

cultural areas are certainly not receiving fair consideration under the Bill, and in the future that position will be accentuated by increase of settlement in outside districts. When I was first elected, it was not necessary to go near large areas of the province, because there was no settlement in them; but now not one part of that tremendous expanse of country remains unsettled. This great development has taken place in 14 years. And yet the province is to remain dormant in respect of Parliamentary representation until another Bill of this kind is brought forward.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We give you man for man, and 50 per cent. thrown in for wheat and sheep.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The congested areas of the city could do very well with their present number of members.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Do you suggest that a metropolitan resident has more intelligence than a country resident?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Not for a moment. That has certainly not been shown in this Chamber. I repeat, the Bill does not give the agricultural districts fair representation; and as time goes on, that position will become worse.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Metropolitan members represent the agricultural areas, as well as country members.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, until important questions come up, and then the agricultural areas are very quickly dropped. Take the vermin tax as an example.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What was wrong with that?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The agricultural areas have to find two-thirds of the taxation, and the pastoral areas expend two-thirds. That arrangement is quite in accord with the present Bill.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Government are going to make their position secure, for which one cannot blame them. The Bill is a more reasonable one than I expected from the Government. Since it is an improvement on the existing Act, I support the measure.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.14 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 22nd November, 1928.

	PAGE
Petition: Liquor traffic, earlier closing of hotels ...	1975
Urgency Motion disallowed ...	1975
Questions: Railway project, Kalgoorlie-Perth ...	1976
Pastoral leases, expiry ...	1976
Mental home, Point Heathcote ...	1976
Bills: Poor Persons Legal Assistance, 1A. ...	1976
Road Closure (Queen Street), 3R. passed ...	1976
Education, returned to Council ...	1976
Health Act Amendment, 2R. ...	1977
Workers' Homes Act Amendment, Com. ...	1982
Hospital Fund, 2R. ...	1984
Municipal and Road Districts Electoral, 2R., Com. Report ...	1995
Annual Estimates, 1928-29, Report. Ways and Means	1976

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

PETITION—LIQUOR TRAFFIC.

Earlier Closing of Hotels.

Mr. MANN: I have a petition to present to the House from the Western Australian Prohibition League. With your permission, Sir, I will read the prayer, as follows:—

To the Honourable the Speaker and hon. members of the Legislative Assembly of Western Australia in Parliament assembled—The humble petition of the undersigned residents of Western Australia over the age of 21 sheweth that whereas from time to time the public sale of intoxicating liquor has been restricted by the Parliament of Western Australia with beneficial results, and as the expenditure on intoxicating liquor in this State is abnormally high, and as this expenditure results in a high percentage of crime, much economic waste and human unhappiness, your petitioners pray that amending legislation may be introduced at an early date providing for the closing of all liquor bars at 6 p.m., or that amending legislation may be introduced to provide for an immediate referendum of the electors on the question of the hour of closing. And your petitioners as in duty bound will for ever pray.

The petition is signed by 14,000 electors and I move—

That the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

URGENCY MOTION DISALLOWED.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received from the member for York the following letter:—

The Hon. the Speaker: I desire to inform you that it is my intention, on the House meeting this afternoon at 4.30 p.m., to move under Standing Order 47 the adjournment of the House for the purpose of ventilating the hasty

method of dealing with the business of the House by the Chairman of Committees. (Sgd.) C. G. Latham.

Under Standing Order 47 I am entitled to decline the receipt of this notice, on the ground of urgency alone. But there is a more particular ground why I cannot receive any motion for the adjournment of the House for the reason stated in the hon. member's letter. In the 13th Edition of May's "Parliamentary Practice," page 271, the hon. member will read—

Certain matters cannot be debated save upon a substantive motion which can be dealt with by amendment or by the distinct vote of the House. Amongst these may be mentioned the conduct of the sovereign, the heir to the throne, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, the Governors-General of the Dominions, the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker, the chairman of ways and means, and members of either House of Parliament and judges of the superior courts of the United Kingdom, including persons holding the position of a judge, such as a judge of the court of bankruptcy or of a county court. These matters cannot therefore be questioned by way of amendment, or upon a motion for adjournment under Standing Order No. 10.

Which is the equivalent of ours. Sir Erskine May continues—

For the same reason no charge of a personal character can be raised save upon a direct and substantive motion to that effect. No statement of that kind, therefore, can be embodied in a notice stating that the attention of the House will be called to a matter of that nature.

I, therefore, cannot allow the hon. member to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose stated in his letter.

QUESTION—RAILWAY PROJECT, KALGOORLIE-PERTH.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Works: 1, Have alternative surveys been made of the proposed broad gauge line from Kalgoorlie to Perth and Fremantle? 2, Are plans of these surveys available for inspection? 3, What is the estimated cost of the proposed line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No complete surveys have been made. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, A proper estimate cannot be prepared before the through surveys have been made.

QUESTION—PASTORAL LEASES, EXPIRY.

Mr. COWAN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is he aware than many pastoral leases, principally of small area, will expire on the 31st December, 1928? 2, If so, will he give some information to the House in regard to the Government's attitude on the extension, or otherwise, of those leases?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (for the Minister for Lands) replied: 1, Yes. 2, A Bill will be introduced shortly.

QUESTION—MENTAL HOME, POINT HEATHCOTE.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Are the erection and furnishing of the Mental Home at Point Heathcote now complete? 2, What accommodation for males and females is provided and used?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Yes, with the exception of certain services. 2, 36 males and 36 females. At present five harmless patients are engaged under the supervision of a gardener, in laying out the grounds.

BILL—POOR PERSONS LEGAL ASSISTANCE.

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

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Road Closure (Queen Street!).

Passed.

2. Education.

Returned to the Council with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1928-29.

Report of Committee of Supply adopted.

In Committee of Ways and Means.

The House having resolved into Committee of Ways and Means, Mr. Lutey in the Chair.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER

(Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [4.45]: I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the service of the year ending 30th June, 1928, a sum not exceeding £5,612,150 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and £186,447 from the Sale of Government Property Trust Account.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. S. W. Munsie—Hannans) [4.48] in moving the second reading said: I hope hon. members will not be alarmed at the number of clauses in the Bill, 44. Many of them represent amendments which are merely minor, although essential to the proper working of the measure. The Bill also contains some important clauses, and new provisions to the number of eight. The measure, I believe, can be much better dealt with in Committee than on second reading; but I admit that unless hon. members have a copy of the parent Act beside them they will find this Bill difficult to follow even in Committee. I shall deal first with the principal alterations proposed, and then with the new provisions. The first important alteration relates to the definition of infectious diseases. The definition in the existing Act includes many diseases which are not now considered infectious, or treated as being infectious, in any part of the civilised world. The definition in the Bill is one that has been agreed to by the Central Health Council of Australia, who have asked that it be made uniform throughout the States.

Hon. G. Taylor: Has it been?

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: No objection has been raised to it by the Health Ministers of the various States at the conference.

Mr. Sampson: Was Western Australia represented at the conference?

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: Yes. Any information hon. members may desire I hope to be able to supply fully during the Committee stage. Therefore I hope hon. members will not cross-examine me at the present stage. The principal object of the

new definition is to ensure uniformity. Unless some Parliaments have adopted the new definition already, the present situation is that in some States certain diseases are considered infectious and in other States not. Thus no uniform statistics can be kept as to the advance or decrease of infectious diseases. On that aspect uniformity is most desirable, in order that reliable information may be available as to methods of treatment and the results of treatment. Another alteration proposed by the Bill refers to a section of the amending measure I introduced about two years ago. The section in question has a proviso that it shall not apply to any house not erected or commenced to be erected before the end of the year 1926. I propose that that provision shall be deleted for the purpose of inserting one referring to houses not erected or completed at a date to be fixed by the local authority and published in the "Government Gazette."

Hon. G. Taylor: Do you find that the present provision works?

