

receive the hearty endorsement of every member. From what the Leader of the House said in introducing the measure, I realise that there are certain essentials in the appointment of every man to a judicial position. For one thing it is necessary to secure him in the tenure of his office. There must also be adequate remuneration. What Mr. Holmes has said on this point will, I feel certain, be duly considered by Cabinet when making appointments. Naturally the Government are not in a position to consider paying the maximum salary to any magistrate at present; but that is no reason why there should not be a maximum stated, so that those who may be appointed will have the hope of attaining the maximum in due course. Another point emphasised by Mr. Holmes is one regarding which all Western Australians can feel a certain pride, that those who have held the position of judge or magistrate in this State are men whose honour has never in any instance been impugned, or could be impugned. They regarded their duties as sacred, and sought to perform them with that degree of honesty and honour which has been one of the outstanding features of our judges and also of our magistrates. I am glad to see the proposal to safeguard the position of those magistrates who have not succeeded in qualifying by examination or otherwise for the positions which they hold. Every one of us can pay a compliment to the men holding positions as magistrates not only in our police courts but also in our local courts. They have performed their duties most efficiently, and have done everything possible to show themselves worthy appointees to the offices which they have the honour of holding. The limitation of 70 years which has been placed upon the holders of the office is quite a correct limitation. When a man has attained so ripe an age, it is fair of him to give some other person the opportunity to follow in his footsteps.

Hon. G. Fraser: Don't you think the age is too ripe?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No. Provision is made in the Bill that the holder of an office under it will be subject to having his service terminated earlier, provided there is some just reason for it; but until that reason arises, there is no occasion to do anything. I noticed recently that the senior stipendiary magistrate in New South Wales, Mr. Gates, had given a history of his ex-

periences. He is a man who was retired at about the age of 65. In view of this Bill, I was interested in reading that man's experiences, how he felt pride in the performance of his duties, and how his ripened experience enabled him to do better than he could have done in his earlier years. So that age is not always a determining factor. Some men are as virile and powerful at 70 as others at 60 or 50. At any rate, 70 years is a fair limit to put so as to give an opportunity to others. I support the second reading.

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

House adjourned at 6.13 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 6th November, 1930.

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

MOTION—URGENCY.

Farmers' Bag Supplies.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [4.34]: I desire, Mr. Speaker, to move the adjournment of the House to discuss the following matter of extreme urgency—

In view of the fact that the wheat harvest is waiting to be garnered, and merchants are not delivering bags on account of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Bill not yet being passed, it is imperative that the Government

take immediate action to arrange with merchants to expedite the delivery of bags to avoid serious financial losses to both farmers and merchants.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before the motion can be entertained, it will be necessary for seven hon. members to rise in their places.

Seven members having risen,

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: In company with the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths), I attended a large and representative gathering of farmers at Merredin yesterday. The meeting was called to deal with various matters affecting the welfare of agriculturists. During the course of the meeting, constant references were made to the position with regard to the supply of bags. Ultimately it was decided, in the form of definite resolutions carried by the meeting, that the member for Avon and I should be requested to draw the attention of Parliament to the seriousness of the situation. Wheat is ready for stripping in the eastern wheat belt generally, and farmers are extremely anxious because of the fact that while the harvest is ready and the machines are there to do the work, the farmers themselves are unable to proceed with harvesting operations because their bags have not been delivered. Unfortunately, a difficulty has arisen owing to the legislation that is now before the House, dealing with the adjustment of farmers' debts. Evidently the merchants—I cannot vouch for the correctness of my impression, but we can assume what has influenced them—because of that legislation, desire to receive some assurance that the bags they deliver will be a first charge on the proceeds of the harvest, or that they shall secure a guarantee in some form that the supply of bags shall be paid for by the grain put into the bags. Evidently they are fearful in regard to their payments to such an extent that thousands of bales of bags are stored on the wharf at Fremantle, while the farmers are waiting for the bags to be delivered on the farms. I understand the merchants have negotiated with a number of farmers regarding arrangements for the delivery of bags and the payment for them. Possibly owing to the legislation now under discussion and the extreme financial stringency, the necessary arrangements for jute supplies have been delayed to such an extent that the farmers are extremely anxious.

From farmers I met yesterday, I ascertained that quite a number are unable to explain the cause of the delay. They have not been consulted about the delayed deliveries, and a number of the farmers who spoke to me were under the impression that the necessary arrangements for deliveries had been made. Evidently whatever arrangements were arrived at prior to the introduction of the legislation now before the House, do not hold good now, and other arrangements have to be made. There were at the meeting representative farmers from the Kulin district and the secretary of the local co-operative store, which deals with the majority of the farmers in connection with their bag supplies, said that 70 per cent. of the farmers in that district had not finalised their arrangements for the supply of bags, and were beginning to worry as to what would happen regarding their harvest. Another centre that was largely represented at the meeting was Quairading. Farmers from that district said at first that they thought 70 per cent. of the farmers there, where the harvest would be a little earlier than at Kulin, were without any satisfactory arrangements regarding their bags. I told them that I thought the percentage they mentioned was positively alarming and asked them if they were quite sure they were not over-estimating the number. They consulted amongst themselves and then told us that we would be perfectly safe in assuring Parliament that 50 per cent. of the farmers at Quairading had not yet secured their bags, and that supplies were still the subject of negotiation. The difficulty is that if the legislation is the trouble, we cannot await the passage of the Bill. By the time the measure passes this Chamber, if it does, and is agreed to by the Legislative Council, if it is, the position will be deplorable, and the loss enormous. We cannot wait until the Bill is passed to deal with this urgent matter, and I regard it as imperative that the Government should make some arrangements with the merchants so that the bags at present on the wharf may be delivered to the farmers at once. There is no room for one minute's delay. Loss is going on now. It has started already. The wheat is ready; the machines are ready; the organisation for taking off the harvest is prepared; the bags are not available to take the wheat. I think Parliament should take

a hand in the matter. I have no desire to reflect upon the Government. I have discussed the position with the Minister and with merchants. The position is so serious that, in view of the desperate situation, Parliament must take a hand to protect the interests of the State. We cannot afford to waste a grain of wheat. We want all we can get and we want to take the harvest off as economically as possible. Delays are dangerous. There may be storms or fires. The insurance question is an important matter. As the delay continues, the necessity for insurance remains and premiums have to be paid. In view of the circumstances I have indicated, I trust that the Government will immediately take some action that will assure the merchants that the Government will see to it that arrangements will ultimately be arrived at that will be satisfactory to the merchants, and that, in the meantime, the merchants will be induced to deliver the bags that are so urgently required. I was assured by a member, to whom I spoke in the corridor, that he had approached Mr. McLarty, the managing trustee of the Agricultural Bank, about the position and that that officer had got in touch with a merchant immediately, with the result that the merchant agreed to send forward all the bags required without any delay. That is all I want. If the Government take action that will secure the result that was achieved by Mr. McLarty as a result of a telephonic communication, and if they see that each farmer secures his bag supplies, it will be all right and the position can be adjusted later on. If it is possible to secure results only by members of Parliament interviewing Government officers, the delay by following that course will be serious indeed. I hope that the Government will realise the gravity of the situation and act promptly. I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [4.43]: The Government are well aware of the difficulty in which farmers find themselves at the present moment. I can give the House my assurance that we are keeping in touch with the position hourly. I was not aware that the adjournment of the House was to be moved until I reached Parliament House and then only five minutes before the House met. Just before leaving my office. I got into

touch with Mr. McLarty and he assured me regarding the position, as he has from day to day. There are members in this House to whom I gave information a day or two ago.

Mr. Willcock: A week ago.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I assured those members that the Agricultural Bank was doing everything possible to help the farmers. I think the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) has rather exaggerated the position. I do not know of any wheat in the southern portion of the State that is fit for harvesting at the present moment.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: In the southern part?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. I have been where the hon. member was yesterday. I happened to go up there last week end, and I know there was no wheat fit for stripping. At any rate, I saw none, and I motored through the district. A lot of oats remain to be stripped, but I do not think the farmers are using new bags for the oat crop.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They are stripping wheat.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: All I can say is that I saw none being stripped. There may be some at Southern Cross. I wish to give the House an assurance that the Agricultural Bank has allowed the merchant to come in with a prior claim over any securities it may hold for the purpose of supplying bags to the farmers. That is a definite statement. As long as the Agricultural Bank holds a bill of sale or a lien over a crop, the bank will forego its prior claim in order to allow the merchant to be secured for the supply of bags. That explains the governmental point of view. Let us consider the Associated Banks.

Mr. Angelo: And other mortgagees as well.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If members did not interject, I would not run the risk of losing the thread of my statement. I was given to understand yesterday that the Associated Banks have paid for a good many bags to be sent to the country. If any mortgagor requires bags, the banks realise that it is necessary to assist to get the harvest in so that the security might be protected. Therefore, they are supplying bags. Later I inquired from the merchants, and was informed that to date 15,000 bales of cornsacks have been despatched to the coun-

try. There are now waiting to be despatched 20,000 bales. They are booked to be despatched on the 15th November. To-day is the 6th November. Unless the farmers ask for their bags to be sent, they can hardly blame the Government or the Parliament for being without bags. In addition there are still 18,000 bales at Fremantle.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That makes 38,000 bales.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, 53,000 bales.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But only a fraction of them have been sent out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I want the House to understand that the merchants have not been asked to despatch the 18,000 bales. The 15th November is the date on which farmers have asked for their despatch. I was in touch with the manager of Western Farmers' Ltd., Mr. Thomson, a week ago, and he assured me that as regards the Agricultural Bank clients, there was no difficulty at all.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What about the farmers who are not under the Agricultural Bank?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A great deal of trouble is caused by the fact that some of the farmers will not give a bill of sale over their crops, or will not give an order against their wheat for the supply of bags.

Mr. Willcock: And they will not pay cash.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Unfortunately, they cannot pay cash. That explains a good deal of the trouble at present. The managing trustee of the Agricultural Bank, Mr. McLarty, has assured me that in some instances the supply of sacks has been turned down because the settler refused to give any security for payment. The bank has no power to guarantee payment and no funds with which to provide cornsacks. If we had the money to make advances for cornsacks, would this House agree to the Treasurer making advances without any security? Would it?

Mr. Willcock: The Minister would be foolish to do so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The House would not agree to it. If the farmers would not give security to one section of suppliers, they would not give security to the Government. I have been in touch with a person who can speak on behalf of the merchants, and he says that in many in-

stances the farmers have not replied to the merchants. They believe there is some difficulty in the way. I do not know what the difficulty is, but I think we can safely leave it to the holders of securities to try to recover something by ensuring that the crop is harvested.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is the trouble. You are waiting and the bags are down at Fremantle.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: My information comes from a reliable source. I have told the hon. member there are 20,000 bales waiting to be delivered, and the time for their despatch has not arrived. The merchants are acting under instructions from the farmers.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: According to your figures there are another 18,000 bales.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Roughly two-thirds of the bags needed for the harvest have been arranged for.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You say that only 15,000 bales have been sent to the country.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: And another 20,000 will be despatched between now and the 15th November.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What about the other 18,000 bales?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They are held at Fremantle.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Something like 48,000 bales will be needed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I assure the House that I will take up the question first thing to-morrow and ascertain what the difficulty is. I will get into touch with the chairman of the Jute Merchants' Association. I asked Mr. McLarty to keep in touch with me and notify me if any difficulty was experienced. The Government realise the difficulties confronting the farmers. I cannot believe that any of the Associated Banks having crops on their secured properties fit to harvest would refrain from supplying bags to permit of the harvesting. However, I have not yet been able to find a solution of the difficulty created by those farmers who will not give security for the supply of bags, and I do not think the House could do it. Perhaps the member for Guildford-Midland has been in touch with some of the farmers who are not prepared to give the required security. I do not know how we shall be able to deal with the farmers who have already given bills of sale, mortgages or liens beyond the control of the Govern-

ment, excepting that, if we had the money, we might pass a Bill automatically taking a lien over their crops immediately we supplied the bags, such as we did years ago by the Industries Assistance Act. The difficulty now is not so easy to overcome. It was my intention to discuss the difficulties confronting the farmers during the debate on the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Bill, and I obtained this information regarding cornsacks for use during that debate. I hope the hon. member will agree to withdraw his motion and will accept my assurance that we realise our responsibility. I do not think it is in our power to solve the difficulty, but we can help by promoting good feeling between suppliers of cornsacks and the farmers. However, the farmers must be prepared to give some security to the merchants supplying the bags, and the merchants must be prepared to supply on those terms.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [4.55]: Whilst the position may not be so serious in the southern districts, it is certainly serious in the eastern districts. The idea in moving the adjournment of the House was to get the Minister to make a statement that would be published throughout the country. The figures quoted by the Minister should bring some relief to the minds of the farmers who are feeling such anxiety about the position. At the meeting referred to by the hon. member, I was particularly asked to move in Parliament. In order not to embarrass the Government I decided not to move, but to let the member for Guildford-Midland do so.

Mr. Willecock: You would not keep your promise?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: This action has been taken with the idea of promoting harmony. The existing position is most serious for many farmers in the eastern areas. One of the motions carried at the Merredin meeting read—

That this meeting requests the Government to make arrangements immediately to supply cornsacks to those who are unable to pay for them, and that sufficient wheat to cover this cost be delivered at the siding and held by the Government pending the passing of the necessary farmers' debt adjustment legislation.

I believe the Government are doing all they can, but I desired that some definite statement should be made for the information of the farmers. There are some beautiful

crops in the eastern districts, and it would be a pity if any of them were endangered by risk of storm or fire that might result from delay.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland—in reply) [4.57]: I am quite prepared to accept the assurance of the Minister, but I would point out that all he has done to date is to arrange supplies of cornsacks for clients of the Agricultural Bank.

The Minister for Lands: Six thousand of them.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is a very small proportion of the total wheat farmers in the State.

The Minister for Lands: There are 10,000 wheat farmers.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I venture the opinion that the Minister is wrong in saying that 6,000 have given a lien to the Agricultural Bank. Quite a number are covered by liens to merchants. The trouble is that a number of them have given a lien for supplies of requirements other than bags, and they cannot now give a lien for bags. Had times been normal those men would have had no difficulty in arranging to get bags, seeing that they have a certain crop. I want the Minister to realise that this is no scare matter. The statements I have repeated were made by farmers, and the member for Avon knows that I went to some trouble to get details so that neither the Minister nor the House would be misled.

The Minister for Lands: Did you get the names of any of the farmers?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, but if the Minister gets into touch with the secretary of the Co-operative Society at Quairading he will be able to obtain the information. The directors were present, and they said that 50 per cent. of the farmers were hung up owing to the non-supply of bags. From what I can gather, we shall require about 4,000 more bales to meet the needs of a 50,000,000-bushel harvest. The indications are there will be a 50,000,000 bushel harvest this year. We have all but 4,000 bales of our requirements.

Mr. Griffiths: I thought it was 7,000.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The figures have been revised; I obtained these this morning. They show that another 4,000 bales will meet the requirements of the State. The urgency of the position is due to the fact that the 20,000 bales the Minister

speaks of are on the wharf at Fremantle. In the ordinary course of events they should be on the farms.

The Minister for Lands: Mine are not on the farm yet, although they are paid for.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am sorry to hear that. I thought the Minister was a better farmer than that.

The Minister for Lands: I cannot strip for another fortnight.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister's farm is in an earlier district than mine. We are stripping now.

The Minister for Lands: Wheat?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes. The oats were taken off a week ago.

Mr. Willcock: He does not grow early wheat.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) knows that quite a number of farmers said their harvest was ready, but they could not go on with it because of the shortage of bags. The Kulin district is not as early as the others to which we are now giving attention. In the eastern belt, around Merredin, Yilgarn, and the Southern Cross areas, wheat has been ready for stripping for over a week. I understand that harvesting has already started there.

Mr. Corboy: Strange to say, they are a little late but they have started.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Many farmers in the Yilgarn district are hung up for want of bags.

Mr. Corboy: Yes.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We are not dealing with the late areas but the early ones. In the early areas, where the wheat is ready for stripping, the farmers have not obtained their bags. They cannot afford to be running about getting bags when harvesting should be going on. Such a thing would disorganise the whole of the farming operations. One cannot take a team from the harvester in order to go after bags. They should have been on the farms a week ago.

The Minister for Lands: Why were they not ordered earlier?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: They were ordered. For all the bags on the wharf to-day orders have been received. It is not a question of ordering.

Mr. Sampson: What do you suggest?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I suggest that the Minister should do for farmers outside the Agricultural Bank what he is

doing for those who come within its scope. If a merchant or a bank has a lien over a crop, I want the Minister to be as active in favour of the farmer concerned as he is in the case of the client of the Agricultural Bank. The one should receive the same consideration as the other. I know the Minister has been active, for he and I have discussed the matter. He is certainly attending to those farmers who are under lien to the Agricultural Bank. I am now pleading not for the farmer who is covered by lien under the Agricultural Bank, but the one who is outside that institution. The difficulty is that these people cannot get the cash. The merchants say they must have the cash, or its equivalent, before they can allow the bags to leave the wharf. I want the Minister not only to see the Jute Association, but to get in touch with the merchants.

The Minister for Lands: I have just been in touch with some of them.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We are a week late already. I hope the Minister will not delay another moment.

