

premises of the licensee unless such liquor is supplied in a glass capable of holding at least $1\frac{1}{4}$ gills. Penalty: £5."

I gave notice of this amendment when moving the second reading. It is one of great importance. An infinite amount of harm is done through people drinking liquor, particularly spirits, that is too strong. I do not see why a person going into an hotel should be allowed to help himself to spirits. The measure that is given provides a fair and generous nobbler. My contention is that a publican, having supplied this liquor, should supply it in a glass to enable the consumer to adulterate it to suit his own taste. If this amendment is carried it will mean that the glass in which the liquor is supplied will be large enough to enable the purchaser to add four times as much water, or sodawater, as there is spirit. A bottle of whisky contains $5\frac{1}{4}$ gills, and the measured nobbler provides for 23 measures to the bottle. It allows the publican sufficient profit to enable him to serve his customer in the way he likes to be served. In some hotels people are treated properly in this respect, but in other hotels the glass is capable of holding only about as much water as there is spirit. People, therefore, frequently pour back a good deal of the whisky, and this deprives them of something for which they have paid. I cannot see any reasonable objection to the amendment.

Hon. H. Stewart: I suggest that progress be now reported.

Progress reported.

BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Amendments.

Returned from the Assembly with amendments.

House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 23rd November, 1920.

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

QUESTION—MIGRATION, ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES.

Hon. P. COLLIER asked the the Colonial Secretary: 1, What was the total number of arrivals in the State for the 10 months ending 31st October of the present year? 2, What was the number of departures from the State for the same period? 3, What number of assisted and nominated immigrants arrived during the time in question?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1 and 2, Arrivals, 25,497; departures, 23,192. These figures, which are supplied by the Commonwealth authorities, are estimates only, and so far as they relate to the four months since June 30, are preliminary unrevised figures. Included in the estimate of departures is an item of 787, set down as the estimated number of unrecorded departures. 3, Assisted, 2,491; nominated, 1,259.

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Mr. Wilson and read a first time.

BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and returned to the Council with amendments.

BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

Second Reading.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: It will be generally admitted that the time has come when we must face the question of the redistribution of seats. We have a changing population, and many and varied businesses. The Bill before the House provides for the recasting of electoral districts by three commissioners. One of these shall be a judge of the Supreme Court, one the Surveyor General, and the other the Chief Electoral Officer. Provision is also made for temporary commissioners to replace either of the last two-named officials. Both the Surveyor-General and the Chief Electoral Officer are at present only acting in that capacity. It is conceivable that the House may order the commission to get to work when one of these officers is ill, and it must be possible to fill the position of either. The basis of redistribution is laid down in the Bill. The single electorates are to be retained. It will be conceded that this system suits our conditions better than any other on account of our scattered population. It may not be scientific or perfect, but it is one that has obtained for many years. I believe it is the only system that provides for fair representation. We must give adequate representation to all sections of our people and to all those engaged in our industries. The single electorate system, which is based upon the scattered nature of our population, and

the varied nature of our industries, provides very fair representation where there is such an unequal number of electors. We cannot give equal representation on the basis of an equal number of electors in each electorate. The Bill provides for certain divisions that are set out in the schedule and in Clause 6. One division is the metropolitan area, another the central goldfields area, another the agricultural area, another the mining area, which means the outer goldfields and includes a great deal of pastoral country, and finally the North-West. A large number of people have left the goldfields during the last few years, and many of these have been transferred to the agricultural districts. I do not know that we are likely again to achieve that excess in mining which we once had, but I believe we shall do so. Should the population of the State again move in that direction, the Bill provides for an automatic report by the commission.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It will make us unionists whether we want it or not.

The PREMIER: I do not know that the Bill will do that.

Mr. McCallum: This is government of the country by broad acres.

The PREMIER: I will explain directly what the representation is to-day.

Mr. McCallum: It is not too good to-day, but this Bill will make it worse.

The PREMIER: This House has always held the opinion that we cannot have an equal number of electors in each electorate.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We do not want 50 per cent. more.

The PREMIER: Menzies contains 542 electors, Mt. Leonora 784, Canning 10,354, and Leederville 9,545. It will thus be seen that the numbers are not equal.

Mr. Munsie: That is so.

The PREMIER: The time has come to correct these anomalies.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: If not, you would not require this Bill.

The PREMIER: That is so. During the last few years the number of electors in the metropolitan area has increased. The Bill seeks to correct anomalies that exist, and to provide fair representation, the basis of which is set out in Clause 4. We had a Bill before us in 1913. I will tell members what might have happened and what would have happened at that time.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Bill was fairer than this is.

The PREMIER: Had the Bill been passed, certain things would have happened. It did not contemplate an equal number of electors in each electorate.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There was a 40 per cent. difference, one-fifth above and one-fifth below.

Hon. T. Walker: And this does not contemplate it either.

The PREMIER: No. That Bill contemplated a difference of 40 per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And three seats in the North-West.

The PREMIER: The Bill now before us contemplates a reduction of 50 per cent. in the metropolitan area, and an increase in the mining area, that is the outer goldfields, of 50 per cent. The agricultural areas are neither increased nor decreased, and that also appertains so far as the central goldfields are concerned. Four seats will remain in the North-West. After the number of electors has been increased in the case of the outer goldfields, and reduced in the metropolitan area, the total in the four areas is divided by 40, and the quota of 2,956 is obtained. This quota is divided into the number of electors in each given area as weighted, and this increases or reduces the number of seats for those areas. It is important to remember that we are dealing with divisions. When the member for North-East Fremantle said that the margin in the 1913 Bill was 40 per cent., I should have indicated that the provision in the present Bill is 50 per cent., with the addition that while the 20 per cent. variation will remain in the Bill, it cannot be applied other than in one area. The variations which are allowed can only be applied to single areas.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not so under the Act.

The PREMIER: Where the quotient contains a fraction, the commissioners may at their discretion ignore it or increase to the next whole number. When the division is made, we may get one place having a right to 4.60 seats, while in another they may be entitled to 4.25. Undoubtedly when the division discloses a percentage of more than $4\frac{1}{2}$, the extra representation would go to that division which is entitled to it by reason of the larger fraction.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why should the North-West be singled out and treated differently from the other outlying parts, such as Esperance?

The PREMIER: I do not know why the member for North-East Fremantle agreed to that.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We gave only three members to the North-West.

The PREMIER: But you treated them differently. The total number of electors divided by the number of seats will give the quota of voters per seat for each electoral district in the area. If it be determined that Perth shall have 14 seats, 14 will be divided into the number of electors, and the result will be the quota.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I suppose you will run the metropolitan area up to Northam?

The PREMIER: I do not want North-East Fremantle in Northam anyhow! Whatever the area may be, the commissioners may vary the basis of division above or below, but by not more than one-fifth of the quota. In the metropolitan area, the number of electors in each division need not necessarily be 6,000. It may be varied. It is impossible to fix the divisions so as to get an absolutely even number. If we did find it possible to

get that even number of electors in each division, it could not be maintained because the numbers are ever changing. In the North-West, the present boundaries are to be retained. The area is to be divided into four districts, but the present boundaries need not necessarily be those fixed by the Commissioners. In that area 4,000 electors are represented, and the representation will remain. It must be realised that we have in the North an enormous territory with a scattered population. In various parts of that area are to be found people occupied in pastoral pursuits, in mining operations, in pearling, and in other industries. We have the meat works at Wyndham, and I am glad to say that people are engaged in boring for oil as well, so that it is possible that there may be a considerable increase in the population there.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You are looking forward.

The PREMIER: We are looking very much ahead. I maintain that the North-West cannot be treated on the same basis as the rest of the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You could give the North three seats and that part of the State would be treated well.

The PREMIER: This House has always recognised the special claims of the North.

Hon. P. Collier: If we had not done so, it would have had only one member. There is a big difference between one and four members.

The PREMIER: This House has never suggested, that I can remember, that there should be one member for the North-West.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course! Had that not been recognised, there would be only one member here.

The PREMIER: There are over 4,000 people in that part of the State.

The Minister for Mines: The greatest anomaly in the Parliamentary representation of the North-West is in the Legislative Council, not here.

The PREMIER: I want to make it clear that the effect of weighting the metropolitan and outer goldfields areas is that six metropolitan voters have the same representation as three in the agricultural and central goldfields areas, and as two in the outer goldfields area.

Mr. McCallum: That is, three to one?

The PREMIER: Yes, compared with the scattered goldfields areas.

Mr. McCallum: And you call that fair?

The PREMIER: We cannot have representation on an equal basis.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I warn you of what happened in connection with the 1911 Redistribution of Seats Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: It is little better than that Bill which brought disaster to your party.

The Minister for Mines: That was a question of adjusting boundaries; this does not do so.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course this adjusts the boundaries.

The PREMIER: The commission will report to the House. There must be regard shown for the community of interest, means of communication, physical features, and the existing boundaries. The commission may modify the boundaries of the areas as set out in the schedule, in formulating the redistribution. In this case, we ask the commission to make a report to Parliament, and that report will be presented to both Houses. After the report is presented, a Bill for the redistribution of seats will be introduced. If passed, the Bill will operate from a proclaimed day. Members of both Houses must continue to represent their existing districts until their terms expire. That, of course, is essential. The Bill, however, provides that the redistribution may be made subsequently by the passing of a resolution by the Legislative Assembly or if, on making up the rolls for the triennial elections, the enrolment in five electoral districts departs by more than one-fifth from the quota. In that case, the commission would report to the House without instructions from Parliament.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The commissioners have no power at all.

The PREMIER: A Bill for the necessary redistribution will then follow; that is, when the report shows that the number of electors in five districts has fallen or increased by 20 per cent. on the quota. To-day in the metropolitan area there are 84,872 electors on the roll.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This will mean that the metropolitan party will have to be dissolved, unless they work together after this Bill is brought in.

The PREMIER: Reducing that number of electors by 50 per cent. will leave 42,436 electors. In the mining area, there are 9,372 electors, which, with the addition of 50 per cent., will give a total of 14,053 electors. In the agricultural area, the present enrolment totals 65,858 and that will remain as it is. In the central goldfields areas there are 13,651 electors and that will remain as well, for the purpose of calculating the quota. Dividing the total number of electors, which works out at 136,003, by 46 gives a quota of 2,956. This means that if we take these figures for to-day and the quota as well, it will be found that in the metropolitan area we will have 14.35 seats, in the mining area, 4.75 seats, in the agricultural area, 22.28 seats, in the central goldfields, 4.62 seats, and in the North-West, four seats. To-day the metropolitan area has 12 seats with an average of 7,073 electors per seat. In the mining areas, there is an average of 1,041 electors for each of the nine existing seats. In the agricultural areas, there are 21 seats with an average number of voters per seat of 3,136.

Mr. McCallum: Why call South Fremantle part of the metropolitan area and the Swan district an agricultural seat?

Hon. P. Collier: One is represented by Labour and the other is not.

The PREMIER: The central goldfields have four seats with an average of 3,413 voters per seat.

Hon. P. Collier: This Bill is a greater abortion than the 1911 Bill.

The PREMIER: The North-West has four seats with an average number of voters per seat of 1,064.

Hon. P. Collier: If this is the best you are capable of doing, you should be proud of it! It is a jerrymandering measure and nothing more.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: Under the Bill, the quota for the metropolitan seats will be 6,062 as against 7,073 and there will be 14 seats. In the mining area the average number of voters will be 1,874 with five seats; in the agricultural area there will be 22 seats with an average of 2,993 electors, while in the central goldfields, there will be four seats with an average of 3,413 electors.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You give the same to the man who lives a hop, skip and a jump from the Town Hall, Perth, and call that fair play.

The PREMIER: In the mining area, it may be that the number will be divided into five, in which case there would be an average number of electors of 2,730. In the North-West, the quota will remain as at present. There is no denying the fact that the present indications point to an increase in the population of the agricultural areas and I hope there may be an increase in the central goldfields and the outer goldfields as well. In view of the later reports we have received, there is a possibility of that occurring.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It makes no difference if you knock off members and give them to other parts.

The PREMIER: That is not the aim.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is, in the Bill.

The PREMIER: In October 1916 there were in the metropolitan area, 71,084 voters as against 84,872 to-day; in the mining area there were 14,632 in 1916 as against 9,372 to-day; in the agricultural area there were 62,348 in 1916 as against 65,858 to-day; in the central goldfields there were 14,965 voters in 1916 as against 13,651 to-day, whilst in the North-West there were 4,012 voters in 1916 as against 4,257 to-day. The number of electors in the metropolitan area to-day has increased by 13,788, while the number for the other areas, excluding the North-West, has decreased by 3,064. A Bill was presented to the House in 1913. Under that Bill three commissioners were to be appointed by the Governor. Under this Bill three specified commissioners are provided for. Under the 1913 Bill the North-West was to have three seats; under this Bill it will have four seats. Under the 1913 Bill the value of the votes was to be the same throughout. There was provision that the quota should apply to the whole State, with

the proviso that the number of electors might be increased or decreased by 20 per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That was left to the commissioners; under this it is not to be left to the commissioners.

The PREMIER: In the metropolitan area to-day the votes are distributed in the way I have explained. I have explained, too, that the 20 per cent. which represents the possible variation of numbers applies only to specified areas.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The quota applied to the whole State.

The PREMIER: Yes, under the 1913 Bill it did. Under this Bill the quota applies separately to specified areas. The hon. member himself said it was never intended that there should be a 40 per cent. variation. Also the Bill provides for subsequent redistribution when directed by the Assembly, or when in five districts the number of electors departs by 20 per cent. from the quota.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You did not take into consideration distance from the capital.

Hon. P. Collier: The Kalgoorlie seat has a bigger quota than that for the Swan electorate. Do you call that equity?

The PREMIER: It is true that in the 1913 Bill the metropolitan area might have had 23 seats. But it was never intended that it should have 23 seats.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It could not have 23 seats.

The PREMIER: Yes, under that Bill it could. Under this Bill it will have 14 seats, as against the existing 12. Under the 1913 proposals the mining area would have had two or three seats on present figures whereas on present figures the number of seats is nine. The agricultural areas, including the outer parts, would have had on present figures 18 seats under the 1913 Bill, whereas under the Bill's proposals on present figures they would have from 21 to 23 seats. The central goldfields under the 1913 Bill would have had three or four seats, whereas on present figures they would have under this Bill four or five seats.

Mr. McCallum: You are quoting extreme instances under the 1913 Bill.

The PREMIER: Yes, I have said so. The then Attorney General (Hon. T. Walker) made it quite clear that this allowance of one-fifth would be used. He said:—

There shall be a certain amount of elasticity in the allocation of the quota. Electorates that are very far from the capital or have difficulty of access to the capital will not be burdened with so large a quota as those lying in the very heart of the metropolis. Consequently, there is this amount of elasticity allowed to the commissioners, that they will be enabled to increase the quota by one-fifth in thickly populated districts in close proximity to and easy communication with the capital, and to diminish the quota by one-fifth in those electorates which are remote or have difficulty of communication with the seat of Government. That is the one guiding feature.

That means 40 per cent.

Hon. P. Collier: Your Bill means 100 per cent., 50 under and 50 over.

The PREMIER: No, that is not so.

Mr. McCallum: You just admitted that it meant three to one.

The PREMIER: That was in respect of the outer mining districts. I have just explained that under the 1913 Bill those outlying districts would have been wiped out altogether.

Mr. McCallum: You are quoting the extreme instances that could have happened.