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: No. It cannot be enforced in respect of any house commenced before 1926. Thus it cannot be enforced in a new suburb springing up. Another alteration proposed refers to control of the milk supply. The parent Act enables the Health Department to prohibit the sale of impure milk; but if the cream is skimmed off the milk, the milk can be condemned but not the cream. Power is desired to apply the Act to cream as well as to milk. Another small but important alteration is proposed in the same connection. At present the Health Department have the right to prosecute for adulteration of milk. In a case heard some little time ago the defence raised the point that a prosecution would not lie because of impurities, or foreign substances, in the milk, but only if the milk failed to reach certain standards.

Mr. Mann: Was that the case where the defence raised the point that the foreign matter was merely dirt?

The **MINISTER FOR HEALTH**: Yes. The foreign matter in that case was cow dung, and fair quantities of it, too. Under the Health Act it is the duty of the Health Department to see that schools are kept clean, and especially that they are kept free from vermin.

Hon. G. Taylor: A difficult task apparently.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In some instances it is difficult; but if the amendment is carried, the task will be rendered considerably easier. It is proposed that where a parent refuses or neglects to keep the child clean, the authorities shall have power to compel the parent to have the child's hair kept short. That will enable the hair to be kept clean. There may be controversy on the point, but to my mind the power is essential.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is somewhat depressing to find we have to legislate in that direction.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Such legislation exists already, but it does not go far enough. Somewhat strangely, perhaps, in the clause which asks for more power, there is also a proposal to reduce the penalty. The parent Act mentions penalties only twice. The maximum penalty is fixed at £20, and a section of the Act provides that for various offences the court may fix one-tenth of the maximum penalty, which would be £2. So that for no offence could a magistrate impose a penalty of less than £2. That minimum, in my opinion, is too high. The Bill proposes to reduce the £20 to £5, of which 10 per cent. would be 10s. The Bill deals with another fairly important matter, as to which I have received two influential deputations. The Government employ school medical officers for the purpose of examining school children and pointing out defects. The deputations have suggested to me that the Education Department should employ nurses to follow up the representations made by the medical officers. I do not agree with that view, and have told the deputations so. I hold that if the State goes so far as to employ medical officers to examine every school child at least twice during its school life and to point out any defects in the child, it is the duty of the parent to see that the defects are remedied, and not the duty of the State to employ nurses for that purpose.

Mr. Mann: And in the absence of parents?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The provision will apply also to guardians.

Mr. Davy: You are referring to such things as septic tonsils, adenoids, and bad teeth?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and in some cases ruptures in young children. Ruptures have been pointed out to

the parents, the school medical officer in some cases going to the home and drawing attention to the seriousness of not having a child attended to by means of what is practically a minor operation which may be done at the Children's Hospital free of charge, and yet, I regret to say, the parents have neglected the matter. The Bill asks for power to make such wilful neglect an offence. Proceedings will not be taken purely on the evidence of the school medical officer. If a school medical officer considers that the child should be attended to, the services of another school medical officer can be called in, and, if it is desired, any outside doctor can be consulted. No prosecution can take place until there has been consultation of other medical men. I do not wish to make the opinion of the school medical officer mandatory without the support of other medical practitioners. The safeguard in the clause is, I consider, ample to protect the parent or guardian. But in the interests of the child the neglect to which I have referred should be an offence, and the parent or guardian guilty of it should be punished. The Bill contains many minor matters which I shall not mention on second reading. I may, however, draw attention to one which, if not taken seriously here, may be viewed seriously in another place. At present local authorities have the power to order the owner or tenant to renovate or repair his house if it has been condemned as unfit for human habitation. If the owner should refuse to do so, the local authority can carry out the work on their own initiative and charge up the cost to the owner. At the same time that charge is one against the property, not against the land. I want to alter that position so that the expenses involved will be a charge against the land, irrespective of whether it has been sold or not. Provision is made setting out how the money may be collected. I do not know that I need make any further references to the amendments. There are many of them, but some are of minor importance. Nevertheless, they are considered to be necessary and some are fairly important. Regarding the other parts of the Bill, there are eight new features that are introduced. In a sense they represent the introduction of new principles.

Hon. G. Taylor: Are they in force elsewhere?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Some of them may be, but I cannot say regarding others. One of the new provisions is in connection with local boards of health. At the present time the Act is so worded that members of local health boards can be nominated by anyone or everyone. There are no such conditions operating at present as apply to the election of other local governing bodies.

Mr. Davy: But are not these health boards nearly always the local authorities?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If that is the position, then the health boards will comply with the provisions of the Bill; but in many instances the local health authorities are not the municipal councils or road boards. In the first instance some of them are nominated at public meetings. The names of four or five gentlemen are submitted and they are forwarded to the Minister for approval. With that approval given, the people nominated at the meeting become the health authority for their particular district. We have no power at present to make the local health authorities elective bodies. I have had complaints on a number of occasions from various districts, but those complaints did not come from districts where the local road board was also the health authority. They always came from districts where the health board was distinct from the local governing authority. Complaints have been made that the health authorities have not acted in the best interests of the ratepayers, and, according to the views expressed by those making the complaints to me, the people interested were anxious for an opportunity to hold an election to see whether the members of the health board really represented the views of the people concerned. Clause 5 of the Bill will give the necessary power to the Minister to arrange for an election at the expiration of the period for which any health authority has been appointed. Under that clause a poll will be taken under the same conditions as apply to the election of other local governing bodies.

Mr. Thomson: There should be no objection to that proposal.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I should think not. I have had three or four serious complaints, and the people who brought the facts before me, advocated the holding of elections.

Mr. Ferguson: But the boundaries of the respective bodies do not always coincide.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is all right. In a few instances that may be so, but usually the local health authority has jurisdiction over a portion only of a road board area. Another provision refers to the creation of sanitary boards. At the present time the Health Act does not give power to the Government to create a sanitary board elsewhere. If it is intended to deal with the sanitation of a district, it is the local governing authority or the local health authority that has to undertake the work. Strictly speaking, under the constitution of a health authority, it is necessary for a medical officer and a secretary to be employed, and we find in consequence that many such officers are employed despite the fact that their services are not really required. In a big State like this, I think it advisable to place a little less authority in the hands of those health boards which cover huge tracts of country, in favour of the creation of sanitary boards where the district to be served is not big enough to warrant the constitution of a health authority or a road board. Another important, and very necessary, provision is included in Clause 8 which provides for the amalgamation of different health districts in the country areas and the appointment of a health inspector to carry out duties throughout the amalgamated district. At present, nearly every local authority, when vacancies occur, advertises for the services of an officer who shall be an engineer, secretary and so on, and health matters are included as the last-to-be-mentioned qualifications of the individual to be appointed. As a result, the Health Department has had to employ five or six inspectors who are engaged in travelling round the country, very often going over extensive areas where health inspectors employed by local authorities are already operating.

Mr. Sampson: Do you propose to insist on the district health inspector being certificated?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. The object of the clause is to make provision for the amalgamation of many of these health districts and the appointment of a full time inspector to carry out the work necessary throughout the various districts. From a health point of view, I have always

held the opinion that health inspectors should be controlled by the State and not by local authorities. The Bill will not take away altogether the power of the local authorities in that respect, but I think health inspectors should be under the jurisdiction of the Government.

Mr. Thomson: A lot of the country people will be pleased if you take control of them.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In many small country places where local authorities employ a health inspector, there may be eight members of the board. Perhaps seven of them are running businesses that the health inspector will have to inspect. In such circumstances the official has to inspect his employers' premises. That is neither fair to the health inspector, nor to the township. A health inspector should be quite independent of the people whose premises he has to inspect, and he should be responsible to the Health Department.