The Minister for Lands: I will attend to the matter in the morning.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: On that assurance, and with the leave of the House, I shall withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

MOTION—PRINTING OF BILLS.

To Amend Joint Standing Orders.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [5.7]: I move—

1. That Nos. 4 and 7 of the Joint Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly be amended by the insertion of the words "or other suitable material" after the word "vellum" in lines 1 and 3 respectively.

2. That the resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Council and its concurrence desired therein.

The Standing Orders provide that any Bill which has passed both Houses of Parliament shall be fair printed by the Government Printer, who shall furnish three fair prints thereof on vellum to the Clerk of Parliaments, and when the Governor has assented to such Bill one of the fair prints thereof on vellum shall be deposited by the

Clerk of Parliaments with the Registrar of the Supreme Court. We are now unable to procure vellum, and it is essential we should substitute some other form of paper for it. It is proposed to use the paper on which Crown grants are issued. It is English hand-made paper of a substantial character and is, in fact, the best procurable in the world. As the matter is urgent, I respectfully ask the House to make the necessary amendment as outlined in the motion, so that the Government Printer may be able to get on with the work. It is necessary he should have authority to-morrow for this purpose because there are many Bills passing through both Houses continuously. In order that he shall have the necessary authority to print them on the new paper, I hope the House will pass this motion.

Question put and passed, and the resolution accordingly transmitted to the Council.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1, Bees.

Returned to the Council with an amendment.

2, Roads Closure.

3, Vexatious Proceedings Restriction.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. G. Latham—York) [5.12] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has a three-fold purpose. The first empowers the bank to raise money at a higher rate of interest than it has statutory power to do at present. Under Section 17 of the Agricultural Bank Act of 1906, the Treasurer has power to sign bonds to provide capital for the Agricultural Bank, and the rate of interest is fixed at 4 per cent. It is now proposed to ask the House to agree to the raising of the interest to 6 per cent. as there is no longer any 4 per cent. money available for

the purpose. A few months ago it was necessary to obtain a short-dated loan from the Commonwealth Bank for the assistance of farmers. We were able to get £200,000 of that money. Of this £100,000 is repayable on the 30th June, 1931, and a similar amount is repayable on the 31st March, 1932. The rate of interest is at 6 per cent. In order to give the Government the authority to use this money, it is necessary to have this small amendment passed. The Agricultural Bank have commitments in anticipation of the passing of this Bill, and we are anxious to be able to provide the necessary security for the release of this money from the Commonwealth Bank. The Bill also empowers the trustees to carry on a farm or other property on the hands of the bank as the result of abandonment or foreclosure, and to spend money on such farm or property pending sale. Numerous farms are from time to time on the hands of the bank without anyone being in charge, and the principal Act does not allow the trustees to expend any money on keeping the security in order. Therefore legislative authority is asked to allow someone to go on the farm and operate it—fallow, or put in a crop. Fallowing is often necessary in order to keep the country clean. Power is asked to carry on farming operations during the transition period from the property leaving the hands of the mortgagor until it passes to someone else. The promised amendment authorises the trustees to crop or share-farm, and to do all that is necessary for the purpose of maintaining the bank's security. At present it is almost impossible to realise anything near the amounts advanced upon securities, and in order to prevent the securities from deteriorating, someone should be left in charge.

Hon. P. Collier: It looks as if next year the Agricultural Bank will be the only farmer in this State. Another State enterprise!

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am somewhat concerned about that aspect. Further, the Bill proposes to liberalise the amount payable as an equity by an incoming purchaser. At present the equity has to be paid in full. There is no power under the Act to extend payment of the equity. That power is asked for now. Purchasers up to the present have been required to pay cash equal to the estimated value of the equity.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not cash.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Extensions are given now, but there is no legal power to do so. Sometimes there is an equity payable to the mortgagor.

Mr. Willcock: To the farmer going out?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Foreclosure sometimes means that there is an amount of money in improvements which the equity does not carry. Advances may have been made for fallow or super, and these things provide equities though there are no substantial improvements to show for the expenditure. In addition to the mortgage, usually a bill of sale is taken; and often the amount paid is for what is called an equity over and above the fixed mortgage. In such cases the bank is frequently unable to accept a tender, and this may have the effect of reducing the price to a figure at which the property would be saleable if the terms were more liberal. Frequently people come to Western Australia with capital amounting to £300 or £400, and perhaps there is an equity of £1,000 demanded in connection with a farm. The proposed amendment would enable the bank to place such a property with people who would be able to work it.

Mr. Willcock: Do you mean the balance of the equity under the mortgage?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Our mortgage period is 30 years, and the principal is reduced by half-yearly instalments. In all probability the bank require the power to fix a short-date loan for, say, five years, during which the equity will be paid.

Mr. Willcock: But the amount will be added to the bank's mortgage?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Security will be taken for it. Frequently an equity is coming to the man who has left the property. There is the case of a man at Bruce Rock on whom the bank foreclosed, and who took away £2,500 after the bank had realised in full. The property was put up to auction and sold. I think the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) knows the case. As a fact, the farmer was an uncontrollable man.

Hon. P. Collier: The property was good, but the farmer was bad.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. The proposed amendment will benefit a farmer who has to abandon his property.

Hon. P. Collier: There will not be many such cases now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know that. The hon. member is not often pessimistic.

Mr. Willcock: The Agricultural Bank do not often foreclose on such people.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not very often, but there are such cases. From the present attitude of the farmers it seems as if some of them may unnecessarily abandon their properties. The temperament of the farmer now is like that of a man out of work; he does not reason circumspectly. We are also asking that the bank shall have the same power under the Agricultural Bank Act as the Industries Assistance Board have under the Industries Assistance Act—that as soon as advances are made for fertiliser or fallowing, there shall be an automatic lien over the crop. The bank have been advancing for years in such circumstances, and sometimes the farmer refuses to give a bill of sale.

Hon. P. Collier: The bank need not make the advance unless the farmer agrees to the bill of sale.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No; but the bank do make advances, and they cannot take the bill of sale until the crop is in. Often it is impossible for the bank to register on account of other creditors intervening, and consequently advances cannot be made for those purposes. The proposed amendment is designed to give the bank a statutory lien over the crop.

Mr. Angelo: That is the coming crop, from year to year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. It is proposed that as soon as the bank make advances for fallowing, fertiliser or insurance, they shall automatically have a lien. Private firms are getting in and preventing the bank from registering their bill of sale. Therefore we ask for the same authority as is given under the Industries Assistance Act.

Hon. P. Collier: Private creditors may already have liens.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know that the private creditor ought to have a prior lien, seeing that the Government provide fertiliser and funds for fallowing. It can also be claimed that the Agricultural Bank have always been most lenient, and not in any way of a grasping nature or

disposed to take possession of the whole of a farmer's securities without giving thought to other creditors. The merchants will, I believe, agree that the best people they have to deal with are the trustees of the Agricultural Bank, who have before them at all times the welfare of the whole community, and not the welfare of any individual.

Mr. Angelo: Will notice of these liens be given?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS. No.

Mr. Angelo: Then the trader will not have any notification?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No more notification than under the Industries Assistance Act.

Mr. Angelo: I think that is wrong.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In the interests of the bank, which will be expected to do more than other people, it is essential that there should be some protection.

Mr. Angelo: The bank should have protection, but the public should be notified.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The great trouble is that people have been selling the farmer machinery that he could very well do without, and then they have come along and lodged caveats and bills of sale. On the other hand, the advances made by the bank are for absolute essentials. The bank officials do not do anything stupid, such as making advances for tractors or motor cars. The funds the bank advance are advanced in the interests of the merchants themselves.

Mr. Angelo: I am not referring to a notice of intention to register.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think that when the bill of sale is actually registered, notification will be made.

Mr. Angelo: Then that will be all right.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: At all events, I think that is the position. Before the Bill reaches the Committee stage I will ascertain whether it is not possible for the lien to be notified in the *Government Gazette* or elsewhere. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—LAND TAX AND INCOME TAX.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—ROMAN CATHOLIC NEW NORCIA CHURCH PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's amendment.

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th November.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.30]: This is another of those Bills that lead people to believe that something is to be done for a section of the community. In my opinion it is not going to be done at all. The Minister the other night said the primary object of the Bill was to place hospitals on a firmer financial basis. I cannot agree with that, for I think the Bill will make that basis much weaker than it is at present. It is more like a Bill to assist the Treasurer in the raising of revenue than to assist hospitals. We find that £104,000 is cut out of the hospital vote on the Estimates, and that amusements tax to the extent of £35,000 which now goes towards hospitals is put in its place. The Government propose to take a large sum of money that otherwise would have been used for hospitals. The Government should have been honest enough to tell the people that this money to be raised will not be an additional amount towards the hospitals. Actually the Treasurer is so short of funds that he wants to take money from the Estimates and replace it with this amount. If the Bill be passed, all other channels of revenue for the hospitals will be cut off. During the last few years most of the hospitals have had valuable assistance from local committees; but if the Bill goes through, no body any longer will do voluntary work for the hospitals or give voluntary subscriptions to them. Naturally the answer of those people who have given in the past will be that they are now taxed for the support of the hospitals. So all the money that during the past few years has been collected on behalf of the hospitals will be cut off, and in consequence the hospitals will be in a worse position than they were before. For the assistance of the Fremantle Hospital, the people of Fremantle have raised large sums of money. In 1926, £4,780

was collected; in 1927, £3,725; in 1928, £4,517; in 1929, £4,598, and during the last financial year £4,435 was contributed. If the Bill passes, that source of assistance will be cut off and the hospitals will have to maintain themselves on the funds collected under the Bill. At present the Fremantle Hospital is showing a financial leeway of £5,000 per annum. Yet under the Bill it will receive less than it is getting to-day. Maintenance of hospitals should be the first charge against Consolidated Revenue, for there can be no more important work than the work of a hospital. Under the Bill the Fremantle Hospital, instead of having a chance to make up its annual leeway of £5,000, will find itself in a worse condition than it is now. I am in this position: If I vote for the second reading and let the Bill get into Committee, I will not then have any chance of getting back for the hospitals that £104,000 which has been cut off; I will not be allowed to move that that be restored, for the estimates are disposed of. So it seems to me the best thing we can do is to vote against the second reading. Then if the Bill be defeated the Government will be compelled to restore that £104,000 taken from the hospitals. So I will vote against the second reading.

HON. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.35]: I am going to oppose the Bill for the reasons advanced by the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie). After examining the figures, I am convinced that under the Bill the financial position of the hospitals will not be improved by so much as £1. The principal object of the Bill unquestionably is not so much to aid the hospitals as to relieve the Treasurer of the payment of £104,000 per annum. It amounts to an increase in the income tax for the purpose of benefiting Consolidated Revenue. It would have been much clearer and more easily understood by the public if the Government had come forward with a proposal for an increase in the income tax because the financial position of the State required additional revenue. To bring down under the guise of a hospital tax a taxation proposal for the benefit of the Treasurer is misleading to the public. Even taking the estimated revenue from this measure, the hospitals will benefit only to the extent of £52,000 per annum. And that is assuming that the same amount is obtained from col-

lections as has been obtained in the past. But there can be no question that the voluntary contributions will fall off, I will not say completely, but certainly very largely. People will not contribute voluntarily when they are forced to pay by way of a tax. So if the Bill passes we shall have the same position as exists to-day, the conducting of art unions and sweeps, and all those methods that for so many years past have been employed for the purpose of raising revenue for the hospitals. They will continue in the future, and still the hospitals will not benefit to the extent of £1 as the result of the passing of the Bill. I have no doubt whatever that the section of the general public who interest themselves in the maintenance of our hospitals would strongly protest against the provisions of this Bill if they were aware of them. But no doubt a great majority of the people believe that the estimated revenue of £156,000 is going to the maintenance of our hospitals as an addition to what they enjoy to-day.

The Minister for Health: I did not say that.

HON. P. COLLIER: No, of course not, but that is what is in the minds of the public. They think that all this money is to go to the hospitals in addition to the amount that has been provided on the Revenue Estimates from year to year. But that is not so. All that will go to the hospitals is £52,000. It is true the Minister mentioned that the whole amount would be paid into a hospital fund. So it will; not £52,000, but £156,000 will be paid into the hospital fund. But while that amount is paid in with one hand, £104,000 will be taken away with the other hand.

The Minister for Health: Not taken away: it will not be put in.

HON. P. COLLIER: It will not be put in, which is merely expressing it in another way, that is all. We will refrain from putting in that £104,000, which has been put in for years past, leaving a net amount of £52,000 for the hospitals. And that is assuming that there will be collected for the hospitals in voluntary contributions the same amount as has been collected in past years. But unquestionably it will not be so. Consequently our hospitals will be left in the chronic state of starvation that has been their lot for so many years past, and the springs of philanthropy will dry up as the result of people being compelled to pay

taxes for the support of the hospitals. So we shall still have the position that has obtained for many years, the hospitals begging for money, having to close some of their wards, and the same methods of collecting money about the streets—and this without any benefit whatever. It would have been fairer had the Government come down and said, "We require another £100,000 to enable us to balance the ledger this year, so we will increase income tax to the extent of raising that amount."

Mr. Kenneally: Then those near the basic wage would not have to pay so heavily.

Hon. P. COLLIER: And then the tax would be levied on the same basis as we levy the income tax at present, on what is regarded as an equitable basis, on the ability to pay; with all the exemptions that exist in our income taxation scheme on the basis accepted for many years past as being equitable. But under the Bill the people are to be taxed on an inequitable basis, taxed from the very lowest upwards, because they believe the whole of the proceeds will go to the hospitals. They would never agree to this basis of taxation were it not for hospital purposes. When they discover that it is not so after all, that it is merely another means of raising money for the benefit of Consolidated Revenue to the extent of £104,000, they will see that it is not an equitable way to do it. Whatever increases might be necessary in order to raise £104,000 ought to be put forward in the income tax—if it is essential that the Government should have this amount—not in the guise of a hospital tax getting £104,000 for the benefit of the Treasury.

Mr. Angelo: The same men will collect it, so it does not matter very much.

Hon. P. COLLIER: It matters a great deal when you put forward a tax for hospital purposes under which the hospitals are not going to be any better off than they are to-day.

Mr. Corboy: They are going to be a lot worse off.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Then if they are worse off, they will have to close up more of their wards. Certainly under the Bill they will not be any better provided with money than they are to-day. Yet we are solemnly passing a Bill to provide a hospital tax to raise £156,000, only to find that the hospitals will be no better off than if the Bill were not passed at all. We shall

be exactly where we are to-day. It is not a fair method at all. Whilst we on this side did put forward a Bill for a tax for hospital purposes, it was vastly different from this Bill. The only resemblance between this and that Bill is the amount of the tax. There the resemblance ends.

The Minister for Health: The exemptions were the same.

Mr. Munsie: No.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I certainly cannot support this Bill, and I hope it will not go through. Members should examine it most carefully. The effect of it will be to mislead the public, to mislead all those authorities that are governing the hospitals, to mislead anybody who has ever taken any interest in the maintenance of the hospitals. We shall be misleading them by putting this Bill through, for the hospitals will be in just the same position financially as in the past. I hope the Bill will not go through. I will oppose it.

MR. CORBOY (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [5.45]: I also intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill. As a matter of fact the Minister is very optimistic if he believes that the revenue he expects to get for the year is going to be anything like what he estimates if the Bill is passed. First of all he is counting on the continuance of certain revenues outside those that will be derived under the Bill, and there is no doubt about it, particularly in my own district, and with which I am conversant, many of the sources of revenue which the Government have enjoyed for years past will dry up at once if the Bill is carried. Let me be parochial and explain the position as far as my own electorate is concerned, and show what will probably happen. We have at the present time a hospital which is neither a Government nor a public hospital. It is not even a private hospital. It belongs to the department, but it is leased to a nurse and by arrangement she charges whatever fees she likes.

The Minister for Health: She does not.

Mr. CORBOY: I say she does.

The Minister for Health: All right, we shall see.

Mr. CORBOY: I will put it another way: she chooses her cases.

The Minister for Health: Does she? We can deal with that.

Mr. CORBOY: Yes, and I regret to say that so long as she can be sure of getting

the maternity bonus fiver, nobody else can get a look in. It is a private hospital to all intents and purposes, and the Government pay her an annual subsidy to keep the hospital open. Because it is a private hospital that she is running for her own personal benefit, a medical officer has no power to order anyone into it, or even out of it. The nurse who is running it can please herself in that respect. What I wish to emphasise is that the Government pay a certain subsidy to the hospitals, amounting to £104,000 a year. That sum has appeared on the Estimates in the past. Also the Southern Cross doctor has received a subsidy, but £50 has been cut off that, and he now receives £300 per annum. In order to make it worth while for the doctor to remain in the district, the Medical Fund of Southern Cross—to which most people in the place contribute—pays him another £300 per annum. In addition the doctor gets fees from patients who are outside the fund. If the Bill is carried, I can see that the first thing that will happen will be that the hospital will go, because in the Bill there is no provision for the payment to any institution other than a public hospital.

The Minister for Health: I will guarantee that the hospital will get its subsidy just the same.

Mr. CORBOY: The Minister will need to amend his Bill to do that, because it provides that the money that is raised can only be paid to public hospitals. Let the Minister look at Clause 13 and see for himself.

The Minister for Health: Look at the Hospitals Act.