Hon. P. Collier: Under our Bill they would have had the number of members to which they were entitled, having regard to their distance from the capital.

The PREMIER: Under that Bill the quota might have been reduced by 20 per cent.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Why the distinction between the outer districts and Carnarvon? It is only 20 hours from Geraldton or, by aeroplane, only an hour?

The PREMIER: Under the present system we have 13 members from mining districts, whereas under the Bill they will be nine or 10.

Mr. Chesson: How will they be nine or 10?

The PREMIER: Yes, they will be nine or 10. They would have been fewer under the 1913 Bill. Hon. members will realise that it was intended to use that 20 per cent. variation in the quota; so under that Bill it would have taken 11 electors in Perth to equal eight in the country.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But they would have broadened the area in accordance with the difference in quota.

Mr. Underwood: It would have been 25 each way, as against 50 now.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Swan electorate would not have had the same representation as the Irwin electorate.

The PREMIER: The difference is that between 11 and eight, as against that between 12 and six. The principle is the same. We could not have 23 members representing Perth.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you think it fair that the Swan electorate should be on the same plane as that of Greenough?

Hon. P. Collier: And should have a smaller quota than Kalgoorlie?

The PREMIER: It was realised in 1913 that the quota could not be the same in Perth as in the scattered districts. I suppose that this will be the point most warmly discussed on this occasion.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I suppose the Bill will suit this time, and you will not withdraw it as you have done the last two Bills.

The PREMIER: I have never before introduced a Redistribution of Seats Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the Attorney General in the same Government did.

The PREMIER: It was not contended in 1913 that every vote should have the same value. That cannot be. It is far more difficult to represent some of the outer districts than it is to represent a metropolitan seat.

Hon. P. Collier: It is all a question of a degree of area which is honest and fair.

The PREMIER: Yes, and when you vary it it can always be questioned.

Hon. P. Collier: There can be no question about a smaller quota for a constituency at the back door of Perth than that for an electorate 400 miles away.

The PREMIER: The Swan electorate extends 40 miles from Perth.

Hon. P. Collier: And it comes in to the end of the tram track.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: South Fremantle extends 40 miles from Perth.

The PREMIER: Yes, it goes to Rockingham.

Mr. McCallum: It goes half-way to Mandurah.

The PREMIER: I know that any redistribution of seats proposal must meet with considerable opposition. It is just a question of what is fair and right by the State, and also what is just to the people of the State and what will produce a fair representation.

Hon. P. Collier: What will benefit party supporters?

The PREMIER: No, I have not given the slightest consideration to that.

Hon. P. Collier: Is it a non-party Bill?

The PREMIER: No, it is not. The hon. member himself cannot say just what the result will be from a redistribution of seats proposal of this sort.

Mr. McCallum: What did Monger have to say about it?

The PREMIER: Mr. Monger had less to say about it than had the hon. member to say about the Bill of 1913.

Hon. P. Collier: This Bill was submitted to caucus, anyhow.

The PREMIER: The Bill has not been submitted to Mr. Monger, to Mr. Millington or to anybody else. It is brought down to the House for the consideration of members. The time is overripe for a redistribution.

Hon. P. Collier: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: It was so in 1913.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is another instance of the Government killing the metropolitan area.

The PREMIER: Of course that will be said. If by increasing the number of representatives of the metropolitan area we kill the metropolitan area, then of course the Bill will do it. I am not going to accuse the hon. member of wanting to give the metropolitan area unfair representation. All I ask is that we shall provide for fair representation. Under the Bill no class of electors can hope to have representation which will mean power to control the affairs of the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But you have provided for a majority straight away. It is all fixed up in the Bill.

The PREMIER: Included in the agricultural area are the four ports, and Collie and Forrest.

Mr. Wilson: How are you going to fix up Collie this time?

The PREMIER: It will not be fixed up at all.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It is fixed up already.

The PREMIER: The House will have the recommendations of the commission and will deal with them as it thinks fit.

Hon. P. Collier: The commission will be only a camouflage. An office boy could do it with the statistics. What is there for the commission to do with the figures?

The PREMIER: There will be a great deal for the commission to do.

Hon. P. Collier: To decide whether the boundary shall go down this street or the next street?

The PREMIER: A commission was appointed in 1913.

Hon. P. Collier: But it was not tied up as this one is to be.

The PREMIER: It is not intended that it should do other than use the 20 per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: By taking the distances from the seat of government.

The PREMIER: 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.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. P. COLLIER (Boulder) [5.17]: This is the usual Bill which comes down every year for the purpose of deciding what the land tax and income tax shall be for the financial year. Whilst it has been usual to accept the Bill as being merely formal, the circumstances at present are such as to call for some consideration of the position. It is quite obvious, in fact it has been more than obvious for a number of years, that the total revenue raised by way of taxation has been wholly insufficient to meet the outgoings. This being so, we should consider whether it is not necessary to increase the amount of the tax in order that we might be able to bring the revenue and expenditure nearer together at the end of the financial year. Last year we had a deficit which constituted a record in the history of the State—£732,000—in round figures we might say practically three quarters of a million, and so far as indications go for the present financial year, we shall equal, if not eclipse, the record of last year.

The Premier: Not at all.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Four months of the financial year have expired and the total shortage on revenue account is £411,000.

The Premier: That is £90,000 better than last year.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That is small comfort. Even if that rate of improvement is maintained, it is still evident that we shall end up the financial year very much on the wrong side of the ledger. I do not know whether

the Government consider they are entitled to go on year after year piling up such a deficit, the accumulation of which threatens to almost submerge the State in financial difficulties. Here we have a total deficit of nearly £6,000,000. Year after year we are borrowing money in order to pay our way. The result of that policy has been to add tremendously to our interest bill. The amount which taxpayers are now called upon to find for interest on the deficit alone totals some hundreds of thousands of pounds. If we continue in this way indefinitely, where is it going to land us? A few years ago the country was asked to be satisfied with a policy of increased production, which it was said would ultimately enable the Government to square the finances. Members took the view that in the circumstances they would be justified in affording the Government an opportunity to see what effect that policy would have on the finances. But we have gone on borrowing large sums yearly. With the exception of one year, the amount borrowed last year was the largest for any one year, and although we are spending that money in development work, we still find that the financial results show no improvement. In fact, it is remarkable how each year gives practically the same result. Although we keep on piling up taxation, although taxation has increased from £407,000 in 1916, to £955,000 last year, and although the Premier expects to receive more than £1,000,000 this year, notwithstanding all this direct taxation, it is in no way reflected in the financial results. No matter how taxation is increased, each year sees us worse off than the preceding year. Has Parliament become so absolutely indifferent to the financial position of the State as to be careless of the ultimate result? When the deficit of this State was not one-fifth of the total it is to-day, the people were informed by members of the House, through the columns of the Press and from the public platform, that the State was rushing headlong to bankruptcy. But the same newspapers, which never allowed two days to pass without printing in large type and in the most prominent position, the fact that the financial position was so parlous, are now content to make merely a very mild comment about once a quarter. The comment on the financial position does not average more than about four references a year.

Mr. Munsie: They have given up doing that now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The Press, the guardian of the public welfare, is content to be silent to-day when the accumulated deficit is £6,000,000, notwithstanding that it shrieked from the very housetops when the total was only £600,000. So long as the Press is prepared to aid, abet, and condone shortcomings in the administration of the affairs of the State, so long may we see that attitude reflected in members of this House and the public generally.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Last Saturday's election showed that they have not much power now.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The session should not be allowed to close until the House receives some assurance or pronouncement that the Government propose to do something, either by way of reducing expenditure and effecting economies somewhere in the departments, or by increasing the revenue, and so improve the position. We would not be doing our duty to the country, and, in fact, we would be scandalously negligent of our responsibilities if we permitted this drift to continue month after month, and year after year, without insisting upon something being done to stop it. The possibilities of taxation in some directions have not been exhausted. In 1916 the total amount collected from land tax was £47,000, and the amount collected from income tax was £91,000. Let us now consider the figures for 1921. I shall not take the figures for 1922 because they would be unreliable, due to the fact that a fair amount of both land tax and income tax was still outstanding. While the amount received from land tax in 1916 was £47,000, in 1921 it was £57,000, an increase of only £10,000 in the five years. The receipts from income tax, however, increased from £91,000 in 1916 to £332,000 in 1921.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is where they got it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: See the contrast! That enormous increase received from income tax was due, not to any increase in the amount of wealth or of taxable income in the State, but to the taxation itself having been increased. The tax per £1 has been increased during those intervening years. But the amount of the land tax remains the same to-day as it was when the Act was carried in 1906. There has been no increase whatever in the land tax during the years from 1906 to 1922. Taxation has been piled up on those who pay income tax, and in like manner under the Dividend Duties Act. Last year the amount received from dividend duties was £177,000. The amount received from stamp duties was £164,000—something like five times the amount received six years ago. It seems to me that the House would not be justified in passing this Bill in the same form as that in which the measure has been enacted for a number of years. Something is required by way of increased taxation. If the Government say they have exhausted the possibilities of reducing expenditure, if the Government find themselves unable to reduce expenditure in any of the departments, then obviously the only alternative is to increase their total revenue by amendments in their taxation measures, or else increase the charges made for services rendered, principally by the business undertakings. I venture to say no member of this Chamber would contend that charges in those directions have not already reached the absolute limit. In fact, the charges are too high. The plain fact of the situation is that we are making no attempt,

that there is no policy, no programme, to arrest the financial drift which we have experienced for years. If the Government have no policy in that direction, then surely it is up to this House, and particularly it is incumbent upon the party standing for financial reform, to take a hand in the matter. I should like to know what the Country Party think with regard to the financial situation, bearing in mind the resolutions and decisions of their conferences, bearing in mind also that the Country Party are now part and parcel of the Government and equally responsible with them. The annual conference indulged in sharp criticism of the financial administration of the Government. The position has not been in any way improved. For the last financial year the position is actually the worst in the financial history of the State. Notwithstanding the Premier's statement that the financial position for the first four months of this year is better than that for the first four months of last year, the outlook for this year is no better than it was for last year, or very little better. It rests with hon. members themselves to say whether they are content to drift along in the same fashion as hitherto. Personally I think the financial position would have been much worse but for the fact that this House, at the lead not of the present Government but of their predecessors, so amended the Income Tax Assessment Act as to impose iniquitous and unjust burdens upon a large section of the people of this State. The enormously increased revenue from income tax has been due in a measure to the fact that the exemptions have been reduced from the former amount of £200 to £156 in the case of married persons and those with dependants. There is also the reduction to £100 in the case of single persons without dependants. For my part I maintain the attitude which this party adopted when those amendments were being made. All the tribunals which have investigated the subject in this State and in the Commonwealth have declared that £156 a year is not a living wage. The minimum or basic wage laid down by those tribunals is £3 17s. per week. That is the amount of the bare living wage. It is generally accepted as a sound principle of taxation that a person should be called upon to pay taxation only in proportion to his capacity to pay it. Those who are in receipt of £156 a year are below the living wage, and it follows that they are not in a position to pay taxation. I should like to see the exemption raised to at least £200, if not £250. In my opinion £250 is the lowest annual income on which any person should be asked to pay taxation. Now the proposal is to pile on additional taxation, with the existing insufficient exemptions. When this Bill is in Committee I hope to effect one or two amendments in it, although the opportunity does not present itself of so amending the measure as I should like. We know, of course, that it is not competent for a private member to

move an amendment which will add to taxation or impose increased burdens. Such an amendment can only be moved by a Minister. In fact, any far-reaching amendment in a taxation Bill can only be effected by a Government. It is not possible for a private member to do anything effective in that direction. If members supporting the Government are content to go on, letting the six million deficit of to-day become a 12 million deficit at the end of another six years, if they are content to pile up the burden for posterity to meet, not only with regard to redemption of loans but also in respect of the huge, burdensome interest bill, then the responsibility must be theirs. Certainly I think the time is opportune for the ventilation here of the whole position of our finances. So long as a Ministry is allowed to carry on with its programme and gently slide into recess at the end of the year, to hibernate for seven months until the end of the following July, and then to dawdle along for the first four or five months of the session, to end with an attempt at bundling through a long list of Bills, all of them of the utmost importance and all having a bearing on the finances of the State, we cannot look for any improvement. So long as we allow the country to be governed in that fashion, so long will the present drift continue. I protest against the fact of our being offered merely a Bill similar to that which we have had in previous years, containing no indication whatever that there is going to be any improvement or alteration during the present year on what we have experienced during the past six years.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam—in reply) [5.41]: I quite realise that the Leader of the Opposition is fully justified in drawing attention to the position of the finances. However, the Budget is now before the House and hon. members are dealing with it. The Estimates show that there will be a considerable difference between this year's results and those of last year. I think hon. members will agree that it is a very good thing if the deficit can be reduced to £389,000. The indications up to date are that this will be achieved. It is true that we have expected increased production to improve the position. There have been various difficulties on the goldfields affecting the revenue. Goldfields activities have been greatly reduced. We know, however, that the mines are looking up in various goldfields, and are promising increased activity and greater revenue. I have already endeavoured this session to induce the House to give me some additional revenue. The Liquor Act Amendment Bill, as introduced, provided for a total revenue of £110,000. However, this Chamber gave me just half the desired increase. I should like to feel that I could reasonably oppose additional taxation being placed on the people. Let hon. members look at the number of taxes the people bear—State taxation, Fed-

eral taxation, and local taxation. It is said that the land would bear a higher rate of tax. But land owners already have to bear State tax, Federal tax, road board tax, vermin tax, and water tax.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Most of it is being paid out of loan moneys.

The PREMIER: No; loan moneys do not pay taxes. Again, hon. members must bear in mind that governmental responsibilities are growing year by year. The cost of the education system has increased owing to extended settlement. The cost of the Health Department must increase year by year. There has been a rise in the expenditure on charities. These various departments eat up every penny that we get from State taxation. A few years ago it was not so, but it is so to-day because the needs of the people are ever increasing. The House would protest against curtailment of expenditure under any of these heads. I know hon. members might say that there should be greater economy regarding the expenditure of the Education Department, but I also know that the House would not countenance the reduction of expenditure on charity, medical, or health. Of course all that expenditure has to be met. The loss on the railways is due almost entirely to falling off in traffic, and that in turn is due to depression on the goldfields. However, that difficulty is gradually being overcome. It seems to me that the difficulty must be overcome with increased production and increased traffic. In the early period of the war business was almost at a standstill for a long time. Then the aftermath of war had to be faced and everyone knows that country storekeepers were in trouble because of decreased trade, which meant also the decreased use of the railways, and consequently a fall in the revenue. We have endeavoured to meet the situation by rigid economy in Government departments. It must not be forgotten too that we have spent a good deal of money in development work and in settling people on the land, and if we have had increased revenue, it has been due to increased income obtained by some of our people. In addition to the exemption of £156 there is also the exemption of £40 for each child, as well as other exemptions. I had hoped that the House would assist me in obtaining what I anticipated getting from the liquor trade. Unfortunately, the amount of £110,000 was reduced by half. I trust that the House will assist me to pass the Bill as it has been presented.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT.

Second reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. MUNSLIE (Hannans) [5.50] I have not much to say on this Bill at the present time, as I recognise it is a measure that can better be dealt with in Committee. A num-

ber of amendments have already been suggested and I intend to add one or two more to the list. I realise that the Act at present on the statute book is being interpreted in different ways by different people. The Commissioner of Taxation has an interpretation of his own, and of course the taxpayers are compelled to abide by his decision. They must either do that or appeal to the court, which is a costly matter. I can quote two instances of amendments made to the Assessment Act last session, neither of which the Commissioner would allow. It is my intention when the Bill is in Committee to endeavour to make these particular provisions perfectly plain. I absolutely disagree with the methods it is proposed to adopt for raising taxation, that is, to wipe out exemptions, or reduce them to practically nothing. If it were possible for a member on this side of the House to move to increase the exemption I would certainly do so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You can do that.