Mr. Sampson: The secretary of a road board has much the same experience.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, but in nine cases out of ten the road board secretary is the health inspector. It is most decidedly wrong. Recently the Health Department endeavoured to put such a scheme into operation in one part of the State. We sent an officer of the department round, and the area covered included the districts in which 18 health inspectors were operating. We endeavoured to secure an amalgamation of those areas. Sixteen of the local health authorities wrote congratulating the department upon the action taken and requesting that the scheme should be put into operation as soon as possible. On the other hand, two of the local authorities objected. We found that under the provisions of the Health Act we had no power to enforce the amalgamation. I trust that the Bill will be agreed to so that we shall be able to cope with that difficulty. Then again the Bill makes provision for the Government to pay half the salary of a health inspector who is appointed to take charge of amalgamated districts. Thus each of the several small health districts will not have to shoulder the financial burden independently, but the whole of them combined will have to pay half the salary of the inspector. Another new provision is that which will give a local authority the right to provide a sewerage system in portion of a township. There are two or three towns in Western Australia that desire to do something of that sort. One of those towns

is Northam. There it is desired to sewer part of the township and, of course, it would be a very expensive and difficult job to sewer the whole of it. Under the existing Health Act, such a thing could not be done. The Bill seeks to give local authorities in such a position the power to sewer portion of their area if so desired. Then again the Bill provides that if the sewer is not constructed from loan funds or if the loan funds available are not sufficient to meet requirements, then the local authority may strike a rate in the district served by the sewer to make up the deficiency. Then again, the Bill will provide power for the local authorities to enforce connections with the sewer, if one is available. It may interest hon. members to know that until recently some of the principal buildings in the centre of the city were unsewered.

Mr. Mann: Right in the centre of the city!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and there was no authority under which the owners could be forced to connect up their premises with the sewerage system. So long as the owner paid the sewerage rate levied on the property, there was no authority to compel him to connect up his premises. In such circumstances the local health authority had to provide a pan service at some of the principal residential places, hotels and business premises in the city. That such a position could continue was unfair and unjust, and most decidedly the health authorities should have power to compel such owners to connect up with the sewer.

Mr. Thomson: Did you say there was a large hotel in the centre of the city that was not connected up?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, right in the city. It was connected up only recently.

The Premier: I can guess who owns it—the man who pays no one.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: In such circumstances it will be agreed that it is only fair that a local authority should have power to compel such property owners to connect up their premises with the sewer. The next new provision is contained in Clause 20, which relates to the cleanliness of premises.

The Premier: Power is required to clean up some places of amusement in the city.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It is strange that the Premier should mention

that point just now. Under the clause power is sought for local authorities to compel owners or occupiers of premises to clean them up.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There are some premises in the city, including rented places, that are not quite bad enough to be declared to be public nuisances and so be condemned under the provisions of the Health Act. As a matter of fact, many of them would be quite habitable if they were properly cleaned up, but at present there is no power to compel an owner to clean up his premises. The health authorities should have power to compel anyone to cleanse premises.

The Premier: There is a place in the city that apparently has not been cleaned since it was built 30 years ago.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We are not seeking power to order painting or renovating; we are asking power to compel the owner to cleanse premises, and that is a very necessary power to have. The next clause is new; I do not know whether it will meet with the approval of members, but I hope it will. At present we are spending a fair sum of money each year and doing good work through the sisters to teach mothers the proper way to rear their babies, and particularly to teach mothers the advisableness of naturally feeding their babies.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is happening to the modern mother that she needs all this tuition?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I suppose what I am about to relate happens once daily in the city and more than once in the city and suburbs combined. People employed by patent food firms go around advising mothers to try their foods. The ladies employed by those firms have been known to stop a mother in the street, congratulate her on the appearance of the baby and ask on what food it was being fed. The mother has told her it was being fed on the breast, and the lady has actually endeavoured to persuade the mother to cease feeding it on the breast and to use the food she was representing. She has been known to claim that such food was better for the baby and much more wholesome, and that if it was adopted the child would not longer be pulling the life out of the mother. People should be prevented from doing anything of that kind, regardless of how good

the food may be, in the event of the mother being able to feed her baby naturally.

Mr. Sampson: Are women engaged to represent such firms?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, principally women in the guise of nurses.

Mr. Mann: The nurses in the baby clinics advise the use of such foods.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Only when the mother has not got the milk or the quality of milk to feed the baby naturally.

Mr. Davy: A doctor will not be able to advise without the permission of the Commissioner first being obtained.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We can alter that if necessary. I wish to make such actions on the part of infant food vendors an offence and put a stop to that sort of thing. It is not fair that while we are paying money to train sisters in order that they may be able to give mothers correct advice, other people without any training should be able to go around and persuade mothers to do something that is not in their own interests or in the interests of the babies. Take the ordinary diseases to which infants are subject. One of the most prevalent some time ago was diphtheria. We had a fairly long run of diphtheria in Australia, and until we got anti-toxin, many lives were lost through that disease. Statistics show that the child that is naturally fed has 10 per cent. less chance of getting diphtheria than has the child artificially fed.

Hon. G. Taylor: I suppose it is more healthy to resist the disease.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, but the theory is that the child gets a certain toxin from the mother that is to some extent a preventive. Further, it has been definitely proved that a naturally fed child contracting diphtheria has a 25 per cent. better chance of recovery than has a child artificially fed. In the circumstances we should be prepared to go a considerable way by making it an offence for people to advise mothers to refrain from naturally feeding their babies in order that a particular brand of artificial food might be adopted in lieu. There is no doubt that people are employed by the companies, are going round advising mothers in that way, and are advocating the use of their foods. If they find a mother is artificially feeding her baby with a certain food, they endeavour to persuade her to abandon that food and adopt theirs.

Mr. Davy: Are you going to prohibit the advertising of Glaxo, etc.?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No.

Mr. Davy: If you do not, you will not get any further.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There is a clause giving control over advertisements.

The Premier: That is where the danger lies.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: At present we have control over the actual advertising on the bottle or package, but we have no control over the advertisements that appear in the Press or over any dodger that may be distributed, so long as it is not wrapped round the article.

Mr. Sampson: Is that law in existence in any other part of the world?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. Steps should be taken to curb some of the most extravagant statements made in pamphlets and advertisements as to the curative properties of certain patent medicines and the value of certain patent foods. According to the advertisements there is a medicine vended in this city that will cure anything—cancer, consumption and, in fact, the most dreaded diseases known.

Mr. Mann: Down to a broken leg.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is not fair. We ought to have control over such advertisements in order that we may compel the vendors to substantiate what they claim for the medicine.

Mr. Sampson: Tell us what is being done in other parts of the world.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I shall do that in Committee. The only other new provision is in connection with Section 272 of the Act, which at present gives local authorities the right, if they so desire, to subsidise hospitals from their funds to the extent of 10 per cent. A few local authorities are subsidising hospitals, but very few. That provision will be extended under this Bill so that local authorities will have the right to subsidise infant health centres and other schemes for the prevention of disease. If the local authorities have money to spend in the interests of the health of the community, it is much better that they should endeavour to prevent sickness than to cure people after they become sick. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Sampson. debate adjourned.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 20th November. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clause 10. Amendment of Section 19 (partly considered):

Mr. Panton had moved an amendment as follows:—

That the following paragraph be added:—
“(c) by adding a new subsection as follows:—
“(4) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this section, a lessee, or any person lawfully claiming under a deceased lessee, who holds a certificate of purchase issued in accordance with Section 16 of this Act, may dispose of a worker's dwelling otherwise than to the board.”

The PREMIER: I undertook to consider the amendment and consult the Solicitor-General on the point raised by the hon. member, namely, that when the leasehold home has been paid for and a certificate of purchase has been issued, the owner will be entirely free to dispose of the home to whomever he likes without having to obtain the approval of the board. I am quite convinced the amendment is not necessary. All that is required to enable that to be done has already been effected by the Bill and the amendments agreed to. Really the amendment seeks to amend Section 19, and that is where the obstruction existed. Instead of amending Section 19, we have already provided that Section 19 shall not apply at all. Consequently Section 19, in relation to this particular matter, disappears. Therefore it is evident that it is not necessary to amend Section 19 in order to remove the obstacle of an owner being free to dispose of his home once a certificate of purchase has been issued. I think it is beyond question that the amendments made providing that certain covenants shall cease to have effect and that Section 19 shall not apply leaves it quite clear, even if anything further than Clause 9 were necessary, that the owner will be free to dispose of his home in any way he thinks fit and for any price he can obtain, without the consent or approval of the board. At the previous sitting we added to Clause 9 “and covenants ii., iv., v., vi., and vii. shall cease to have effect and Section 19 shall not apply.” That amendment makes the position quite clear so that

the amendment now before the Committee is not necessary.

