Hannans) [8.28]: I do not propose to allow the Bill to go through without having something to say on it. I will oppose it chiefly for the reasons advanced by the Leader of the Opposition. I do not believe it is fair that any Government should introduce legislation for the purpose of taxing a certain section of the community only. As the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, a large number of people, through articles or letters appearing in the Press recently, have indulged in vilification of members of Parliament and have sought to belittle Parliament as a whole. I have read many such articles and letters, and when I examined them and got down to bedrock, I usually found that those responsible for the publications were persons who had tried to get into Parliament themselves but, as the public had no confidence in them, did not succeed. We need not take too much notice of the statements published in the newspapers regarding members of Parliament, because a majority of those come from men who have tried to get here and failed.

Mr. H. W. Mann: The reduction is only for one year.

Mr. Corboy: What a futile thing to imagine.

Mr. MUNSLIE: The member for Perth suggests that it is for one year only. The matter that we have been discussing in this House since half-past four until 10 minutes ago was taxation for only one year, but it has been in force for the last 6½ years.

Hon. P. Collier: For 20 years.

Mr. MUNSLIE: Not the double tax. That statute has to be re-enacted every year, and if the Bill we are now discussing becomes law, it, too, will be re-enacted year after year I suppose for another seven years. I have been a long time in this country battling and doing everything I possibly could, inside the House and out of it too, for the purpose of lifting the people up, and I shall be the very last to record a vote that may be used outside for the purpose of putting back those I have tried to lift. If I thought for one moment that the reduction asked for here was to be on the same lines as those proposed in the next Bill to be introduced, where some of the gentlemen in the service receive over £2,000 a year and pay very little more than we are asked to pay on our £600, perhaps I might

not complain; but this Bill is being introduced not because of the money that it is suggested will be saved by its introduction, but so that it can be used outside as a lever for the reduction of wages of the ordinary worker.

The Premier: On a point of order, I ask that that remark be withdrawn. The hon. member has no right to suggest it.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

The Premier: The hon. member said that it might be used as a lever to reduce the wages of men outside. It is not so.

Mr. MUNSIE: I did not make that statement.

The Premier: That is what I heard you say.

Mr. MUNSIE: Then the Premier heard wrongly. What I did say was—and I shall ask you, Mr. Speaker, to say whether I am right or wrong—that this Bill could be used, and would be used, by people outside for that purpose. I repeat the statement, that articles appearing in the Press for the past three or four months have been attacking the worker, and wherever you see such articles in the newspapers, mention is always made of the fact that wages must be reduced and that a start should be made from the top, with the Parliamentarians. That has been the argument right through the whole piece. Therefore I cannot support the Bill, and I will not support it because, if it is carried, it will be used outside—there is not the slightest shadow of doubt about it—for the purpose of reducing the wages of the worker. Therefore I intend to vote against it.

MR. CORBOY (Yilgarn - Coolgárdie) [8.35]: I also intend to oppose the measure. I am somewhat surprised that the Premier has brought in legislation so obviously ill-considered at this. Had the matter been given the thought and the consideration it deserves, we might have had something a little more equitable than the proposal which has been submitted to us. I hope I shall be excused if to some extent I anticipate the debate which will take place later on on the proposal to impose a special tax on members of the Civil Service, because obviously both matters are interlocked. If one compares the proposals of the two Bills it will very quickly be seen that there is an attempt in this

measure to inflict on members of Parliament—whether it is because they happen to be members of Parliament I do not know—what apparently the Premier is not game to put on thousands of civil servants. There is no comparison between the incidence of the special taxation proposed in regard to the two classes. Essentially, my objection is based on an inherent opposition to class taxation of any sort. After all, why single out members of Parliament or the Civil Service any more than a business man or anyone else?

The Premier: Did you vote for an increase in members' allowances?

Mr. CORBOY: Of course I did, and I would vote for another increase to-morrow, and make no mistake about my attitude.

The Premier: Would you see that everybody got the same?

Mr. CORBOY: I would do my best to help other people get increases. You know as well as I do that it could not be done by legislation, but outside the House I have done my best to get increases for other people. The Premier cannot justify the infliction of special class taxation. Why single out any particular body? What a cry there would be to-morrow if we selected the professional class—lawyers, doctors or architects, and said, "We are going to take 1 per cent. of your fees as a special class tax."

Mr. Angelo: That is a good suggestion.

Mr. CORBOY: But because a man happens to be in the employment of the Government, or happens to be a member of this Chamber, he is to be singled out for special class taxation. Are the Government so barren of ideas that they are incapable of submitting to the Chamber anything that will be equitable on all sections of the community? Are they so barren of ideas that they must single out for special taxation those on whom they have a particular grip? The very idea of a special class tax, irrespective of the people on whom it is intended to impose it, is abhorrent to democratic people. It has been left to the present Government to submit legislation of that kind. Not only that, but the Bill has been hastily thrown together; that is the only way one can put it. Just consider the Government's own proposal as between members of this House and members of the Civil Service. What do we find? Members are to be taxed 10 per cent. on

their allowance of £600. We who are country members know well that we do not receive £600 a year. We are paid an allowance of £600, certainly, but a very considerable portion of that must be used in carrying out our duties. I dare say, if country members averaged the actual expenditure that must be devoted to attending to Parliamentary duties, they would find that a third of their allowance was eaten up in that way. Thus, one can say that a member's allowance is approximately £400. But members are to be taxed on the full £600 per annum. Now what is the position with civil servants? I have taken the trouble to go through the Public Service List—I shall not include the employees of the Commissioner of Railways, nor those of the Education Department—and I find that there are no fewer than 137 officers who come under the Public Service Commissioner in receipt of £600 or more. Of that number 54 receive between £600 and £676 per annum, and it is proposed by the Government that those 54 shall come under the special tax proposals at the rate of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I find that the 54 draw between them an average salary of £621 per annum and that they will pay $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Their tax will thus average £46, and so we have 54 officers drawing £21 more than we do and paying £14 per annum less than it is intended we shall pay. I am not opposing the Bill through any personal motives at all, and I hope nothing of that kind will be insinuated. I am opposing it because I do not believe in class taxation in any shape or form. The point is that a civil servant who draws £21 per annum, on an average, more than does a member of Parliament will pay £14 per annum less. Country members have to forfeit on an average one-third of their salaries in looking after the affairs of their constituents.

Mr. Angelo: And they are lucky to get through on that.

Mr. CORBOY: I dare say members representing North-West constituencies do not get through with one-third; in their case it would be more like half.

Mr. Angelo: About half.