Hon. T. Walker: You can lessen the burden, but you may not increase it.

Mr. MUNSIE: If that is the case there will be more than a couple of amendments submitted by me. I have nothing more to say except that the system is absolutely unfair.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle [5.53]): The Bill has not come up to my expectations. When we dealt with a similar Bill last session everything possible was done to provide for the relief of those who were engaged in business whether commercial, agricultural, pastoral or mining. Everything possible was done to relieve those sections of the community; but what was done to assist the worker? Everything that we did for the worker has been disallowed by the Commissioner of Taxation.

Hon. M. F. Troy: He is a law unto himself.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It would seem that Parliament does not rule so far as taxation is concerned. The only thing to do if one wishes to enforce the intentions of Parliament, is to appeal to the court. But we know what that means, especially when the other side happens to be the Government. Then it may be, not one court but two or three, and eventually the Privy Council, and probably the appellant will finish up in the bankruptcy court. There is no doubt that the Act is not administered in accordance with the wishes of Parliament. There is a section in the existing Act which provides that reasonable travelling expenses shall be allowed as a deduction. The Premier stated last night that if a person lived in Perth and he had to go to Subiaco in one week, to Claremont in the next week and Leederville in the following week, travelling expenses would be allowed. I say that is not the case.

The Premier: I say it is.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If a man were employed in Perth and his employer sent him to work to any place outside the city, and had to pay the employee's fare to the place where

the man was going to work, the employer could claim that expenditure as a deduction, and it would be allowed. But if a man happens to be working for himself, say in the building trade, and he has to move about from place to place, he receives no allowance.

The Premier: Are you quite sure?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Quite sure.

Mr. Munsie: I will move an amendment which will make it pretty sure.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I cannot understand why the department say it is quite right to permit a doctor to have his travelling expenses in connection with the earning of his income, and not allow similar expenses to anyone else. It is well known that a doctor whose surgery is in Perth and who has to go to Subiaco to see a patient, might not be able to earn his income if he did not go to where that patient resided. In those circumstances a doctor receives an allowance in connection with the use of his motor car.

The Premier: And he charges the patient.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Taxation Department makes an allowance in such a case, but if a man lives in Subiaco and has to come to Perth to earn his income he receives no allowance. He is in exactly the same position as a doctor, and yet one is allowed an exemption and the other is not. That is neither fair nor just in the assessing of income. The argument used by the Premier last night was that every person should reside where the work happened to be, or as close to it as possible.

The Premier: If they have permanent work.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Is it possible for all people who are working in Perth to-day to reside in Perth?

The Premier: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Of course not. The whole system is wrong. There might be some difficulty in saying what is reasonable, but no attempt has been made to determine that. We know well that no person can earn an income unless he goes to the place where it is to be earned. A man may be supposed to be earning £3 6s. per week and it may cost him 6s. a week to earn that income. That person, therefore, cannot say his income is £3 6s. a week. The same thing applies right through. The Government are making the worker pay every shilling that it is possible to raise from him. It has also been asserted that a man who is conducting a business finds it necessary to use a motor car in connection with it, but if a person goes to his place of business in his own car, the Taxation Department do not allow the full amount that it costs the individual to run that car. I ask any reasonable man to tell me how it is possible for the Taxation Department to say that a man is using his motor car once a week or even six times a week. As a matter of fact, the cost of the use of the motor car in instances such as this is charged up to the business and in that way the deduction is allowed.

The Premier: Are you quite sure of that?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have made inquiries; it has never been questioned. One man said, "I use my motor car to take me home occasionally for my own private purposes, but no inquiry is ever made as to whether I do so or not." Suppose a man is living in Claremont and is running a business in Perth. He may go to his business every day in the motor car used in connection with his business, and receive exemption for the amount it costs him to travel. Another man may also be living in Claremont and have a business in Perth, but be obliged to reach the city by train. He therefore pays the Government to convey him to his business every day, but is given no exemption for the cost of his fares. Because a man cannot afford to keep a motor car and ride to his business in it every day, but is obliged to pay a certain sum annually to the Government to take him to Perth, he is allowed no exemption, whereas the other man who can afford to keep a motor car is granted exemption.

The Minister for Works: It costs something to run a motor car.

Hon. P. Collier: It costs something to ride in the train. One man is entitled to exemption if the other is.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am dealing with the question of exemption, and not the amount involved. The man with the motor car can charge it up to his business and is exempt, but the other man I referred to receives no concession. There is also some difficulty with regard to an allowance for medical expenses. I understand that the intentions of Parliament in this respect are not being carried out. A man's taxable income may be less than £250 but he is not allowed any exemption on account of medical expenses. My attention has been called to this by a person who gives a good deal of his time to taxation matters.

The Minister for Works: Are you sure you are right?

Mr. Munsie: I am sure he is.

The Minister for Works: I thought if a person had an income of over £250 he was not allowed any exemption for medical expenses.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Act deals with the assessment of actual income; not the full income itself. If the income assessable for taxation is over £250, the individual cannot get exemption for medical expenses, but the intention of Parliament was that if the income fell below £250, exemption should be granted. This intention has not been carried out, and there is nothing provided in this Bill to give effect to the wishes of Parliament.

Hon. P. Collier: It was intended that this should be one of the deductions.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was certainly the intention of this House.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is what we asked for.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Commissioner of Taxation is acting under certain advice.

It all depends how a case is put to a solicitor as to what advice he will give. In this case two opinions have been given, one being diametrically opposed to the other.

Mr. Pickering: Which one do you agree with?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I agree with the first decision.

Hon. P. Collier: The intention of this House should have been accepted without recourse to legal opinion.

Mr. Pickering: That certainly was our intention.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It was made quite plain at the time. I hope in Committee members will definitely state their desires in this direction, and leave no loophole for escape. We must see that the Bill clearly shows the manner in which the Taxation Department shall carry out the decision of Parliament. More latitude should be given to persons required to furnish returns. I have been appealed to on many occasions to see if more than a month could be given to a person to enable him to get in his return. People may have money in the State savings bank and there may be certain interest due upon it, but if that is not shown fault may be found with the taxpayer. People are liable to a fine if the return is not sent in by the due date. This Bill should set out clearly what time is allowed to a taxpayer for furnishing his return, instead of its being left to the discretion of the department.

The Minister for Works: What do you think of the new forms?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not know that I understand them.

The Minister for Works: I do not understand them either.

Mr. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [6.7]: I wish to emphasise the remarks that have been made by the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin), and to endorse the view he expressed as to the intention of this House when the Act was amended last year. I have here a copy of a letter written by the Deputy Federal Commissioner of Taxation to a business house in Perth. It is as follows:—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 16th ultimo, and inform you that the State Commissioner has interpreted the words "taxable income," used in the State Income Tax Assessment Act Amending Act No. 17 of 1922, to mean the taxable amount as defined by the Act less all allowable deductions, except the following concessional items:—life insurance, children, repairs to private residence, medical expenses, rates and taxes other than those paid on business premises. Until this interpretation is proved to be incorrect the amended Act is being applied to all State income tax assessments in accordance with the decision mentioned.

Hon. P. Collier: Who signed that letter?

Mr. ANGELO: Mr. Whiteley, the Deputy Commissioner. He is evidently throwing

the responsibility upon the State Commissioner, Mr. Black. We had the definite assurance of the Government during the debate last session that all these deductions would be allowed.

The Premier: They are allowed.

Hon. P. Collier: No.

Mr. Munsie: The Commissioner has refused to allow them.

Mr. ANGELO: During the debate last session the Minister for Mines said—

After the man has arrived at his taxable income, all deductions having been made, the amount incurred for medical expenses will be deducted from the taxable amount.

Mr. Angelo: With the Minister's assurance that that is the position—

The Minister for Mines: I do not give the member for Gaseoyne an assurance; the Act provides for that.

It was the intention that these deductions should be made. I am glad the matter has been brought up by the hon. member, and am pleased that I was in possession of the letter I have just read. The interpretation appears to be that of our State Taxation Commissioner, and evidently the Federal Taxation Commissioner has had to abide by the finding of the State official.

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [6.10]: I wish to enter my protest against the manner in which the Act is being administered by the Taxation Department. It is wrong that the Commissioner should take advantage of every section of the Act to inflict penalties upon the taxpayers which were never intended by Parliament. Section 68 of the Act of 1907 says—

If any person fails or neglects to furnish any returns within the prescribed time; or (b) knowingly and wilfully makes any false statement in any returns or makes any false answer for the purpose of evading or enabling any other person to evade assessment or taxation; or (c) by any falsehood, wilful neglect, fraud, art, or contrivance whatsoever evades or attempts to evade assessment or taxation, he shall be liable to pay for each offence under Subsections (b) or (c) a penalty not exceeding £100.

In 1918 that Act was not amended, but a new section, Section 68a, was added as follows—

Any person who fails or neglects to furnish any return as and when required by this Act or the regulations or by the Commissioner, or (b) fails to include any assessable income in any return shall, if a taxpayer, be liable to pay on demand by the Commissioner, by way of additional tax, an amount of not exceeding 10 per centum of the amount of tax assessable to him.

A fine of 10 per cent. is to be added for lateness in furnishing returns. That was clearly the intention of Parliament, but the Commissioner takes advantage of the 1907 Act to fine as he thinks fit.

Mr. A. Thomson: Do you think a man ought to be fined if he is late through unavoidable circumstances?

The Minister for Mines: He is not fined.

Mr. CORBOY: He should not be fined. The Act gives the Commissioner power to remit fines where the circumstances make it necessary.

The Minister for Mines: The Commissioner will give an extension of time whenever that is applied for.

Mr. CORBOY: I am not sure that he will do so.

The Minister for Mines: I know he will.

The Minister for Works: He does. He has already given me three extensions this year.

Hon. P. Collier: It is your political influence that has secured you that concession.

Mr. CORBOY: I wish I had as much influence as the Minister. I have before me an assessment from the department which demonstrates what is being done.

The Minister for Works: I do not want to see an assessment for 10 years.

Hon. P. Collier: If the assessments puzzle you how do you think we get on with them?

Mr. CORBOY: According to this assessment the Commissioner has fined the taxpayer in question 50 per cent. of the amount of the tax for being late with his return.

The Minister for Works: There must be some special reason for that.

Mr. CORBOY: There is no special reason. The case is being fought by the taxpayer, though I do not know what the result will be. It is apparent that the Commissioner is taking advantage of Section 68 of the Act of 1907, instead of obeying the instructions of Parliament given in the 1918 Act in respect to the 10 per cent. fine. It should be made clear to the Commissioner under which section he may operate.

Mr. McCALLUM (South Fremantle) [6.13]: Last session I referred to the position of waitresses and housemaids. At the time the Premier doubted whether the Act was being carried out in the manner described by me. I assure him that it is still being carried out in that way. Waitresses and housemaids are being compelled to include in their income tax returns a sum of 25s. a week as an allowance for board and lodging when they live on the premises. Their wages may amount to only 15s. a week, but this compulsory allowance of 25s. a week brings them up to £2, on which they have to pay income tax.

Hon. P. Collier: Men can get board and lodging for that.

Mr. A. Thomson: Are they not exempt on that income?

Mr. McCALLUM: The Taxation Department makes up their income to over £100 a year by enforcing this allowance of 25s. a week. These unfortunate people have therefore, to pay income tax on the whole amount. This has been done systematically. If that system is to be followed a more liberal allowance than 25s. should be made. The Arbitration Court has set down the basic wage at

£4 a week. In this case the Government are extracting taxation from girls receiving as little as 13s. a week. It is an unjust, unfair, and inequitable tax. Although I drew attention to the matter last year no change has been made in the position. We should provide in this Bill that this shall not continue any longer.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison) [7.30]: I desire to add a little in support of those who have spoken in hostile terms concerning the attitude of the Commissioner of Taxation. I know of one or two cases which, in my opinion, have been unjustly dealt with by the Commissioner. I believe, however, that there are others not less autocratic than the Commissioner in their dealings with the taxpayers. The Premier knew of the attitude adopted by the Commissioner long before this and in consequence, by his silence or inactivity, he has practically concurred in the position the Commissioner has taken up and has really encouraged him to carry on. In doing so, the Commissioner has flouted Parliament.

The Premier: I want him to merely carry out the law.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Premier knows what has been going on and this is not the first time his attention has been drawn to the matter. I regard the Premier as more to blame than the departmental officer because he was fully cognisant of the intention of Parliament, inasmuch as he listened to the debates in this Chamber in favour of the deductions. The Commissioner, however, has flouted Parliament.

The Minister for Works: That is a serious accusation!

Mr. MARSHALL: But it is true. The Premier knew what was going on, and he could have taken steps to give effect to the wishes of Parliament. I cannot understand how it can be contended that under the existing system of taxation, there is any provision for exemptions whatever. We were given to understand that if a married couple happened to exist for 12 months on £156, they would be free from taxation. In the event, however, of the married people earning £157 they have had to pay taxation on the whole amount, without any exemptions whatever. There is nothing in the Act declaring definitely what the exemption is. It is deceiving the taxpayers who are not conversant with the laws and who imagine that there is an exemption of £156, provided they are married. That, however, is incorrect. The present law is calculated to deceive the majority of the taxpayers of the State and I believe it was meant to do so. I wish to bring before the notice of the Premier a matter affecting the taxation of elderly people. I refer to those who are the old pioneers who have battled through life in the back areas for many years past. Some of them are old warriors 65 years of age or more. Because they are not prepared to accept charity

in the form of old age pensions or invalid pensions, they prefer to remain at work in the back blocks, battling along.

The Premier: That is not charity.

Mr. MARSHALL: At any rate, the acceptance of pensions is below their dignity. They feel that while they can earn a living wage they want to do so, and this despite the fact that many of them are well qualified for the old age pension. These men, if they earn £100, should they be single, or over £156, should they be married, have to pay taxation. That is most unjust. When people have reached such an age and have reared families and battled through the pioneer work of the outback districts, they could well be exempted from the payment of taxation. That was what the House desired.

The Minister for Works: How do the Federal people deal with them?

Mr. MARSHALL: If the State Government have any influence over the Federal Government, I will be prepared to advocate steps being taken to bring the matter before the Commonwealth authorities. Let us for once refuse to be copyists and set out to provide an example for the Commonwealth Government. Members of this Chamber have no desire to penalise the old people.

The Colonial Secretary: But what treatment do they receive from the Federal Government?

Mr. Underwood: Never mind the Federal Government.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know what treatment is meted out to these people by the Federal authorities. They do not want that treatment nor do they expect it. The member for Pilbarra (Mr. Underwood) knows of several instances and perhaps knows of the one in which a Government employee is concerned. He is 67 years of age and has reared a family of five. His wife recently died and he is now subject to taxation as a single man. This is his treatment after he has put in years of his life, as an old warrior in pioneering the mining industry outback! He has either to resign his position and become a burden on the country or to continue battling along. It is beneath his dignity to become a burden on the community as a whole, with the result that he is penalised by means of taxation. It is unjust and undeserved. People of such an age might well be left to enjoy the remaining years of their life 600 or 700 miles away from Perth, without being worried by taxation. I hope the Premier will relieve these people from taxation.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—PEARLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

BILL—HOSPITALS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [7.41]: As a member of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the Bill which was submitted to this Chamber during last session, I feel somewhat disappointed at the reception accorded to the measure so far. When the Bill was introduced last session, grave and serious objections were raised to the form in which it was presented, mainly because of the taxation proposals. Those proposals touched only one section of the community, namely, those who paid rates to the local governing bodies. The taxation proposals did not touch in any way many thousands of wage-earners who were not paying rates to any local authority. Further, it was stated at the time—and I think with full justification—that the class of people who would not have been touched by those taxation proposals were the people most likely to use the public hospitals.