Mr. CORBOY: I am looking at Clause 13 of the Bill, and there it is provided that the funds to be raised shall be applied only to public hospitals.

The Minister for Health: You will find that yours is a public hospital.

Mr. CORBOY: If the Minister is right, we shall require a little more control over it than we have at present. No one can order a patient into that hospital to-day.

The Minister for Health: I am surprised at what you are saying; you could easily have brought it under notice.

Mr. CORBOY: It has been brought under notice, and if the Minister will consult the head of his department he will find that the matter has been brought up repeatedly. Mr. Huelin has told us that

the Government subsidy to this institution is for the purpose of treating indigent patients. Outside of indigents, we cannot do anything, because it is a private hospital. Anyway I am glad to have the assurance of the Minister that if the Bill is carried the subsidy will continue. All the same, I hope the Bill will not be carried. We have a populous district, and the nearest doctor, apart from the doctor in the district, is over 70 miles away, and it is obvious to us that if the Bill is carried it will definitely kill our medical fund which at the present time is keeping the doctor in the district. It is no use the Minister shrugging his shoulders, because it is perfectly true that the people will not pay the tax under this Bill and contribute to the fund to keep the doctor with us.

The Minister for Health: They are two separate things.

Mr. CORBOY: From our point of view it is only one; if the Bill is carried we shall not have a doctor unless the Minister says that he is going to provide medical services. The Bill will have the inevitable effect of taking away the medical facilities we have always enjoyed. I wonder whether the Minister will give me another assurance. As I have said, the doctor receives £300 and the Medical Fund is responsible for the payment of another £300. Unless the £600 is forthcoming, it will not be possible to keep a doctor there.

The Minister for Health: I will not pay one penny-piece to the doctor at Southern Cross beyond what he is getting to-day.

Mr. CORBOY: You have not the power to pay anything to-day. The subsidy was £104,000 per annum, and there is no power under the Bill to pay anything to the doctor. I have a communication from the chairman of the Medical Fund in Southern Cross, asking me to oppose the Bill. Surely the Minister must realise that when men devote a great part of their time to the medical services of the district, they are justified in expressing alarm when they find that those services are going to be restricted by legislation. Unless the Minister is prepared to give me a guarantee that he will pay £600 to enable us to retain the services of a doctor—

The Minister for Health: I will not.

Mr. CORBOY: Very well, it means the death of the medical fund, and we shall lose our doctor. Does the Minister consider that the Bill will have the effect of

improving medical services? Our unfortunate position is that apart from the doctor in Southern Cross the nearest doctor is over 70 miles away. We have women in the district who in their hour of trouble put up with conditions that are hardly imaginable. If we compel them to travel another 70 or 80 miles to secure medical or hospital attention, we shall make the position for those women absolutely intolerable. It is not the tax that I object to; it is the fact that the facilities offered in exchange are no good to us. The Bill will kill country medical services altogether, because the people will not pay the tax to the Government and contribute to a medical fund every week. They will say, "No, we are paying a tax to the Government now."

The Minister for Health: We never have provided a doctor under the conditions you mention.

Mr. CORBOY: I am telling the Minister that he will take away the doctor from us. I do not wish to be parochial, but I ask the Minister whether the Bill is not entirely one for the Perth and Fremantle hospitals.

Mr. Panton: It will not be much good for the Perth Hospital.

Mr. CORBOY: And I can assure the Minister it will be no good for country hospitals.

Hon. P. Collier: It is purely a Treasury Bill.

Mr. CORBOY: I am endeavouring to find out what the Minister proposes to do for the hospitals. I contend that the Bill will destroy medical funds in the country.

Mr. Munsie: It will be of no benefit whatever to the hospitals.

Mr. CORBOY: None at all. I have a letter with me that I will hand over to the Minister afterwards. I would like him to go through it. It is from the Medical Fund at Southern Cross, and he will realise from it that we will certainly lose our doctor there, and probably also the hospital, if the Bill is carried. The Bill will destroy the hospital committees and in our case the committee has been in existence for over 29 years. Those who are members of it have carried out their work without fee or reward. The Bill will wipe them out, and the Minister offers nothing in their place. The Minister does not appear to realise what he is going to do; the Bill will re-act against the medical services at present in

existence. It is obvious that the Bill has been inspired from the Treasury for the purpose of relieving the Treasury of the burden of finding £100,000 a year, and the Bill is called a hospital Bill to create the impression that it is for the purpose of benefiting hospitals, whereas it is merely an attempt to delude the public. I hope it will be defeated.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. N. Keenan—Nedlands) [5.58]: The hon. member who has just resumed his seat is apparently under the impression that hospitals in country districts will not come within the purview of the Bill. It is perfectly clear that they will, because a public hospital is defined as being any hospital to which a contribution is made from State funds. The hospital in the hon. member's district is one of that character, and therefore, if money is available for distribution, it is one of the hospitals to which that money can be applied. From that point of view, I think the hon. member is labouring under a misconception.

Mr. Corboy: I am satisfied with the Deputy Premier's assurance about the hospital, but what about the doctor?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Last year, when the present Leader of the Opposition was Treasurer, he made available, from the public revenue, £100,000, and he exceeded that amount by £4,000. He was in the position to do that. Can anyone imagine that such a sum can be found from revenue this year? It is obvious that the money must be obtained from some other source.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes; get it by direct taxation, but do not call this a hospital tax.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If, in fact, we are rendering a service, surely we are entitled to collect at least a portion of the expenses for that service.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But you are not rendering a service.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The other evening one hon. member, when discussing the Bill, said that it would be just as logical to impose an education tax. That is a different matter altogether. Education is made compulsory; ill-health is not compulsory.

Mr. Panton: But it is a State obligation to look after the sick.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is a service rendered.

Mr. Munsie: So is education.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But that is compulsory.

Mr. Munsie: It is a service rendered.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: And if one tax is justified, the other must be.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not intend to enter into a controversy with the hon. member regarding how far education differs from work of this description. Of course, it is a service rendered. It is a service when we carry a person in a railway train. When the Government do anything else for the people it is a service, and undoubtedly we are rendering a service to those who have no money, or, at any rate, very little of it. It is our duty to humanity to do so. That is why hospitals have been founded for the purpose of rendering that service free. That position is not at all comparable with such a matter as education.

Mr. Corboy: Why not tax the man who gets run in by the police?

Mr. Munsie: Magistrates tax him on occasions.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Every day the people enjoy the protection of the police force.

Mr. Corboy: But why not tax the fellow who is run in because he makes the police force necessary?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The police force exists for the purpose of protecting the people generally, and not because a burglar may break into a person's house. There is no comparison there at all. In connection with the hospitals, there is a specific service. As, in fact, we know that in many instances those who are deserving of the service cannot pay for it, we are required, to that extent, to provide free hospitals. It is within the proper province of the House to ask that the contribution shall be of a reasonable character, so that the contribution shall not become too heavy a burden. To reject the Bill because it asks for the payment of a small contribution for services rendered, would be most illogical and most unjust.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [6.3]: To my mind the Bill is overdue, and should have been introduced long before now. I am surprised at the opposition offered to the measure.

Hon. P. Collier: You do not understand the Bill.

Mr. BROWN: If the measure will benefit the hospitals, what possible opposition can there be to it?

Hon. P. Collier: You do not understand it.

Mr. Raphael: Would you expect him to?

Mr. BROWN: Perhaps I do not understand it, but perhaps the Opposition do not. I hope they will understand it.

Mr. Munsie: Of course you do not.

Mr. BROWN: I have been long enough in this House to appreciate the tactics of the Opposition; they are out to camouflage the real position, and throw dust in the eyes of the people.

Hon. P. Collier: On a point of order. I ask that the member for Pingelly withdraw his statement that the Opposition throw dust in the eyes of the people.

Mr. Munsie: It is the Minister and the Government who are doing that by means of the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has taken exception to the remark made by the member for Pingelly and I must ask him to withdraw it.

Mr. BROWN: I withdraw the statement.

The Minister for Lands: On a point of order, I desire to take exception to the remark of the member for Hannans, who made a similar statement reflecting on the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: I did not hear the hon. member make that statement. The member for Pingelly may proceed.

Mr. BROWN: The Bill proposes to levy a tax of 1½d. in the pound. What is wrong with that?

Mr. Munsie: We have told you what is wrong.

Mr. BROWN: If a person receives £1 a week, what does a 1½d. stamp on his receipt mean to him? I would like to ask the Opposition members this question: Who will receive the greatest benefit from the public hospitals?

Hon. P. Collier: No one on the Opposition benches spoke against the tax.

Mr. Munsie: We did not mention it.

Hon. P. Collier: I told the hon. member he did not understand the position. We have not opposed the tax itself.

Mr. McCallum: He does not understand the position at all.

Mr. BROWN: I will explain why I consider the action of the Government is justified. Consider the men who have large incomes. They will pay the larger proportion of the tax and there is not the slightest doubt that they will not go to the public hospitals, but will receive treatment in private hospitals.

Mr. Panton: Those people would not be allowed to have treatment in public hospitals.

Mr. BROWN: Those in receipt of the basic wage will receive the greatest benefit from the institutions.

Mr. Raphael: And it is the Treasury that will receive the greatest benefit from the Bill.

Mr. BROWN: No.

Mr. Raphael: People will go into hospital the same as ever.

Mr. BROWN: All Governments have a peculiar system of bookkeeping that cannot be understood by the average citizen. When the Leader of the Opposition was Premier and Treasurer, it was most remarkable that in the last month of the financial year we always found we had an enormous surplus, whereas in the following month there was a deficit of £200,000 or more.

Hon. P. Collier: That has been the position for 20 years or more.

Mr. BROWN: That may be so.

Hon. P. Collier: Then why say that when I was Treasurer that was the position?

Mr. BROWN: Why did you adopt that system?

Hon. P. Collier: You said that was my system.

Mr. Munsie: At any rate, the hon. member will find that the position will be just as he suggested at the end of the present financial year.

Mr. BROWN: Why should the Opposition say that the money raised under the Bill will go into Consolidated Revenue, seeing that we have had the assurance of the Minister that the whole of the tax will be for the purposes of our hospitals?

Mr. Munsie: Of course it will not be used that way.

Mr. BROWN: But he made that statement the other evening! Is it possible that we cannot accept the word of the Minister?

Mr. Munsie: Well, you wait and see.

Mr. BROWN: Evidently, the Opposition do not accept the Minister's word.

Hon. P. Collier: We said that £165,000 will go into Consolidated Revenue, but that £106,000 will go out, leaving something like £56,000 only.

Mr. BROWN: Then on the admission of the Leader of the Opposition, we will have £56,000 more than we had before.

Hon. P. Collier: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. BROWN: No doubt if the Leader of the Opposition were in the Treasurer's shoes now, he would be scratching his head to think of means of getting more taxation out of the people.

Hon. P. Collier: You are hopeless.

Mr. BROWN: I sincerely believe the Bill will be the means of providing a greater amount of money for hospitals than we have had in the past.

Mr. Munsie: You wait until the Bill is in operation, and then you will find out.

Mr. Panton: How will you get the money?

Mr. BROWN: At present our hospitals are maintained partly by Government subsidies and partly by money collected from the public.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You will not get that under the Bill.

Mr. BROWN: Why not? If there is not sufficient money coming in for the upkeep of a hospital, surely the people in the locality can hold fetes and other functions in order to raise money for their particular institution. It does not matter how it is raised. The most surprising thing to me is that in the Opposition we have representatives of what I might describe as the poorer class of the people, and it is that class that will receive the greatest benefit from the Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: You do not know what is in the Bill; you have not studied a line of it.

Mr. BROWN: It is easy to offer destructive criticism and for the Leader of the Opposition to say the Bill is no good, and that the money will not go towards the hospitals. Can he suggest anything better?

Mr. Munsie: Yes, leave the position as it is now.

Mr. BROWN: The Leader of the Opposition admits that we will get £56,000 more than was obtained before.

Mr. McCallum: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. BROWN: When the Bill was first introduced I thought it was a splendid thing, and throughout the length and breadth of the country I have heard the measure commended.

Hon. P. Collier: That is because they do not know what the Bill contains.

Mr. Munsie: They think the £165,000 is an additional sum. They will not get anything like that amount.

Mr. BROWN: That is most surprising! Who are the people to believe?

Mr. Munsie: They will believe me at the end of 12 months, if the Bill is passed.

Mr. BROWN: The ex-Minister for Health, Mr. Munsie, was instrumental in establishing a large number of hospitals throughout the State. At one period I believe we really had too many hospitals. Every little township was encouraged to establish a hospital.

Mr. Munsie: The centres had to be 25 miles apart.

Mr. BROWN: In other parts of Australia the position is different. In the district where I came from in Victoria, the hospital served a district in which 70,000 or 80,000 persons lived.

Mr. Panton: Victoria is only 25 miles across!

Mr. BROWN: In this State a hospital serves a population of 500 or 600 souls. That is asking too much altogether.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid the hon. member is wandering beyond the four corners of the Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: He is wandering to the four corners of Australia.

Mr. BROWN: The question is, will the money to be raised be devoted to Consolidated Revenue?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: How will you get on about the Kondinin hospital?

Mr. BROWN: The Government have promised that they will provide money for the hospitals; what is wrong with that?

Mr. Munsie: Why are the Government not honest and tell the people that they want £100,000 for Consolidated Revenue and take steps to get it?

Mr. BROWN: It is easy for the Opposition to advise an increase in income tax, but who will pay the added impost?

Mr. Collier: It is the same thing. Who will pay the tax under the Bill?

Mr. BROWN: Under the Labour Government's Bill, the money went into the Consolidated Revenue.

Mr. Munsie: No, not one penny piece of it.

Mr. BROWN: I do not think that is so.

Mr. Munsie: It is, and you are being prompted by a man who knows that what he is telling you is perfectly untrue.

Mr. BROWN: I am not being prompted.

Mr. Munsie: Yes, you are.

Mr. BROWN: The Bill is a good one and we should support it unanimously. If not, what can we put in its place?

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. BROWN: I have very little to add. Under the Bill the Minister will have a lot more money and will not have to depend on the Treasurer as in the past, for there will be a fund for him to draw upon. Members of the Opposition say that fund will be not more than £56,000. Even that shows conclusively that there is going to be more money than at present. As for its going into Consolidated Revenue, nearly all the funds go into that, and the Minister controlling the fund then draws upon it. Under the Bill a man on the basic wage will have the right to demand free treatment in any public hospital, whereas to-day he is admitted to such institutions as an act of charity. Under the Bill such a man will have a perfect right to free treatment.

Mr. Munsie: Where is that to be found in the Bill?

Mr. BROWN: It is what the Bill is intended for.

Mr. Munsie: Nothing of the kind. All it provides is that a man on the basic wage will not be compelled to contribute to the fund. In a hospital he will be charged the same as anybody else.

Mr. BROWN: I understand he is to have free hospital treatment for the reason that he will be contributing to the fund; so, a working man with a wife and family will receive a greater benefit than he gets to-day. Clearly the Bill is going to do a great deal of good. I fail to see how country hospitals will not get a fairer deal than they have had in the past.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Show us how and where. Give us some details.

Mr. BROWN: All hospitals will benefit under the Bill. To-day we have committee hospitals, which are not in the same category as public hospitals, which are maintained solely by the Government.

Mr. Munsie: No. Government hospitals are, but not public hospitals.

Mr. BROWN: In the Perth Hospital fees are charged against any man who can afford to pay them, but under the Bill a man who cannot afford to pay fees will be able to go into that hospital and be treated free because he has contributed to the fund.

Mr. Sleeman: Not everyone who contributes to the fund can get free treatment in a hospital.

Mr. BROWN: No, because some of them can afford to pay.

Mr. Sleeman: And so they will get no benefit.

Mr. BROWN: The Bill will not benefit those who can afford to pay hospital fees. It would be to my personal advantage if the Bill were thrown out, but I think that in the interests of humanity we should pass it. Even a young girl on £1 a week will not begrudge 1½d. for the hospital tax. I am surprised that there should be any opposition at all to the Bill, and I trust the second reading will go through. If there should be found in the measure any anomalies, we can remedy them in Committee. I will support the second reading.

MR. PANTON (Leederville) [7.36]: I am surprised that the Leader of the Country Party, the member for Pingelly, should have said—

Mr. Brown: That is a mistake.

Mr. PANTON: Well, if not the Leader of the Country Party, the leader of the cross benches. It is obvious that whatever the member for Pingelly may know about the Bill, he knows very little about public hospitals in the metropolitan area. I should like the Minister, when replying to the debate, to clear up the member for Pingelly's contention that any man on the basic wage who is a contributor under the Bill shall have the right to go to the Perth Hospital for free treatment.

The Minister for Health: Yes.

Mr. PANTON: The Minister says "Yes." If that is so, it would be interesting to my colleagues on the board of management of the Perth Hospital to learn how the Minis-

ter proposes to pay that hospital for those people who will be accorded free treatment. The Perth Hospital has a schedule of regulations under statutory authority which makes certain people eligible and others ineligible to enter the hospital. Those who go in there for treatment are debited with 8s. per day whilst there, and the actual income received from patients averages 2s. 10d. per day. So we have to write off about £30,000 per annum for people who enter the Perth Hospital and can only afford to pay, not 8s., but 2s. 10d. per day. The Bill introduced by the late Government provided that patients entering the Perth Hospital would be paid for out of the fund at the rate of 6s. per day. If under this Bill all on the basic wage are eligible to enter the Perth Hospital, I should like to know how they are going to be paid for; is the Minister going to pay for them out of the fund to be constituted under the Bill?