Mr. CORBOY: Nevertheless, they too will be charged 10 per cent. on the full £600. Next to the class of civil servant I have just dealt with comes those whose salary ranges between £677 and £988, or only £12

short of £1,000. There are 64 in that class. The average salary is £804 per annum and they are to be taxed at the rate of $8\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. Although they draw over £200 per annum more than we do, their taxation is actually $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent. less. As a matter of fact they will actually pay, on an average, £70 per annum, or £10 a year more than we are asked to pay. Then we finally come to the class which the Government propose shall be put on the same basis as ourselves. There are 19 officers in the service drawing between £989 and £2,400, and it is proposed that they shall pay 10 per cent. In other words, officers of the Public Service in receipt of travelling allowances and everything else when they go away, and drawing upwards of four times the salary paid to members of this House, are going to be asked to pay just what we pay.

The Premier: There is only one man, the Engineer-in-Chief.

Mr. CORBOY: There are more than one receiving that salary.

The Premier: No.

Mr. CORBOY: There are not many, I admit. The average salary of those 19 officers is £1,241, or just over double the allowance paid to members of this Chamber, and those officers are to pay just the same as we are to pay. I quote those figures to show that in my opinion the legislation has not received from the Treasurer the consideration which it deserves. If we lump in one body the whole of the 137 public servants drawing from £600 to £2,400 per annum, the average amount of tax they will pay is 8.6 per cent., or roughly $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Those public servants are therefore to pay $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. less than is asked from members of this Chamber. I do not wish the public servants in question to pay more; in fact, I object to this legislation altogether. But I submit that the Treasurer has not given the subject the consideration it merits, or, if he has, that his ideas of what is equitable are indeed strange. The very thought of class taxation is abhorrent. I cannot imagine what could possibly have induced the Government to bring in these Bills calling for special taxation.

Mr. Panton: The line of least resistance.

Mr. CORBOY: What is the line of least resistance? In this case, I take it, the line is to dodge the kick that one is getting from

the rear from the "West Australian," and to kick the fellow in front, the public servant who cannot kick back.

The Premier: That is nonsense.

Mr. CORBOY: It is not nonsense. Ever since the Premier took office, the newspapers have ranted and railed at him with anonymous letters and everything they could think of to reduce the allowances of members of Parliament.

The Premier: Those things have not had the slightest influence.

Mr. CORBOY: It is a strange coincidence that right throughout the hon. gentleman's two Premierships he has obeyed without question the dictates of that great morning journal in St. George's Terrace. Time after time we have seen introduced into this Chamber by the hon. gentleman legislation which has been thrust at him for a few weeks by that newspaper.

The Premier: I suppose "The Worker" dictates to you?

Mr. CORBOY: The hon. gentleman reads that paper probably as often as I do.

The Premier: Do you not read "The Worker"?

Mr. CORBOY: I defy the hon. gentleman to point to one article appearing in "The Worker" throughout the six years that the member for Boulder was Premier dictating to him as head of the Government what he should do, whether in the form of an anonymous letter, a leading article, or any other shape. Yet the present Premier apparently has allowed himself to be bludgeoned by the Press into taking the line of least resistance by bringing down measures attacking people who, except in the instance of this Bill, do not dare to kick back.

The Premier: You will be here for the next day or two kicking.

Mr. CORBOY: I hope I shall be here as long as the hon. gentleman has been.

The Premier: I mean, in the House.

Mr. CORBOY: The Government are obviously barren of ideas as to raising the revenue they think they require. I am not in a position to say whether the Government do or do not require additional revenue. I am prepared to accept the Premier's word that they do. If the hon. gentleman will come to us and honestly say that he needs additional revenue and proposes certain measures to obtain it, I assure him that

I at least will give the matter conscientious consideration. But when he comes here and asks us to attack one special class, one particular group of persons in the State, instituting what is, after all, the rotten principle of class taxation, he is leaving the gate wide open to something that should not creep in. Suppose that some future Government, wool prices happening to be high, decided to attack the pastoralist and impose on him a special duty of £1 per bale of wool.

Mr. Angelo: That has been done through the income tax.

Mr. CORBOY: The income tax applies to everybody. I hope the House will not agree to the introduction of such a principle into the legislation of Western Australia, a principle giving any Government the power to single out a special group of persons and say, "We will inflict special class taxation on them."

HON. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [8.53]: I did not propose to speak upon the Bill, but we have to vote, and so I think, though the result is a foregone conclusion, members ought courageously to express their opinions. I propose to express mine. I realise that we live in most difficult times, probably the most difficult experienced since the inception of the Commonwealth. It is expected, when a great number of people are out of work, that all members of the community should make some sacrifice. We members of Parliament, naturally, ought to make sacrifices in common with every other member of the community. I think that is understood and appreciated by all hon. members. The popular thing would be to support a measure of this character. People outside would say, "So-and-so is a decent, altruistic fellow; he voted for a reduction of salaries." But I wish to point out that, after all, this is not the place to do popular things; it is the place to do just things. Therefore I propose to-night to discuss the Bill from the aspect of the justice that is contained in it, and to cast my vote in accordance with my views as I express them. I have said that at this time we are expected to make every possible sacrifice for the community, and to help those who are unable to help themselves. But we ought not to agree to bear any further charge than is borne by any

other person in the community who occupies a similar position. Let it clearly be understood that no matter whether a man is a member of Parliament, or a civil servant, or a wages man, or a merchant, or a financier, or a lawyer, or a commercial man, or a shipping man, he is in every instance a charge on the community. We all live on the community; we all live on the wealth produced by the country. The wealth of the country is contained in its wheat, its wool, its timber, gold, dairy produce and fruit. Whatever may be the total production of wealth, we all live on that production. It does not matter how the wealth comes to us; we all live on it. So every member of the community is a charge on the general production of the country. Therefore when it comes to making sacrifices, which I admit we ought to make in the circumstances, let us here make the same sacrifice as is made by every man and every woman in the community, or on a similar basis which will be just to them and to ourselves also. No one can quarrel with us if we say, "We set the example, and what we apply to ourselves we apply to you. We escape nothing that you pay. We do not exempt ourselves in any respect whatever." Instead of that, the Government introduce several measures to reduce salaries, one of them on the basis that our salaries are drawn particularly from the revenue of the country. But every pound and every penny that is drawn by any member of the community is drawn in some manner from the general production of Western Australia. So I am perfectly willing to stand this tax of £60 per annum if every other man in the community rendering a similar service pays in the same manner as I do. There should be no quarrel with that. In my opinion it is a perfectly just course. And so I ask the Premier, if this is not a mere gesture—for it will save £4,800 or £5,000 at most—why does he not apply the same tax to the community? There are hundreds of people in this community receiving £600 a year. Why should they escape this tax? Why should they be exempt? Why should only members of Parliament and civil servants pay the tax? What justice is there in that? This is the first time during the 26 years I have been a member of this Chamber that I speak of my personal position. I came into the House when the salary was £3 17s. 6d. per