Mr. Underwood: That is not correct.

Mr. MULLANY: When the Commission began making inquiries, we naturally got in touch with the representatives of the local governing bodies as much as possible. We realised that the representatives of the local authorities were the people most concerned in the Bill, inasmuch as they were being asked to take over the control of hospitals, with the assistance of subsidies from the Government as prescribed in the Bill. The only centre in favour of last year's Bill was the Beverley road district. There the representatives of the local authority said the money they could raise under the Bill, with the assistance of the Government subsidy, would be sufficient to finance their hospital. I do not know whether the member for Beverley (Mr. Broun), then Colonial Secretary, had any influence on that road board. When the hon. member was speaking on this Bill the other night he supported the Bill of last session, declaring it to have been infinitely preferable to the Bill before us. Of course a long-established, prosperous district like Beverley would be in a position to finance its hospital under the Bill. However, the Royal Commissioners had to take into consideration, not one district alone, but all hospital districts: and whilst it may be that Beverley could have got on very well under last year's Bill, other districts would not have been able to carry on. We are developing a vast new country, and the conditions of a long-established district like Beverley would not be found to apply to many other districts. I have grave doubts whether the system of subsidising hospitals is ever sound. Under such a system a prosperous district has great advantages over a struggling new district. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin), in opposing the second reading, raised three main objections to the Bill. First he said the hospitals would be in a worse position under the Bill than at present.

I have been quite unable to follow the hon. member in that statement. He said the Bill almost prohibits the Government from giving any help to the hospitals, outside the taxation to be collected. That was never the intention of the Royal Commission, nor do I think it is the intention of the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: The Estimates show it.

Mr. MULLANY: The Estimates have nothing to do with the Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: The Estimates show the intention of the Government in that regard.

Mr. MULLANY: I am going to ask the Minister to give the House an assurance that it is not the intention of the Government.

Hon. P. Collier: But there are the Estimates.

Mr. MULLANY: They have nothing to do with the Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: But they have everything to do with the point you are making.

Mr. MULLANY: If, when in Committee, the Leader of the Opposition is not satisfied with the provisions of the Bill, if it is not clear to him that other sources will be found for financing the hospitals, I will help him to make it perfectly clear that it is not the intention of the Government to restrict the hospital finances to the proposals under the Bill. The second objection raised by the member for North-East Fremantle was to the appointment and constitution of the proposed hospital trust. I am not altogether enamoured of the appointment of that trust. We may be able to get on quite well without it. But the hon. member was wrong when he said the trust was to take the management of local hospitals out of the hands of local committees. Nothing of the sort is contemplated. The Royal Commission desired to encourage in every way the establishment of local governing boards of various hospitals, and to encourage the appointment of local committees in centres where no hospitals exist to-day. The hon. member attacked the constitution of the trust, saying there would be on it at least three members of the British Medical Association. The Leader of the Opposition declared it was possible to have on the board four members of the British Medical Association. It is improbable that there will be even three, and impossible that there should be four, unless indeed the outside districts were to appoint the fourth member. The member for North-East Fremantle almost ridiculed the provision that the central trust should have power to appoint advisory or visiting committees. He said we would have the central trust, the local hospital committee, and also an advisory committee all appointed to inquire into the workings of the one hospital. Here again the hon. member misinterpreted the intention of the Bill, and even its actual wording; because the clause provides that in respect of hospitals under the direct management of the board, an advisory committee may be appointed by the Governor. The Royal Com-

mission's reason for recommending that clause was that we desired to establish local hospital committees in centres where existing hospitals are maintained and controlled entirely by the department. Although we could not force people to take control of their local hospitals where those hospitals are now maintained by the department, yet the desire was to appoint local people in the first instance as an advisory committee, with a view to stimulating in those centres an interest in the local hospital, which is entirely lacking to-day. That was the idea underlying the proposal for the appointment of advisory committees. Again, the member for North-East Fremantle said the one thing we had been looking for was that doctors should be permitted to follow their patients into the hospitals; and the hon. member complained that no provision for this had been made in the Bill. With his knowledge of the Medical Department, the hon. member ought to know perfectly well that it would be absurd to put such a provision in an Act of Parliament.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Minister said it was so.

Mr. MULLANY: I hope the system which has obtained in the past, and under which medical men have objected to this being done, will be broken down. The system has already been broken down to a considerable extent in the State. I mentioned Narraggin where there is a Government controlled hospital.

Mr. Underwood: This Bill does not alter it.

Mr. MULLANY: I asked the local medical officer if he could see any real objection to doctors following and treating their patients in the public hospitals. The question was put and Dr. Mackie answered in this way:—

If there were a resident medical officer at the institution, would it interfere with the administration of the institution if doctors followed their patients to the hospital?—Not if they acted in a common sense way. Before the war broke out, when Dr. Lewis was resident medical officer here, I had no interest in the hospital, but by courtesy of Dr. Lewis, I was able to send patients there and treat them myself, and, recognising his courtesy, if there was anything extra I wanted, I asked him about it, and the whole thing worked satisfactorily. I would be prepared to extend the same courtesy to any other practitioner here.

Dr. Aberdeen, of Northam said—

There should be a district medical officer in charge, and it should be arranged that the patients of other doctors are admitted if there is room for them. Most of the paying patients in Northam go to private institutions. If I were a district medical officer I would not object to another medical man sending his patients to the hospital, because I think it would be a fair proposition.

These are two fairly prominent members of the British Medical Association, and not only

did they raise no objection to the proposal, but they said they could see no real objection to it. Dr. Matthews, who is in charge of the Kalgoolie hospital, told us he had very grave objections to it, as it would have a tendency to upset the whole administration of the staff of the hospital. We could only judge between the men who gave evidence.

Mr. Underwood: Where did you get the evidence?

Mr. MULLANY: From the doctors, who were quite competent to speak on the question.

Mr. Underwood: You did not go to the right place. You got the evidence you were looking for.

Mr. MULLANY: The hon. member is not fair in speaking like that. In every centre we visited, we advertised for people interested in the Bill to give their views. We asked no individual to attend except representatives of the labour organisations and the friendly societies, but they did not reply and did not tender evidence.

Mr. Johnston: Everyone had a fair chance.

Hon. P. Collier: How do you know?

Mr. MULLANY: It would be a good thing if we could get the medical men generally to waive any objection to doctors following their patients into public hospitals. It would be one of the functions of the central board to arrange for the question to be discussed by members of the British Medical Association, the outside local governing bodies and people interested in hospital work. If this Bill becomes law, it will bring into operation an entirely new system of hospital administration and finance, and it would be wise to have a representative trust in the early stages to work out the details of administration and put the system on a good basis.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do not the Medical Department do that now?

Mr. MULLANY: If members are quite satisfied that, with the taxation provisions of this Bill, the administration will be perfectly safe in the hands of the Medical Department, I shall raise no objection to the adoption of that course. The only reason for proposing a trust would be to break down the objections which might be raised in the outback districts. One of the greatest anomalies discovered by the commission was the utter lack of uniformity in the method of financing and maintaining the hospitals. It has been stated during the debate that there have been no complaints on the score of the general management of hospitals. In that respect the commission had no complaints either. Wherever we went we found that the staff were efficient, earnest and desirous of doing their best. But the present system of financing and maintaining the hospitals is absolutely unfair.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This Bill will not improve it.

Mr. MULLANY: That is a matter of opinion.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How can it, with less money?

Mr. MULLANY: The hon. member does not want any improvement.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I want to see hospitals put in a better position, but this Bill will not do it.

Mr. MULLANY: Notwithstanding the bald and unconvincing statement of the member for North-East Fremantle, I maintain that the Bill will improve the present position.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How will £113,000 improve it when they are getting £142,000 to-day.

Mr. MULLANY: The hon. member was not in the Chamber when I began, or he would understand my views.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Minister has come down with his Estimates, and there is clear proof for you.

Mr. O'Loughlen: We shall see what the Minister says when you have finished.

Mr. MULLANY: If for no other reason than to bring about uniformity in the system of financing our hospitals, this Bill should be passed.

Hon. P. Collier: Could not that be done by administrative act?

Mr. MULLANY: There are about 46 hospitals outside the metropolitan area, and 24 of them were established and are maintained entirely by the Government. The remaining 22 are controlled and to a large extent maintained by local committees. I am not aware how the system has grown up, but it is a striking fact that the old established and prosperous centres are the places where the department have established and are to-day maintaining hospitals. There is a local managing committee at the Perth Hospital, but so far as we could gather, no attempt is made in the metropolitan area to raise financial assistance for the upkeep of that institution. At Northam we found that the hospital was maintained entirely by the department, with the exception that a fine new ward had been built out of returned soldier funds.

Mr. Underwood: That is just as good.

Mr. MULLANY: Infinitely better, I think. At Albany and York hospitals have been established and are maintained entirely by the Government. At Kalgoorlie the hospital is maintained by the Government. At Leonora, Meekatharra, Kellerberrin, Merredin, Jarrahdale—

Mr. Pickering: And Busselton.

Mr. MULLANY: I believe Busselton should be included though we did not visit that hospital—at these places the local people do a great deal towards the maintenance of their hospitals.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The goldfields hospitals are under different conditions.

Mr. MULLANY: I am aware of that. They are under different conditions to the extent that medical funds have been established to which the mine workers principally contribute so much per week, these payments entitling them to medical attention and hospital treatment if necessary. But these arrangements have been made with the local

medical men who own or who have interests in private hospitals, and a great majority of the patients are sent to private hospitals. The Kalgoorlie Hospital is the same as the Perth Hospital—for the upkeep and treatment of indigent patients, the State is entirely responsible. At Albany I asked the matron if the local people took any interest in the management of the hospital. She smiled and answered, "They do sometimes—when they are sick." But unless they are ill it does not seem to strike more than a few to visit the hospital and inquire how the institution is getting on. She assailed me when she told us that, a few weeks before, she had visited an orchard whence a large number of cases of apples had been exported to London. Lying around were hundredweights and possibly tons of apples, blemished, it is true, and not suitable for export, but still good and wholesome. The matron told the Commission that she said to the owner of the orchard, "The hospital would be very pleased to get some of those apples, which look like going to ruin and rot here." The reply she received was, "The Government's duty is to maintain hospitals, and if the hospital wants apples let the Government buy them."

Hon. P. Collier: That could not happen anywhere except at Albany.

Mr. MULLANY: The instance is a glaring one, no doubt; but we found the same spirit of apathy in York and many other centres. I do not blame the people of those centres, for they have never been called upon to support their hospitals. It is simply the system that has gone on. The Government establish and maintain a hospital, and all the staff have to do is to send the accounts to headquarters, whereupon the accounts are settled. Let me illustrate how committees controlling hospitals have been treated. The member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen), who is not present, would be interested in this. When the Royal Commission went to Jarrahdale, which has a small hospital for which the local people do a good deal, and in fact almost entirely maintain, we heard something of an influenza epidemic which occurred at that centre. The hospital accommodation proved inadequate, and a number of the influenza patients had to be sent to the Perth Hospital. The medical fund at Jarrahdale was being contributed to by a number of those patients. The result was that eventually the Jarrahdale hospital committee were billed for about £150 on account of maintenance fees in respect of the patients sent to the Perth Hospital. That is what happens where people have a sense of their responsibility in the matter of hospital maintenance. Had the same influenza epidemic occurred at York, where there is a hospital controlled by the department, the patients would have been kept in the hospital. Accommodation would have been found for them; wires would have been sent to the department in Perth for extra nurses, and the State would have borne the whole of the cost.

Hon. P. Collier: Will the rejection of that Jarrahdale incident be prevented by the passing of this Bill?

Mr. MULLANY: The effect of passing the Bill will be to make people in such places as York and Albany, and the residents of the metropolitan area, pay their quota towards the upkeep of hospitals in the same way as the Jarrahdale people are now doing.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They must pay or the patients must be allowed to die, you mean.

Mr. MULLANY: That may be the hon. member's view. Would he let the patients die?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No.

Mr. MULLANY: Why impute it to others, then?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I was talking about the Bill, not about the hon. member.

Mr. MULLANY: Another objection has been raised to the taxation proposals. The member for Beverley (Mr. Broun) stated that if direct taxation for hospital purposes were imposed, it would stop the flow of charity from ladies and gentlemen who now give voluntarily. I agree with that contention to a considerable extent, but I also put up the further contention that whilst the flow of charitable contribution may tend to be diminished, the loss in that respect will be far more than offset by the payments of people who have never voluntarily contributed anything towards hospital maintenance. A witness at, I think, Merredin, said, "I do not disagree with the taxation proposals, but if direct taxation is imposed it will be found that voluntary contributions will cease; the effect will be to close up the channels of charity." I replied, "That is so, but many other channels will be opened which have never been opened yet." I believe that the taxation proposals of the Bill will work out far more satisfactorily than the system, or lack of system, existing to-day. In reply to an interjection, I said that the Commission, while desirous of getting in touch with everyone sufficiently interested to give evidence, endeavoured to place themselves in touch with only two bodies, the labour organisations of Perth and Kalgoorlie and the friendly societies. Personally I much regret that members of those organisations did not accept the Commission's invitation to state their views.

Hon. P. Collier: But there were so many Commissions sitting that those bodies were probably busy before some of the other Commissions.

Mr. MULLANY: That may be so, but I do not know why the Leader of the Opposition should look for such an excuse. The position of members of friendly societies has been raised, and no doubt will be raised again. I fail to see that the provisions of the Bill will impose any great hardship upon members of friendly societies. A member of such a society has taken out what is really an insurance policy; by paying into the society, he gets an assurance of medical attention and medicine should he require it. That is all the friendly society undertakes.

We must conclude that the members of the various friendly societies are satisfied with the arrangements they have made, since otherwise they would not continue to contribute. But there are in this State many thousands of men who do not belong to friendly societies, who carry their own insurance risk, inasmuch as if they fall ill they are responsible for the payment of fees for medical advice and medicine. That aspect has nothing whatever to do with the taxation proposals for the upkeep of hospitals. The man who is a member of a friendly society, if it should happen that he has to go to a hospital, is admitted to a hospital; and the man who does not contribute to a friendly society is admitted on an equality. I altogether fail to see where the hardship to members of friendly societies comes in under these proposals. Every member of this House is well aware that when the last Bill was presented here, objection was raised on the ground that the incidence of taxation was unfair and did not cover a sufficiently wide area. Under that Bill many people escaped who it was thought should pay. The Commission fully realised the difficulty of arriving at a recommendation which would give satisfaction all round. After much serious consideration and inquiry we have put up recommendations which we believe to be fair and equitable.

Mr. Pickering: We were unanimous.

Mr. MULLANY: Yes.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Bill is not in accordance with your recommendations.

Mr. MULLANY: As regards the main taxation proposals, the Bill is entirely in accordance with the Commission's recommendations.