Hon. P. Collier: If so, you will not even get 2s. 10d. per day, you will get nothing.

Mr. PANTON: Because if so, the Perth Hospital will be in a better position than it occupies to-day. But I fail to see that, under the Bill, the charges will be paid. The Minister must know that after he subtracts the amount on the Estimates and the amount derived from the amusements tax and paid into the hospital fund, there will remain nothing like the amount the hospitals are getting to-day?

The Minister for Health: There will be more. That is counteracted by the fees now paid into Consolidated Revenue from all the public hospitals.

Mr. PANTON: As a matter of fact, the Perth Hospital pays none of its fees into Consolidated Revenue. Last year we received £37,000 from the Government and £48,000 from other sources, including the fees. If this tax comes into operation, except for the 2s. 10d. per day averaged in fees, the money will be very difficult to obtain at all; because, as the member for Hannans has said, those people who are taxed for the maintenance of the hospitals are not likely voluntarily to subscribe to the hospitals. Having put in nine or ten years as a member of the Perth Hospital Board, I am anxious to support any scheme that will be of assistance to the hospitals. The Minister says this is a good scheme. It is, for

the Treasurer; but I want to see something that will be of advantage to the hospitals. In the Perth Hospital we instituted a scheme under which we endeavoured to obtain a number of voluntary subscribers of 6d. per week, for which we gave them hospital treatment. We have, or rather, before so many people were out of work, we had, something like £5,000 per annum from this source. Under the Bill, people who, the Minister says, will be able to come into the Perth Hospital free of charge are not likely to contribute 6d. per week with a view to securing treatment. So we can say there will be something like £5,000 per annum less revenue coming into the hospitals from that source. I hope the Minister when replying will be able to convince me that he proposes to pay the Perth Hospital an amount equivalent to the average of those people who were contributing.

The Minister for Health: If they are below the basic wage.

Mr. PANTON: Very few that are over the basic wage come into the Perth Hospital; because we have at the discretion of those admitting patients into the hospital, a figure prescribing who can come in and who cannot come in. At the same time the number of people admitted to the Perth Hospital is regulated by the number of beds available. Under existing conditions, the capacity of the Perth Hospital is overtaxed by 142 beds. That is because owing to the number of men out of work and the number working half-time, a large additional number have become eligible to enter the hospital.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Is not that the position in every hospital?

Mr. PANTON: It may be so, which makes the position worse.

Mr. H. W. Mann: It is so in the Children's Hospital.

Mr. PANTON: Of course it is, and I suppose the same thing obtains in every hospital in the metropolitan area. But that makes it the more essential that nothing should be done to increase the number coming into the hospitals. I am afraid the Bill is going to do a great deal more harm than good. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Corboy) and the member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) spoke from the point of view of the country hospitals. I want to tell

them that 25 per cent. of the patients in the Perth Hospital come from the country.

Mr. Corboy: But most of mine go to either Merredin or Kellerberrin, still country hospitals.

Mr. PANTON: I am not concerned about that. The Perth Hospital is the up-to-date hospital. It is equipped with all the necessary X-ray plant and is attended by the best specialists in an honorary capacity. Consequently, when the doctor in places like Kellerberrin and Southern Cross find a major operation necessary, he sends the patient to the place where the best conveniences are provided, and that is the Perth Hospital.

Mr. Corboy: And properly so.

Mr. PANTON: Hence the Perth Hospital is not merely a metropolitan hospital.

Mr. Munsie: It is a Western Australian hospital.

Mr. PANTON: That is so. Perhaps the Minister will tell me how he intends to meet the demands on the Perth Hospital arising from motor accidents. At present from 40 to 44 persons a week are taken to the Perth Hospital for treatment of injuries received in motor accidents.

The Minister for Health: We shall have some remedy for that next year.

Mr. PANTON: But the Perth Hospital is falling into arrears to the extent of £600 to £800 a month. We have been told by the Treasurer that we must make ends meet, and so I want to know what the Minister proposes to do to-day.

Mr. Parker: Pass this Bill.

Mr. PANTON: How will that prevent motor hogs from running people down? Will it prevent people from seeking treatment at the Perth Hospital? As it is, they are brought to the hospital for treatment, and nobody is responsible for the accident or for the payment of the hospital expenses.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Under the Bill every factory girl will have to pay 1½d. a week.

Mr. PANTON: Yes, and the factory girl is now paying 6d. a week.

Mr. Parker: Then she will pay 7½d.

Mr. PANTON: No. She will take the word of the Minister and say she can get treatment for 1½d. so that the Perth Hospital will lose revenue to the extent of £5,000 a year. The Minister has told us that we can expect no further hospital subsidy this year. Consequently the Perth

Hospital is in for a very bad time. The board of management are interested in their work; their services are honorary; but if they are called upon to do all the worrying over the financial position, I am afraid they will be handing the job over to the Minister.

Mr. Sleeman: And the Perth Hospital is not on its own in that respect.

Mr. PANTON: The member for Fremantle can speak for the hospital in his district. Another question agitating my mind is that of the hours worked by nurses in the Perth Hospital. During the last 10 years I have done my utmost to secure a reduction of hours for the nurses. The hours have been reduced from 60 to 50 or 52 per week, and the only reason why the nurses are working such long hours at present is that we cannot obtain the money necessary to employ a sufficient number of nurses to enable the hours to be reduced. When the Minister intimated his intention to introduce a hospital Bill, we were under the impression that, as the necessary quarters had been built to house the additional nurses, funds would be provided to permit of an increase of staff so that the nurses would be able to work the reasonable hours asked of other people. I am afraid that the nurses of the Perth Hospital must continue to work 50 or 52 hours a week, owing to lack of funds.

Mr. Corboy: The Bill will force them back to 60 hours a week.

Mr. PANTON: I would sooner see a ward closed than that such a thing should happen. So far as I am concerned, the nurses will not revert to the 60 hours a week, even if we have to close up one or two wards.

Mr. Corboy: Hear, hear!

Mr. PANTON: If it became necessary to close up a couple of wards, the people of the State would realise what was being asked of the Perth Hospital nurses. No member of this House should expect or ask any girl to work 52 hours a week.

The Minister for Health: We are not doing it.

Mr. PANTON: Of course the Government are, because there is not sufficient money to enable the required number of nurses to be employed.

The Minister for Health: But the number of nurses has been increased in the last six months.

Mr. PANTON: No, not for the last three years.

The Minister for Health: Then do not blame us.

Mr. PANTON: If this Bill be passed, those nurses will have to continue to work 50 or 52 hours a week.

The Minister for Health: We will put you off the board if you increase their hours.

Mr. PANTON: It would not be difficult to do that; I do not intend to go grey-headed or bald-headed by worrying over hospital finance. The Minister should be doing that, and he is not going to pass over his job to me. The Bill will lead people to believe that, by contributing 1½d. in the pound, hospital accommodation will be provided for them, but when they learn that the Government intend to take much of the money away, they will want to know all about it. The opposition from this side of the House is not directed against the tax or the amount of the tax. The opposition is based on the fact that people are being asked to contribute 1½d. in the pound towards a hospital fund, though every member of the House knows that £104,000 has been taken out of the Medical Vote, while £30,000 odd out of the amusement tax that was previously allotted to hospitals is to be paid into Consolidated Revenue. Of the £156,000 estimated to be raised under this measure, £134,000 will go back into Consolidated Revenue. Obviously the present Minister has based the amount likely to be realised from the tax on the estimate of his predecessor.

The Minister for Health: No, he estimated £217,000. We have reduced it to £156,000.

Mr. PANTON: Unless the Government take action in the direction of providing employment for some of the people, the amount realised will be a great deal less.

The Minister for Health: We shall do that if we can get the money.

Mr. PANTON: Perhaps the Government intend to take the money from the hospital tax?

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. PANTON: Then what do the Government propose to do with the £134,000? They estimate to receive £156,000 from the hospital tax, and they propose to give the hospitals £134,000 less from revenue. It amounts to the same thing. Having been on the Perth Hospital board for 10 years and taken a keen interest in hospital work, I am prepared to support any Government in enacting a reasonable scheme to finance

the hospitals. Anyone who has been associated with hospital work must realise the necessity for passing legislation to benefit the hospitals, but I am afraid the people will be very disappointed with this measure, more particularly those people who are members of hospital boards. Much as I regret it, I must vote against the second reading, because I am convinced the measure will be of no benefit to the hospitals. As a matter of fact, it will be detrimental.

MR. KENNEALLY (East Perth) [7.53]: In the previous Parliament a measure was introduced to deal with hospitals, and under it the then Government proposed to tax the people to the extent of 1½d. in the pound. A certain amount of revenue was estimated from that source, and it was proposed to give some return to the people who were taxed, so that when they went into a hospital for treatment, the cost of it would be met out of the tax. The measure before us is entirely different. It is proposed by means of a tax of 1½d. in the pound to raise a certain amount of revenue from the people, but, instead of giving them hospital treatment in return, it is provided that a person, if married and receiving up to £230 a year, or if single and receiving up to £156 a year will be entitled on a declaration of poverty to receive treatment. I wish to direct attention to the position of a married man who is receiving just a little more than the basic rate. Under the previous measure, if a married man was receiving £2 or £3 above the basic rate and had six or seven children, he would have been entitled by virtue of having paid the tax to receive free hospital treatment for himself and his family. Under this measure he will be taxed, but he will have to pay full fees for any hospital treatment he or his family might require. That measure of relief under the previous Bill applied to both public and prescribed hospitals. There is no reference to prescribed hospitals in this Bill. Not only did the previous Bill provide for hospital treatment, but no matter which hospital was selected, the patient would have been relieved of expense to the extent of 6s. per day out of the taxation collected. The Government propose to tax the people to the same extent—1½d. in the pound—but intend to benefit Consolidated Revenue rather than the hospital fund. The Chief Secretary, in defending the attitude of the Government for collecting the

money by way of a special tax and not devoting it to hospital purposes, said it was the same as the police service to the community. Do the Government propose to introduce a taxation measure to pay for the police service? If not, where is the logic of the Chief Secretary's argument? Here we have a Bill, ostensibly a hospital Bill, but it makes provision for money to be paid into Consolidated Revenue, and almost to the extent that money is paid into Consolidated Revenue, Consolidated Revenue is relieved from the present expenditure for hospitals. If there is anything in the argument of the Chief Secretary, this measure should be followed by a Bill to provide a police tax, and by measures to provide taxation to meet other special expenditure.

Mr. Angelo: You should not suggest those things to the Government.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The member for Gascoyne would tremble at the idea.

Mr. Angelo: I am trembling now.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I am favourable to financing hospitals by means of direct taxation. That is why I supported the measure in the last Parliament. One of the first charges upon the revenue of the State should be for the sick who need hospital attention. When we get in money for a specific purpose we should be honest about it and spend it upon the object for which it has been collected. That is what was aimed at in the previous measure. The member for Pingelly said that we on this side were objecting to the tax. No word of protest has been put up against it. We support the idea of taxing the people for hospital accommodation, as we did before, but we say when the money is collected there is no justification for spending it upon something else and depriving the hospitals of the assistance that should be rendered to them from that source.

Mr. Wansbrough: It is misrepresentation.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The hospitals will be placed in a very bad position. Various appeals which have been liberally responded to have been made to the people, largely because there has been no tax for hospital accommodation and upkeep. Once we place upon the statute-book a measure which imposes a special tax for hospital purposes, the money which has come in from direct appeals is bound to be very limited. If we compare the revenue that is likely to be available to hospitals under this Bill with

that which was voluntarily subscribed as the result of appeals to the public, we shall find there is a great falling off in the amount that is forthcoming. People who are taxed directly for the upkeep of these institutions will not give as liberally as they did before. Not only will the Bill not give the anticipated relief to hospitals, but it will be the means of drying up the streams of charitable contributions which have been such big factors in the maintenance of these establishments in the past. Already the revenue of the Perth Hospital is falling back.

Mr. Panton: And very considerably, too.

Mr. KENNEALLY: If some move is not made to augment the funds of that institution, there is no doubt that many of its doors will soon be closed to the public. The Bill makes provision for the accommodation of those who are on the basic wage. When we come to deal with that aspect of the question we must ask ourselves where the accommodation is that will give effect to that provision.

Mr. Panton: There are at least a dozen patients waiting every day to get into the Perth institution.

Mr. KENNEALLY: There is a special clause dealing with the man on the basic wage, but I see nothing in it to provide that if he cannot get into a public hospital, he can obtain relief if he is obliged to go into some other institution. A person who requires hospital treatment cannot as a rule wait until some particular establishment can accommodate him. He must be taken in at once and receive medical attention. If there is no room in a public hospital, he must proceed to another. In what way does this Bill relieve him in a case like that?

Mr. H. W. Mann: What is his position to-day?

Mr. KENNEALLY: To-day he is not taxed, but the Bill proposes to make him pay.

Mr. H. W. Mann: That does not make any difference to the provision of hospital accommodation.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The hon. member cannot see any difference between the position as it exists now in that respect, and as it will exist if the Bill becomes law. It is proposed to reach into a man's pocket and, under false pretences, take money out of it. It is suggested that he will get certain things in return for what is taken from him, but when it comes to a question of delivering the goods, they will not be there to be delivered.

That is the case with many of the measures brought down by the Government. What is to happen to the man in the country who is on the basic wage? This is simply an attempt on the part of the Government to make themselves popular with a section of the community, and to make those people believe they will get some return for that of which they are to be deprived. The Government know very well that, when the time comes to give this relief, there will be no chance of delivering the goods. We are all concerned about seeing that if the money is collected for the provision of hospital accommodation, and for the relief from payment of certain people, it shall be used for the purpose for which it is to be raised. The member for Perth asked what is a man's position to-day? Out of revenue a sum of £104,000 is now being paid as a subsidy to hospitals. According to the Minister's statement, it is proposed by this Bill to collect £156,000 from the people. The Government desire to take the £104,000 which previously came out of Consolidated Revenue and substitute for it the £156,000 they will raise by taxation under the pretence that the public will get free hospital accommodation, which will not actually be forthcoming. If the hon. member supports a measure of that sort he will have to answer to his electors who returned him to the House to see that, being taxed for a specific purpose, the goods will be delivered to them. Another aspect of the Bill with which I do not agree is with regard to those who are on or near the basic wage having to prove their poverty before they can take advantage of its provisions, even if there is room in a public hospital for their accommodation.

The Minister for Health: They do not have to do that under the Bill.

Mr. KENNEALLY: There is provision whereby they have to afford proof of their poverty.

The Minister for Health: That is not before they go to the hospital. Be fair. It applies to when they come out and to the payment for their treatment.

Mr. KENNEALLY: I did not mean my remark in that way. I said I was opposed to the declaration of poverty before a patient could get any benefit under the Bill. By that I meant the benefit of exemption from payment for hospital treatment. It is provided that, before a man can get exemption

from payment, he must prove that he does not possess a certain amount of money.

Hon. P. Collier: He can get that treatment now if he cannot pay.

Mr. KENNEALLY: Under the parent Act certain persons are exempt altogether from payment and others are partly exempt. It is now proposed to amend Section 33 of the Act dealing with that question. This will take a person no further in the matter of relief than he can go now. This is one of the main reasons for the opposition to the measure. It is said that if a person pays a certain amount of tax, he will be provided with hospital accommodation, but that will not be provided when the occasion arises. If the Government will make provision for a return to the taxpayers, equal in value to all, no matter to what extent they may be taxed, it will have my hearty support. That will mean not only a benefit to the people concerned, but it will mean keeping open certain wards that it will be impossible to keep open if the Bill becomes law. If we dry up the funds from which contributions have been forthcoming in the past, we shall impoverish the hospitals and they will be obliged to close up some of their wards. I hope the Government will see to it that they do deliver the goods as promised. The people should be taxed for hospital accommodation. I can understand why the Government have not adopted the alternative suggestion to amend the incidence of income taxation. If they did so, they would be taxing their own friends on a higher scale than is now suggested. Ordinary income taxation means that the more able a man is to pay, the greater amount he is called upon to pay. The Bill, however, provides for a flat rate of tax of 1½d. in the pound, no matter how high the income goes. The effect of this is that those who are the supporters of the Government will pay a smaller amount than if they were taxed on the income taxation basis.

Mr. Angelo: How many people who would pay the higher tax use these hospitals?

Mr. KENNEALLY: The previous Bill did not differentiate between sections of the community, but covered the community as a whole. It was laid down that so long as a person went into any of the hospitals prescribed

in the Bill, he could receive a contribution towards the cost at the rate of 6s. per day. The present Bill declares that no matter what other hospital a man on the basic wage has to enter, he can get no relief. This means that if he cannot get accommodation in a public hospital, he will receive no advantage from the taxation if he is obliged to go to some other institution. In effect, the Bill says, although the Government may not intend it in that way, that the man in the country on the basic wage will receive no relief. Notwithstanding this, he and others will be charged 1½d. in the pound. If members opposite stand for that sort of thing, let them support the measure. If, on the other hand, they are under the impression that when the people are taxed they will get relief by having their hospital expenses paid, let them vote for an amendment, in order to bring the measure into conformity with that placed before the last Parliament. Then will the Bill receive a full measure of support from this side of the House. The time will surely come when people will ask for the accommodation they need if this Bill becomes law.