week. I would have come here when the salary was nothing at all if I could have afforded it, because my ambition was to come here and do some service to the community. Other members have felt the same impulse sooner or later. At that time £3 17s. 6d. was not a living wage. Members of this Chamber, like the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson), had to take contracts to build shearing sheds to maintain themselves; other members had to take clearing contracts. In those days the salary or allowance was a mere pittance, and we had to pay our own expenses, stamps and correspondence. And even then people said we were getting too much. What is the position to-day? Members of Parliament receive £600 a year, and I admit there are some members not dependent on the payment. But there is no member of this House, in my opinion, who, having another occupation, is capable of making that occupation a profitable one so long as he gives honest service to the House. He cannot do both things. No Minister sitting on the Treasury Bench can attend to his official work and to the work of his own interests. It cannot be done. It is not done. The Minister must entirely shut out his own interest, and leave that to somebody else. If I may be pardoned for saying it, this last year, if I had not had my public duties to attend to, I could have sold my wheat at 5s. per bushel. I did not sell it. I apologise for mentioning that instance, but it is a proof that if I had been looking after my own interests I could have made a lot of money. However, I was so absorbed in official work that I had not time to attend to my private affairs. No man can do two jobs. If a member of Parliament runs a business, then, unless he has a very good partner, his business will fail in competition with the business of another man, because that other man will have his whole energy and mind on his business. Probably you, Mr. Speaker, are an outstanding example of what I have in mind. When you left Perth, you were a wealthy man. Thereupon you entered business and Parliament. To-day are you a wealthy man? I consider yours a striking example. All sorts of people have been writing to the Press about the matter. The Press have an extraordinary idea of what members do. I think this is an occasion when we should tell the facts. I do not hesitate to advance them. The member-

for Yilgarn has referred to country constituencies. A country member who has an expensive constituency suffers more than does the man who has a city constituency.

The Premier: Both are paid the same.

Hon. P. Collier: But the city man retains all of it for himself.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Take the member for Kimberley. He has a district as large as Victoria, and his expenses are very heavy. Much the same thing applies to the members for Pilbara and for Murchison, as well as to the Mt. Magnet district which I represent. Prior to the elections I paid £75 in order to go round my electorate by car, a distance of 1,500 miles. During that election I had to travel altogether 3,000 miles which, at a cost of 1s. per mile, represented an outlay of £175 on travel alone. To-day I keep a motor car. I would not do this were I not a member of Parliament. I must visit outlying portions of my electorate that are far removed from railway communication. Were I not a member I would not incur that expense. I look upon a motor car not as an asset, but as a liability. I must keep one however, in order to tour my electorate. These are facts that ought to be understood by the community. With all these difficulties I would still come back tomorrow, because my life work is here, and I feel I can serve my people best here. It is a laudable ambition to be a member of Parliament. He is a poor type of man who does not possess some such ambition. The community ought to know that the position of a member carries with it responsibilities of a financial as well as of a political nature. Two weeks ago I visited my electorate on the Murchison side and later on the Leonora side. That journey alone cost me £60. I am not an extravagant man. I do not throw money away. A member of Parliament has to be a man in his constituency, and he has to move amongst the people. He is not like the business man who is visiting a district and is entitled to expenses. These things ought to be known. If they were recognised the public would take a different view of what they call "our perks" and our responsibilities. Our "perks" are generally on the wrong side of the ledger; that is my experience. When I got married, I found my wife looking over a small notebook that I kept. In the notebook were jotted down certain sums of money I had lent to per-

sons since I had been in Parliament. She asked me what those sums represented. I replied, "These are the 'perks.' " During these bad times, how can a member of Parliament resist the appeals that are made to him by people he knows well, but who have fallen into bad circumstances? His friends may be in danger of losing their homes. One man may owe £10 or £20 and may be in danger of being pushed out of his house. What can one do but lend him the money? No one is approached so much in this way as is a member of Parliament. I have no desire to advertise members' generosity, but I do think the facts about members of Parliament ought to be known. Here and now is the opportunity to stand up for ourselves and speak well of ourselves. I cordially admit that in these times we ought to make some sacrifice. Why, however, should we make more sacrifice or should civil servants make a greater sacrifice than the man who owns some big establishment in the city? Why, in addition to paying the ordinary income tax that as a farmer and a member of Parliament I have to pay, should I contribute a further tax to assist the city man? Why should I pay more than the city man? Take the owners of newspapers, the leaders of financial concerns, the men in high positions: they pay only the same income tax in proportion that I pay, and that civil servants pay on their incomes, but in addition we are asked to make a further payment. Why? To show that we are more patriotic than they are! I agree that we ought to make some sacrifice in order that this State may pay its way. I tell the Premier—and will keep my promise—that if he desires I should pay in taxation £60 a year, and that every other man in the community in circumstances similar to mine should pay the same amount, I shall take no exception to it. I shall not mind being obliged to give up that money without any deductions whatever. If a business man is travelling around the country and engages a car, he is allowed travelling expenses. I am not allowed one penny. The expense that the business man incurs in earning his income, namely travelling, is allowed as a deduction on his income tax assessment. We, as members, are not allowed anything. We would not ask for such deductions. If the Government will bring down a measure of taxation obliging me

to contribute £60 a year, and every other man in the community on a similar income to do the same, I will support it. I make no qualifications; I shall offer no objection to it, and will help the Government to get it through. I am not, however, going to associate myself with a measure which is merely a gesture to the community with the object of the Government being able to say to people who receive probably less income, that they must suffer a reduction, because I have accepted it. I am not going to allow myself to be used by the Government so that they may make a gesture to every member of the community who may be on the basic wage, that he, too, must be reduced because we are; but if all are reduced equally I shall be one of the strongest supporters of the proposal in the House.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [9.5]: Practically all that could be said against this measure has been said by those who have already spoken. During the Address-in-reply, however, I said I would enter my protest against the Bill which I understood the Government intended to bring down. When the Premier moved the second reading of this measure, I said that he was taking advantage of those within the circle. What I meant was that he was getting at those people he knew he had the power to get at. This has been demonstrated by others who have spoken to-night. It has been the catch-cry of all the newspapers, and a considerable number of anonymous writers for a considerable time. They have all said, "Why not start at the top of the tree, and reduce the politician first?" I am quite prepared to make my sacrifice, and lose my 10 per cent. of salary, provided I know the tax will be an equitable one all round, and that everyone will be paying the same amount in proportion to the amount I am being taxed upon. I cannot afford to lose the money. There was a time when I had a sufficient number of children under 16 to enable me to avoid paying any income tax. This year the position has been altered. I should have to pay income tax, except that the £60 reduction will relieve me of that necessity. At all events, this is one way of getting out of income tax. It has been said there are many people outside who are making sacrifices. There are some wage earners,

or salaried officers, not in the Government service who have been reduced 25 per cent. One of these men said to me, "I have had my salary reduced by £125." I said, "That is a great sacrifice on your part." He then asked what the Government were going to get out of it, and I replied, "They will not get a penny, because the first unemployed man they come across will get the benefit of the reduction, and the Government will be no better off." People in the warehouses of Perth are having their salaries cut down, and all over the place earnings are being reduced in order that the whole of the staffs may be kept in employment. Actually the Government will not gain a penny by doing what is proposed, for these reductions in salary will certainly mean a reduction in income taxes paid to the State. If this sort of thing continues, the Premier will certainly not realise the returns he anticipates from income taxes and the figures he gave in his Budget. I suggest that this Bill, and the other Bills relating to civil servants, should have been brought down as one measure. They are interwoven with each other. If the Parliamentary Allowances Bill goes through, it will be an indication as to what will happen to the civil servants and the general body in Government employment. The measures should have come down in such a way that we could deal with both on similar lines. During the Address-in-reply I said it was not my function to tell the Government how to balance the Budget, and what taxation to enforce. I am not here to do that to-night. I object to the present method of taxation. The member for Yilgarn mentioned the influence of the Press. One has only to go back in the history of the State to see that the previous Nationalist Government led by Sir James Mitchell, and the present Nationalist Government, have been governed by the "West Australian" on each occasion. Whether the Government are influenced by that newspaper or not, the fact remains that whatever the "West Australian" says we find subsequently brought down in the form of legislation.