Mr. O'Loughlen: But you thought that the revenue to be raised under the Bill would be supplementary to the Government's expenditure on hospitals.

Mr. MULLANY: Undoubtedly, and I still hold that opinion. It would be an absurdity to make out anything else. The cost of upkeep of hospitals in this State last year was about £181,000, and the estimated receipts under this Bill are £113,000. I consider that it would be absurd to take the measure into Committee unless the Minister in charge of it gives us an assurance that effect is to be given to the Commission's views in that respect.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Will the Minister give the assurance?

Mr. MULLANY: The Minister must speak for himself. The Commission put up the taxation proposals in all sincerity, believing that they represented a vast improvement on the existing state of affairs. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) last night expressed himself as somewhat fearful lest the provisions of the Bill should react harshly upon people employing aborigines. Let me inform the hon. member that at the present time Government hospitals have power to make employers of aborigines pay hospital maintenance for the

aborigines who enter the hospital. Now let me relate an incident which occurred at Carnarvon. There we heard, as we heard in many other places, that the greatest difficulty in collecting maintenance fees arose in the case of the floating population, men working here for a month or two, and six months later working somewhere else. I questioned the matron of the Carnarvon hospital on the point, and she confirmed the statement to some extent, but she added, "They are not by any means the only people who evade payment of hospital fees if they can." Then she instanced some stations inland from Carnarvon, giving their names. The names are recorded in the evidence, and I do not propose to mention them just now. The matron said, "The owners of those stations employ the aborigines, and send them here if they fall ill, and we have the very greatest difficulty in collecting the maintenance fees from the station owners."

Mr. Underwood: There has been a messing up as regards the Aborigines Act.

Mr. MULLANY: "Some," the matron said, "are very good indeed, and pay without any trouble at all." She went on to instance one or two stations, giving their names and the names of the owners, which I do not propose to mention here. Only a few weeks before the visit of the Commission, she said, a sick native was brought to the hospital, and she questioned him where he was working, because someone had advised her of the position. The unfortunate native said, "Not working." She said, "Who told you to say that?" He replied, "Oh, missus, the boss tell me say that before he send me here." I mention this incident as showing that it is not only the floating population who seek to escape payment of hospital fees.

Hon. P. Collier: I know that station owner; he is a prominent member of the Country Party.

Mr. MULLANY: In conclusion, let me say that I believe the Bill will make a vast improvement on the present state of affairs. I trust hon. members will allow the measure to go into Committee. The machinery, if it is not all, or quite all, they would like it to be, can be amended there. Let us treat the measure strictly on its merits and endeavour to improve it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [8.30]: I have very little to say on this Bill. The Leader of the Opposition expressed my thoughts, and perhaps he expressed them in better language than I might have been able to use. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Gibson) yesterday pointed out that there was a club which he said had spent £13,000. If a club could spend so much money, they would contribute towards hospital upkeep, by way of taxation, about half that total.

Mr. Broun: The Federal Government got most of that.

Mr. J. Thomson: Do you belong to that club?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No. Every man who spends 6d. in a club or a pub is paying taxation to the extent of 3d.

Mr. Broun: You might say the same thing about a man who goes into a grocer's shop.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No. What is the object of taxation? It is to provide for certain functions of Government. I ask, what are the functions of Government for which we collect taxation compulsorily? We provide the University, which is free. We provide a Zoo, parks, a museum and a library. Do we impose special taxation for any of those? Not one of those is as necessary as is a hospital. Is not the upkeep of a hospital a function of Government? Why should there be a special tax imposed for the maintenance of hospitals? That is a point that no member has tried to explain. I give the member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) credit for having gone thoroughly into this matter. He knows that the present system is not right, but he has not touched on the real essence of the question. Is it the function of Government by means of ordinary taxation to provide for hospitals? Is it or is it not?

Mr. Davies: It has been the custom.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We are spending three-quarters of a million on education, we are providing a University which is free—and those who go to the University can afford to pay. Then why should we not provide for hospitals? I am like scores of thousands of other Australians, in that I have never cost the State sixpence for hospital attention, but if I were asked which I would prefer to support, a museum, a university, a park, a zoo, or a hospital, I would say at once a hospital. Those who go to the University or to the High School, to the gymnasium associated with the High School, go there because they have the time at their disposal, because they like to go there; but those who go to a hospital go there because they are poor and sick. Are they not our first charge? Scores of thousands, I suppose 20,000 men in this State did as I did when they took the full responsibility of manhood, and joined a friendly society so as to provide medical treatment for their wives and children.

The Minister for Mines: Up to a point only. You cannot quote a single instance where a friendly society provides hospital attendance.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If you can get the doctor to go to your own residence, there is no need for you to go to a hospital, except in rare cases.

The Minister for Mines: In many instances nursing is more necessary than even the attendance of a doctor.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: In this case, as a taxpayer, I am prepared to pay.

The Colonial Secretary: The Bill will enable the State to provide the facilities.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The Bill will enable nothing except to collect the tax, and when we come to the question of taxation it is specifically provided that we shall tax wages at the source.

Hon. P. Collier: Every employer in the State will be a taxgatherer.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Exactly. Some 20,000 members of friendly societies are practically all wage-earners, not salary earners. They are to be taxed, notwithstanding that they make provision for themselves.

Mr. Chesson: They insure themselves.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Exactly, and they are going to be taxed. The Minister, when introducing the Bill, said that it was proposed to catch some of those who were escaping taxation.

Mr. O'Loughlen: A drag net.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And shearers were especially mentioned.

Mr. A. Thomson: They can well afford to pay.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Exactly. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, if they can afford to pay hospital tax, they can afford to pay income tax.

Mr. Brown: They dodge the income tax.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Alter that tax but do not adopt this paltry, miserable way of collecting it.

Hon. P. Collier: If you can collect this from every man and woman, you can collect income tax from every man and woman.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I agree with the Leader of the Opposition to a great extent. He said he was opposed to the Bill from the title to the last schedule. I would not go so far as that. I am in favour of the title.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Minister is going to make an announcement later on.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: This is a legacy that was left to the present Minister by that extraordinary impossibility—

Mr. Pickering: Do be fair.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: —the late Minister for Health, the present Minister for Education and Minister for the North-West. It is from him that the Colonial Secretary has inherited the Bill. I sympathise with the Colonial Secretary for having to put through Colebatch's rubbish.

The Minister for Mines: This is merely prejudice on your part.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There are two or three things we want to know and we want to be as clear on those points as we can. The first is, why should there be a special tax for hospitals?

Hon. P. Collier: That is the point.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Let some member define that and give it to us. Why should we want a special tax for hospitals? I have been thinking particularly about education, and we hear the slogan, "Free from the kindergarten to the University." I would prefer the slogan, "The health of the people from the maternity nurse to the undertaker."

The Minister for Mines: It is free so far as the undertaker is concerned. You do not have to pay him; you are dead.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I trust the Bill will be well discussed. The one thing that must be established before we pass the second reading is why there should be a special tax for

the upkeep of hospitals. The other point that has to be decided is whether our income tax Act is gathering in all the people. Is it necessary by an Act of this description to bring within its scope boys and girls, old men and old women, who do not earn sufficient to pay income tax? Those are the two points that have to be made clear by the Minister, and if he cannot make those points clear we should throw out the Bill.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [8.42]: So much has been said, and said to the point, that I feel somewhat reluctant to add to the debate, but I was particularly struck by the harrowing appeal to the Minister made by the member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany). He wanted the Minister before the debate closed to assure the Chamber that he did not intend that this tax would diminish the contributions from Consolidated Revenue for the upkeep of hospitals.

Mr. Mullany: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is what I understood the hon. member to mean.

Mr. Mullany: The assurance I asked from the Minister was that the money raised by taxation would not be the only money expended for the upkeep of hospitals.

Hon. T. WALKER: That means nothing.

Mr. Marshall: Heads I win, tails you lose.

Hon. T. WALKER: That is not what was conveyed to hon. members. What the hon. member says means simply nothing, for if we get the tax and are also allowed to make appeals for private voluntary contributions—it is clear that the Bill provides for voluntary charity as much as it provides for the tax—it all relieves the Government. It saves them from administering the hospitals by means of the Treasury. The hon. member cannot have forgotten that the Minister in introducing the Bill made a special point of the fact that it was to save the Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. P. Collier: The only purpose, he said.

The Colonial Secretary: Not the only purpose, though it will relieve the Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. T. WALKER: He made a declaration to the effect that if it had been possible to continue to provide the necessary funds from Consolidated Revenue the Bill would not have been brought down. If it were not for the relief afforded to the Consolidated Revenue there would have been no Bill. This shows that that was the point in his mind.

The Colonial Secretary: It is one of the points.

Hon. T. WALKER: It was the point. The other points do not count.

Hon. P. Collier: They would not have justified the Bill.

Hon. T. WALKER: If it had not been for the saving of revenue the Bill would not be before us now.

The Colonial Secretary: The Bill will secure other advantages as well.

Hon. P. Collier: There would have been no Bill.

Hon. T. WALKER: There may be other advantages; but for this one there would not have been the other advantages. We should have had no chance of discussing them.

The Colonial Secretary: That is an admirable thing.

Hon. T. WALKER: He states emphatically that the passage of this Bill will, it is hoped, relieve the Consolidated Revenue to the extent of £100,000.

The Colonial Secretary: Not less than £100,000.

Hon. P. Collier: It may be more.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Minister says "at least." That means that the Bill is not a hospitals Bill but a taxation Bill, for taxation by a subterfuge, as a side line, a trick of Government.

The Colonial Secretary: After an honest and full admission?

Hon. T. WALKER: What does the Minister admit? He admits he is going to save considerable revenue by an outside tax, which is not a tax the Government impose, but a tax handed over for collection, manipulation, distribution, and control by a trust.

The Colonial Secretary: For the help of the sick poor.

Hon. T. WALKER: What does that mean? If we have the treatment of the sick poor so much at heart, why not be manful and take the hint given by the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood), and do it from the fountain source; not by a side issue, by means of some outside organisation?

Hon. P. Collier: Why not amend your taxation Acts?

Hon. T. WALKER: It is a side show to a big circus.

The Colonial Secretary: The tax will be collected at the source.

Hon. P. Collier: From the 7s. 6d. a week youngster?

The Colonial Secretary: That is not so.

Hon. T. WALKER: If to meet every demand made from the Government they had brought forth an income tax, every phase of the question could be discussed. We could take into consideration the infirm, the incompetent, the weakling, and the unlucky. We could spare them contributions from the public purse in fair and open discussion. But this Bill is not fair and open. This is a general poll tax to be levied upon every conceivable class of citizen. No matter how they may have been pursued by the skeleton of unemployment, or how sickness and infirmity—not to the extent which drives them to the hospital, but unfits them for work—may have been their constant oppression, no matter how incapable they may be, because of the adversity of the hour, of earning the necessary sustenance to keep life within their frames, they must pay. There is no excuse, and no get out for them. The hypocrisy of the thing is rendered more obvious when we have the Minister saying it is for the poor and sick. Do not use the poor and the sick to cover such a hypocritical pretence as doing merciful

acts and bestowing charity, when the only object is to save the Consolidated Revenue £100,000! It hurts me to think the Government could come down to such an unmanly level as to impose a tax upon every citizen, no matter what the conditions are, simply because the State is hard up.

Hon. P. Collier: There is no similar tax in Australia.

The Minister for Mines: Some of your members supported it.

Hon. P. Collier: Not on the principles contained in this Bill.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, they did.

Hon. T. WALKER: No. There are people who would support it without due consideration, moved not by intellectual capabilities but by this appeal to the charitable object of assisting the sick and poor. They will do anything to help the poor who have to spend the end of their days in a hospital. There are multitudes who would lock up their reason when it came to helping the unfortunate bedridden. They do not think when their hearts are appealed to; it is all sentiment to them. They have been appealed to, and this may possibly help to carry this Bill. Is it not a measure of our civilisation to help the helpless, to care for the bedridden and the sick? In savagery we have some show of it, but it becomes scientific and complete in a civilised people. That is why we have hospitals, why they are nationalised, and why it is looked upon as the duty of all the people to maintain them.

The Colonial Secretary: That is what the Bill says.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Bill does not say that. It is a further whittling away of the duties of Government. It says, "please relieve the Minister in charge of this department, and place the responsibility upon some outside body." More boards, less Government, less responsibility; put everything on to boards! If there is a thing that should not be entrusted to boards, but which should be distinctly and emphatically a complete function of Government, it is the care and the relief of the sick and the maimed. This is the most delicate of all the machinery of human society. It is this that is to be delegated to an outside lot of nabobs, doctors, and others.

The Minister for Mines: I do not know about the nabobs.

Hon. T. WALKER: Why should we be constantly delegating these functions of Government to boards? Why should we not take the full responsibility ourselves? We want money for the hospitals. Appeal to the people on these lines, and I am sure the appeal would meet with a good reception, provided the extravagance and waste that are going on around us were stopped. They would say willingly "we will pay more in taxes on our incomes and on our properties. The Government, however, should have command of the purse; they should be the tax-gatherers." We should be able to reach the

Government in this Chamber, but we cannot reach these people, for they do not belong to us.

The Colonial Secretary: We can reach them, all right.

Hon. T. WALKER: They are outside us. With this tendency to boards, to bureaucracies, we shall ultimately have a ruling and domineering power that cannot be reached, and cannot be touched through the representatives of the people.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister is the gramophone for his permanent heads.

The Colonial Secretary: The Minister has control over the board.

Hon. T. WALKER: The Minister cannot control his own secretary.

Hon. P. Collier: He is a rubber-stamp Minister.

Hon. T. WALKER: We know what is going on with heads of departments. This State is run by them.

Hon. P. Collier: Hear, hear!

Hon. T. WALKER: The Minister is in constant touch with them. Ministers are seeking now, not heads of departments, but these outside bodies.

The Colonial Secretary: The other night we were complimented, and one department was congratulated.

Hon. T. WALKER: Upon what?

The Colonial Secretary: Upon its fine administration.

Hon. T. WALKER: That might be so. Here is a Minister bragging that his subordinates do their work excellently. He is putting all responsibility, praise, and laudation upon his department. That is what I am saying. Thank goodness, we have good men in the departments, or where in the end would the Government be? True, we can be thankful for that. All thanks to the departments! They are doing the work. According to the Minister they are deserving of congratulation. I am not envying them that congratulation or denying it to them, but for goodness sake, do not come lower down to bodies which have no connecting link with the great public functions. My objection is to the multiplicity of departments, to independent corporations which are running the affairs of State, and to the delegation of a matter like this, wherein the health of the whole community is concerned, to an outside body. The member for Pilbara is quite right. The fundamental duty of wise statesmanship is to have a healthy community. It is to have one where every vital energy can be properly exercised for the common good. Disease is always a burden: sickness is always a weight. The maimed and wounded and incapable are always something for the rest of the community to carry. If we can remove the sick, that is to say, bring them back to health, if we can cure the wounded, we shall benefit the whole community. In our Medical and Health Departments we have the vital clue, so to speak, to our public welfare. I would not trust that to any extraneous board; it should be the Government's chief concern.