Mr. Panton: And immediately, too.

Mr. KENNEALLY: The Bill is entirely silent on the question of giving relief to a man if he is unable, through lack of accommodation, to get into a public hospital. So that even under the measure we shall have the position created that the basic man, who is entitled to relief, for whom the measure provides relief, will find himself compelled, by virtue of the fact of no hospital accommodation being available when he requires it, to go elsewhere for accommodation. The Government, having taken his money, will sit by and give him no compensation for the hospital expenses he will incur elsewhere through no fault of his own. If the measure passes its second reading, that is the position which will arise unless the Bill is considerably amended in Committee. I am prepared to support a proposal to tax the people for hospital accommodation, provided relief is given them in the shape of a daily allowance for hospital expenses. I cannot support the second reading of a Bill the object of which is apparently to get money into Consolidated Revenue and to rob the hospitals of the money which should be paid for their maintenance.

MR. PIESSE (Katanning) [8.17] : I have listened with great interest to the debate on this measure. Were it not for the shortness of finance and the difficulties in which the country finds itself, I suppose we should never have heard of the Bill.

Hon. W. D. Johnson : The needs of revenue demand it.

Mr. PIESSE : Yes; those needs compel further taxation, which we all regret.

Hon. P. Collier : That is a candid statement, anyhow.

Mr. PIESSE : I cannot altogether understand the opposition which has been raised from the financial aspect. Those hon. members who have been most emphatic in objection do not object to the revenue necessary for the upkeep of hospitals being provided through a general income tax.

Hon. W. D. Johnson : That is where it should come from.

Mr. PIESSE : The only advantage in that is avoidance of a multiplicity of taxes, one general rate, sufficient to cover all State needs, being imposed and the proceeds going into Consolidated Revenue. I thought that was the argument of the Leader of the Opposition and of some hon. members who followed him. My chief objection to the Bill is that it represents another tax, and that taxes are becoming irksome. We are already overburdened with a multiplicity of taxation, and are beginning to get sick of it. According to to-day's newspapers we are being overwhelmed with additional Federal taxation. To me it seems absurd that this Parliament should be placed in the invidious position of having to scratch round for £150,000 to support such important institutions as the hospitals. It is one more reason why this Parliament should, as I have asked it to do, express an opinion upon the seriousness of the Federal invasion into the field that is open to us for taxation. It is that invasion which forces us into the position of having to raise £150,000 for the support of hospitals in this manner. I wish to point out how many taxes I myself have to pay in my own town as the result of enactments passed from time to time by the Federal and State Parliaments. I pay the present Federal land tax, which I hope not to pay very much longer; Federal income tax; State land tax; State income tax; vermin and road board general rates; health rate; loan rate; water rate; a special hospital tax of one halfpenny in the pound, representing a tax

upon property to build a base hospital in the Katanning centre; employers' liability—

Hon. P. Collier : And workers' compensation.

Mr. PIESSE : And now we are to be called upon to pay another hospital tax.

The Minister for Railways : You should apply for a refund.

Mr. PIESSE : Certain people are singled out to bear the cost of building hospitals; and if they are also required to contribute to this measure, they are entitled to a deduction from this tax. It seems necessary that the Bill should pass, since funds are needed to carry on our hospitals. I hope that if the Minister finds he has a surplus when the tax has been collected, he will not forget the small subsidised hospitals which are required in certain important centres. I do not urge this from the parochial aspect, but important districts are waiting to build hospitals with a contribution of 50 per cent. I hope the Minister will not lose sight of the great need there is to provide money for that purpose. In the circumstances, I feel it incumbent upon me to support the Bill, and I hope the Minister's anticipations of revenue will be realised to the fullest extent.

MR. MILLINGTON (Mt. Hawthorn) [8.23] : The Bill represents another instance of the Government's ingenuity in devising new ways and means of taxation. I would not object if the Title of the measure were altered to "A Bill for an Act to impose a special tax upon incomes." That would be a true indication of the object of the measure. The Chief Secretary has referred to it under its Title as a Bill to establish a hospital fund; but I think that if the hon. gentleman had been where he is at times, in court, and had been questioning the Minister in charge of the Bill, he would have referred to "an alleged hospital fund." Exact terms are used in court, and this is an alleged hospital fund; there would be extreme difficulty in establishing that it is really a fund for hospitals. There will be considerable confusion in the minds of people, especially of thrifty people who have taxed themselves to establish hospitals and medical funds throughout the State. They pay willingly, because they know that when they have established a fund they will get advantages from it; that they will

be able to draw upon the fund in time of necessity. Having done that for many years, when they have to affix a stamp on the pay sheet every week they will naturally be under the impression that they are paying into a fund from which they will derive some benefit, especially as that was the case in connection with the last Bill, which was discussed widely. Under the present measure they will be in the position of paying, but certainly not in the position of getting any benefits. I object to the incidence of the proposed tax. For many years we have endeavoured to establish a fair and just basis of income tax incidence. Various exemptions have been built up; and no matter what the political complexion of the Government in power, there was a recognition that those exemptions were justified. The section of the community that has been hardest hit by the depression is that which has not paid income tax. The exemption under the Bill will not operate to the extent it should. There is an exemption for people earning under £50 a year. But what will be the position of the casual worker—one, for instance, at present receiving a couple of days' pay for sustenance? That rate of pay would be at the rate of more than £1 per week. It is not a question of earning £50 a year, but it is the rate of earning. The man now in dire distress, receiving a couple of days' pay per week for sustenance, would have to affix the stamp when he received his pay for those two days. The very man who should be exempt, the man in casual work, will have to pay. In spite of what the member for Katanning (Mr. Piesse) has suggested, there is great difficulty, once money has got into the Treasury, in getting a rebate. At least, that is the experience of most people. Therefore the casual worker, having paid the tax but not having earned £50 in the year, will be penalised because of the fact that the little he does earn is at a greater rate than £1 per week. The Minister should give attention to that aspect, because such cases would not be isolated. It is becoming quite general for men to be casually employed. Throughout the State there are thousands of persons casually employed, even though they earn at the rate of more than £50, or even £100, a year. It is ridiculous to say that such persons can bear this additional tax. The Bill has not been thought out as carefully as the income tax assessment

measure. The exemptions under the latter have been built up during a period of years, and are justifiable. If this Bill is justified, the whole of the exemptions in connection with income tax will have to go into the melting pot. This Bill means that those exemptions are unjust. The idea underlying the Bill is new, and from the point of view of the general community altogether unjust.

The Minister for Health: You should have thought of that last time.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I have just explained to the Minister that last time the special tax carried special benefits. He cannot deny that. The member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) has already pointed that out clearly, and I need not reiterate the argument. The taxpayer knew it. The previous Bill obtained general support amongst wage earners, although they realised that they would have to pay. To a certain extent they were prepared to pay, because they knew they would be establishing a hospital fund. The present Bill, however, establishes a hospital fund not for sick people but for a sick Treasury. It is the Treasury that is in hospital, it is the Treasury that needs resuscitation; and this tax will be used for that purpose. I am aware that not only the Government of this State but Governments throughout Australia are in dire need of additional revenue. That fact, however, is no excuse for raising revenue by means of subterfuge. Let us come straight out and tell the people that any given tax is for a particular purpose. In this instance the public are being deliberately misled. With the Leader of the Opposition, I am satisfied there will be a general impression throughout the State that when the hospital fund is established, there will be provided a measure of relief for those who enter hospitals. After a person has paid the tax for a year or two, and then requires the benefit of hospital attention, only to ascertain that he is not entitled to it, those responsible for the measure will have to do a lot of explaining. I am opposed to the Bill, not because I do not appreciate the fact that additional revenue is necessary, but because I object to the Government exploiting the sentiment of the people. I object to them exploiting the term "hospital" in relation to the tax, leading people to believe that it is in reality a hos-

pital tax. When I say I shall oppose the second reading of the Bill, I desire to make particularly sure that I have stated my reasons for so doing, should I in the future be taxed with having voted against such a proposal. I have stated my objection briefly. The Bill itself is a subterfuge. It is for the purpose of raising revenue. The member for Katanning (Mr. Piesse) takes an independent view regarding such questions, and he quite candidly admits that fact. He is an onlooker; he is not responsible to the Government nor yet to the Opposition. He has a free hand and his decision, after reviewing the Bill, is that it is for revenue purposes. He is a clear thinker and has an independent mind. Thus we have the benefit of one independent view, free from party bias. Much as I am disposed to pay a tribute to the Government regarding their ingenuity in devising ways and means of raising further taxation, I cannot allow the Bill to pass without remarking that there may be one or two other taxes that have not been recommended to the Government. I am surprised that they have not exploited that old impost, the poll tax. During the period of the depression, about the time the great war started, I was a member of another place, and a member from the North Province seriously suggested we could get out of our difficulties if we taxed every person to the extent of £1 per head.

Mr. Angelo: A Labour Premier in another State imposed a tax of £2 10s. per head.

Mr. MILLINGTON: Then again, the Government have yet to exploit a toll for the use of the roads.

Mr. Panton: They are doing that under the Traffic Act Amendment Bill.

Mr. MILLINGTON: There is a further avenue of taxation, because the bachelor tax can be exploited. I presume that before they are finished the Government will impose a tax on bachelor girls, and thus rake in everyone.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Will you support the latter tax?

The Minister for Health: Of course, he will.

Mr. MILLINGTON: I will wait until the Government introduce the tax.

Hon. P. Collier: But it would not be fair in times of stress.

Mr. MILLINGTON: It seems to me that the Government have just about exhausted

their ideas, but, at any rate, they should designate the tax properly. I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [8.35]: In placing the Bill before hon. members, the Government, unfortunately, have had again to remind hon. members that the Treasury is empty and that economies in every direction are necessary. I do not know anything of what passed between the Treasurer and the Minister for Health, but I can visualise the Treasurer reminding his Ministers generally that in common with the Premiers of the other States and the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, together with the Federal Treasurer, he had agreed to balance the budget. this year.

Mr. Panton: That is as far as he will get.

Mr. ANGELO: The Treasurer probably also told his Ministers that they must practise economy and ask for as little money as possible.

Mr. Sleeman: Do you think he is entitled to rob the hospitals to balance the budget?

Mr. ANGELO: I can visualise the Minister telling the Treasurer that even the tax last year was not sufficient to provide adequate hospital accommodation and proper service throughout the State.

Hon. P. Collier: It was not.

Mr. ANGELO: Exactly. I have no doubt that the Minister reminded the Treasurer that even in the good old days, even in the year when the ex-Treasurer was able to reduce taxation by 33 1/3rd per cent. and cut off the surcharge, requests were made for increased contributions for hospital purposes.

Mr. Panton: What was wanted was increased accommodation.

Mr. ANGELO: After consultation, I can imagine the Treasurer and the Minister for Health agreeing that, in order properly to carry on this important work of providing for the hospitals throughout the State, it would be better to cut out the contribution from Consolidated Revenue and to establish a special hospital fund so that everyone in the State would know his obligation and duty in contributing his quota of the special tax for the purpose of assisting hospitals. That is work that certainly requires the attention and sympathy of every Government. I think the Government were perfectly right in cutting out the contribution from Con-

solidated Revenue and establishing a special fund. Then came the consideration of what was necessary. No doubt after consultation with the officials and investigations at the Taxation Department, it was considered that a tax of $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound was sufficient to cope with the work required, and therefore the Bill was framed and introduced. Now we are told by the Opposition that the income to be derived from a tax of $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound will not be enough. In the circumstances, let them propose a tax of 2d. in the pound.

Hon. P. Collier: We could not do it.

Mr. Munsie: And I would not do it if I could.

Mr. ANGELO: Let members of the Opposition convince the Minister by argument that the proposed tax is not sufficient, and he can take action. I would agree to increase the proposed tax by an extra $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound. I have never had any necessity to use a hospital, thank goodness.

Mr. Pantou: You do not look as if you would.

Hon. P. Collier: But you look as though you may be in hospital soon.

Mr. ANGELO: I do not think so. The tax may cost me £4 or £5, but I will gladly pay it as a thank offering because of my good health. Those of us who are lucky enough to enjoy good health should regard it as our duty and privilege to contribute towards the fund necessary for those who are less fortunate. We should not begrudge that payment. Opposition has been voiced against the fact that the tax is at a flat rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound, payable by those in receipt of the lowest amount of wages as well as by those in receipt of the highest incomes.

The Minister for Health: That is truly democratic.

Mr. ANGELO: I ask members of the Opposition if they know of any instance of a person in receipt of an income of from £600 to £700 a year, having gone into a public hospital for treatment.

Mr. Munsie: Yes, dozens of them.

Mr. Piesse: But they pay their way.

Mr. Munsie: They could not go into the Perth Hospital.

Mr. Pantou: Judge Rooth was an inmate of the Perth Hospital for six weeks.

Mr. ANGELO: I can understand that in the country areas people having such an

income, would have to enter hospitals there because no other place would be available for them.

Mr. McCallum: Even members of this House have been inmates of the Perth Hospital. You know that!

Mr. ANGELO: I do not.

The Minister for Health: That was because of their low salary.

Mr. ANGELO: I was not aware of that fact; I hope they recovered very quickly.

Mr. McCallum: But surely you know that the ex-Speaker of this House was at one time an inmate of a public hospital.

Mr. ANGELO: No, I did not know that. I suppose these furnish the exceptions that prove the rule. In any case, I presume they paid their way. Why should Opposition members suggest that a tax should be levied by way of a surcharge on the present income tax? What would that mean? The people in receipt of the higher incomes have been contributing towards the upkeep of hospitals in the past and have not taken advantage of the opportunities for treatment there. If they do not pay a tax at the flat rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound but on some other scale, some of those who are in receipt of the higher salaries may pay as much as 1s. 4d. in the pound.

Mr. Sleeman: That would be a thank offering on their part, for all the money they have!

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, but a fair thing is a fair thing. We have the assurance of the Government that the money raised from the special tax will be paid into a special fund to be used for hospital purposes.

Mr. Munsie: No one contradicts that statement.

Mr. ANGELO: Very good. It is just the same as with the Estimates. The Minister will have a good idea of what he should collect during the year as the result of the levying of the tax.

Mr. Pantou: He thinks he knows.

Mr. ANGELO: If anything is left over, as we hope there will be, he will be able to effect improvements to hospitals as required. If the Minister is short, it means he will have to go to the Treasurer for temporary relief. Then next year the tax may be made a little heavier so that there will be no shortage in the future. I hope members opposite will be able to suggest some improve-

ments to the Bill when we deal with it at the Committee stage.

Mr. Munsie: That would be impossible if we were to attempt to secure the improvements we desire. It is not possible to do it in the Bill.

Mr. ANGELO: I think the hon. member will find it possible to do so. We are sympathetically inclined towards the hospitals.

Mr. Munsie: If you can tell me how I can get the £104,000 back, I will be prepared to move an amendment.

Hon. P. Collier: But that is beyond redemption.

Mr. ANGELO: I do not know what was in the Treasurer's mind.

Mr. Panton: But we know what is on the Estimates.

Mr. ANGELO: Nor do I know what is in the mind of the Minister for Health. I am certain the Bill represents the decision of the Government that it is unsatisfactory to depend upon Consolidated Revenue for hospital contributions, and for the Minister controlling the hospitals to go cap in hand to the Treasurer from time to time to make up any leeway.

The Minister for Health: And the Treasurer has not the necessary funds when I go to him.

Mr. ANGELO: In effect, the Minister says, "Let me collect a special tax in order that I may do my duty to the country by providing for the hospitals as is necessary."

Mr. Munsie: If the Bill is passed, you will close up every country hospital in Western Australia.

Mr. ANGELO: Well, give it a trial! Is it suggested that if the Minister for Health finds things are not going right, he will not do something to correct the position?

Mr. Panton: Yes, increase the tax.

Mr. Hegney: But the Minister would be powerless.

Mr. ANGELO: He would not be powerless. He could go to the Treasurer and ask for a temporary loan.

Mr. Panton: Yes, he could ask for it, and that is about all.

Mr. ANGELO: Anyhow, I am glad we will have the fund of £156,000 a year.

Mr. Panton: I would like to think that way, too.