Mr. Corboy: But there is no reduction in the price of 2d. for that paper.

Mr. Raphael: There is in the contents that are given to you for 2d.

Mr. WITHERS: These are the people who are making the biggest outcry, and there is less demand on their pockets. The

politician is the Aunt Sally for everyone, for social, sporting, and other bodies. If a politician were receiving only £5 or £6 a week, and if he had besides only his Parliamentary privileges, probably he would be better off than he is to-day, instead of receiving a kind of dole from the Government under the conditions that now operate. We receive a Parliamentary allowance, and we become lap-dogs for everyone. People say this is Government money we are receiving. It is not looked upon as a salary, merely as an allowance, and therefore we have all these demands upon our pockets. If anyone wants the loan of a dollar, we are supposed to hand it over. If a sporting body makes a member its patron, again one is supposed to contribute to the funds. If only we were allowed to earn our living, as was the case in early days, and we relied upon that living for our income, we could tell the other fellow to mind his own business, instead of handing out the banbees as we do. While we receive this allowance, we have to stand up to our job. As a country member I realise it is not a living wage. I have less now than when I entered Parliament. The average member who tries to live on his Parliamentary allowance soon becomes poorer than when he began to live upon it.

Mr. Angelo: We are all falling away to shadows.

Mr. WITHERS: We may not have fallen away to shadows, and may not have to worry too much about our physical condition, but this is the result. The man who is a politician is thought to have fallen in for a very fat job, and to be in receipt of a wonderful remuneration. People who think that are very far away from the facts. I am going to oppose this Bill on the grounds I have set forth. I have no desire to sit silently and refrain from offering an explanation for my opposition to the measure.

MR. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [9.15]: This is the first time that a Bill dealing with the salary of members has been brought into the House and made a party issue by the Government. I understand that the Government have submitted the Bill to their caucus, and have made it an issue, and that the whips have been cracked. That has not been the position with any previous Government that brought down a measure dealing with the salary of members. The incident stands as unique

in that regard. Members on the other side of the House, unless there is a rebel or two, have not been given a choice as to whether they should vote for or against this Bill. The Premier took exception to the statement of the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) that the proposed action of Parliament will be used outside as an example for others to follow. The Premier knows full well that the publicists of the State, from one end of it to the other, have urged the Government to take this action in the hope that it will be used, as they themselves have put it, not so much because of what it will represent in saving to the State, but as a gesture and example for others to follow. The morning following the announcement by the Premier that the Government had decided to introduce this legislation, the "West Australian," in a leading article, said it was not so much the saving that would be effected by a reduction in members' salaries as the example it would set to others. I have not the slightest doubt that that is what is behind this move from outside.

The Premier: What is?

Mr. McCALLUM: That this will be taken not only as an expression of opinion but will be interpreted as an instruction to members of the Arbitration Court themselves that, in the opinion of Parliament, wages and salaries should come down. The Arbitration Court will be told of the example set by Parliament. That is the whole aim behind the publication of statements made along these lines. That is what is behind those who have urged a reduction in the salaries of members of Parliament and of the Civil Service. It is not the saving that will be effected in reduced salaries paid to members of Parliament and of the Civil Service but what it will mean to private employers in the forcing down of wages paid throughout the State. That is the move behind this effort to secure a reduction in our salaries. If we were to listen to the talk of people outside, we would imagine that the reduction in the salaries of members of Parliament would balance the ledger and remove the deficit. I was at a function in a country district a little while ago and, from the speeches made there, it was easy to imagine that all that was necessary to straighten out the finances was to reduce the salaries of members of Parliament. As a matter of fact, all that

will be saved under the Bill is a paltry £5,000. That is not what those who have written articles in the Press have set out to achieve; they have bigger game to shoot at. There is no question of what they propose shall be done. They propose that this will be taken as an indication of Parliament's opinion that the salaries and wages paid to the rest of the people should be reduced. I have spent too much of my life in assisting the workers to secure a decent standard of living to record my vote to set an example that will have the effect of reducing that standard. The question at issue is not what we stand to lose, but what will be lost by the community. If the passing of the Bill meant that the Government would have more funds with which to provide work for the unemployed, it might be different. Will the passing of the measure create any employment, or get work for the tens of thousands of men who are out of jobs at the present time? If the Government had in mind a move in that direction, and desired the money to carry out schemes to provide work for the unemployed, Ministers would have a case for consideration. There is no such object behind the move by the Government, either in connection with the Bill under discussion or with another so closely associated with it. I wish to say a word or two regarding members representing metropolitan constituencies. We have heard a good deal regarding country members and the expense in which they are involved. There is another side of the picture, from the point of view of the metropolitan member.

Hon. P. Collier: He is easily caught.

Mr. McCALLUM: He lives amongst his electors and is easily got at, particularly in times such as the present. Country members have an advantage in not being too often in their electorates.

Mr. Withers: That does not apply to all; I spend more time in my electorate than I do here.

Mr. McCALLUM: Not when the House is sitting.

Mr. Angelo: At any rate, we get some of the member for Bunbury's constituents in the city.

Mr. McCALLUM: Metropolitan members live in their electorates and their constituents know not only where they live but

when they leave and when they return, and how they travel to Parliament House.

Mr. Parker: They think they do.

Mr. McCALLUM: It is impossible for a metropolitan member to escape. We admit what it costs country members to travel to and from their electorates, but we also know that it costs metropolitan members a great deal to live in their electorates. It will, therefore, be seen, that we both suffer, and the £600 paid to us cannot by any means be regarded as net. Those who suggest that it is, talk without any knowledge of the position. I can honestly say that when I was at my trade, I had a clearer annual income than I have now as a private member of the House.

Mr. Angelo: I can quite believe that.