I do not want to say anything more. I detest the Bill because it is a departure from sound principles of taxation. I detest it, because it is a miserable subterfuge and pretext, and a cowardly attempt to foist taxation on to a non-taxable section of our citizens. It is a proposal by the Government, who have not the courage to come down with some honest suggestion or proposal, to shuffle off the responsibility on to outside bodies. I shall not support the second reading of the Bill.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Capt CARTER (Leederville) [9.0]: I wish to say a few words in connection with the Bill, which I support heartily. I support it because I believe the personnel of the Commission, appointed by the House last year, which went thoroughly into the question of our hospitals, their present difficulties and needs, and their future needs as well, was comprised of men who should be given credit for discrimination and common sense, which enabled them to dissect the evidence placed before them and to bring forward their findings in a business-like form. The Bill has been largely framed upon the findings of the Commission, and as the Commission was representative of all political parties in the House—

Mr. O'Loughlen: This is not in keeping with the recommendations of the Commission.

The Minister for Mines: The taxation part is.

Capt. CARTER: In the main, the Bill is in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The member for Menzies said the Commission never anticipated the taxation in this form.

The Minister for Mines: They proposed this form of taxation.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They thought it would be supplementary to other taxation.

Capt. CARTER: The Bill is largely one dealing with finances. I cannot see how the member for Kanowna arrived at his conclusion that the Bill is a miserable subterfuge or a political trick or a side show to a big circus. Those were the terms he applied to the Bill. The Commission dealt with a problem that is before us in Australia and before other civilised countries in the world, and has been before them for many years past. The fact remains, however, that the members of the Commission had before them all the evidence possible to be collected in the State. There was no party feeling introduced into the meetings of the Commission that I have heard of. There was no necessity for any such feeling, because this question is one that has rested nearest to the hearts of Englishmen so long as there have been Englishmen. The care of the sick and needy has been the first charge on all civilised communities throughout the ages. There was no need for strife in the investigations of the Commission, because of the very nature of the subject. The Commission have placed their views unanimously before us to indicate the best means of properly controlling and

financing our hospitals. There should not be any party feeling imported into this discussion. We have not heard all the members of the Commission speak and I am interested to hear remarks from the Opposition side of the House, seeing that their leaders have spoken so strongly in condemnation of the measure. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) asked loudly whose function it was to look after the sick. He said it was the peculiar function of the Government. I agree with that and if the Government came boldly forward, as the Minister did in introducing the Bill, and said openly that they considered it was necessary to levy this special tax for hospital purposes, I cannot see that there was any subterfuge or trickery about the matter, as the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) suggested. I cannot see that his reference to cowardly and unfair taxation was justified.

The Minister for Mines: If his references were justified, they were charges against his own supporters.

Capt. CARTER: Yes, as well as on the House who appointed the Commission. I cannot understand the attitude adopted by the member for Kanowna and I cannot see how his charge against the Government of bringing in a measure based on purely sloppy sentimentality can be maintained. To my mind, he did not prove his case in any way. With the use of many words, he condemned the Bill, but I have never heard a speech with less foundation of solid criticism than that delivered by the member for Kanowna. In Western Australia we are up against peculiar conditions on account of the immensity of our areas and the large distances to be traversed. In consequence, our hospital problem is one which should be met and settled immediately. The Bill to my mind will be the means of raising sufficient money to place the hospitals in a satisfactory position, providing them with all the latest and most modern appliances for medical purposes and enabling complete and adequate treatment to be provided to the residents in the country districts, as well as in the cities. By this means we shall be able to meet the difficulties as they arise to-day, and obviate the necessity of bringing people 400 or 500 miles to the city for any special form of treatment. I do not say that the Bill will give us modern hospitals in every district, but it is possible that it will be the means of providing such conveniences in every large district, so that modern equipment and hospital facilities will be available. It is essentially a charge upon the people of the State that the sick and poor shall be looked after.

Mr. O'Loughlen: How can that be done, when less money is to be provided?

Capt. CARTER: It is a question, to my mind, as to whether they really are to have less money.

Mr. O'Loughlen: It has been proved.

Capt. CARTER: From what I can make out, there will be a larger sum obtained

than the hon. member suggests, and that there will be more than there was during the last financial year. The objection raised as to the unfairness of the levy of 1d. in the £1 taxation can be fairly met by saying that the men in receipt of from £250 upwards will continue to pay as the men on lower wages will also pay, but the men receiving £250 and upwards will not use the hospital and will not in one case out of 100, receive a pennyworth of help from the facilities provided by the hospitals.

Mr. A. Thomson: And if a man goes to the hospital, he will still have to pay.

Capt. CARTER: Yes, it will be impossible for him to get into the hospital unless he pays his way, as obtains now in the Government hospitals. I cannot see how there can be any honest objection on the part of members to direct taxation of this nature, and why it should be suggested, instead, that there should be an addition to the present taxation and the money taken from Government funds in the ordinary way. It is merely a matter of taking it out of one pocket instead of out of the other.

Mr. Marshall: This means taking money out of both pockets.

Capt. CARTER: Knowing the people as I do, I believe they will gladly contribute to so laudable a cause. In any case, the Bill will do away with the continual cagging we see in our streets.

Mr. Marshall: On the other hand, the Bill makes provision for continuing that cagging.

Capt. CARTER: It does not.

Mr. Munsie: There is special provision for it.

Capt. CARTER: Hon. members are under a misconception in that connection. It will absolutely eliminate the cagging that goes on at present in connection with our hospitals and other institutions.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Not at all.

Capt. CARTER: I believe the man in the street will welcome the Bill and, after all, he is the man who will feel the additional levy of a penny in the £1 more than others. No one probably is better able to gauge the feelings of anxiety that pervade the home when sickness comes there than the man who is short of money. Those people, however, will stand up to their obligations and provide the necessary funds. I believe the measure will result in much good to our institutions. I intend to support the Bill and I believe the House will agree to the second reading because it is an honest attempt to deal with this problem, quite apart from the suggestion of sentimentality. No greater appeal can be made to the public than for funds in aid of sick children and women of the community. By the same token, as the people have readily contributed in the past to the maintenance of the indigent poor and sick ones, so I think they will stand up to the added imposition of a penny in the £1 for hospital taxation purposes.

Mr. CHESSON (Cue) [9.13]: I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill. I look upon it as a taxation proposal, with the object of fleching another £113,000 from the pockets of the taxpayers. Provision is made that the employers are to be tax-gatherers. It also provides that every person in receipt of a wage or salary shall be taxed. It deals particularly with those interested in shearing, droving or mining contracts. People who have such contracts, have to pay on the gross contract, less 10 per cent. Those of us who have had experience in connection with these contracts, know that there is at least 50 per cent. to cover expenses in connection with them. More especially does this apply in the case of mining contracts where the individual has to supply explosives, timbers, and everything else necessary in connection with the contract. It shows that the people who drew up this Bill had no idea of the costs in connection with these contracts when they say that they will appoint the employer, who is the taxpayer letting the contract, to collect taxation on the whole contract, less 10 per cent. I am opposed also to the proposed trust. I am at a loss to know whether it is to be elected by the local authorities or by the subscribers. It will be a central trust consisting of five members representing the metropolis and two representing the outlying districts. In other words, agricultural, pastoral and mining are to be represented by two members. On the Murchison the pastoral and the mining interests work in conjunction for the local hospital. However, the proposal in the Bill includes all pastoralists. I do not know how they are going to come together to appoint a representative. The members of the trust are to be allowed to draw up to £350 per annum, which does not include their travelling expenses. It means the creation of another department which will absorb a large percentage of the taxation to be collected. It is provided that four members of each local board shall be elected by the subscribers. In my view the subscribers should elect the whole of such board. The taxation will be collected all over the State and centralised in the metropolis. Application will have to be made to the trust for a few pounds required for the renovation of a hospital. On the Murchison all the hospitals are committee hospitals, subsidised by the Government. We have considerable trouble in getting any increase in the subsidy, while if we require any renovations or additions, the only thing to do is to appeal to the local people. So far from the Bill doing away with cadging, it provides an incentive to increase cadging. Last year's Bill was far better than the one before us. The principal objection to that Bill was that it made provision for the tax to be collected from the local authorities, or the ratepayers' roll. The Bill before us proposes to collect tax from the whole of the wage-earners. As will be seen from the evidence given before the Royal Commission, most of the local authorities out back objected to the tax being collected from a section of the people, and

pointed out that single men in boarding houses would be exempt. That is quite true. Still, provision could be made to rope them all in without such a Bill as this.

Mr. A. Thomson: The tax is not much.

Mr. CHESSON: It is too much for those not receiving a living wage. All the people on the Murchison are contributing to the upkeep of the local hospitals. It has been said that it costs more to run a committee hospital than to run one under Government control. That is partly accounted for by the extortionate railway freights. Moreover, the committee hospitals pay their staffs higher wages and feed them better than do the Government hospitals. Also the committee in charge of a hospital, work in well with the doctor and matron and, wherever possible, adopt their recommendations.

Mr. A. Thomson: Do not those hospitals receive a subsidy from the Government?

Mr. CHESSON: Yes, we collected £1,400 and received £700 in subsidy.

Mr. A. Thomson: If you collected £1,400 you ought to receive a subsidy of £1,400.

Mr. CHESSON: The people on the Murchison were well satisfied with the provisions of last year's Bill, but are not at all satisfied with those contained in this Bill. If the Bill becomes law, it will be very discouraging to local efforts.

Mr. Davies: Are those efforts for the upkeep, or for the establishment, of hospitals?

Mr. CHESSON: For their upkeep. The hospitals at Cue and at Meekatharra were originally Government hospitals, but were handed over to the people, and have since been run by local committees, who collect from the local people subscriptions for the maintenance of those institutions.

Mr. Teesdale: Do they get their money in fairly well?

Mr. CHESSON: Yes, both the regular payments and the donations under special efforts. For instance, on a Hospital Sunday recently, £350 was collected. The people in the back blocks have done far more for the upkeep of local hospitals than have people in other parts of the State. The taxation proposed under the Bill will kill all that. The Colonial Secretary himself said it would relieve the Treasury to the extent of over £100,000 per annum, and we find that on the Estimates the provision for hospitals has been reduced to six months. It is clear that the Government assistance given in the past is to be cut right out, and in future the hospitals will have to depend exclusively on the taxation. In outback districts friendly societies make provision for the hospital treatment of their members. At Northampton they have a medical fund and a doctor, but no hospital. Provision is there made for sending a hospital case to Geraldton, or even to Perth, the local committee paying for his hospital maintenance for a period of 16 weeks. If he requires to be longer in the hospital, he makes application to the committee for an extension of the period, and the application is invariably granted. If the Bill becomes law, it will knock out all that sort of

thing, for everybody will be paying hospital tax, and many will object to paying anything to the hospitals over and above that. Last year's Bill made provision for a pound for pound subsidy on moneys raised for the assistance of local hospitals. I will vote against the second reading, for I do not think the Bill can be satisfactorily amended in Committee. Like Paddy's gun, it requires a new lock, stock and barrel.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanming) [9.30]: I regret that some members have expressed their intention to oppose the second reading. Those of us who have had anything to do with hospitals have realised that something should be done to improve the present methods. I hope the second reading will be passed. I do not say that I support the Bill in its entirety. I favour a considerable portion of last year's Bill and I am not altogether in favour of the trust proposed under this measure. The appointment of such a trust would place too much control in the hands of the metropolitan area and in the hands of medical men. I am strongly opposed to giving medical men practically the whole control of the administration of the hospitals throughout the State. Laymen might be a little more sympathetic. The member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) asked why we should have a special tax for hospitals, and then he went on to deal with education and a lot of things which the State is supplying apparently free. To say that we have free education and other things free is a misnomer. The people of the State have to pay for these things. This measure is at least an honest endeavour to spread the cost of the administration of the hospitals over the people. Exception has been taken to the tax of 1d. in the pound. The Leader of the Opposition said there were 38,000 taxpayers who were expected to carry the deficit now amounting to £5,500,000. When the Government come down with an honest endeavour to meet some of these responsibilities and make the great bulk of the people, who receive the benefit of the hospitals, pay for their maintenance, they are deserving of support. During a controversy in my district a medical man maintained that 90 per cent. of the patients could be treated for their ailments in their own homes if they had homes.

Mr. Mann: I think he was a bit astray.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I think he was right.

Mr. Mann: I have been on the committee of the Children's Hospital for five years and I would like him to prove the statement.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am prepared to accept his statement. When a large percentage of the people who use hospitals have no homes, it is necessary to provide accommodation where they may receive proper medical attention. Those people, however, should contribute their quota towards the expense of hospitals. The Leader of the Opposition said that under this Bill it was proposed to bring in 140,000 people who at present contributed nothing to the Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. P. Collier: I said 100,000.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I accept the correction. The 100,000 people should pay their quota if it were only 6d. a year. The member for Cue (Mr. Chesson) stated that the people in some districts were already paying and he instanced the people in his own district who were paying up to 1s. 6d. per week.

Hon. P. Collier: If the 100,000 should pay their quota to hospitals, why not their quota also for the upkeep of education and other functions of Government?

Mr. A. THOMSON: If the hon. member proposed that, I would be prepared to support him.

Mr. Chesson: The people in my district pay 1s. 6d. in subscriptions in addition to their local effort, amounting to £5 per year.

Mr. A. THOMSON: This system is designed to obviate the necessity for a contribution such as £5 a year.

Mr. Chesson: Where will there be any alleviation? Look at the Estimates!

Mr. A. THOMSON: We know that the Government have anticipated receiving under this measure a certain amount of revenue. In the country districts we have our local hospitals. There are two in my district and the people have contributed half the cost of the buildings and are paying half the cost of the maintenance. In some districts the people are paying very much more than half. When we realise what the metropolitan hospitals are costing the Government, we should commend the Government for having made an honest endeavour to meet the present position. I believe the Bill can be amended in Committee. Instead of the trust I would prefer the Medical Department continuing to run the hospitals as in the past. If a trust were established, it would mean the creation of a new department and more expense. The department have always treated the country districts sympathetically and helped them to the best of their ability, and I am prepared to continue under that system. The wage-earner should pay his quota, because he is the man most likely to receive the benefits. If a man contributes £5 or £6 a year and is unfortunate enough to have to go into hospital, I would agree to his receiving a similar concession as part payment of the fees while in hospital. I support the Bill, hoping that it will be considerably altered in Committee.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [9.39]: In view of the report of the Royal Commission and the various interests consulted by the Commission, I see no reason why the second reading should not be carried. Criticism has certainly been levelled against the measure, but the matters which have given rise to criticism can be adjusted in Committee. The Government, in framing this measure, should have given some consideration to the members of friendly societies. It has been held, and rightly so, that those who pay to friendly societies are not paying for hospital treatment, but many of the hospitals, especially those in the congested areas such as Perth,

Fremantle, Geraldton and Kalgoorlie, receive in the course of 12 months thousands of patients, most of whom do not pay a penny piece towards medical expenses. This means that members of friendly societies are guaranteeing themselves as regards medical attention notwithstanding that a hospital may be situated in their district, and these men in addition to paying about £2 a year, which is the minimum payment to a friendly society, will have to pay this tax. This iniquity should be rectified in exactly the same way as it is proposed to deal with the man who makes a subscription to a hospital.

Mr. Heron: That was our idea.