Mr. ANGELO: That should be satisfactory for a start, and if we find it is not

sufficient, we can raise more funds next year. I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [8.45]: I am not going to labour the point that has been made in respect to the £104,000 that was previously paid out of Consolidated Revenue for the maintenance of hospitals, and this special tax that will be imposed. But I do say that the collections that have been made for hospitals will undoubtedly fall off. Only the other day I was talking to a man who collects from 30 or 40 people voluntary contributions to hospitals. He said he was certain that if the Bill passed, the collections from those people would fall off. And that seems to be the consensus of opinion. The Minister may have good intentions, but undoubtedly the Bill is unfair in its incidence. Under the Bill a person on an income of £200 will have to pay 25s. hospital tax, although he is called upon to pay only 15s. 10d. in income tax; a man earning up to £300 will have to pay £2 hospital tax, but only £1 7s. 7d. in income tax; a man on £1,000 will have to pay £6 hospital tax and £11 11s. 2d. in income tax; a man on £1,500 will have to pay £9 7s. 6d. hospital tax and £23 14s. in income tax; a man on a higher income, up to £5,000 will have to pay £31 hospital tax, but £742 in income tax. A man on a lower income pays well over 100 per cent. more in hospital tax than in income tax, whereas a man on £5,000 pays only £31 in hospital tax, but £745 in income tax. There is no doubt this measure is inequitable in its application to the taxpayers. And it is deceiving a lot of the taxpayers. As has been pointed out to-night, people in the country believe that sweeps and collections on the street corners and button days will be done away with when the Bill becomes law. As a matter of fact the £156,000 which the Minister hopes to get from this tax will not be sufficient for the maintenance of hospitals. We know that because of unemployment the tendency will be for more people to fall sick than hitherto. Hundreds of people to-day cannot get sufficient food to maintain their physical capacity. That applies to men, women and children alike. Because of that, many of them will be exposed to ailments and in the end compelled to go into hospitals. If it is incumbent on the State to maintain law and order, to pay out of Consolidated Revenue the cost of main-

taining the police force, and to provide out of Consolidated Revenue education for our children, the future citizens of the country, why should it not also be incumbent on the State to see that those unable to look after themselves in their hour of need, when incapacitated through sickness, should have hospital accommodation? But this special tax is designed to penalise the lower section of wage and salary earners rather than those who are able to pay it. I am not going to weary the House with a dissertation on the question, but I do think the measure is deceiving the taxpayers into the belief that hospitals are going to be put upon a sound basis. However, nothing of the sort will happen under the Bill, and so I will vote against the second reading.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.50]: One speaks on this Bill with a certain amount of diffidence, knowing that the Minister thinks he is doing the best he can for the sick and needy in the community and for hospitals generally. The whole position is bristling with anomalies. While we have Government hospitals that have to be maintained by the State, we have also committee hospitals which have to be maintained by voluntary contributions from the people. Our cry has always been that there is only one section of the community contributing to those committee hospitals. But to-night the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Corboy) made the point that some hospitals are maintained from different funds. It seems to me that not sufficient thought has been given to the striking of this tax. It is based on 1½d. in the pound for the lowest-paid workers. There is no graduated scale about it. If we thought for a moment it would get us over our difficulties, we would all be prepared to support it. But it means the same old story: not sufficient money will be secured. We shall be cadging around, running sweeps and different functions, Ugly Men's competitions, popular girls' competitions, just the same old story to keep our committee hospitals open, while the favoured people who have hospitals controlled by the Government do not care a rap. The Minister proposes to raise £156,000 by this hospital tax. My views run in the opposite direction. If it is possible to tax a person in receipt of £1 per week, to tax him 1½d. in the pound, the Government should impose a graduated tax because of the unemployment existing to-day. Has the Minister taken into consideration the thou-

sands of men, rapidly growing in number, who will not be able to contribute one penny towards the hospital fund? Would it not be better if we could do something on the lines of national insurance? Would it not be better if the Minister would bring down some scheme for the nationalisation of medicine? Could he not nationalise the doctors who are battenning on the people of the country to-day?

Mr. Panton: I will not have that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I say we have it now. My friend says he will not have that, but I know doctors who will not attend a man unless they are sure he has the money to pay them.

Mr. Panton: Every person treated free of charge in the Perth Hospital is treated by the best doctors in the State.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes, that may be all right in the Perth Hospital, but there are places other than Perth. While I have great respect for the profession of medicine, what I am saying is quite true. We are tinkering with the whole thing. The Minister is quite honest in his attempt to strike a hospital tax.

The Minister for Health: I am lucky.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: In effect he said to the ex-Minister for Health that this was practically the same Bill as the late Government had introduced.

Mr. Munsie: It is not.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: On many lines it is exactly the same. I cannot understand the concerted opposition to the Bill to-night.

Mr. Panton: Because the Bill is not honest; that is why.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I believe that it is honest, and that the Minister is honest.

Mr. Panton: I am not saying anything about the Minister; certainly he looks honest.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is an honest endeavour to do something, but I am afraid it will fall short of the mark the Minister wishes to attain. Is there not anything we could do by a united effort?

Hon. P. Collier: A sort of get-together policy.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Yes. This is one thing we can get together on, the healing of the sick, the assisting of those not able to assist themselves. But the same old story will go on, and your wife, Sir, and my wife, and your children will go around selling tickets for hospitals in country districts, trying to keep the doors of the hospitals open. If the Minister could give us an assurance

that that is going to stop, we should have some satisfaction, at all events. My people have said to me, "Support the Hospital Bill."

Mr. Panton: They do not realise what it means.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That is so. They do not realise what it means, and they will not until they are taxed, until the boys and girls earning £1 per week are taxed 1½d. They do not realise what it means. They are living in country towns and attending functions designed to assist the hospitals, and contributing all the time to the hospital fund. If the Minister were bold enough to come out with a definite policy and say he was ready to scrap this Bill and start a lottery—

The Minister for Health: Too risky.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Something on the lines of that in Queensland. If the Minister would say, "I will make it illegal to run sweeps on the Melbourne Cup; I will not allow the Trades Hall of Perth or of Fremantle or of Midland Junction to run sweeps, but I will run one big sweep in aid of the hospitals"—then he would raise the money. But the Minister will not do that. Instead of that, he brings forward something without a ray of hope to the people living in country districts. The same old story will go on and the people will be taxed again. Those earning £1 per week will have to pay 1½d., while the man on £5,000 will pay only the same 1½d. in the pound.

Mr. Piesse: You could not sell him a ticket in Tatt's.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No; you could not even sell him a ticket for any function designed to raise money for hospitals in country towns. The same people are paying all the time, and under the Bill they will continue to pay. The Minister proposes to raise £156,000. In view of the thousands of people out of work, the proceeds of the tax will not relieve the hospitals one iota.

Mr. Panton: That is a fact.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The workers at Pemberton have a medical fund and they will have to pay the hospital tax. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Corboy) outlined the position clearly. The industrialists will say, "This measure will knock out the medical fund. We shall not contribute when we have to pay a tax of 1½d. in the pound." Consequently, medical and such like funds will disappear, and how shall we be able to get medical men for

our country districts? The whole question is bristling with difficulties, and the Minister will be well advised to agree to the appointment of a select committee to investigate it. I suggest that the debate be closed, and that the question of instituting a lottery be considered. If a lottery were agreed upon, all other sweeps should be suppressed and a monopoly established in the interests of the hospitals. If that were done, the necessary money would be subscribed over and over again, and we in the country would not have to submit to the present demands for the maintenance of our hospitals.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [9.2]: I thought of having a conference with the Minister and advising him, as a friend, to destroy the Bill, but I suppose I shall have to do publicly what I had proposed to do privately. I do not wish to give a silent vote on the Bill. I am strongly opposed to it. I would oppose it in any event, because I am averse to special taxation for special purposes.

Mr. Doney: Did you support the previous Bill?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I was not here at the time.

Mr. Panton: He was in hospital.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I would not support such a measure at any time, because I am opposed to this kind of legislation. I have always maintained that the raising of special taxation for special purposes is quite wrong.

Mr. H. W. Mann: Your views are not shared by some of your friends.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That may be so. There is room for a difference of opinion.

Mr. Kenneally: We over here are allowed to differ.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It has been urged that if it is right to impose special taxation for hospitals, as outlined in this Bill, it would be right to continue the practice and have special taxation for other special purposes. The Chief Secretary contended that, though the Government are proposing this tax for hospitals, it would be quite different if they had proposed a tax to provide for police or education. As a matter of fact, there is no difference at all. If it is right to have one tax for a special purpose, other taxes for special purposes would be equally justified. In the

Old Country police and education are not part and parcel of the national taxation; they are singled out for special means of raising revenue. We in Australia have not done that to any extent, and as yet it has not been resorted to in Western Australia. I do not wish to see that practice introduced. I do not desire to be offensive, but I say the Bill has not been introduced for the purpose indicated by the title. There is no doubt the Government will be relieving the financial burden to the extent of £104,000. It is a Bill to relieve the burden on revenue. If the Government are going to relieve the burden on revenue to that extent, the only fair way to raise the money is to adopt the method we have of raising other revenue for the needs of government. The needs of government are supplied mainly by the income tax. If the drain upon the revenue is £104,000 beyond the capacity of the Government to provide, the proper course is to increase the income tax to raise that sum. If we are going to raise £104,000 to assist revenue, it is quite wrong to do it on a flat tax. Like other members on this side of the House, I have no objection to the 1½d. tax. What I object to is the way in which it is proposed to utilise the money. It is to be raised to relieve the Government to the extent of £104,000. The Government would be ashamed to admit the need for raising £104,000 by a direct tax on income. They know they could not appeal to Parliament and could not justify themselves in the eyes of the electors if they proposed to raise £104,000 by a flat tax of 1½d. in the pound. They would not go to the factory girls and others and say, "You shall relieve our need by giving us 1½d. out of every pound you earn." To do so would be quite wrong. The exemption should apply as it applies under the income tax, and the £104,000 should be raised, if necessary, by means of an increase of the income tax. I did not like the previous Bill, but it was quite reasonable from the flat tax point of view, because it provided that everyone who paid 1½d. in the pound should have the right to treatment on an equal basis. The then Government did not say, "You shall pay 1½d. and your treatment will cost you so much, while to someone who pays a little more because of a higher income, he shall receive more." They made a flat tax for a flat treatment, which was perfectly just and democratic. This is not a democratic pro-

posal. The Government will not provide treatment for the taxation that is raised. They will raise taxation for the needs of revenue and that is decidedly wrong. Undoubtedly the country hospitals will suffer if the measure becomes law. They will not continue to receive from public effort the amount they are receiving to-day. I want country members to appreciate what will happen. If we raised the amount by increasing the income tax on a graduated scale, we could still appeal to the public to continue their patronage and assist in maintaining the hospitals in the country.

The Minister for Health: You would not gain any more.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If we increased the income tax and appealed to the people to assist to supply the need for hospital accommodation and treatment, they would continue to do it, but if we impose what is really a revenue-raising tax and call it a hospital tax, the public will say, "You are penalising us to the extent of 1½d. in the pound of our earnings for the benefit of the hospitals, and you have no right to come to us and ask for a further contribution." Undoubtedly, the medical and other funds will go out of existence, because the Government will be expected to maintain the hospitals out of the money they receive from the tax. If that happens, and I claim it is a reasonable anticipation, the country hospitals will receive less than they are getting to-day, and there is no doubt that what the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) asserts will happen will come to pass, that we, instead of helping the hospitals, will injure them. Instead of hospitals being able to do more for the indigent, the sick and distressed, they will be able to do less. For those reasons I am opposed to the tax. I quite appreciate that we should do something for the hospitals. The population of the State, together with the income of the people, is not sufficient to supply the needs of the hospitals. When we appeal to the public for charitable purposes, it is the wages man largely who contributes the money. The member for Perth (Mr. H. W. Mann) will not deny that the Ugly Men's Association has been maintained by the wage earner. It is always the same. Wherever we raise money for charitable purposes, the wage earner contributes it.

The Minister for Health: There are a good many benefactors besides.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is the small man who contributes towards the necessities for sickness and distress; the big man gets off free. There is only one way to get hold of those in a position to pay and that is through the graduated income tax. The Government are attempting to raise this money in the wrong way. The proper way is to raise revenue by means of the income tax, and then devise ways and means of helping the hospitals. I cannot see how this Bill can be amended in Committee, because the basis of it is wrong and it cannot be licked into shape. The only thing to do is to defeat it on the second reading, and give the Government an opportunity to bring down another that will be more acceptable to this House and the country. There is no support for the Bill in the country on the part of those who understand it. Particularly are the hospital committees concerned, seeing that they are charged with the responsibility of maintaining these institutions from public and medical funds. I am surprised that so few country members of this Chamber, who have had years of experience in connection with the maintenance of country hospitals, have given us any real explanation of how these institutions are being maintained to-day and, after applying the provisions of this Bill to them, how it will be possible to keep them going. The only one who gave us any information that helped us to understand the position was the member for Yilgarn. If his statements are correct, and I have no reason to doubt them, because he was talking from practical experience, the Bill constitutes a grave danger. I have been waiting for other country members to give us their experience of what is happening to-day, and what is likely to happen under the Bill.

Mr. Panton: They are not allowed to.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: None of them has done so. That is the kind of analysis we want. We should take existing circumstances and apply the proposal to them to see how it will cut out as regards the two different propositions. If country members will analyse the Bill from that point of view, they must agree with us that it would be dangerous to pass it as it will cause injury to country hospitals. I am, however, prepared to admit that it will do £104,000 worth of good to the Government. We are going to raise that money by a camouflaged hospitals tax, which is a revenue-earning tax, on a

flat rate instead of on a graduated scale, if the needs and demands of government justify the imposition of such a tax.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. C. G. Latham—in reply) [9.18]: Every one of the arguments to which I have listened during this debate could have been applied with equal force to the Bill that was introduced last session.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There are two exceptions. The first is that Consolidated Revenue is not now contributing anything to hospitals. It is contributing something, but has been relieved of about £90,000. When the member for Hannans was Minister for Health he brought down a Bill that was very similar to this. The contribution to the fund was word for word the same as that referred to in the Bill now before the House.

Mr. Panton: There is as much similarity as there is between an elephant and a giraffe.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I was informed that the Bill which passed this House and another place had the concurrence of the hon. member. I think we have removed three clauses from it. The objection is not so much against the Bill, as it is against the Estimates which have been passed.

Mr. Munsie: There are no benefits under the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We are giving some benefits. I agree that under the previous Bill the benefits were that every person who contributed to the fund was to get 6s. a day for every day that he was in hospital. Whilst we would like very much to do that, the financial position of the Government will not permit it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That makes it a revenue Bill.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The time may come when we may be able to do what we desire to do. Had we been getting the revenue that was budgeted for by the hon. member's Government, and I believe budgeted soundly, namely £217,000, we could have given those benefits.

Mr. Munsie: Not if you had taken your £104,000.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, we could. The hon. member is entitled to

his opinion in regard to that matter. The revenue we have budgeted for under this Bill is £61,000 less than was budgeted for by the late Government. These are the main objections to the measure. I can assure the House that this money will not be paid into Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. P. Collier: We know that.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It will be paid into a trust fund. It is intended to give to the Health Department the control of that fund, and we shall know from time to time in what direction it has been expended. The Treasury is part of the Government. It would not say "no" to Ministers if it could say "yes" when appeals were made to it for funds. I am just as anxious as members opposite are to assist the hospitals. There is no finer work for anyone to do. During his term of office the member for Hannans did more for public hospitals than anyone else who has occupied the position of Minister for Health. The other night he said the Perth Hospital was not a public hospital.

Mr. Munsie: I said it was not a Government hospital. It is a public hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: All are public hospitals now. By the Act of 1927 all that were committee hospitals and Government hospitals became public hospitals. Any married person who goes into hospital and is receiving the basic wage or less, under this Bill will receive free hospital accommodation, not by way of charity as is the case to-day, but as a matter of right. There is nothing in the Hospitals Act to enable anyone to go into one of these hospitals as a matter of right without payment. There is no provision for writing off the debt. If it is done, it is an act of grace on the part of the Minister, although it is never withheld. It is a good thing we are able to go so far as to say to the man on the basic wage that for his contribution we will give him free hospital accommodation for himself and his dependants. We do not go as far as that with a single person. The member for Guildford-Midland said we were taking 1½d. in the pound from factory girls. We are. So did the previous Government, but for these girls we will provide free hospital accommodation.

Mr. Pantou: How are you going to pay the Perth Hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We are going to pay. I give the hon. member an assurance that for the 1½d. in the pound we will give these girls free hospital accommodation as a matter of right, provided their wages or salaries do not exceed £156 a year. Surely there is something decent in that.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is the only decent part about it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am glad to receive that admission. When listening to the hon. member I did not think there was one good point in the Bill. I am desirous of doing exactly the same as my predecessor did, but unfortunately the finances will not permit us to go so far.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: My point is that it is wrong to take it from the girls.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We give them free hospital accommodation as a matter of right.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You ought to do what was proposed by the previous Bill.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I assure the House we copied our Bill from the old one. It is almost word for word the same as that which passed through this House.

Hon. P. Collier: The real big exception is that this tax is plus the other tax.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Had I desired to shorten the discussion or prevent it, I might have persuaded the Premier to leave the amount on the Estimates.

Hon. P. Collier: And cut it out afterwards.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: But it would have been unfair to do that.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, and it would have been dishonest.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We have gone along in an honest way and told members exactly what the position is. We have hidden nothing.

Hon. P. Collier: There has been no hiding.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It could have been done by a subterfuge.

Hon. P. Collier: By dishonesty.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I would not like to call it dishonest.

Mr. Angelo: By a trick.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It would have curtailed the debate in the House.

Mr. Panton: Not next time.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Had the hospitals been going along smilingly we would not have had much opposition. The member for Hannans said that neither the hospitals nor the public would benefit under the Bill. We shall have a revenue to the extent of £56,000 in excess of what we have to-day. The whole of that will not be available for hospitals for we have to take £6,000 for the cost of collection. The £50,000 will be available to make up the losses and contributions and extra amounts we will have to pay for hospital accommodation for people under the basic wage.