Mr. PANTON: In view of the statement of the Premier, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 11 to 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Application of Commonwealth Housing Act 1927-28:

The **PREMIER:** This clause is rendered necessary to comply with the conditions of the Commonwealth Act. Set out there are the conditions under which the Commonwealth are prepared to lend money and the clause in the Bill is necessary to give effect to those conditions. We must have this clause, and we may not even amend it in any way. To do so would put us out of court.

Mr. DAVY: When one comes to peruse the powers inserted in this clause, it makes one wonder whether it is an advantage to the people in Western Australia that they should be encouraged to borrow money up to £1,800. That seems to me to be almost criminal. By the time the house is built, it will stand the owner in at least £2,000, and when we take into account interest and rates and taxes it will cost a minimum of £184 a year. A man earning £12 a week is a very injudicious person if he spends £184 a year on the house he proposes to live in.

The **Premier:** We can only hope that people will exercise some judgment and not take full advantage of that clause.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I suppose the Premier has been advised why that provision appears in the Federal contract. The Federal Act applies to all States, and a house that might cost £1,600 to build in a suburb of Perth might cost £1,800 in close proximity to Melbourne or Sydney. Land in the Eastern States is very dear and building is expensive. For instance, a villa at Mt. Lawley that would cost £1,000 or £1,200 could not be built in Sydney for less than £2,000.

The **PREMIER:** I agree with the member for West Perth that the amount of £1,800 is needlessly high. I consider that if the maximum were £1,000 it would be quite sufficient. Those people who might be in a position to

build an £1,800 house should also be in a position to finance themselves. When the original Bill was introduced by the Federal Government, it provided for a maximum of £1,600, but the amendment was made at the request of the Victorian members. When I discussed the matter with Dr. Page he said himself that he thought £1,800 was too high, and that that figure was embodied in the Act to an extent under pressure from Victorian members. I do not know why, but it may have been that the cost of land was higher there than in the other States. Still, I think the position would be safeguarded to a great extent by the exercise of judgment and discretion on the part of the board.

Mr. Davy: If a man comes along with his £12 a week, you cannot refuse him a loan.

The **PREMIER:** At the same time the board would have to work within the Act, and if they refuse an application they may find themselves in a difficult position. Of course they may give a reason for refusing which may be entirely different from the real reason. Personally, I hope that whatever funds are available, they will go towards building homes for those in receipt of lower incomes and who are not in a position to finance building operations.

Mr. Davy: Better that two houses of a value of £900 each should be built than one of £1,800.

The **PREMIER:** I can see a rush of applications for the transfer of liabilities to the Government so as to get a lower rate of interest. Our whole object, however, should be to increase the number of houses in the community and not to take over existing liabilities.

Mr. Mann: There is a dearth of workers' homes.

The **PREMIER:** Yes, and in the country too there is a dearth of £300 and £400 houses. All through the agricultural areas there is need for workers' homes. Married men who are wage earners cannot take their families to the country. They go to the country for a few months and drift back to the city, whereas if they had their families with them they would remain in the district and find work. In that way there would always be a better class of farm worker. He would have his home there and would be anxious to maintain it as his permanent residence.

Mr. Mann: It will be difficult under this Bill to get workers' homes built in the towns

because there is not always a guarantee of permanent employment.

The PREMIER: There is no reason why that should be so. Anyhow, the value would always be there and there would be no difficulty in disposing of the house to somebody else. A considerable number of homes have been built in country towns during recent years, and I would like to see many more built. This legislation will enable us to do that. If we can get funds from the Commonwealth to meet the requirements of the city, then with the money available from our own resources we shall be able to more than double the number of homes not only in the suburbs but in country towns as well. These are very much needed and should relieve to a considerable extent the housing difficulty that exists all over the State.

Clause put and passed.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—HOSPITAL FUND.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th November.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.45]: I agree that the public are anxious for the present position in respect to our hospitals to be altered. Time after time it has been asserted, with justification, that hospital service is the best criterion of the advance of civilisation. I am hopeful it will be found possible for Consolidated Revenue to find the money necessary in order that existing hospital services may not only be maintained but increased as circumstances may require. The present position is grave. Apart from the hospitals, the method of securing funds by way of street collections is certainly not to the credit of those responsible. Our streets have become the hunting ground for collectors. We have efforts of various descriptions such as flower days, button days, flag days, appeals of all descriptions, sweeps and every other conceivable method of raising funds. Young girls are encouraged to sell buttons and so on. The result of this importuning of strangers is not to the advantage of modesty, which is so desirable and which is innate in every young woman. That position is regrettable. Occasionally references have been made to the publication of the contents of a Bill before the measure is introduced in Parliament. Personally I do not know that it

is a very serious matter. At the same time I can recall criticism that was indulged in by Government members when they sat in Opposition. That criticism arose in connection with the alleged publicity given to another measure. On this occasion the effect of the Bill has been made public, and probably the Minister may think it of sufficient importance to justify his action. Personally I have no objection to raise; I do not know that there is any fault to be found with the Minister because he has made the content of the Bill known. I understand it is regarded as a matter of etiquette for the Bill to be first introduced in Parliament.

Hon. G. Taylor: The contents of the Bill should be made known first to the House.

The Minister for Health: Did you see, or did anyone else see, a copy of the Bill beforehand?

Mr. SAMPSON: No.

The Minister for Health: Do you know of anyone who saw it?

Mr. SAMPSON: I read a report in the Press showing that the Minister had explained the measure at a couple of meetings that were held some time ago. Again I repeat that I do not know that I find fault with the Minister's action. It may have been a good thing. It will require advocacy, such as he could put forward at the meetings I refer to, to secure support for the Bill.

Hon. G. Taylor: We discussed the necessity for it at conferences.

Mr. SAMPSON: When a Hospitals Bill was before the House in 1922, it was claimed by the then Opposition that they could not support the measure because it was calculated to protect Consolidated Revenue, owing to the estimates being framed in such a way that Consolidated Revenue had been conserved. It was acknowledged that the Bill aimed at saving revenue as well as providing hospital services. It is very awkward for the Minister in charge of the Bill that the measure before us does exactly the same thing.

The Minister for Health: No, it does not.

Mr. SAMPSON: Not perhaps in the same way, but I shall show the House that the measure does save Consolidated Revenue. Let me first of all indicate the way in which expenditure has increased during the past decade. In 1920-21 the expenditure totalled £7,746,291; in 1924-25, it was £8,439,344; in 1927-28, £9,834,415: and for the year

1928-29 the estimated expenditure will amount to £10,317,010. The revenue received from the Commonwealth under the Surplus Revenue Act was, in 1922-23, £554,231; in 1924-25, the receipts under that heading amounted to £561,744; while for 1928-29, it will amount to about £811,446. It will be seen that the increased expenditure from 1924-25 to 1928-29 will amount to £1,877,166, which is a tremendous increase. The expenditure on Government hospitals, public hospitals, assisted hospitals, ambulances and the Woorloo Sanatorium was £94,403 in 1924-25 and it is estimated that the expenditure this year will reach £122,850. Next let me deal with the revenue derived from the entertainments tax. Although I did not support it, that tax proved to be very useful. In 1925-26 the tax resulted in revenue amounting to £19,921; in 1926-27 it resulted in a return of £30,771; in 1927-28 the revenue from that source totalled £34,943, whereas the estimated returns for 1928-29 will be £40,851. This sum, if added to the amount expended in 1924-25, represents an amount greater than that provided on the Estimates this year for hospitals. In 1924-25 it was £94,403. If we add the entertainments tax of £40,851, that represents a sum of £135,254. The Estimates provide for £122,850, so that I claim those figures bear out my statement that Consolidated Revenue is being protected.

The Minister for Health: The same amount was spent out of Consolidated Revenue prior to the entertainments tax coming into operation.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am dealing with the Estimates and the results of the expenditure in the previous year. In addition to that, I claim I am justified in drawing attention to the fact that our population is growing and that will involve a proportionately heavier expenditure on our hospitals.

The Minister for Health: So it has.