Mr. McCALLUM: The discrepancy will be all the greater if the Bill becomes law. To listen to talk outside this Chamber, one would think that members enjoyed all sorts of perquisites and privileges. The only perquisite they have is their free railway passes, and the more they use their passes the more money they have to spend. If we seek to fit ourselves for the task we have to perform in Parliament, we have to make ourselves acquainted with the requirements of various parts of the State, and we have to make use of our railway passes. That all means spending more money. Why should we be singled out for a special impost on our slender income at the moment? To my mind, there is one ulterior object, and that is the effect it will have on others not mentioned in the Bill at all. If the proposal were in the form of an increased income tax, there would be no complaint because everyone in the State would be on the one footing. As it is, we will have to pay our income tax and, in addition, pay this special impost. Then, again, those of us who have made investments have entered into obligations that have to be met. The Bill will add to our difficulties, and place us in a more invidious position than that occupied by other sections of the community. The civil servant is not placed in that position at all. It is for the Government to say what they want and what they propose to do with the money, but they have not given us any such indication. There is another phase. The salaries paid to members of Parliament in this State have never been high. In some of the other

States the salaries paid are considerably higher than those we receive, and particularly does that apply to the Commonwealth Parliament. Despite that, I do not think there is one Parliament in the Eastern States the members of which work harder or longer than we do. The more cheaply we regard ourselves, the cheaper shall we be considered by outsiders. We are asked to belittle our own position in comparison with other Parliaments of Australia and with the rest of the community. I not only oppose the tax to be imposed on members of Parliament as such, but I oppose it because of what is behind the minds of those who have urged the Government to take this course and make a gesture or set an example to be followed by others. If we agree to this legislation, then application after application will be made to the Arbitration Court for the reduction of wages and salaries. Here is the example and the gesture, as the "West Australian" mentioned in its leading article, set by Parliament for others to follow, and I will not be one to provide that gesture, or set such a bad example that will lead to reduced wages throughout the country.

MR. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn) [9.25]: I have vivid recollections of the occasion when you, Mr. Speaker, standing in your place on the floor of the House, moved the motion that was responsible for placing the salaries of members of Parliament on its present basis of £600 per year. It is fortunate for you that you are relieved of the necessity for supporting dumbly the Government who are endeavouring to undo the work you accomplished on that occasion.

Mr. Panton: Good work, too.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I regard the issue as so vital that you, Mr. Speaker, may consider the question of departing from precedent and impartially setting out from the Chair the case against a reduction. I believe you could do it in such a way that you would influence the Government far more than any argument advanced by members sitting on the Opposition side of the House. I cannot remember all the arguments you used, but I have a recollection of how carefully you prepared your case and how your logical reasoning convinced the Government of the day.

The Premier: The Speaker did not propose anything.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, he did. I said he moved the motion that encouraged the Government to introduce the necessary legislation. The Speaker, when he was a private member, acquainted the Government with the sense of the House and succeeded in convincing the Government accordingly. Had the present Government acted in the same way, and had they the opportunity to understand the feelings of members, they would not have rushed in with experimental legislation of this description, without first giving the House the opportunity to express an opinion. In applying the axe, the Premier has been precipitate and when the mischief is done, we are asked to express our views. It seems to me that there is a general impression that members sitting on both sides of the House enjoy a uniform income, and that there is being imposed a uniform tax on that basis. That is not so. Discussing this measure with a member of the Legislative Council, I pointed out to him that if he had to pay 10 per cent. on his full income, he would have to hand back the whole of his £600 plus a large amount in addition. It will be appreciated by hon. members that in one instance the 10 per cent. may represent a deduction of no consequence, while in another instance it will represent a serious matter. Regarding country members, I agree with what has been said, particularly when I remember how much has to be expended in securing election. Is there any other job in the world that a man has to buy for himself to the extent that is necessary in seeking election to Parliament? Unless a member representing a country district had a motor car, he would have no possible chance of being elected to Parliament. And after he was elected, if he did not have a motor car he would find some enterprising chairman of a roads board who did have one and who would run rings round him. So to hold down his £600 job he has to go to the expense of a motor car and all the costs of running it.

The Premier: The city member has to do the same.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I am coming to the city member presently, for I have known both classes of experience. As the competition becomes keener and there is so much

advertising regarding the perquisites attached to this position, some of our members when electioneering in the North-West have to incur a great deal of expense, and shortly they will have to invest in aeroplanes. That will add materially to the expense and slightly to the risk of the job. But it will be necessary in some outback places for up-to-date candidates to adopt the more modern system of locomotion. In New South Wales already election campaigns are being conducted by aeroplanes. Just fancy a position, with such an emolument, in which one has to run motor cars, aeroplanes and all the expenses of an election for a tenure of three years! I think the Premier should give some consideration to the tenure of this job. Only the other evening we passed a Bill affording security of tenure to certain people, and I think consideration should be given to it in our own instance when we are considering a reduction of salaries. The Premier should think out some compensation for the salary reduction he proposes.

The Premier: I will consider it.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Now we come to the city member. Some people have the idea that if one represents a city constituency, it is quite inexpensive. I can assure you, Sir, it is not so. It is surprising how popular I am with various sporting bodies, and surprising also how the imagination of the people has developed in recent years. There are associations of all descriptions to think of. There are the various progress associations, and then there are all the school associations. One finds that he has been made a vice president of this or that body.

Hon. P. Collier: And always unanimously elected.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Yes, that is so. I thought I could get out fairly lightly by being made a vice president, but since in at least one instance I have been elevated to the position of patron, I am not sure whether it is 10 guineas or 20 guineas that I should donate to the body. However, I cannot compete with some more wealthy candidates, for I find there is such a thing as buying popularity. I cannot afford that. In addition, as the member for South Fremantle has said, some of us live in our constituencies and so our constituents know where we live. Already there is a very severe tax upon us, because people are so well aware of the enormous salaries we receive that they feel justified in calling upon

us for donations, sometimes before breakfast. So taxation is already upon us and will continue. I am often reminded of certain remarks by the member for Claremont (Mr. North) in this respect. Regarding calls made upon members of Parliament he said that in the case of a wealthy member they amount to bribery, and in the case of a member who cannot afford to respond, they are tantamount to blackmail. Therefore, I say that when we are considering ameliorative proposals in order to soften the fall, we had better extend the restriction applying to elections: we cannot give donations immediately prior to an election, and that rule should be made permanent. It should be an offence for any member of Parliament to give a donation to any public body.

The Minister for Works: Hear, hear! We all agree with that.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Very few members have the moral courage to stand up against what has become the usual procedure with many public bodies, particularly those who now demand our head upon a charger. It will be found that those very people are insistent that we should pay a compulsory levy or tax in order that their respective organisations may benefit and profit. So there are two sides to this question. It seems to me that nobody outside of Parliament, no newspaper, no organisation—I cannot recall that any one body in this State has carried a resolution protesting against the proposal to reduce our salaries; they seem to be oblivious to the trouble we are in. We are supposed to be concerned about the Public Service, and we are, but no one is concerned about us. We are positively friendless. I am not too sure the country does not blame us for the financial position in which the community finds itself to-day.

Hon. P. Collier: They have a suspicion that it is our fault.