Mr. DAVIES: If a deduction is allowed to members of friendly societies to the extent of the amount paid to such societies, this objection can be overcome. Another very serious objection to the measure is that it will discriminate against various patients who enter hospitals. A man, to get free treatment in a hospital, will have to practically declare himself a pauper, and that is obnoxious to any Australian. This difficulty can be overcome by the elimination of Clause 48. We would then bring about the nationalisation of the hospitals of the State. There would be no very great objection to the elimination of that clause, and certainly members of the Opposition would not oppose its deletion. I agree with the member for Pilbara (Mr. Underwood) that we are introducing a new principle in the form of this tax, but it does not very much matter whether the hospitals are maintained out of Consolidated Revenue or by a special tax on the people. Another matter deserving of attention is that there are many funds which provide for medical attention for their members, and I am afraid that instead of encouraging such funds, unless provision is made for them on the lines I have suggested for members of friendly societies, many of these funds will go out of existence. One such fund, typical of several in this State, is the railway hospital fund, members of which are charged 7s. 6d. per annum, for which they are guaranteed medical and surgical attendance at a Government hospital, so long as it is necessary for them to remain in it.

The Colonial Secretary: That does not pay for them.

Hon. P. Collier: In addition to that, they had a surplus last year of £270.

Mr. DAVIES: I was about to mention that.

Mr. Harrison: That is due to the large number in the service.

Mr. DAVIES: It shows the value of co-operation, and co-operation should be encouraged under this measure.

The Colonial Secretary: It is most unusually healthy.

Mr. DAVIES: Anyhow, it is a fact. The railway man's calling is regarded as a dangerous one.

Hon. P. Collier: They take in tramway employees, too.

Mr. DAVIES: If men engaged in a dangerous calling can be given medical and sur-

gical attention for 7s. 6d. per annum, it seems disproportionate that a wage earner under this Bill should have to pay an average of 25s. to 30s.

The Colonial Secretary: The average under this Bill is 16s. 10d.

Mr. DAVIES: That is twice as much as the railway fund charges its members for attendance.

Hon. P. Collier: And they get hospital accommodation for their 7s. 6d., but those who pay under this Bill will not get it.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so. Whether we stand for nationalisation of hospitals will have to be considered when we deal with the question of eliminating that particular clause. The wages and hours of nurses in public hospitals have been engaging the attention of the people for some time. I think it would be a fair thing for the House, when dealing with the Bill in Committee, to make the passing of certain clauses contingent upon the introduction of the eight-hours system into Government hospitals. It was stated recently that hospital nurses receive 15s. per week. The fact is, however, that for their first year they receive only 7s. 6d.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I think that was stated.

Mr. DAVIES: The House should at least affirm the principles involved. In view of the financial difficulties, there is no hope of introducing the eight-hour system into hospitals unless some such provision is made as the Bill suggests.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We cannot do it under this Bill.

Mr. DAVIES: I fail to see why we cannot do it. Once the second reading has been passed, the whole measure is in the hands of the House.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Not financially. We can decrease, but not increase.

Mr. DAVIES: We do not want to increase. We can do what is required under the taxation proposed by the measure.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How can you decrease the hours if you have not sufficient money to pay additional nurses?

Mr. DAVIES: I think we can achieve our end by keeping the Government to their assurance. The chairman of the Royal Commission made the important statement that he was under the impression that the amount of money to be collected under this measure would be supplementary to the amount granted by the Government. Anyone looking at the Estimates can see that the Government are anticipating the revenue from this measure and have correspondingly reduced the vote for hospitals. Other points could be referred to on the second reading, but I shall reserve what I have to say on the various clauses until the Committee stage. I appeal to hon. members, particularly those representing the workers, to pass the second reading, when it will be open to us to mould the measure into any form we desire.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We cannot do that.

Mr. DAVIES: There is the opportunity now.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No opportunity whatever.

Mr. DAVIES: We can make the measure just what we wish within the range of the revenue provided.

Hon. P. Collier: Ah!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is the limitation.

Mr. DAVIES: The limitation is £100,000.

Hon. P. Collier: We cannot make the measure anything we desire except by granting the revenue.

Mr. DAVIES: With £100,000 we can do a great deal towards increasing the pay of the nurses and reducing their hours, and rubbing out the pauperising clauses.

Hon. P. Collier: You are a marvel if you can do all that with £100,000.

Mr. DAVIES: It is £100,000 additional.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Premier just said no as regards that.

Hon. P. Collier: The Minister is wriggling.

Mr. Chesson: The Royal Commission thought that the amount to be collected under this Bill would go to the hospitals as additional funds.

Mr. DAVIES: Everything depends on that point. I think it reasonable to carry the second reading of the measure, because those in receipt of the basic wage will not complain of a little extra taxation for the purpose of improving the conditions of those working in hospitals.

Hon. P. Collier: If the Government intend to make this taxation additional, they should not have allowed the time of the House to be wasted for two days in arguing the point.

Mr. DAVIES: I reserve the right to mould the clauses in accordance with what I consider desirable, when the Bill is in Committee.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [9.53]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill. The last speaker is simply sidestepping the issue when he tries to encourage the House to pass the second reading as a means towards raising the wages of hospital nurses. The measure is simply a taxation Bill. The member for Katanning (Mr. A. Thomson) calls it an honest endeavour on the part of the Government to raise revenue. I say it is a backstairs way of raising revenue for hospital maintenance. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that there is no more reason for special taxation for hospitals than for any other Government function. The member for Leederville (Capt. Carter) referred to the speech of the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) as sloppy sentimentality. It is always sloppy sentimentality when members of the Opposition put up a fight for the 100,000 wage earners not assessable to income tax because of the lowness of their earnings. The Government could raise additional taxation by increasing the land tax. I protest against taxation of people who are below the bread line. Let the landholders of this State, who are only paying some £50,000 annually,

which is far too little, contribute more towards the revenue.

Mr. Pickering: They pay more by way of income tax.

Mr. LUTEY: The income tax has risen by about £300,000 during the last few years, and the land tax has increased by only £10,000. The Premier has had the opportunity of putting on an unimproved land tax, but he has sidestepped that opportunity on every occasion. For my part I intend to sidestep the present revenue-raising proposal until the Premier is prepared to place additional taxation on the shoulders of those able to bear it. The member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) mentioned that at Kalgoorlie the doctors have private hospitals, and that patients who pay doctors are sent to those private hospitals. That used to be the position some years ago but I believe that only one small hospital remains, used mostly for maternity cases. The other two hospitals were done away with some time ago. Miners paying to doctors or lodges are sent either to the Government hospital or the St. John of God hospital.

Mr. Heron: At the Government hospital, we were told, they would not be allowed in.

Mr. LUTEY: The doctors are not allowed to go into the Government hospital, but lodge patients are sent there. I shall vote against this taxation Bill.

Mr. Pickering: What do you think of intermediate hospitals?

Mr. LUTEY: Perhaps our friend will get up and let us know all about them.

Mr. HERON (Mt. Leonora) [9.59]: Having been a member of the Royal Commission, I did not intend to speak on this Bill; but the turn which the discussion has taken renders it necessary for me to make my standpoint clear. I visited every centre which the Royal Commission visited. I speak as one who has had a good deal to do with the running of hospitals, and who knows the difficulties under which those institutions labour. I speak also as one elected by the masses, and as one who does not believe in extra taxation if it can be avoided. I do not agree with the Bill, having regard to the manner in which it has been brought down; and I do not think any other member of the Commission agrees with it entirely. In introducing it, the Minister said it was on all fours with the Royal Commission's recommendations. Perhaps it is as regards the tax.

Mr. Pickering: And as regards the trust.

Mr. HERON: Perhaps also as regards the trust. With reference to the taxation proposals we decided to present a unanimous report, but only on condition that each member of the Commission had the right to express his individual views on the floor of the House, and if necessary to oppose or endeavour to amend any part of the Bill. I opposed the trust because I was familiar with the work of local committees. I know, too, the difficulties those local bodies labour under, and I am aware of the fight that they have to put up in order to get money with

which to carry on. Since I have been elected a member of this House I have lived practically on the doorstep of the Minister in the hope of getting assistance for the hospital in the district I represent. It was understood that the members of the Commission would approach Parliament with an open mind. A Bill was presented last year which did not meet with the approval of the community. In fact there was an uproar when it was submitted. Almost every road board and other local authorities passed resolutions opposing that Bill in the form in which it was introduced, and when the Commission was asked to investigate the matter, the hope was expressed that a measure would be substituted which would meet the position fairly. Evidence was taken by the Commission throughout the State, and no objection was raised to the imposition of a tax, provided that it was made to apply to everyone on a fair and equitable basis. There are 48 hospitals in Western Australia, 23 of them conducted by the Government and 25 by local bodies. In the district I represent, the hospital is run with the aid of a subsidy from the Government. That, however, is not adequate. We collect about two-thirds of the money required for the maintenance of the institution, and we also pay our share of the tax on the subsidy obtained from the Government as well as our share of the tax for the upkeep of the Kalgoorlie hospital, the cost of the maintenance of which institution is £12,000.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The miners have the right to get medical attendance there; other people have not.

Mr. HERON: Why should one district be taxed twice and another district only once?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There are special privileges.

Mr. HERON: But the special privileges have to be paid for. In Leonora married men contribute 1s. 9d. weekly, and single men 1s. 3d.

Mr. Marshall: That is an insurance against sickness.

Mr. HERON: That money is raised over and above what is paid in contributions. Let me quote an instance of two towns in close proximity to each other, and the method of hospital management in each. Beverley has a locally run hospital, where the people find two-thirds of the cost of its maintenance. At York, which is only 16 miles away, and which is a flourishing town, there is the Government institution supported entirely from Consolidated Revenue. Is that fair?

Mr. Pickering: How did York get it?

Mr. HERON: Perhaps they had a member who possessed a lot of influence. At Albany there is also a Government hospital, and the matron told the Commission that the people there did not know that a hospital existed until they became sick. The same thing exists in farming communities. One district will be found to be conducting its own hospital, while another district not far away may have a hospital which is controlled by the

Government. With reference to the position of medical men, the member for Menzies mentioned that in certain districts doctors have the right to follow their patients into the hospital. That was started first in the district of Leonora, and it worked satisfactorily. The two doctors who instituted it are now at Collie, and they are still carrying on this practice. If it can be worked successfully in one district, there is no reason why it should not work with equal success everywhere else. The Commission thought that the hospitals should be placed on the one footing; either they should be all locally controlled, or managed by the Government. I oppose the formation of a trust.

Mr. Harrison: Was there a minority report?

Mr. HERON: We agreed to present a unanimous report, but we reserved to ourselves the right to criticise and suggest amendments when the Bill was before the House. I went so far as to advocate exemption for those who receive under £3 a week, but I was overruled by the majority. When I could not get this exemption I sought to provide that those who paid the tax, and were getting the minimum wages or less, should have the right to enter the hospital free of cost.

The Colonial Secretary: We hope that will come about.

Mr. HERON: There is no such provision in the present Bill. At Leonora provision is made for attending to the sick. The member for Fremantle (Mr. Gibson), who was on the Leonora Hospital Committee some years ago, is aware of the disadvantages under which the people in the back country labour. We were under the impression that if the tax were to be imposed and everybody was made to contribute, hospital accommodation could be provided for the sick at a lower rate than that in existence at present.

Mr. Marshall: That is what we want, but it is not provided for in the Bill.

Mr. HERON: I am opposed to the Bill as it has been brought down. It is not as the Commission suggested it should be introduced.

The Colonial Secretary: Wherein does it differ?

Mr. HERON: In the previous Bill provision was made to levy a tax from property owners and the amount so raised was to be subsidised by the Government. That was the basis on which the Commission worked.

The Colonial Secretary: It is not shown in your recommendations.

Mr. HERON: As that was in the old Bill we did not think it necessary to include every detail in the recommendations. The Minister may have read these remarks in the Commission's report.—

We have already commented on the fact that the department, generally speaking, pays its nursing staff at lower rates than are paid by local hospital committees. We desire to record our opinion that, generally speaking, the nursing staff engaged in the hospitals of the State do not receive suffi-

cient payment, having in view the nature of the employment, and the training that has to be undergone, and in making recommendations which we consider will place the finances of the hospitals on a sounder and more liberal basis, we have in view the possibilities that will exist for increasing the salaries of the nursing staff to a figure more commensurate with the value of the work done.

If the £113,000 we expected to raise was not over and above what the Government were already providing, how could we be expected to make provision for increases to the staffs? The Bill has not been submitted in accordance with the recommendations of the Commission and therefore I cannot support the second reading. If the Bill reaches the Committee stage, we must do our best to bring it into line with the Commission's recommendations.

The Colonial Secretary: You will have that opportunity in Committee.

Mr. HERON: I have been informed by those who have been in the Chamber longer than I, that it is not possible for private members to amend such a Bill in the direction we desire.

Mr. Davies: You may not amend it so far as it will affect the revenue.

Mr. HERON: That is the vital matter. I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [10.13]: I have studied the Bill carefully and I have heard what the Minister stated when he introduced it, to the effect that it was an effort on the part of the Government to submit proposals that were in accordance with the findings of the Royal Commission. It appears to me that the Bill will not give satisfaction, especially in country districts where self-help plays a considerable part, more in fact than it does in the metropolitan and closely settled areas.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The difference between what the metropolitan area gets and what the country districts get is £20,000 a year.

Mr. HARRISON: I can speak with authority concerning my own electorate. I remember the trouble there was to get a hospital in a mining centre there. The people felt they had no security against accident or sickness in their homes unless they had a resident medical officer and a properly equipped hospital. They contributed largely not only towards the construction of a hospital, but also contributed weekly, as did the mine owners, towards its maintenance. If the workers in the metropolitan area and in the country districts had contributed in a like ratio, this Bill would not have been required. This Bill was brought forward with the idea of putting us all on an equal footing. People have tried to obtain the security of medical attention by contributing to the funds of friendly societies and so on. We fear that under the proposal contained in the Bill the country districts will suffer to a greater ex-

tent than is now the case. By the concentration of the management of hospitals in the trust situated in Perth, country hospitals, we fear, will not receive that supervision that they are now getting under the local boards. The Bill will alter the method of managing the country hospitals. The most successful hospital in my electorate is the newly established one at Kellerberrin. The people there have paid for its construction and are paying for its maintenance. The only amount contributed by the Government is a sum of £150. That amount has been more than absorbed by the treatment given to indigent patients. Except for the small amount that has been paid in fees, the cost of maintenance has been wholly subscribed by the people of the district. Under the principle of the penny in the pound tax there is a danger that the requisite amount for the maintenance of this hospital will not be raised and voluntary contributions will still be necessary. The conduct of this hospital is an object lesson to other districts.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is new yet.

Mr. HARRISON: It was built only 18 months ago. A considerable number of patients have already been treated with the utmost success. The institution possesses a good medical officer, a competent matron, and an efficient nursing staff. The hospital board is composed of men who are enthusiastic in making the hospital a success. It was built in memory of those who fell during the war, from amongst the men who enlisted from the district. A great interest has been taken in the institution by returned soldiers. The matter was submitted to a plebiscite of the people as to the form the memorial should take, whether it should be a hospital, an obelisk, or an honour board. After a good deal of controversy it was decided to erect a hospital. The returned men of the district then thought they would have something more lasting and more definite. They made an effort to erect an obelisk. When this was made possible the obelisk was fortunately erected in the hospital ground. This has been the means of inducing a greater interest in the hospital management and maintenance, and in creating enthusiasm in the direction of maintaining the surroundings of the hospital. The returned men are taking great interest in both. The board has enlarged its membership in order to increase the interest in the institution. From Kellerberrin itself there are five representatives on the board. Tammin has two representatives, Doodlakine two, and the Bandee district two. One is appointed from the north and south of Kellerberrin and the Yorkrakine district, and there is one who represents the R.M.O. and one the R.S.L. of Kellerberrin. This has kept alive the interest in the institution.

Mr. SPEAKER: What has that to do with the Bill?