Mr. SAMPSON: I have shown that when we take into consideration the entertainments tax, a smaller sum is provided this year. I can sympathise with the Minister regarding the difficult position in which he finds himself. I urge that the hospital services are at least as important as any other service rendered in the State.

Mr. Mann: They are more so.

Mr. SAMPSON: Funds should be provided to enable that work to be done. With

all due respect, I am of opinion that the Minister is in error when he claims that Consolidated Revenue is not being protected under the present proposition.

The Minister for Health: I did not say it was not being protected.

Mr. SAMPSON: It was claimed by the Minister that there was no reduction in the amount contributed from Consolidated Revenue.

The Minister for Health: That is true.

Mr. SAMPSON: I think I have proved that the Minister's statement is not quite in accordance with the facts.

The Minister for Health: They are absolutely in accordance with the statements I made. I do not know where you got your figures.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Minister proposes to collect a tax of 1½d. in the pound on all revenue, wages and incomes, and he intends to collect it at the source. It is estimated that the tax will produce £217,000 per annum. That works out to the amount of £34,720,000, being the annual wealth produced by the State. I have not myself the figures, and I readily accept the Minister's assurance that the income from all sources in the State would not be less than that amount. If the Bill is passed, an increasing sum will be required year by year. I can only regret that that increase has not been made each year during the past several years, at least to an extent consistent with the expenditure of public funds and the increase in population. Of the £217,000, it is proposed to pay to private hospitals for services rendered to patients £29,000, and to general hospitals £130,000, leaving a balance of £58,000 the capital expenditure of which I do not think was explained to the House. Possibly the Minister will make that clear when he is replying. However, it was said that any surplus that might be left after the hospital services were provided for would be used for the construction of buildings, the provision of plant and other equipment. The reference to a differentiating scheme makes the matter of payment clear. I quite agree with the Minister that whereas the Perth Hospital would be able to carry on at 6s. per bed per day, in the smaller hospitals a larger sum would be necessary, and in the Children's Hospital, perhaps, not quite so much would be required. I understand that the 6s. is not uniform, but is on a differentiating basis,

the average to be about 6s. per bed per day.

The Minister for Health: That is what will be paid.

Mr. SAMPSON: In small hospitals as well?

The Minister for Health: Yes.

Mr. SAMPSON: I doubt whether it will be possible for small hospitals, where the average number of patients is very low, to carry on their work at that rate.

The Minister for Health: Do they get any subsidy now?

Mr. SAMPSON: The Government do help them from time to time.

The Minister for Health: Do you know of any hospital in the State without an annual subsidy?

Mr. SAMPSON: I am unable to answer that.

The Minister for Health: There is not one without a subsidy. Rather, one was generous enough to write in last year saying the subsidy was not required, and so it was not sent.

Mr. SAMPSON: The position of the hospitals is very bad, and always has been so.

The Minister for Health: Do you know of any hospital collecting 6s. per bed per day?

Mr. SAMPSON: No, I do not. Only too frequently a sick patient is sick in pocket as well as in health, the one condition being a corollary of the other. Under the proposed scheme the Perth Hospital will benefit, as indeed every hospital should do. I understand it has been urged that Consolidated Revenue should provide each year an amount equal to that provided on the Estimates this year. I do not see any reference to that in the measure. Here again an assurance from the Minister would be helpful.

The Minister for Health: I have given that assurance. It is not intended to reduce the present amount available.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Bill is silent on the point.

The Minister for Health: How could you put that in a Bill?

Mr. SAMPSON: I suppose not. In all the circumstances, the additional taxation proposed in the Bill is not justified. Since 1924-25 when the Minister assumed control of hospitals, the position has altered very much: not in respect of the hospitals, but in that the funds we are receiving from the Commonwealth, together with the entertainments tax, should make it possible for

the hospitals to carry on without any necessity for the proposed taxation. I respectfully urge that in regard to taxation this State has reached saturation point. Consider the position from the standpoint of land tax. In 1923-24, the sum of £71,448 was produced from this source, and last year the amount produced was £162,906, representing an increase of approximately 114 per cent. Yet, despite this heavy increase in the returns from land taxation, the vote to the hospitals has not been materially increased.

The Minister for Health: It has increased at a faster ratio during the last five years than in any other quinquennial period in the history of Western Australia.

Mr. SAMPSON: The amount of money expended in the State and the amount of revenue collected by the State have increased very materially during the last few years. I have given the figures as to the amounts provided by the Commonwealth, and I have shown, too, that the expenditure has increased by nearly two million pounds, that is to say, from 1924-25 to the estimated expenditure of the present year. There is a phase of the Bill which I think we might very properly consider, namely, the matter of hospital service for workers. Of course that is essential. But, as the Minister knows, it is already provided for in the Workers' Compensation Act. The employers face this expenditure through the Workers' Compensation Act. Yet the Bill without a blush states that Subclause 6 of Clause 15 shall not apply to cases coming within the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. I do not think the Minister can deny that the Bill double-banks the charge in that respect. Here we have on the one hand the employers finding the protection afforded by the Workers' Compensation Act, and on the other hand the workers called upon to pay 1½d. in the pound on wages in order that hospital services should be provided.

The Minister for Health: What do you suggest: that I should pay the 6s. to the employer?

Mr. SAMPSON: I suggest that, if the Bill passes, the Workers' Compensation Act should be amended by an alteration in the second schedule. For, obviously, it is inequitable that there should be a double charge for hospital services. The House would be justified in expecting that if the Bill be passed, the Workers' Compensation

Act shall be amended. Just the same I claim there is not, in the present circumstances of our improved revenue returns, justification for the imposition of this proposed tax. The sympathy we all feel towards hospitals may easily lead one to say that anything brought forward for the amelioration of hospitals should be supported. I have been a supporter of every hospital measure brought down in the House, and I claim that I am still of the same attitude towards any improvement in hospital services. But, as I have said, the position has so altered that there is no longer justification for the bringing down of this measure. I hope the Minister may yet decide to go further into the matter and see whether it is not possible to avoid this proposed further taxation. I could have referred to the placing on the employers the responsibility for collecting the tax. If the Bill be passed, that responsibility should be on both the employers and the employees. But again I say I hope the Bill will not become an Act.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) (6.15): I suppose all of us feel that some method should be adopted by which we would be able to finance the hospitals in a manner satisfactory to all concerned. I am dealing with the Bill, not from a party point of view, for it is not a party question, but just from the aspect from which I view it.

Sitting suspended from 6.16 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. THOMSON: I was remarking that it had been thought desirable for a considerable time to place the hospitals on a more satisfactory basis. I wish to preface my remarks by saying that no one has administered the Health Department more sympathetically than has the present Minister. No doubt he has felt, after consultation with the departmental officials, that it is essential to have more funds available for hospitals. I regret that another place saw fit to turn down a Bill that was carried by this House some years ago. Later on I shall quote some figures to show the enormous amount of money that Queensland derives under a measure similar to that introduced by the present Minister for Health a few years back. In speaking on this Bill I am expressing not a party point of view, but my own viewpoint. Each member will

be responsible for his own actions. On our platform we have the following plank:—

We are opposed to any increase in taxation until satisfied that every effort has been made in the direction of economical administration.

The position resolves itself down to the question whether members who favour a policy of that kind are convinced that due economy has been exercised. There is a general feeling—and certainly it is my opinion—that the Government should indicate what they propose to do with the £427,000 that is now held in suspense and will be saved as a result of the carrying of the referendum. No doubt the carrying of the referendum will mean the putting into effect of the Financial Agreement, which was approved by this Parliament last session and has likewise been approved by all the Parliaments of the Commonwealth. One feels justified in suggesting that it would have been better if this Bill had been postponed until such time as members of the House were satisfied of the purpose to which that money will be applied. I propose to quote some remarks made during the discussion of a similar Bill introduced by the then Minister for Health, the member for Swan, in 1922. He introduced a Bill containing somewhat similar provisions, and the measure met with considerable opposition from the gentlemen who now occupy the Treasury benches. I should like to refresh the memories of members with extracts from the discussion that took place and particularly the remarks of the present Premier, then Leader of the Opposition. According to "Hansard" of the 21st November, 1922, page 1668. Mr. Collier said—

Instead of its being described as a Hospitals Bill it should be described as a Bill for the raising of £100,000 additional revenue. The Bill was not introduced for the purpose of securing more effective control or the better maintenance of hospitals, but for the sole purpose of raising this sum. The question of the present machinery for managing and controlling hospitals being satisfactory or otherwise is not taken into account. It was not the object of the Bill to deal with the question. All that was required was to raise an additional £100,000 towards the Consolidated Revenue of the State.