Mr. MILLINGTON: They have a suspicion that we are responsible for it, and they say, "Now is our opportunity to get even with them." So, knowing that the present Government have broadcast an appeal for economy ideas, they write to the newspapers, mostly anonymously—somebody has suggested the writers are disappointed candidates for Parliament—and the Government have taken notice, not only of the suggestion made by those writers, but of all other suggestions touching their patch-

work taxation proposals—shreds and patches. I cannot refer to the other Bills just now, but it seems to me the Government are advertising for ideas and that a section of the community are eagerly telling them how to tax the other fellow. All outside the magic circle of the 80 members of Parliament are in favour of our being taxed. Also the good people in country districts are satisfied that all "sports" ought to be taxed. Generally speaking, "sports" take things in a sportsmanlike way. They have paid pretty well in the past, and now they are to be asked to pay still more. Public servants are easily attacked, particularly now that half the Government are composed of members representing country constituents. I find that country people generally are right down on the public servants. They are convinced that all men in the Public Service are right at the top of the tree, just as they think and speak of us. People outside of Parliament suggest that to start at the top of the tree is to start on a member with a beggarly £600. So also they regard public servants as good game. In the public view, all public servants have been brought up on privilege, and in some mysterious way people in the country districts believe they have been keeping public servants in their privileged positions. So all outside the Public Service are quite sure that public servants ought to be taxed. Indeed it has become the policy of Australia, the unwritten policy, that the Public Service, including school teachers and railway men, should, at this stage, be taxed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member can deal with that on the next Bill.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I know I can claim your sympathy, Sir. I only wish I could stick to the subject as you did, stick to the case and with such force of logic that those on the Government side would at least get up and do something besides voting. I cannot imagine how the Government have bound their followers to the extent they have. I always understood that with the exception of certain vital principles all on that side had a perfectly free hand. But it seems to me now that a perfectly free hand does not mean a perfectly free tongue, that it is an entirely different thing. I have never seen men in such a position being executed without being permitted to plead their own case.

The Premier: Fancy it going out to the public that men have been executed! Was anything of the sort suggested when the salary was increased?

Mr. MILLINGTON: If the party on this side were in power and the Government attempted to impose silence on them, as the Premier has been able to impose silence on his followers—

Mr. Panton: It would not be on a Bill like this.

Mr. MILLINGTON: No, it would be quite impossible. It seems to me the discipline so much spoken of in relation to the Labour Party has been extended to the Government side, and that just as we were defeated at the last elections by superior tactics, so now the Government party is being controlled by the most rigorous tactical discipline ever imposed on a party—in this instance two parties—in any Parliament. Since those members on the Government side who are not actually members of the Government and receiving the extra emolument have silently to submit to the proposed reduction, I am sure they will give us full credit for taking up the cudgels on their behalf and stating their case, particularly those members representing country districts. I feel the utmost sympathy and regard for them. My friend the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo), a most careful man, has given us a hint despite the rigorous discipline imposed on that side of the House. He has hinted that his salary was cut in half. Half of it, he said, went in expenses. I am not sure how the other half was expended and I should like him to give the House a full account of it, for it is necessary that we should have candour when dealing with this question. All this hush-hush policy is no good, for nobody but ourselves is interested. No one outside of Parliament is at all interested. It is our own affair and if the Government have been bluffed by outside forces that is no reason why the whole of the House should be demoralised. Never before have I sat at a meeting like this, when there was a proposal to reduce wages, without the whole of the crowd protesting. I think when other sections of the community are being attacked in the same way members here will devise some argument in behalf of the proposed victims and voice it pretty freely. Why, then, should they so meekly accept the im-

post proposed to be put upon them? It will remain on record that a certain section of this House submitted to the reduction without a word of protest. When they get out amongst the money-making community with which they are associated they will find they have forfeited all respect. I remember that on the last occasion some inquisitive elector asked me if I had voted for the increase in our salaries. I inquired of him did he expect me to make a speech about it, and when he said no, I just rose and answered yes, that I had supported the increase. No further explanation was required of me for I think the public then, Sir, remembered the case you had so ably put up. But now they have forgotten it and so it is necessary for us to remind the public that despite all that is said about members of Parliament, we have to submit to a qualification that no other body submits to; that if we cannot satisfy the public that we are capable of doing the job, we have no hope of getting the job or, having got it, we have no possible hope of holding it. I believe that when you, Mr. Speaker, stated the case, you dwelt on the fact that the occupation of a member of Parliament was of the most casual nature. There is no security of tenure of which I am aware. I know of no other job which a man is holding down fairly well and which his own particular friends can attempt to take from him, but it is quite the recognised thing with Parliamentary seats that one's own particular friends have a right to shake hands with him while attempting to shoot him politically and pinch the seat from him. Those are the peculiar rules of the game and it is well that the public should know them, because we have been told that the public are fair-minded. The only way in which the public can be informed is for us to tell them. Who is it that has been demanding a reduction of Parliamentary salaries? Not the Treasurer, I think. Had not undue influence been brought to bear upon him, it is the last thing he would have thought of.

The Premier: Nonsense!

Mr. MILLINGTON: Therefore it means that the influence came from outside.

The Premier: The influence was a bare Treasury.

Mr. MILLINGTON: The last thing that should be done in the circumstances is to

belittle those who are responsible for carrying on the affairs of the country. I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that in accordance with the reduction of our salary and status, if we submit tamely to it, so shall we command less respect from the public. If the position is to be paid, it should be adequately paid. The member for Mt. Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) mentioned the pioneering stage of payment of members in this State. But for that start, I presume the legislation of this State would have remained in the hands of entirely different people.

The Premier: And a good job, too.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I remember the President of the Federal Senate, when a member of the Legislative Council of this State, in discussing a Bill to authorise an increase of salaries to members, saying that he had yet to learn that the legislation of a young country like Australia should be the function of the idle rich or of those who, in addition to attending to their ordinary avocations, could devote themselves to the work of Parliament. So the very fact of salaries—and I mean adequate salaries—being paid permitted many men to enter Parliament who otherwise could not have done so, and I think their ability to enter Parliament has proved beneficial to the legislation of the State. I should not have risen but that I desire to pay a tribute to you, Mr. Speaker, and to express my regret that you are not on the floor of the House to advocate the just claims of members of this branch of the legislature. If it is not too late, I suggest that you should state the case impartially from the Chair, so that the House may be placed in possession of the full facts which it seems impossible to get from any other source.

MR. PARKER (North-East Fremantle) [9.48]: I have listened very intently to the various arguments that have been raised, and I must say I have found it difficult to follow them.

Mr. Panton: You will not get too many briefs if you talk like that.

Mr. PARKER: Yes, I shall. I happened to be in the civil service when the salaries of members of Parliament were raised. I know something of the remarks that were then made and of the feeling that prevailed in the service at the time. I have yet to

learn that the increase of Parliamentary salaries or any interference with Parliamentary allowances is an indication of the manner in which the civil service is to be treated. If Parliamentary allowances are reduced, it will not have any effect on the salaries of civil servants. Otherwise it would seem to indicate that Parliaments work in a verily peculiar way.