Mr. HARRISON: It has a great deal to do with it. In the opinion of the residents of Kellerberrin this board has brought the hospital to a high state of efficiency, and has

been the means of a good deal of money being raised by voluntary subscriptions. It is feared that the same success would not follow in the train of this Bill. Surely that is relevant to the subject matter before the House?

Mr. Marshall: It is even mentioned in the Bill.

Mr. HARRISON: Yes. The Bill will not tend to a forward movement in the management of district hospitals. If we can keep the interest alive in district hospitals by the establishment of local boards, elected by those who subscribed to the hospitals, it will be a better system than that proposed by the Bill. This is a memorial hospital, and returned soldiers, their dependants and children up to the age of 14, are guaranteed treatment there at half fees. If the hospital is administered by a trust in the metropolitan area, what guarantee is there that this privilege would be honoured? That is a most important thing. There is nothing in the Bill to provide for it. If the trust is going to take the management of country hospitals out of the hands of the local board, which have managed them so successfully in the past, we fear the result. In the case of Kellerberrin, there is a reserve fund of nearly £800. What is to become of that money?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It will go to the trust.

Mr. HARRISON: Of course. It will be manipulated by nominees of the Minister who form the trust. It is intended ultimately to buy an X-ray plant for the hospital. I am told this will cost about £400. It is not intended to purchase it at once. We never know when the harvest may fall. It is desired to increase the reserve fund to a still greater amount in order to increase the security of the hospital. Under the present system we have very keen supervision over the entire management of the institution. It is directly under the control of the board, through the medical resident officer and the staff. The rules of the hospital have been carefully thought out, and are likely to give good results. Are we likely to have such good results under the system proposed by this Bill? When in Committee we should do all that is possible to separate those hospitals which are now being run to the satisfaction of the districts concerned, and are financing themselves, from those institutions which are not being so well conducted. I have no desire to see the Kellerberrin hospital managed by a trust or board situated 150 miles away. I do not believe in centralisation in the management of such institutions.

The Colonial Secretary: It is competent under this Bill for local boards to be appointed.

Mr. HARRISON: Selected by the trust. If the boards are elected by those who contribute to the upkeep of the hospital, men will be chosen who will best safeguard the interests of the hospital.

Mr. Chesson: The subscribers should elect them.

Mr. HARRISON: Yes. It would be difficult to improve upon the management of this institution. True, many of the patients who could afford to pay evade their responsibility in all parts of the State, and it would be a good thing if steps could be taken to enforce payment in many instances. The money could be collected from the employers, in the same way as it is collected in the case of mining centres. The reason why voluntary contributions have fallen so low in the metropolitan area is that the people there feel secure in the matter of receiving medical attention when it is required. They have only to ring the telephone to have a St. John's ambulance sent down at a moment's notice.

Mr. Mann: A great many patients come from the country into Perth.

Mr. HARRISON: I know that. There are no ambulances in the country. If a man wants to reach the hospital he has to be taken to the nearest railway either in a dray or a spring cart. That very circumstance stimulates people in the country districts to contribute to the upkeep of their own hospital. It is a disgrace that the people of the city, who have benefited so much by the wealth that is produced in the country, do not contribute more to the upkeep of their own hospitals. Had they done so, a Bill of this kind would never have been brought down.

Mr. CORBOY (Yilgarn) [10.30]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill, for various reasons. The measure demonstrates that the Ministry is bankrupt of ideas and it shows that they have failed to grasp what should be the fundamental basis in an endeavour to raise money for hospital purposes. The fact remains that the mentality of the Ministry has not risen above a tax of 1d. in the pound!

Mr. Davies: But that was the unanimous recommendation of the Royal Commission.

Mr. CORBOY: Then it is a reflection on the Royal Commission as well.

Hon. P. Collier: It was for certain purposes.

Mr. CORBOY: The report of the Commission was not along wholly similar lines to the Bill. It is wrong to place the burden of the maintenance of the health of the community on the basis of a tax of 1d. in the pound. The whole scheme put forward for relieving the Consolidated Revenue of the necessity for maintaining our hospitals is one worthy of the present occupants of the Treasury benches! The Bill provides for the administration of hospitals and the control of health by a central trust. I fear that administration by such a trust would not be in the best interests of the State and especially of the back country districts. I have in mind an incident that happened a few months ago when we lost our medical officer in Ravensthorpe. He was offered a more lucrative appointment elsewhere and he took the position. The district has become so depopulated that it is impossible

for it to support a medical man. The Government were approached with the request that they should fill the vacancy which had occurred in connection with the resident magistracy, by the appointment of a man who could fill the dual position of medical officer and resident magistrate. The request was not acceded to and I feel that it was largely because there is no sympathetic administration in the head office in Perth, particularly where an outback district such as Ravensthorpe is concerned. The centralised administration does not appear to understand the disabilities under which a centre like Ravensthorpe is labouring. To-day the position is that we have no medical officer and there has not been one there for some months. The people are able to maintain a nurse, and a community containing approximately 300 souls is isolated over 150 miles away from a doctor. Members will realise what a handicap it is to be so far away from medical attention. Personally, I do not believe that the administration under a centralised trust would tend to relieve such a position as that. There is no guarantee that the money raised from the pockets of the workers of the State will be used to provide doctors in isolated districts. One can imagine that the plea of the trust will be that they have not the money to spend on accommodation of that sort.

Mr. Mann: Do you think the position would be worse than it is to-day.

Mr. CORBOY: It might be worse. We are maintaining our nurse by voluntary contributions.

Hon. P. Collier: What is the good of passing a Bill if conditions are not to be improved by it?

Mr. CORBOY: That is so. If the people have to pay a tax of 1d. in the pound they may refrain from doing any more and then we may lose even our nurse. Regarding the efforts made elsewhere in connection with the maintenance of hospitals, I would refer particularly to the position in Queensland. Most members will be aware of the methods adopted there for the maintenance of the hospitals. That success has been achieved because of the establishment of the Golden Casket scheme. As a result, the maintenance of the hospitals in Queensland to-day does not involve a penny charge on the Consolidated Revenue. The whole of the hospitals and health administration is paid for from the money received from that scheme. There may be moralists here who will say that we should refrain from legalising lotteries and that if we encourage them, we will merely be encouraging gambling.

Mr. Teesdale: That is not half as bad as the caldug we have here every day.

Mr. CORBOY: It is obvious that whatever we may say, money is going East every week for investment in sweeps or consultations elsewhere. While we will not allow these sweeps to be run here, we do not prevent our people from sending money to other States.

Mr. Teesdale: I send a few "bob" myself.

Mr. CORBOY: I hope the member for Roe-

bourne will be as successful as I have been. I drew £50 the other day, when I took my first ticket for over eight years. Last year, Tasmania received £174,000 as taxation from Tattersalls. It has been stated that approximately one-third of the revenue of Tasmania is derived, directly or indirectly, from Tattersall's consultations. In Queensland the hospitals are maintained as the result of funds secured from a similar scheme. Good West Australian money is leaving the State every week to be invested in these consultations.

Mr. Teesdale: The Premier's wife runs them in Queensland.

Mr. CORBOY: And if our Premier's wife ran them here, we would do just as well and we would retain our money in the State. Some effort should be made to deal with this problem by way of a consultation or otherwise, and so keep our money here. This would relieve the Consolidated Revenue of the necessity for maintaining our hospitals, and no more worthy object can be conceived than the maintenance of the public health of the State. I hope something will be done in the direction of establishing a consultation of that sort with the object of benefiting hospitals and providing proper medical facilities for the outback districts where none is provided to-day. I hope the Bill will be thrown out at the second reading stage.

The Premier: You do not mean that.

Mr. CORBOY: I do. The Bill does not provide one glimmer of hope for the betterment of hospitals anywhere in the State. It will lead to the establishment of a trust, with the necessity for an increased staff to cope with the collection of the tax of 1d. in the pound. It will mean interference in directions which will render the conditions in country hospitals worse than they are to-day. As a matter of fact, the conditions in many of these hospitals are good to-day, but they will not be improved by the Bill. I trust that the measure will be thrown out and that it will be replaced next session by some genuine effort on the part of the Government to provide a Bill which will result in an improvement in our hospital facilities without hardship to the general taxpayer.

Hon. M. F. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [10.40]: When the Bill was introduced at the outset, I welcomed it on the understanding that it would afford relief to those taxpayers throughout the mining districts who, for many years past, have been almost wholly responsible for the maintenance of their own hospitals. At Meekatharra, Cue, Day Dawn, Mt. Magnet, Sandstone, Youanmi, and Leonora, the local people have taxed themselves very heavily for the upkeep of their hospitals. Large sums of money have been collected for this purpose as well as for charitable objects generally. I have always had a grievance on that account because the people living in the wealthier and more populous parts of the State do not pay anything towards the upkeep of hospitals in their midst. Towns like Kalgoorlie, Geraldton, Northam, Albany, Bunbury, York, Fremantle, and Katanning, which

are populous, and where the people are wealthier than those in the mining districts, pay nothing whatever towards the upkeep of their hospitals, which depend upon the Treasury for support. I came into conflict with the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) when he was Colonial Secretary, because I wanted to insist upon the people in the populous areas paying their share so that the people in the outback districts should not be penalised.

Mr. Lambert: It is a shame the way the Government are starving the outback hospitals.

Hon. M. F. TROY: At Sandstone, the people contributed £13,000 in four years. They put up a fine hospital and provided quarters for the matron and the doctor. The institution was equipped with up-to-date appliances as well. The department was so grateful to the people for their splendid efforts that the then Colonial Secretary, who is now Agent General, wrote a letter commending the people for the sacrifices they had made in raising so large a sum of money. In that very letter, however, he informed them that he was reducing their subsidy. Presumably that was to encourage the people. During the last two years the Government have been able to utilise the Sandstone buildings, and the matrons' and doctors' quarters have been removed to another locality. This saves the Government considerable expense.

Mr. Marshall: What legal right had the department to do that?

Hon. M. F. TROY: No matter what is subscribed by the local people and what is done with the money, the buildings become the property of the department. When a locality goes down, the Government have the right to remove the buildings and equipment to some other district. At Mt. Magnet last year the people contributed over £1,200 towards the funds of the hospital. I was hopeful that the Bill would relieve the people in the back country by insisting that the burden should fall more lightly on them, and that the people throughout the State would be compelled to pay their share. Had that been done, the Treasury would have been relieved and the people would be on the same footing. I am surprised to learn from the discussion on the Bill that nothing of the sort is contemplated. It merely provides for the formation of a trust and the funds collected are to be handed over to a centralised body in Perth. I do not see that the hospitals in the more distant parts of the State will receive any benefit, because those who pay will have no rights whatever. The people will be compelled to pay for doctor's attendance and hospital fees even if they pay taxation under the Bill. That is a fatal objection to the Bill. It is unreasonable to expect the people to pay a hospital tax if they are not to get some advantage from it. After all, what the Bill provides is that the Government shall have power to tax, and the money received from such tax shall recoup the Treasurer against the money he has already spent on hospitals. What we

did hope for was that if there was to be a general tax, the community would get something for it. The community is to get nothing. That is a fatal objection. I could not go to my constituents and say, "You are to pay as before for the hospital, but you are not to get the privileges you now enjoy." Such a Bill cannot commend itself to any member whose electors are in the position of my electors. For the last 20 years they have paid for the maintenance of their hospital. They have taxed themselves and erected building, but they have had a quid pro quo, because they were entitled to accommodation at the hospital, with medical attention. The Bill takes that away from them but subjects them to a tax. I shall vote against the Bill.

Mr. MARSHALL (Murchison) [10.47]: I will oppose the second reading. No one is more desirous of being kind to those stricken down by illness than am I—it is our duty to do all that we can for those subject to ill-health—and so I regret that I cannot support the Bill. It is the most undemocratic measure introduced since I have been in Parliament. In the first place it proposes to take away the local autonomy of outback hospitals which have been established and maintained by local effort and sacrifice. Let me ask the Minister if he can explain how the trust is to be elected? It is provided that three members shall be nominated by the mining, the agricultural and the pastoral interests. The pastoral industry extends from the Northern Territory to Cape Leeuwin. It is not possible for people living at the Leeuwin to have community of interests with those up North. I regard the Bill as a measure imposing taxation without representation. The taxpayers are to be taxed for the benefit of the metropolitan hospitals. All that we have had from metropolitan members is the hope that, if the Bill pass, certain concessions will be provided for the Perth and Fremantle hospitals. I am afraid that under the constitution of the trust it will be essential for road boards to appoint to the trust local representatives, that is to say, persons living in Perth. No other plan will be practicable, and so the trust will be composed exclusively of metropolitan men. I cannot support that. Local authorities are not to have the right to say who shall represent the taxpayers on that trust. Some members of road boards have as many as 12 votes. Of course such an elector will determine who is to represent his district on the trust in the metropolitan area.

Mr. Davies: He will have only one vote at the referendum.

Mr. MARSHALL: I know a road board member who has 12 votes. As against him, an ordinary voter will have no say.

The Colonial Secretary: Occupiers have representation.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am speaking of the working man whom the Minister proposes to tax. When paying taxation, such men ought to have as much right to representation as

has anybody else. The member for Kataning (Mr. A. Thomson) said he regarded the Bill as an honest effort at reform. Probably he was sincere in that; but when he spoke of local hospitals I think he had in mind only the hospitals of Perth and Fremantle. The Bill cannot be beneficial to outback hospitals. I agree with the member for Mount Magnet (Hon. M. F. Troy) when he says we are not going to be on the same basis under the Bill as we are at present. At least we have local autonomy, have the right as subscribers to local hospitals to say who is to administer those hospitals. The Bill will rob us of that privilege, and so I cannot support it. Above all things, I object to people whose children are barefooted and ill-fed having to pay increased taxation. Until the Government show greater care and economy, I cannot support any measure of additional taxation. I will oppose the Bill.

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

Ayes	20
Noes	16

Majority for .. 4

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. James Mitchell
Mr. Broun	Mr. Money
Mr. Carter	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Davies	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Durack	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. George	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Gibson	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Harrison	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. J. Thomson
Mr. Mann	Mr. Mullany

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Chesson	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Troy
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heron	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hughes	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Munsie

(Teller.)

Pair: Aye—J. H. Smith; No—Mr. O'Loughlen.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—MINERS' PHTHISIS.

Message.

Message received from the Lieutenant-Governor, recommending the Bill.

House adjourned at 11.1 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 23rd November, 1922.

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

PROCEDURE—QUESTION OR RETURN.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.34]: With reference to the two questions appearing on today's Notice Paper in the name of Mr. Harris, and with reference to other questions of the same kind which have been asked, I desire to say that while I have always made a practice of supplying all the information asked for by way of question, I would request hon. members to submit motions for returns when returns are required. The two questions standing in the name of Mr. Harris involve the preparation of returns at some cost; and returns of that nature should, I think, be called for on the vote of the House and not merely by way of question. However, the information will be ready on Tuesday.

The PRESIDENT: You mean that there ought to be a motion instead of a question?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes; a motion for a return. However, I do not wish to delay the matter, and I am having the information obtained.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day; Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair, the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

New clause (partly considered):

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Just before the adjournment last night, I moved a new clause reading as follows:—“That the following be added to stand as Clause 79:—‘A section is inserted in the principal Act, as follows:—104a. No licensee shall supply to any person by the glass liquor to be consumed with water or aerated water on the premises of the licensee unless such liquor is supplied in a glass capable of holding at least one and a-quarter gills. Penalty: £5’”