Mr. Panton: You will have to pay for everyone who goes to the Perth Hospital. No one getting over the basic wage goes there.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I have more information about that institution than I had when I presented the Bill the other night. The Perth Hospital is in capable hands under the management of the committee. I know that any person who goes to the Perth Hospital who says he cannot pay for accommodation in a private hospital—

Mr. Panton: It goes a little further than that. People have to make a declaration that they are unable to pay.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There should be no need for a declaration.

Mr. Panton: There is. Lots of people have found that out.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The hon. member knows the people better than I do. That is the basis on which they are admitted to the hospital.

Mr. Panton: Nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We will say they have to make a declaration that they cannot pay for their hospital requirements in a private institution.

Mr. Panton: The position is based on the amount they are earning and the family they have.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The passing of the Bill does not mean we are going to prevent people who are to-day getting free hospital services from receiving those services. It will give us a fair amount more revenue than we are now receiving, and in my opinion it will be an increasing revenue. We have brought it back to what we think is bedrock. I hope we shall have an increasing revenue in order to enable

us to give increased services. The hon. member said that in another six months we shall be closing our hospitals.

Mr. Munsie: You will be closing some of the country hospitals.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We will not close one that there is any warranty for keeping open.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You mean they will be kept open for seven months.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Nothing of the sort; we do not play those tricks.

Mr. Corboy: Will you guarantee not to reduce the medical services?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Unfortunately at present some hospitals are being closed in the timber areas. In many cases that is due to the fact that people are leaving because there is no employment for them. It would not be correct if I said that no country hospitals would be closed.

Mr. Munsie: I am not referring to hospitals in localities where industry has closed up.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Where hospitals in country districts are warranted, they will not be closed. Before we close them, many other services will be cut out.

Mr. Munsie: Under this Bill, you cannot keep the hospitals open.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We will have a try.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You will not get the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) says that we shall not get all the money that the hospitals have been receiving after the 1½d. tax is imposed. That is agreed, and we have made provision for it. Most of our country hospitals are on subsidies of about £100 per annum, the average throughout the State being about £180. Now, £180 does not provide sufficient funds to pay for indigent cases. All indigent cases practically, and certainly cases on the basic wage, will be paid as a matter of right under the Bill. As a result, hospitals in the country will not suffer.

Mr. Munsie: Where will you get the money from?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It will be surprising how we get the money.

Mr. Panton: You will be most surprised.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The sum of £5,000 will go a long way towards

providing additional hospital service after an institution is once built and equipped.

Mr. Munsie: On the number of patients in hospitals when I introduced the 1928 Bill, it would cost £135,000 a year to pay 6s. per day for the beds occupied.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We do not propose to go so far as the hon. gentleman did. He makes a tremendous lot of the Consolidated Revenue benefiting. The Consolidated Revenue will not contribute. That is the position.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the entire difference.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There are not many other points to be answered, except those raised by the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie (Mr. Corboy). That hon. member told us that in his district the people are paying to keep the doctor. Many other districts are doing the same. This Bill does not interfere with the contribution to the doctor. It is only for hospital services, not for medical or surgical services.

Mr. Corboy: My point is that the people to-day have certain medical facilities which they will not have under the Bill. The Bill will kill those facilities.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not think the Bill has anything to do with a doctor being in a district.

Mr. Corboy: It has.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not think so. The hon. member is the only one who has raised that point, though many other members from the country have doctors in their districts. The hon. member has only one doctor in his constituency, the doctor at Southern Cross. I have been credibly informed that that doctor is not at all likely to be influenced by the passing of the Bill.

Mr. Corboy: That is wrong. I have a letter here, which I received yesterday, from the local medical fund saying the opposite.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No doubt the hon. member has been up there.

Mr. Corboy: That is a rotten suggestion.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If the hon. member told the people there what he has told this House, they may be misled.

Mr. Corboy: That is unfair. All I did was to give them the Bill, without saying a word on it; and they gave me their opinion of it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The hon. member was up there the other evening.

Mr. Corboy: That is so. I merely gave the people the Bill. I did not even speak.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I accept the hon. member's word that he did not speak; but if he spoke there as he did here, the people might be misled.

Mr. Corboy: They are going to lose the doctor.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Most of the country hospitals have been built at the wish of the people in the district. That is a very fine spirit, and the hospitals have been generously helped by Governments in the past. If the people maintain the existing relationship with regard to the country hospitals which they helped to build, the Government will do their part by those institutions. But we will not allow the country hospitals to be loaded on the Government at the present time. My predecessor did all in his power to bring about the relationship that exists, and he did it effectively. In my term of office I shall do nothing to break down the system he built up. When the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie has any reason to complain, he can come to me and discuss matters, and I am sure a remedy will be found. The question of the nurses, I propose to take up with my officers, and get them to inquire into the statements made here to-night. Such things as have been described have no right to exist. The existing agreement sets out that the same conditions shall apply as if the hospital were a Government hospital, and the hospital is to be open to everybody.

Mr. Corboy: I am sorry to say those conditions do not apply.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am indeed sorry to hear it. I shall certainly see that the agreement is carried out. I believe my predecessor entered into the agreement, which is extremely fair.

Mr. Corboy: The trouble is that there is no method of enforcing the agreement.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Generally these nurses are qualified matrons or certificated nurses, some of them trebly certificated, who have given good service; and on account of that service they have been allowed to take charge of hospitals. In the instance which has been mentioned, we have evidently struck someone who is not living up to the general reputation.

Mr. Corboy: It is not that. The conditions will not permit it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The member for Leederville (Mr. Panton) dealt with the position of the Perth Hospital. I

believe the Perth Hospital is going to benefit considerably from the Bill.

Mr. Panton: How much do you propose to pay for each patient going into the hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I shall have to ask the hon. member to give notice of that question. The Government are not going to be so stupid as to say, "We will pay you what it costs you to run the hospital." Certainly the Government will not do anything so stupid. The hospitals generally have been given a fair deal, and they will get it in future. The position will be satisfactory to the hospitals.

Mr. Panton: I hope it will.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not like that tone.

Mr. Panton: It is nothing like the tone you will get before the thing is finished.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There is no provision in the Bill to deal with motor accidents.

Mr. Panton: They all go into that hospital. There is an average of 40 a week.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I know that motor accidents represent a serious strain on the Perth Hospital, and on other hospitals as well.

Mr. Corboy: We had better ask the motorists to make a job of it and send the cases straight to the morgue!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Motor accidents, from that aspect also, have caused a good deal of trouble throughout the world. A Bill was introduced into the House of Commons to deal with the position in London and in the counties, but tremendous difficulties were encountered. The latest effort has been made in Rhodesia, and that may be the basis of a piece of legislation to be introduced later. I hope it will be introduced next session. The hon. member said we were thieving £134,000 from hospitals.

Mr. Panton: I was moderate in my language.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We are not thieving £134,000 from the hospitals, but giving them £192,000.

Mr. Corboy: You are not giving them a penny.

Mr. Panton: The public are being asked to subscribe an amount for you.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The member for East Perth (Mr. Kenneally) cannot have read the Bill. The man on the

basic wage will receive the benefit of the measure, and there will be no question of his having to come along and beg. When he goes to a hospital to-day, he has merely to show a certificate that he has contributed to a fund.

Mr. Panton: If a motor car knocked him down and broke his leg, he would first have to go to the Taxation Department for a certificate.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The member for Mt. Hawthorn (Mr. Millington) either has not read the Bill or has forgotten the measure introduced previously. The clause to which he refers, dealing with the woman on £1 per week, is exactly the same clause as that which appeared in the Bill introduced by my predecessor. It provides for cases where the income, including salary or wages, if any, is under £52 per year. Further, the provision is exactly the same with regard to collection of the tax.

Mr. Munsie: There was an amendment.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There was a slight amendment which the Upper House would not accept.

Mr. Millington: What about the casual worker?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: He would pay on his £1 a week, and for that he would get hospital accommodation as a matter of right instead of charity.

Mr. Millington: But he puts in only a couple of days a fortnight.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: As to the comments of the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson), I do not think the public will view the matter from exactly the standpoint the hon. member thinks they will. There will be only an odd one or two taking that view. I hope the hon. member is not impressed by everything he is told. If so, he has a very varied mind. I was much struck by the figures which he quoted; and if I wanted him to assist me in impressing the members of this Chamber, I would use his figures. The man on £5,000 a year nowadays contributes very little to the upkeep of hospitals, using the words of the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson), and this Bill will compel him to contribute £1 a year.

Hon. P. Collier: That will affect some of the farmers!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The fairness of this Bill is that everybody will

contribute alike. All those on £100 a year will contribute the same amount, all those on £1,200 a year will contribute alike, and similarly as regards all on £1,500 and all on £10,000.

Mr. Hegney: The Bill is not equitable, though.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The equity lies in this, that, to use the words of the member for Leederville, a man who is above the basic wage cannot get hospital accommodation in any of our city hospitals to-day. If he goes into a country hospital, he has to pay. Thus he contributes something towards indigent cases and cases on the basic wage. That ought to commend itself to hon. members opposite.

Mr. Munsie: I want to know how you are going to keep the hospitals open. You have not told us one word about that yet.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Under the Bill we shall have £192,000 as against £150,000 we have to-day. The member for Nelson (Mr. J. H. Smith) tells us that there will be hundreds who will not pay. I think that if ever there was a drag-net piece of legislation, it is this one. I admire the ingenuity of my friend who arranged it. The drag-net system he has contrived will, I think, prove highly effective. Now as to the hon. member's remarks about the medical service. If there is any section of the public or of professional men that gives service in an honorary capacity to the poor of the country, it is the medical profession. The legal profession does not do it. In fact, nobody else does it. I think we should at least show our appreciation of the efforts that doctors make voluntarily and gratuitously. I have always said that the free services available to the poorest people are not available to middle class people.

Hon. P. Collier: And, mark you, doctors who give their services free at the Perth Hospital regularly, will contribute to this tax as well.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is so, and they will do it with pleasure.

Mr. Panton: And the little nurse girl who gets £51 or so a year will contribute her share too!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and will receive free treatment at the hospital.

Mr. Panton: She gets that now.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am pleased to know that.

Mr. Panton: I am sorry to know that she requires it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: She will not mind paying the tax.

Mr. Panton: Of course, the poor little nurse won't mind!

Hon. P. Collier: He is fond of the nurses.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I know that.

Mr. Panton: The trouble is, it is not mutual.

Mr. Corboy: When the Minister goes to the hospital, he will get a rough spin.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am sure that when I go to the hospital the nurses will give me a pat on the back, and say "Go on, we do want more assistance."

Mr. Panton: More likely they will hit you on the head with a brick!

Hon. P. Collier: But even so, women always judge by appearances!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There was a suggestion that we should raise funds by other means. Members of Parliament have made several attempts to introduce legislation to raise money by means of lotteries, but their proposals were not found acceptable.

Mr. Corboy: One attempt only was made.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I remember a Bill was introduced by a private member.

Mr. Corboy: Give it another go; we will help you!

Mr. Munsie: I did not introduce that Bill.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No; I think the late Mr. Boyland introduced it.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, and it was thrown out in the Council.

Mr. Panton: The Council have thrown out a couple of Bills like this one.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I hope the Bill will receive more favourable consideration on this occasion.

Mr. Panton: You are rather optimistic.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: As we have framed it as nearly as possible to the Council's own ideas, we may expect it to be passed. It was not the opposition of hon. members of this Chamber that I feared, but that of another place. As we have accepted the Bill that was passed through the Council

as nearly as possible, I hope that the dotting of the "i's" and crossing of the "t's" will be acceptable.

Mr. Sleeman: What will you do regarding the £3,000 to which extent the Fremantle Hospital goes to the bad each year?

Hon. P. Collier: Oh, write that off!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I hope that position will be rectified. When we arrange to pay the extra sum that will be available for that hospital, I shall not forget to remind the hospital authorities at Fremantle that it was not because of the assistance rendered by the hon. member that the money was available.

Mr. Sleeman: I do not think you will get much assistance for the Bill at all.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I think I will. At any rate, I think hon. members will agree that the Bill is well worth a trial. The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) thinks we should fix the tax on a graduated scale. The hon. member knows that we would get very little additional help under that method, and the hospitals would not benefit. I assure the House that we have given very careful thought to the subject with a view to ascertaining how best we could raise money for the maintenance of hospitals. I was desirous of establishing a fund that would be beyond the grasp of the Treasurer. Under the existing system, Ministers go to the Treasurer to secure funds in all sorts of different ways, and very often when a Minister goes to the Treasurer he finds that another Minister has been there before him and has secured all the money available. I trust that, as a result of the Bill, my successor, whoever he may be, will at least have the benefit of an alteration in that position. If there is any service rendered to the people that should be in a favourable position, it is the medical service. In conclusion, I give members of this House my assurance on behalf of the Government, that we will not relax our efforts on behalf of the sick of this State. Particularly will that be so in the interests of those who find themselves in need of hospital accommodation in these days of financial stress. If sufficient funds are not provided as a result of the passage of the Bill, then other services will have to go by the board before that associated with our hospitals.

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

Ayes	22
Noes	17
Majority for			5

Ayes.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Barnard	Mr. Parker
Mr. Brown	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Davy	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Doney	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Grifflie	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Keenan	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. North
Mr. H. W. Mann	
Mr. J. I. Mann	(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Panten
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Walker
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Luter	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McCallum	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Millington	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. J. M. Smith	Mr. Cunningham
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. Coverley
Mr. Wells	Mr. Withers
Mr. Teendale	Mr. Troy

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

PRINTING OF BILLS.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had concurred in the Assembly's amendments to Nos. 4 and 7 of the Joint Standing Rules and Orders.

BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [9.55]: I had not anticipated speaking this evening, and have not the advantage of my notes in connection with the measure. I do not regard the Bill as of any value at all. It will not assist the farmers,

nor will it help merchants to any extent. In other ways it will do much harm. In the first place, the Bill divides the farmers' creditors into two sections. It says to one section of creditors that the Bill shall not operate where they are concerned; it says that the mortgagee, the lien holder and the secured creditor have nothing to fear or gain from the Bill, and that other creditors are prevented from taking action to recover their debts, provided the farmer is accorded the protection of the Bill. The creditors of those coming within the scope of the Bill will be prevented, supposing the Bill to be constitutional, from taking any action to secure the payment of debts incurred by farmers. As a matter of fact, the Bill aims at preventing such people from taking action for recovery. The Federal law, as it stands, makes it possible for every creditor, even though the farmer should come within the scope of the Bill, to take what action he deems necessary, and the Bill itself cannot prevent creditors from making a farmer bankrupt. The Bill in itself is an invitation, particularly to country storekeepers, to take advantage of the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act and to make a farmer bankrupt. In my opinion, the country storekeeper would be the last person to take drastic action against a farmer, but I am satisfied he will be compelled to take that action because he will resent the fact that while the mortgagee, the lien holder, and the secured creditor will not be interfered with by the Bill, he himself is supposed to keep quiet. The other fellow will have full scope to do what he desires. Thus we have the creditors separated into two classes. To one section the Bill says, "Your securities and rights shall not be affected in any any shape or form." To the other fellow the Bill says, "We expect you not to take any drastic action under the Bankruptcy Act; we want you to adopt a lenient point of view and assist in carrying on the farmer." That is wrong. If we are to have legislation of this description, it should be along the lines of the South Australian Act. In my opinion, the South Australian Government went the right way about helping the farmer out of his difficulties without taking any such action as that contemplated in this Bill, which has the effect of dividing the creditors into separate camps. Under the South Australian measure, a director was appointed to look after the administration of the Act and he has power to get the farmers and his creditors together, in a conciliatory spirit, with

the object of endeavouring to make arrangements for the farmer to carry on. If the farmer secures the necessary certificate that accords him the protection of the Act, that protection applies to all creditors—to the mortgagee, the lien holder, the secured creditor and the unsecured creditor. By that means, the South Australian Act avoids any sense of irritation, because it places all creditors on the same level. Under such conditions it is easier to get the creditors to co-operate with the Government in maintaining the farmers on the land and to continue affording the latter protection. In South Australia that is the course which has been adopted.

Mr. Piesse: Could we not include that in this Bill?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, it could not be included in this. A private member cannot introduce a provision of that kind, and of course the Government would not agree to it if we attempted it. To remodel this measure on the lines of the South Australian Act would be impossible. There is another objectionable feature in the Bill: The Government, when up against an unemployment problem, adroitly transferred that problem largely to the shoulders of the local authorities. They said, "This unemployment problem—"

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that we are not discussing the unemployment problem.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I will show you, Sir, how I apply it. It is quite pertinent to the question before the Chair. The Government transferred that unemployment difficulty to the local authorities, and under this measure, again, they are transferring their difficulties regarding the farmers on to another outside body. What is happening under this? The farmers have been put on their farms by the Agricultural Bank and assisted by the Industries Assistance Board. The farmers have been educated up to the practice of going to the Agricultural Bank and the Industries Assistance Board for all their advice and all their encouragement. But under this those two bodies will cease to function, and the proposed board will be given the power. I want country members to appreciate that the farmer in distress who comes under this measure will no longer go to the Agricultural Bank or to the In-

dustries Assistance Board, but to a board the majority of whom will be merchants, creditors.