The Premier: That was one of my best speeches.

Mr. THOMSON: It was a very good speech and I congratulate the Premier on it. I thought it so good that I have repeated portion of it on this particular Bill, which

is a measure of a similar character. On that occasion the present Premier went on to say—

It is the function of government to raise by taxation a sum sufficient to enable them to carry on the departments of State. If the Government find that the money at their disposal, that is the total sum raised by means of taxation, is not sufficient to enable them properly to carry out their functions, the logical and reasonable course to pursue is to bring down a Bill for the imposition of additional taxation What is there special about hospitals that a Bill of this sort need be introduced for the raising of money? If we are going to adopt this new principle, why not extend it to other departments? Why not say we want a special tax to raise money to cover the cost of education? Does not education affect everyone in the State? If this form of taxation can be logically defended, it can equally well be defended in the case of education. The same argument would apply to police. That is a non-revenue producing department, but is just as essential to the State as the carrying on of our hospitals. Why not bring down a special Bill to raise money to cover the cost of our police force. The same thing may be said in the case of our charities.

Those were the arguments used by the present Premier when opposing a Bill of a similar kind introduced by the Mitchell Government.

The Minister for Health: What similarity is there?

Mr. THOMSON: The only difference is that the Bill now before us provides for raising double the amount of money.

The Premier: The hon. member surely recognises the all-important fact that the other tax was to relieve revenue. It was not going in actual money to the hospitals.

Mr. THOMSON: I think I can show it is the apparent intention of the Government to relieve revenue as well under this Bill.

Mr. Davy: The principle criticised by the Premier in 1922 is the same as the principle under discussion to-day.

Mr. THOMSON: Exactly the same. Those of us who were associated with the present Agent General for the State know that he took a very keen interest in all matters affecting hospitals and was certainly a very keen debater. In 1922 he very ably supported the arguments put up by the then Leader of the Opposition. According to "Hansard" of the 5th December, 1922, page 1995, Mr. Angwin quoted a letter which had reached him from a well known public man and strong Nationalist. The letter read—

Dear Mr. Angwin, I hope you will be successful in your effort to have the Hospitals Bill rejected. The system it would introduce

is an anachronism, and I am surprised to find it suggested in these days. The duty of a State to care for its indigent sick is as imperative as its duty to feed its indigent hungry and any system which hides from the people this direct and imperative duty is wrong. I tend to act as an opiate, and that I think is always an evil. Whatever may be said to the contrary, the introduction of the local element is bound to create an atmosphere of parochialism, and in no phase of our life is that atmosphere more objectionable than in relation to the treatment of the indigent. The English poor house is a striking illustration. As the duty is cast upon the State, it should be discharged by the State out of its ordinary revenue. Taxation by the State for specific and earmarked purposes is, in my view, open to objection. The Government might just as well create an education board with taxing powers. The Bill would not have been introduced except by a Government foolish enough to think they can hide the fact that increased taxation is being imposed, and my opinion is that the only aim of the Government is to get increased taxation without being found out. The deficit, however, will keep as large as ever, and the sick will be no better cared for even if the Bill is carried.

The Premier: That is the point; "the sick will be no better cared for." Our money is going to be utilised for the better care of the sick.

Mr. THOMSON: The arguments used by the member for Boulder in 1922 can just as logically be opposed to the provisions of this Bill. I should like to read an extract from Mr. Angwin's speech, reported in "Hansard," page 1996. He had been asked by the member for Roebourne why the writer of the letter had not sent it to some member on the Government side of the House, and Mr. Angwin's reply was, "Because he knows hon. members opposite will go any way they are pulled." In other words he suggested that members sitting behind the then Government must of necessity support any measure introduced by the Government.

Hon. G. Taylor: It does not apply now though.

Mr. THOMSON: Mr. Angwin proceeded to say—

He knows that if he wishes to introduce something for the betterment of the people, he cannot get any support for it from member opposite if it is not approved by the Government.

The following is the passage in Mr. Angwin's remarks that I should like to stress:—

There was never any trouble about hospital when we were in office. The Labour Government found the money required for the upkeep of the hospitals The present Government refuse to maintain the hospitals on of revenue. They refuse to adopt the method

by which the taxation of a Government is usually judged. The direct tax to be imposed by this Bill would never be taken into consideration when the taxation of the country was being estimated I was pointing out that the proposed taxation will not be regarded as an addition to the general taxation. During the last five or six years our direct taxation has been increased approximately 120 per cent. This new taxation will bring us up to over a million pounds per annum although as I say, it will not be regarded as an addition to the general direct taxation.

I thought it well to remind the present occupants of the Treasury benches of those arguments.

The Minister for Health: I refreshed your memories when I moved the second reading.

Mr. THOMSON: It is well to remind members opposite of the views they so strenuously advanced when a Bill of a similar character was brought before the House by the Mitchell Government in 1922. This Bill goes a good deal further than the previous measure. We know that the Minister has his heart in his work on hospitals. All country members are behind him in his desire to extend the usefulness of his department by the establishment of hospitals in the country as well as in the metropolitan area. But, as Mr. Angwin pointed out, our taxation in five or six years increased by about £1,000,000. In 1923-24, when the present Administration took office, the State's total revenue, including direct taxation, amounted to £7,866,594. At the present time, when this Bill is being introduced, the revenue is £9,807,949, showing an increased spending power to the Government of £1,942,355. The present Opposition can justly contend that the arguments so ably put forward by the opponents of the previous Bill may fairly be advanced now. I am quite willing that every word I uttered on the previous measure should be quoted. Let me point out, too, that the net revenue in 1923-24 was £22,241 per head, and that in 1927-28 it was £35,009, or an increase of over £2 15s. per head of the population. In 1923-24 our indebtedness was £148.174 per head, and this year it is £168.801, showing an increase of approximately £20 10s. per head of the population. Moreover, last year the Government saved £116,043 as compared with the previous year's expenditure, in respect of interest and sinking fund under the Financial Agreement. Personally I should have liked the Government to hold over the consideration of this Bill

until Parliament had an opportunity of knowing what they intend to do with funds now in suspense. I would say, in language similar to that used by Mr. Angwin, that apparently the Government refuse to adopt the measures by which the taxation of a country may be judged. This direct tax would probably never be taken into consideration when the taxation of the country was being adjusted. I am not in favour of the proposed tax, because it embodies a principle which can easily be extended. The requirements of the country in the way of hospitals will certainly be much greater in the future—at least, I sincerely hope so.

The Minister for Health: Then give me money from somewhere or other.

Mr. THOMSON: The Government have two millions more to handle.

The Minister for Works: Not two bob more!

Mr. THOMSON: I can only go by the Government Statistician's figures. Having that enormous amount of money, we should be unnecessarily running a great danger by introducing a special tax for a specific purpose. Great demands will be made upon the Health Department for increased hospital accommodation, and then the department may not find themselves in a position to meet all requirements. Thus it is quite possible that we may be faced with a demand for an increased tax for this special purpose. Realising the enormous amount of taxation imposed upon the people, one hesitates to support any increase in either direct or indirect taxes. Let me refer briefly to two statements in the last report of the Commissioner of Taxation. On page 6 he deals with the reduction of tax upon incomes, saying—

The reduction in the prices of wool and wheat has been responsible for considerable reduction in the taxable incomes of farmers and pastoralists.

On page 7 he states—

The loss from previous years applies to every class of taxpayer carrying on business, but more particularly so in regard to pastoralists and farmers, who are subject at all times to the variations of the season as well as the fluctuations of prices which they cannot control.