The Premier: The civil servants received an increase when we got ours.

Mr. PARKER: The civil servants got no increase when Parliament, without consulting the people, voted its members an increase.

Mr. Corboy: Members of Parliament do not receive annual increments as do civil servants.

Mr. PARKER: Neither did I when I was in the civil service.

Mr. Corboy: Because you were on the maximum, and a pretty good figure, too.

Hon. P. Collier: But we gave an increase to your successor.

Mr. PARKER: Might I add for the information of the Leader of the Opposition that I was offered an increase on what is being paid to my successor if I would remain in the service. I did have a complaint or grouse owing to the fact that I considered at the time that a person who was not in a full-time position, though I was devoting the whole of my time to my position and had followed a professional career for some years, should be paid within £100 of what I was receiving. Various arguments have been raised against the Bill. The member for Mt. Hawthorn (Mr. Millington) mentioned that Parliamentary members have a good many calls on their pockets because they are receiving £600 a year. I agree there are many calls.

Mr. Millington: And they grow with time.

Mr. PARKER: But it is largely the fault of members if they fall to those calls, whether it be for one of two reasons, namely that one wants to buy one's seat, or as blackmail.

Mr. Wilson: All members have not two jobs as you have.

Mr. PARKER: And they have not been asked to subscribe to the political funds of the Opposition.

Mr. Panton: You will be asked to subscribe to the Consultative Council.

Mr. PARKER: Shortly after I was elected I received a letter from the A.L.P.

asking me to subscribe to a children's dance, which I did. Afterwards I learnt that the object of the dance was to raise funds to oppose me at the March election.

Mr. Panton: I thought you were shrewder than that.

Mr. PARKER: I was delighted to subscribe, because I believe I am indebted to that organisation for having won my seat. Anyhow, I have the seat and the A.L.P. have the subscription.

Mr. Raphael: Anyhow, you were a subscriber to a good cause.

Mr. PARKER: I should like to know the reason for terming this reduction a tax, because the Bill describes it as a reduction of Parliamentary salaries. During an earlier discussion this evening, members on the Government side were castigated for not carrying out pledges made on the hustings. I was asked at North Fremantle whether I would endeavour to become a member of Parliament if there was no payment of members. Like the member for Mt. Hawthorn, I also replied, "Yes." Had there been no payment of members, I should still have had the ambition to win a seat in Parliament.

Mr. Panton: You would have had a better chance as there would have been less opposition.

Mr. PARKER: I believe there would be just as many candidates if there was no payment of members.

Mr. Corboy: But not candidates of the same calibre.

Mr. PARKER: The proposed reduction is only right and fair, and I do not consider it anything too much. I candidly admit that the country member does not derive as much benefit from the allowance as does the metropolitan member. The country member must find it very hard to make ends meet, but nevertheless I think the House will agree that Parliament is costing this country too much. We are spending a large sum of money on all the Parliaments of Australia.

Mr. Sleeman: Cut them in half.

Mr. PARKER: Many suggestions have been offered. Some people suggest, as does the member for Fremantle, that we should cut them in half. I think what the hon. member really means is that we should do away with the Upper House.

Mr. Sleeman: And halve the membership of this House.

Mr. PARKER: I would prefer that members were paid half of their present salaries and that both Houses were retained at their present strength, rather than have the members of one House paid £600 and the second Chamber non-existent.

Mr. Coverley: Could not you reduce the other House to ten members and get just as effective work?

Mr. PARKER: I want to see the country effectively represented. I should not like to see Pilbara merged into Kimberley. All portions of the State should be well represented by local men, because questions could then be discussed from the parochial point of view, which is advantageous. In times like the present, however, if the expense of Parliament is maintained at the old level, there is a danger of a public outcry to reduce the number of Houses. I shall vote in favour of the Bill.

MR. RAPHAEL (Victoria Park) [9.57]: It is not my intention to labour this question because the result is a foregone conclusion. What I desire is rather to qualify my pre-election promise by trying to deter the Government from taking this course. During my election campaign, I too was asked by many electors whether I was prepared to support a reduction of Parliamentary salaries, and I answered in the affirmative. That has placed me in a very invidious position, because the lever is being used by the Government for the purpose of reducing civil servants' salaries, and thus giving a lead to municipalities and road boards to reduce the salaries and wages of their staffs, a proceeding to be abhorred by any clear-thinking man. We have been told by members on the Government side that the lead given by the Premier is not intended to be followed by others. Yet, as soon as this measure has been passed, we shall have submitted to us a Bill proposing a reduction of civil servants' salaries. I am not going to be a party to supporting that reduction. Unlike some members, I am not solely dependent upon my Parliamentary allowance for a living, but my sympathy goes out to country members who have to keep two homes going, and who run very close to showing a loss through holding a position in the public life of the State. I hope the

Premier will agree to some alteration to the Bill. We have the penalisation of members of Parliament, while many other men who could well afford to pay the extra taxation escape. In the City Council employ, the Town Clerk is receiving in the vicinity of £28 a week.

Mr. SPEAKER: We are not discussing the City Council.

Mr. RAPHAEL: These remarks, Sir, are in qualification of my statements. The pay of the man I refer to is to remain what it is, and yet a log has been lodged with the Arbitration Court asking for reductions in the pay of wages men. I have heard the argument used in the Perth City Council that because members of Parliament are being reduced, wage earners must come down. I hope that even if we suffer our reduction, the Premier will reconsider the Bill for the reduction of salaries of public servants. I hope the hon. gentleman will withdraw his tentacles from the members of the Public Service, who should not be called upon to suffer what the members of this Chamber have to put up with.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	22
Noes	..	..	..	..	19
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	3
					—

A YES.

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

(Teller)

NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Pantol
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Troy
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Withers
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Munste	

(Teller)

AYES.	PAIRS.	NOES.
Mr. J. M. Smith		Mr. Kenneally
Mr. Plesse		Mr. Lutey
Mr. Brown		Mr. Cunningham
Mr. Teendale		Miss Holman

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Reductions of allowances:

Mr. McCALLUM: A point has been made as to the difference in the percentage reduction proposed by this Bill and that proposed by the Bill affecting civil servants. Our expenses are much greater than those of public servants, who moreover receive travelling allowances whilst we do not. Is there any reason why our reductions should be heavier than those proposed in other quarters?

The PREMIER: There is some difference between the position of a public servant and that of a member of Parliament.

Mr. McCallum: Yes. We have to pay our own expenses when we travel.

The PREMIER: I do not wish the country to believe that a member of Parliament is overpaid at £600. Quite apart from the work here, there is a great deal members do. No member can save money out of his salary. It is not expected that he should. It is also true, however, that a member of Parliament is free for part of the year from attendance at this House.

Mr. Wilson: Free to do what?