The Minister for Lands: You say the majority?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, representatives of the banks and of the merchants.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, and where are the others?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not know. You will give the Agricultural Bank a representative, and the Associated Banks will have a representative. There will be five on the board, although in the Bill only four are provided for. The fifth one we do not know. If the fifth were to be a Government servant, he would be provided for in the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: It says he shall be a Government nominee.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, the Bill provides for the appointment of four members, representing respectively the Agricultural Bank, the Associated Banks, the merchants and the farmers. From those a chairman will be elected. But there is already a vacancy for a fifth member. As to who he will be, there is no indication in the Bill, but I take it that if the fifth were to be a public servant, he would be provided for in the Bill. So I am assuming that the board will be composed of those four members and some other person directly interested in the farmers' debts, who will be appointed to the board by the Government.

Mr. Patrick: The Government will appoint all four.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, but you and I have some indication as to where the four will come from. I assume the Government will take into consideration the most practical man they can get from among the farmers. He will be the farmers' representative. Then the Government will consider all the merchants available, and appoint one. So, too, in respect of the Agricultural Bank and the Associated Banks. But there is no indication as to where the fifth member will come from. All the farmers that take advantage of the Act will be subject to the direction of that board, not anyone else. Their farming operations will be directed by the board and all their work will be subject to the approval of the board. I want country members to appreciate exactly what the Bill means.

There was a good deal of opposition to the administration of the Industries Assistance Act. There were complaints that members of the Public Service, who knew but little of farming operations, were appointed to administer that Act. But the proposal contained in the Bill is more objectionable than that was; because at least we had public servants, men trained in the looking after of the public welfare, to administer the Industries Assistance Act, whereas if we pass this measure we shall be putting the farmers who take advantage of the Act under the control of merchants and others. I do not want the farmers to be placed under any administration other than that of the Agricultural Bank. Again, the Bill divides up the farmers, only certain of whom will be able to come under the measure. The man capable of making his own financial arrangements will not get any protection from the Act. The man who is down and out, who is involved, who is really the grave anxiety of those who study the matter to-day, is not going to come under the measure; he is going to be left. But instead of the Government saying to him, "You shall cease to operate, you have become deeply involved, you are too far in debt to carry on any longer;" instead of the Government saying, "You shall cease operations," the Government appoint a board to say that. It is not the Government any longer who will tell a man to cease farming because he is too heavily involved.

The Minister for Works: Did the Government ever tell any farmer that?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Agricultural Bank, which is subject to Government direction, have told that to scores of farmers. The present Minister confers with the trustees of the Agricultural Bank, discusses with them public policy and the general administration of affairs regarding the industry with which they are directly associated. But under this Bill that will cease; the Agricultural Bank will no longer say which man shall go on and which shall go out. This board is to have that say. The farmer that is heavily involved will go before the board. He will not go to the Agricultural Bank or to the Government, but to a board upon which merchants and others sit; and they, and they alone, will determine whether or not he is to come under the provisions of

the Act. It is perfectly clear that if a man heavily involved is denied the protection of this measure, he will go out of existence as a farmer. If an involved farmer is not a suitable client for this board, he is not likely to get assistance, or any further support, from the Agricultural Bank. Therefore, everyone who is denied the protection of this measure will cease to farm. The fact that he goes to the board for protection is clear evidence that he is not able to arrange with his creditors to continue farming. He goes to the board for protection as a result of his inability to make outside financial arrangements. The board deny that protection, and he automatically ceases to farm. He leaves the farm and it becomes the asset of the creditors, and the creditors can operate it and do as they like with it. The farmer can no longer go to the Government for protection, but must cease to farm.

The Attorney General: That is exactly the position at the present time. A farmer gets into trouble, assigns his estate and ceases to farm.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: What I complain of is that we as members of Parliament can get the Government to give special consideration. We can go to the Minister and say to him and his organisation, "We want you to investigate a certain position." But under the Bill that ceases.

The Attorney General: Why?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Because the board will be the deciding factor.

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If a farmer gets into financial trouble, he will no longer go to the Agricultural Bank who understand him. He will no longer go to those who realise that he has had a good record, but that adverse seasons, sickness and special visitations of bad luck have put him back considerably. The only voice he will have on the board will be through the representative of the Agricultural Bank. A majority of the board will have no knowledge of him. They will not know his farming history. All they will know will be his present circumstances and their only interest in him will be from their point of view as creditors. From that point of view they will decide whether he shall go out or shall continue.

The Attorney General: The board do not determine that fact at all.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The board do determine it.

The Attorney General: The board do not decide whether a man shall come under the board or not.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The board will determine by vote whether a farmer shall be given protection or not.

The Attorney General: The board will not determine that.

Mr. Kenneally: The creditors can make application to the board.

The Attorney General: All the board will do will be to call a meeting of the creditors and the creditors will decide whether a man shall come under the measure or not.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The board will be composed of creditors.

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Well, the representation is set out, and there will be only one farmer on the board.

The Attorney General: The persons to decide whether a man shall come under the measure or not will be the creditors, and they are not the board.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The application in the first place will be made to the board.

The Attorney General: Merely to call a meeting.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The board will call a meeting of the creditors and, if they determine that the farmer shall not come under the board, he cannot come under the board. The farmer will no longer get any protection from the Government or from the Agricultural Bank. The creditors may stop him from farming and will be the deciding factor in regard to his continuing farming. In other words, the Government are very cleverly transferring their trouble to the creditors. Every Government since I have been a member of Parliament has carried the responsibility of determining who shall or shall not continue farming and as to what is best in the interests of the State as regards maintaining certain settlers on their holdings. The Government in the past have always determined that, but if we are silly enough to pass this Bill, the power of making that determination will rest with the creditors. The Minister says that there will be the ordinary recourse to law. I have no objection to that, but I do object to passing a special law stating that the farmer shall go to them and they shall determine this question, according to certain procedure

laid down in the Bill. Another objection is that the farmers will be divided. The creditors also will be divided. One set of creditors will not be interfered with. They may exercise their rights. The other creditors will have to be docile and help to carry the farmer. The only section of guarantors in regard to carrying on will be those who have carried the farmer in the past and will be composed of the unsecured creditors. The secured creditors will not be called upon to become guarantors, because they have no connection at all with the measure.

The Attorney General: They have.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The measure will not apply to the mortgagee, the lien holder or the secured creditor.

The Attorney General: It will.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: How? It says distinctly that secured creditors shall be exempt, a different proposition altogether from the South Australian measure.

Mr. Doney: It makes definite provision for them all the same.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The measure divides the creditors up. To one class of creditor it says, "We do not expect you to take any special action to maintain the farmer. You are a secured creditor and can do as you like." But the country storekeeper and the less favoured creditor who have no security have not only to allow the measure to operate and the board to function, but in certain instances they have to stand as guarantors for the continuation of the farmer.

Mr. Doney: Why not bring that up in Committee?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Bill is of no value and is not worth wasting time on. I defy anyone to put anything into the Bill that will make it of any real value to the farmers. It might have been of some value had it been introduced a few months ago, but it has been delayed too long. We are right in the harvest. As a matter of fact the harvesters would be going full steam ahead throughout the eastern wheat belt if the farmers had received their cornsacks. There is a lull at present, but I hope it will be overcome in the next 24 hours.

Mr. Corboy: Meantime the crops are going down badly. I saw a crop down badly yesterday.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: And the longer it stands, the worse it becomes. The har-

vest is upon us, and any advantage that might have been available to the farmer under the measure cannot now accrue because of its lateness. All that the creditors can do, they will have done before this. What they will do from now on will be very little. Generally speaking, the repossession of harvesters will occur in the outer fringe of the eastern wheat belt from the farmers who have started within the last year or so and have been carrying a big burden. If there was to be any repossessing, it would have taken place already. It is unlikely that any more harvesters will be repossessed. A month or two ago the measure might have prevented certain machinery firms from taking action in that way, but it is not likely to have any effect now. The harvesters are being used or will be in use within the next few days. Therefore the measure will be of no value, so why waste time over a measure against which large meetings of farmers have declared themselves definitely. Only to-night I received a letter from the Lake Grace section of the Great Southern farmers who declared themselves definitely against the Bill. The Bill was discussed in detail at a large representative gathering of farmers yesterday afternoon and last night at Merredin, and they declared against it. They said definitely it was of no value to them. They did not want to be saddled with other boards and administrations from which they were not to gain any advantage.

Mr. Corboy: And the same thing happened at Southern Cross the week before that.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The secured creditors are not to come under the Bill, only the unsecured. Even the unsecured creditors need not be hampered by the Bill because for the recovery of their debts they can have recourse to the Federal Bankruptcy Act. The Bill divides up the farmers. The man who is capable of raising sufficient funds to carry on does not come under the Bill. The man who is too heavily involved and is declared to be beyond the point of recovery by any additional assistance goes out of existence. There is only one set of farmers, the medium man who is just on the fringe of becoming involved, who will come under the measure. What are we going to do for all those men who will be declared to be not

eligible to come under the Bill because of their position?

The Attorney General: What would happen to them without the Bill?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I want a Bill that will tide them over.

The Attorney General: That means money.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Of course. If the Government are going to stop these farmers, let them do so. It is no good trying to do so by the Bill. They will have to do it themselves. I said on the Budget that quite a number of farmers should be stopped by the Government to-day. These were situated 50 or 60 miles from a railway on the eastern fringe. It is wrong to maintain and encourage these farmers who cannot possibly make a success of their ventures, even if they had the luck to get good crops.

Mr. Doney: You do not attach any blame to the Government for that surely?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, but the Attorney General says it is a question of money. This money will be taken from farmers who are close to a railway and who can succeed with good seasons and reasonable prices. We are denying to those who have a chance of battling through all that they want because the Government are trying to help the man who is endeavouring to secure an impossible result. If I had anything to do with the matter I should have a stocktaking of the possible and the impossible propositions. It is no use trying to farm in remote places. The Government who put those farmers out 60 miles from existing railways did so because they anticipated that within a reasonable time railway construction would be proceeded with. The Government were led to believe by the Migration and Development Commission that settlement in the Forrestania and Lake Biddy districts was a profitable proposition, and that it would be financed under the Migration Agreement. Those days have gone because the agreement no longer exists. The possibility of getting railway communication there is very remote. We cannot expect to get the money for this purpose for a good many years. In the meantime we cannot keep the farmers out there. It would be wrong even if they could market their products at something approaching the cost of production to keep them there, owing to

the extraordinary disabilities under which they must suffer in the matter of isolation, transport and so forth.

Mr. Patrick: They should never have been placed there.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No. We must realise they cannot be maintained there. We should have a stocktaking to find out how many settlers are so situated that they cannot make a success of their holdings. They should be so organised that as blocks become vacant along existing railways they can gradually be put upon them. I did this at Lake Brown when I was Minister. Some years ago I took over the Agricultural Department. There were many settlers in the Lake Brown area far removed from existing railways, struggling under grave difficulties in the matter of water supplies and other disabilities. The possibility of economically marketing their produce was very remote. I decided it was wrong for them to go on. I could see there was no chance within a reasonable time of giving them a railway. We had many lines to construct such as the Quairading-Merredin, the Wickepin-Merredin, the Ajana railway and others. Those had all been promised and were reasonable propositions. The Government decided to go on with them. Had we tried to maintain the farmers at Lake Brown during that period we would have broken their hearts and wasted a considerable portion of the funds of the Agricultural Bank. I therefore gave instructions that as blocks became vacant within a reasonable distance of a railway they had to be reserved for the Lake Brown settlers, who were thus gradually brought in. The member for Perth was one of those who had settled at Lake Brown. I urged him at the time to come in, and he was one of the first to be brought in. Many others followed, and ultimately we practically closed the Lake Brown settlement. It has been opened up since under conditions different from the original, because railway communication was provided shortly after the second settlement took place. That sort of thing should be done on the eastern fringe to-day.

Mr. Doney: Do you suggest that work of that kind comes within the scope of the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, but the Attorney General got me on to that point. He said this required money. We are spending funds on these impossible propositions to-day. It would be better if the Government concentrated their funds in carrying on

farmers who are within striking distance of a railway or within carting distance of it. I appeal to country members to realise the seriousness of the position. We do not want another organisation created to deal with farmers. We shall have one section under the Agricultural Bank and the Associated Banks carrying on under certain conditions, and another section carrying on under the proposed board. It must be remembered that to-day the trustee system of farm management and farm direction is far from satisfactory. I do not think it will be improved at all by having farmers brought under the direction of the proposed board. Under the South Australian Act the farmer is not subject to control to the same extent as under this Bill. Only in exceptional circumstances does the South Australian Director interfere. The Bill as drafted would lead one to think that the board are going to be the organising and directing influence and will dictate to the farmer how he shall carry on.

Mr. Griffiths: But the farmer is granted a stay of proceedings under the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I see much virtue in the South Australian Act, but none in this Bill. The Bill is a totally different proposition from the South Australian Act. The South Australian Act provides no money.

Mr. Griffiths: Yes. There are two South Australian Acts.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I saw no provision for funds in the South Australian legislation. The only provision I saw was the power of the Director to function in somewhat the same way as the proposed board, though not exactly in the same way. I saw no provision for Government funds in the South Australian legislation, any more than there is provision for Government funds in this measure. I understand that there are two measures in South Australia. One is for the farmer suffering as a result of failure of crop, and special funds are provided to help him through his period of distress. But under the South Australian Debt Adjustment Act the provision is the same as under this Bill, though the former measure has the virtue that the Director does not interfere to the same extent as is proposed by this Bill. I consider that the best interests of the State will be served by not proceeding any further with the measure. I have discussed it with merchants, and am

in a position to say that they fail to see any virtue in it. If the Bill were enacted, no doubt some farmers and merchants would endeavour to make use of it. But they cannot tell you how it will advantage them. Doubtless there is a need to prevent a scramble for the proceeds, if any, of the farmer's operations. It is possible for common sense to prevail, and if the farmer's proceeds are distributed on a pro rata basis, everybody will receive a fair proportion of that which the farmer has available for payment. But that matter has been attended to by the merchants, and in fact has been in operation for some months now. Months ago the merchants were called together, and after negotiating for some time they came to an understanding with reference to the distribution of the farmer's proceeds.

Mr. Doney: Did the storekeeper come into it?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not know. In any case, he does not come into this Bill to any extent. He is well left out; and he is the man to whom I am prepared to give, next to the wages man, the maximum consideration. I think it would be far better, instead of going to all the trouble of appointing a board and holding investigations, if the Government were to give legal authority to the arrangement made with the merchants, and allow that arrangement to continue; in other words, to protect the merchants by compelling the recognition by all parties of the voluntary undertaking which has been given. I quite realise that in connection with the voluntary agreement some merchants may become disgruntled and upset all calculations. However, there was an understanding that all the merchants had come to an agreement.

Mr. Griffiths: Not at all. A section would not join in.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I was given to understand that at one period all of them were prepared to subscribe to a uniform method of distributing the farmer's proceeds, and that all that was required at that time was for the Government to say, "We will give legislative authority to this; we will make it compulsory for you to observe for a given period this agreement at which you have arrived." The Government could have allowed that agreement to function. In that case they would never have been brought into the business, and a measure of this kind would not have been needed;

nor would another organisation be necessary. If the creation of this board were to stop the work of the Agricultural Bank, we would not be duplicating organisation; but in fact the Bill proposes to create, afresh, a new organisation. Even with the Industries Assistance Board we did not create an altogether separate organisation. Certain administrative heads were separate and distinct from the Agricultural Bank trustees, but the real inspectorial work and all that kind of thing was done by officers of the Agricultural Bank. Under this measure merchants who are not connected with the Agricultural Bank, who do not understand as we do the operation of that organisation, will create their own methods, and will have their own inspectors, and the farmer is to be called upon to pay for all the inspectorial and other work done by the board. The Bill cannot be amended so as to make it of any value to either farmers or merchants. A separate organisation would have to be created, and the point is that the full burden of the cost of that organisation would be borne by the farmer coming under the measure. The secured creditor would not have anything to do with it, nor would the farmer who could get through without the assistance of the board. All the operations of the board would have to be paid for by the unfortunate farmer coming under the measure. If I had the responsibility to-day, I would utilise the organisation that exists. This is no time for duplicating organisations. This is a time when we want to economise, when we want to use our existing organisations to the maximum extent. The Bill does not propose to utilise the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. Doney: The Government do propose to utilise the Agricultural Bank, though that is not expressly stated in the Bill.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am merely taking the Bill and discussing it. The position is that under the Bill a separate organisation will be created, duplicating work that is going on to-day. The Agricultural Bank will function to a greater extent, but not to the same extent as to-day. The officers of the bank will still function, and another organisation will be created in the shape of the board. In conclusion I want to say that if the members of the Country Party are prepared to saddle the farmers of Western Australia with a separate organ-

isation as here proposed, the responsibility is going to be that of those members. I regard the measure as of no value to the farmers. The organised farmers have declared, in meeting, against it; and I am determined that the House shall be divided on the measure. The Government have delayed too long in introducing the Bill. It is now of no value, though it might have been of some value a few months back. Therefore I shall vote against the second reading, and I hope the Government will not continue to waste our time in further consideration of the Bill.

On motion by Mr. Griffiths, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.41 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 11th November, 1930.

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

PRINTING OF BILLS.

Amendment of Joint Standing Orders.

The PRESIDENT: I desire to inform the House that the Governor has approved of the alterations in the Joint Standing Orders passed by the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly on the 6th instant.