We have passed a Water Boards Act Amendment Bill empowering the Water Supply Department, which is the Government, to levy up to 3d. per acre for water which may possibly be five miles distant from the farm. That means that the holder

of 1,000 acres has to pay £12 10s. per year for water.

The Minister for Health: He will save a lot of money by getting a water supply for £12 10s. a year.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so if he gets the supply. But he may have to cart the water over a distance of five miles.

The Minister for Health: And otherwise he would have to cart it 20 miles.

Mr. THOMSON: The farmer may have to cart the water five miles and still pay the £12 10s. I am only dealing with the matter from a taxation point of view. The present Bill is going to hit the average farmer to the extent of about £6 5s. per year. I know some people will say, "What matter if it does? The farmer is going to get the service, which will be of value to him." But the average country resident will be attended to in his home for general sickness, for anything that is not very serious; and the same remark applies to his wife and children. Probably they are 20 or 30 or 40 miles from a hospital, and thus in a very different position from the fortunate metropolitan resident, who by means of a telephone call can within a quarter of an hour or 20 minutes be safely ensconced in the Perth or Fremantle hospital.

Mr. Mann: But the Perth Children's Hospital treats many country children.

Mr. THOMSON: The hospitals now provided in the country are just as capable of treating children as is the Children's Hospital.

Mr. Mann: No.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member has his opinion, and I have mine.

The Minister for Health: There is not another hospital in the State as capable of treating children as the Children's Hospital is. Not another hospital has the same appliances.

Mr. THOMSON: It all depends upon the nature of the illness. There may be special cases which the Children's Hospital and the Perth Hospital are better capable of treating, thanks to their excellent facilities and to their large staffs of experts who give their services free. But I am dealing with sickness generally. The Bill asks the people to pay £6 10s. per year as an additional tax. The Minister stated that in return for that payment the man who was unfortunate enough to have to enter a hospital would

have 6s. per day paid for him out of a central fund to meet the cost of hospital attention. But the Bill deletes exemptions which the community now enjoys. Married persons are to have their exemption of £200 revoked, and will have to pay the 1½d. on that sum. Persons over 60 years of age are to-day exempt from taxation if their income does not exceed £250. The Bill proposes to levy upon them to the extent of 1½d. in the pound. The allowance of £50 for house repairs is to be struck out. Life assurance premiums, fidelity bond premiums, hospital and medical expenses, and reasonable travelling expenses are also being disallowed. The deduction of £62 for children and dependants is to go. As regards the mining industry, the Taxation Department recognise the peculiar position of investors, and have decided that until a man obtains a return of his capital, he shall be exempt from taxation of dividends. That, of course, is to be deleted as well. Then there are those of us who may be charitably disposed and make contributions to various appeals. Those payments are deductible from our incomes for taxation purposes, but that will not be permitted in connection with the taxation under the Bill. It is certainly a drag-net proposal.

The Minister for Health: But it is a drag-net in its application.

Mr. THOMSON: I admit that we will rope in a lot of people under the Bill who pay practically nothing to-day. I am just wondering, however, whether the benefits that the hospitals will derive through the tax to be imposed upon those who are exempt now, will not be counterbalanced by the position that will be created through placing further imposts upon people already heavily taxed. It is a difficult problem and I am not in a position to dissect it from the figures available at present. I endeavoured to find out from the Taxation Department how the total of £217,000 was arrived at. Perhaps there may be some information that we have not at our disposal, but the figures I obtained do not quite tally. I am doubtful about these exemptions. Even the dividend duties will be taxed. Then again insurance or assurance businesses, except life assurance companies, are to be taxed in respect of every £3 2s. 6d. received in premiums, to the extent of 3¼ per cent. We also find that under Clause 14, advances made under the Industries Assistance Act

or the Mining Development Act or any other statutory authority in respect of work done, or to be done, by the persons in receipt of the advances, are to be deemed wages.

The Minister for Health: Why not?

Mr. THOMSON: I do not think the Minister is viewing the matter from the proper standpoint. A large number of settlers have had to secure assistance from the Industries Assistance Board. To-day, however, the only advances made through the board are to returned soldiers. As I read the clause, if I receive £150 from the board for clearing operations, I have to pay 1½d. on each pound of that amount.

The Minister for Health: If you do the clearing.

Mr. THOMSON: And even if I do not do it myself.

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. THOMSON: That may be the intention of the Minister, but that is not how the clause reads.

The Minister for Health: What you suggest is not embodied in the Bill at all.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister will observe that the point I refer to crops up in the clause dealing with "contributions in respect of salaries and wages."

Mr. Davy: At any rate, why should a man pay a tax on a loan, the whole of which has to be paid back?

Mr. Marshall: Plus interest.

Mr. THOMSON: That is the point I was about to make. The loan of £150 has to be repaid to the Government plus interest, and if I show no income as the result of my year's labour, I will still be taxed on that amount. While the intention of the framer of the Bill may have been to tax wages when the work carried out as the result of such a loan was done by someone else, that is not what the Bill says.

The Minister for Health: That is all that is intended.

Mr. THOMSON: But that is not what the clause says.

The Minister for Health: I discussed this very point with the Crown Solicitor, and I do not think it means what you say.

Mr. THOMSON: At any rate, that is what I read into the clause, and I do not like it. Then again I do not know how some of the hospitals will be able to get along if the Government pay only 6s. per day per bed occupied when the upkeep of

the hospital is considerably more. How can such a position be dealt with?

The Minister for Health: We are running 25 departmental hospitals to-day and the average cost of upkeep is 10s. 10d. per bed occupied per day, and I intend paying those hospitals 6s. per bed. Under that arrangement those hospitals will be better off to the extent of £13,000 than they are to-day.

Mr. Latham: But you intend stopping the collection of money as well?

The Minister for Health: Yes, and we intend giving people free hospital treatment.

Mr. Latham: Then how will the difference be made up?

The Minister for Health: Out of the subsidy they are receiving now.

Mr. Latham: Then that is all right; that is what we wanted to know.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not know how it will be possible for hospitals to make their finances balance out of a payment of 6s. per bed.

The Minister for Health: If we exempt the maternity hospitals, there is no hospital in the State to-day that collects 6s. per bed per day.

Mr. Teesdale: Do you mean that no one pays up?

The Minister for Health: Some pay, but the hospitals would not average that amount throughout.

Mr. Teesdale: I have paid a few quid myself!

Mr. THOMSON: Of course, increased revenue will be derived if, as the Minister suggested, we have intermediate hospitals and, as at Katanning, people can secure a single room by paying a little extra. No doubt that scheme would work out to the satisfaction of the Minister, but I am pointing out the difficulties that may arise. The Bill provides for raising £217,000 by means of a special tax. Of that amount £130,000 has been mentioned as the probable sum to be paid to hospitals and £29,000 will be paid to private hospitals. That will leave a balance of £58,000 for further hospital extensions. If that is the position, then there must be an immediate gain to the Treasurer of £58,000.

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister will have the entertainments tax available as well.

The Minister for Health: And that tax will be available if the Bill is not passed.

Mr. THOMSON: Of course, but at the same time the Government will be better off to the extent of £58,000 as a result of the allocation I have mentioned. In reply to the Leader of the Opposition, the Premier stated that he could not promise any remission this year on account of the land tax or the income tax. If that is so, the Treasurer of necessity must be better off under the provisions of the Bill than he is to-day. As he will receive the £58,000 for the purposes mentioned by the Minister, the Treasurer will be better off because he will not have to find that money.

The Minister for Health: Of course.

Mr. THOMSON: That means that that money will be available for expenditure in other directions. There is a clause in the Bill dealing with surplus revenue and it sets out that the trust that is to be set up, may utilise any surplus revenue for the purpose of "subsidising any public hospital; erecting, adding to, altering, or renovating any public hospital; or in providing equipment for any public hospital or generally for the extension, improvement, or benefit of the hospital service." That is a laudable provision, but it seems to me that we shall be taxing the people in the country districts particularly. If the construction of hospitals throughout the State were on the same basis, that would be fair, just and equitable. On the other hand, we find that in some of the larger centres, such as the metropolitan area, the Government provide the whole of the funds for the erection of a hospital and in addition advance substantial sums by way of subsidy. Last year the Perth Hospital received a subsidy of £37,000.