The PREMIER: He can engage in other work.

Mr. Wilson: I do not think so. Where can he get it?

The PREMIER: Some members of Parliament own farms, some are lawyers, some have businesses.

Mr. Wilson: The lawyers are all in Perth.

The PREMIER: Many members do something besides attending here. It is expected that they should do so.

Mr. McCallum: We cannot go back to our trades when we are members of Parliament.

The PREMIER: A man may, of course, have to go back to the occupation from which he came to enter Parliament. I know that a member who lives in the country, especially one who lives far from the metropolitan area, has to attend to a good deal of business for his constituents, and thus finds his time fully taken up. Public servants, however, can earn money from only one source. I hope, therefore, that members will agree it is right the reduction here should be at the rate proposed.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Provision for deduction from allowances of amount of reduction:

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I move an amendment —

That in line 12 the word "October" be struck out and "November" inserted in lieu.

It ought to be the policy of members on this side of the House to see that such matters are not made retrospective. It has been impressed upon me very strongly that members should be prepared to make some sacrifice, but I do object to this sacrifice being made retrospective. I hope the Premier will agree to the amendment, otherwise I shall have to vote against the clause.

The PREMIER: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. We have known for some time that this proposal would come down; indeed, I told members that the reduction would date back to the 1st October. Upon the anticipated revenue for the nine months of the year I based my Estimates. I see no reason to call this retrospective legislation. It applies only to ourselves, so we need not make much fuss about it. We knew that some reduction would be made from the 1st October.

Mr. PANTON: I support the amendment. When discussing the Bill prior to this, the Premier interjected that members should be consistent. The Government should be consistent on this point. I remember well when the Industrial Arbitration Bill was before the House, and the Collier Government had provided for giving the Arbitration Court power to use their own discretion in making awards retrospective. This was fought day in and day out by the Opposition, and eventually thrown out in another place. We now find the opponents of that

provision making retrospective this reduction in salaries.

The Premier: No, we are not; it is still October.

Mr. PANTON: It is a long way past the 1st October. It is obvious what is in the Premier's mind. We are to be an example so that the reduction of income to the civil servants may date from the 1st October. Members opposite have always fought against retrospective legislation.

The Premier: No.

Mr. PANTON: I could quote passage after passage from "Hansard" showing how the Premier has fought against retrospective legislation of this kind. Before the Bill becomes law, it will be well towards the end of October, if not past it. Already it is proposed in another place that it should be sent back to us with other propositions. I hope the amendment will be carried.

Mr. MUNSIE: I hardly know whether to support the amendment or not. If it is carried, I would not have the opportunity to test the sincerity of another place, as I would like to do.

Mr. Panton: Make sure of it here.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am going to sink my desire to see whether another place will stick to its principles or not.

Mr. Sleeman: They will let you down if you don't.

Mr. MUNSIE: Just as members opposite have let us down. They have always had a mortal hatred for retrospective legislation, but they have only been in their seats a little while when they agree to the principle of dating back a reduction in the salary of members. The Government have no right to do this.

The Attorney General: You are not afraid of being inconsistent, are you?

Mr. MUNSIE: I am not afraid of members opposite saying I am inconsistent. No matter what we do, they are always trying to make out we are inconsistent. They cannot name one piece of legislation brought down by the Collier Government, or the previous Labour Government, providing for retrospective legislation, that members of the Opposition did not oppose.

The Minister for Railways: Now you are inconsistent.

Mr. MUNSIE: I can never be as inconsistent as the Minister for Railways. The one thing most consistent about him is his inconsistency.

The Minister for Railways: You have got into a rut and cannot get out of it.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am always prepared to justify my actions and I am now advocating the same principles that I have pleaded in the past. I will not agree to any retrospective proposal, because if we agree to it now, the principle will be applied to wages paid outside.

Mr. Panton: That is the point.

Mr. MUNSIE: Already a fair number of members have received their half month's salary without reduction. At the end of the month, presumably the full deduction will be made. If the amendment by the member for Nelson is not agreed to, we will establish the precedent and the same retrospective proposal will be applied to others. I will not heat about the bush. I am opposed to the retrospective provision because I want to save my salary and I will not be a hypocrite and suggest otherwise. There is no possible hope of getting the Royal assent to the Bill until late in October and yet it is proposed to make it apply as from the 1st of the month.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I want to impress upon members that if we agree to the retrospective clause, we will be asked to apply it to another Bill to be dealt with later on. Our action in regard to the Bill will be advanced as justification for asking that civil servants shall be similarly treated. We have no right to agree to retrospective taxation. This Bill may be taken as the precedent to justify retrospective action in regard to other industrial working conditions. That would be wrong. I have been told that civil servants have already been informed on this point.

The CHAIRMAN: I must ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the Bill under discussion.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I desire to point out that if we agree to the retrospective clause we will be compelled to continue that policy in regard to another section of the community.

The Attorney General: Why not? Let us be consistent.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have been informed that civil servants have been told that if retrospective legislation is agreed to, their salaries will be subject to a refund. If we accept the amendment, the civil servants will be grateful to the member for Nelson for the action he has taken.

The PREMIER: We should not mix the two proposals.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You took fine care to mix them. You knew which Bill to introduce first.

The PREMIER: I do not know that one required much knowledge to do that. We can do what we like with our own salaries.

Mr. Panton: Yes, provided you have the majority.

The PREMIER: We need not consider what we shall do when we deal with another Bill. Whatever we do with our own salaries need not influence us when dealing with another Bill.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You will not use me in order to attack the civil servants.

The PREMIER: No; the hon. member suggests that we should not accept this reduction in our own salaries because it may be used as an argument in favour of a similar course in regard to another Bill. Even if we agreed to make the Bill retrospective to the 1st October regarding our own salaries, it is competent for us to agree that the reduction in the civil servants' salaries shall date from the 1st November. It has never been suggested that the passing of the Bill need influence us in our consideration of any other measure. Was it suggested that when we increased our salaries, everyone outside Parliament secured an increase.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But increases were general at that time.

Mr. Millington: Others outside received their increases before we got ours.

The PREMIER: The Committee should not agree to the amendment.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I am sorry the Premier cannot accept the amendment, seeing that on many occasions members sitting on the Government side of the House have fought consistently against any retrospective legislation. As the member for Hannans and others have indicated, we may have made commitments for the month, and it is not right for the Government to provide legislation that will apply a reduction in salary retrospectively. I intend to divide the Committee on the amendment and may go further and consider my position. When a member has right behind his back, years of established policy in opposition to any retrospective legislation, that course only is left open to him.

Without making any lucid explanation, the Premier has waived the amendment aside as a small thing, although the principle embodied in it is one that he has endeavoured for years to establish.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	20

Majority against .. 1

AYES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Panton
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hegney	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Withers
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Munale	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. J. I. Mann
Mr. Barnard	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Davy	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Doney	Mr. Parker
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Wells
Mr. H. W. Mann	Mr. North
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.