The Minister for Health: And the hospital received less in comparison with the work done than any other hospital in the State.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not wish to say anything that can be regarded as derogatory to the Perth Hospital, but the fact remains that the Government provided the whole of the money for the erection and equipment of that hospital, and now subsidise it to the extent of £37,000. What is the position in the country districts? The principle laid down, and accepted cheerfully by the country folk, is that the Government provide half the money and the district concerned, the balance.

Mr. Corboy: We provided more than half the money.

Mr. THOMSON: Let me give the illustration of a hospital in Katanning. The Katanning district has pledged itself to a sum of between £6,000 and £7,000. On the top of that, the people of Katanning pay for half the equipment of the hospital and provide £1,500 by way of comfort funds to furnish up-to-date facilities for the medical men. That is all voluntary work. But the ratepayers in the Katanning district are being charged a rate which will cover interest and sinking fund on one-half of the hospital erected in Katanning. Then the Minister brings down a Bill giving power to levy a rate of 1½d. in the pound upon the whole of the people in that district. I would not be one to vote against providing increased hospital facilities in the metropolitan area. But those living in the metropolitan area are not contributing directly one penny piece towards the erection of hospitals in this area. There are, of course, some generous people who have contributed very largely to the erection of and maintenance of the Children's Hospital, but generally speaking the people of the metropolitan area do not contribute one penny to the erection of a hospital. So they are in the happy position of being called upon to pay only 1½d. in the pound, whereas those of us in country districts are going to have that as an additional taxation placed upon our shoulders. That is a phase of the situation which I do not know whether the Minister has considered. It seems to be one requiring a little more investigation than it has had. I appeal to the Government, that in respect of the proposed tax, it would be wise to hold up the Bill until we know what the Government propose to do with the £437,000 they are going to save when the Financial Agreement comes into operation. I propose to show the advantages the State of Queensland derives from what is called the Golden Casket Art Union. I remember that the Minister introduced a Bill with a similar object in view and that it was passed in this House but, unfortunately, defeated in another place. It is time that the people of Western Australia knew exactly what Queensland is making out of the Golden Casket. I have here the balance sheet of that art union, presented to the Queensland Parliament. The amount they handle is surprising. For last year, to 30th June of this year, they sold £366,250 worth of tickets. They gained in

postage £19,753 and in interest £879, or a total of £386,883. They gave prize money to the value of £528,000. I am sorry the Treasurer is not here just now, for he would be pleased with this. The Taxation Department took out of it £41,250. That went into the Treasury. And they handed over to the Home Secretary's Department £247,764 16s. 10d. for the purposes of public hospitals. And except from a voluntary point of view that did not cost an individual in the State a penny piece. And they carried forward £2,954 and, as I say, took into the Taxation Department £41,250. Since the inception of the Golden Casket in 1920 the total payment to hospitals has been £1,291,376. That is in eight years. They have paid to the Bush Nursing Association £4,616, for the erection and equipment of baby clinics, maternity wards and nurses' quarters £232,041, for the erection of creches £4,476, in grants to charitable institutions £3,701, and in sundry payments £1,082. The balance in hand to the 30th June of this year was £61,341.

Mr. Davy: I could suggest an even better method of raising money—run a chain of roulette shops all along Hay-street.

Mr. THOMSON: The people of Western Australia should know how much is made out of the Golden Casket, for there are a great many Western Australians who subscribe to this art union and to Tattersalls in Tasmania as well. Certainly Tasmania derives from the Tattersall sweeps only an amount of 10 per cent., or some £111,000 per annum. However, this balance sheet shows clearly that Queensland, by reason of the Golden Casket, benefited by nearly £289,000 last year.

Mr. Corboy: Quite a large amount of that went from Western Australia.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so.

The Minister for Health: They have had one or two six hobs of mine.

Mr. THOMSON: When I was in Queensland a couple of years ago I had several tickets, but unfortunately I was not able to bring back any of the Golden Casket cash. However, there is the position. It seems to me that here is a very fruitful source for obtaining substantial amounts with which to finance our hospitals and charitable institutions. I know, of course, that quite a large number of people do not believe in gambling of any kind, while quite a large number believe in direct giving, and do give direct and as freely as their means permit them.

But there are also a large number of people who take advantage of the hospitals as soon as they are ill. Those people probably have no homes to go to and so the hospitals are the only places where they can receive medical attention. It is only right that means should be provided for that. I admit that under the Bill the Minister proposes to make those people pay a small sum each year towards hospitals, which of course they are escaping under existing conditions. Still, I want to place before the House—and I am no gambler—the benefits that Queensland is deriving from this Golden Casket. And those benefits accrue without any increased taxation upon anybody. As a matter of fact the Golden Casket has relieved taxation in that State to the tune of £41,250.

Mr. Mann: The charities in this State derive £30,000 or £40,000 per annum from White City. Yet that is objected to.

Mr. THOMSON: I should think so. There are members here who could give concrete instances of the enormous amount of money involved in the running of sweeps for various charities and the relatively small amount of money that is returned to those charities.

Mr. Corboy: Do you not think that for a debate on gambling another place would be the better venue?

Mr. THOMSON: I do not know. I remember that the Bill brought down by the Minister to authorise lotteries for the benefit of charities was accepted by this House but defeated by another place. I know the Minister himself, if he had his choice of the two, would prefer to have a trial made of the Bill he introduced and which I supported. I would support it again. In my opinion we are going to have a certain amount of gambling as long as we are a nation. I can see no wrong in such a sweep, because it would be properly controlled. In Queensland it is run under Government supervision with a continuous audit. The total salaries and wages paid amounted to £27,547, agents' commissions £8,330, and advertising £2,348. The total expenses of drawing amounted to £481, insurance to £271, office expenses £281, general expenses £284, and furniture £146.

Mr. Davy: Do you think the State ought to discourage gambling or encourage it?

Mr. THOMSON: I know that through the Taxation Department a considerable sum of money comes into the revenue of the State

each year. For instance, there are the totalisator duties and the totalisator licenses. Therefore already we are condoning gambling.

Mr. Davy: No, we are taxing gambling, and to tax gambling is to discourage it.

Mr. Chesson: We are legalising it.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, we have legalised the totalisator.

Mr. Davy: Then you think it ought to be encouraged?

Mr. THOMSON: Speaking for myself I would much prefer to have an art union of this character properly controlled, an art union the whole of the money from which would go to charities and the hospitals, as in Queensland. I would rather have that than have the many rotten things that are put before us every day. I guarantee that at every street corner in the city to-day there will be found somebody selling tickets for some art union or other.

Mr. Mann: Somebody has to sell the tickets for the Golden Casket sweeps. I suppose they are sold on a percentage basis.

Mr. THOMSON: On a percentage or commission, yes. I bet the hon. member—

The Minister for Works: Now you are gambling. You want to make a bet.

Mr. THOMSON: The commission is less than one per cent.

Mr. Mann: Is that all they pay their agents?

Mr. THOMSON: I know that in Queensland £866,250 was collected and £8,330 was paid in commission. I sympathise with the Minister in his desire to obtain some revenue, but I certainly do not approve of the imposition of a special tax. I do not like a special tax because it establishes a dangerous precedent. Then again I do not like the idea of a trust administering the Act. From the experience I have had with the department, I would much prefer to see the department continue to administer the hospitals. The expenditure of the money to be collected should, in my opinion, remain in the hands of the Medical Department. Further, if the Bill becomes law there is no provision, so far as I can see, for what might be termed local control. Even if the policy of the Government is brought into effect, I should like to see provision made whereby we would be able to proclaim certain areas hospital districts and the whole of the money collected in a particular district made applicable to the hospital in that district.

Mr. Mann: That is the New Zealand system.

The Minister for Health: What you suggest cannot possibly apply under the Bill. If it did, the country districts would be absolutely starved.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not think they would.

The Minister for Health: I am positive they would.

Mr. THOMSON: Taking the population we find that half is in the metropolitan area and that the bulk of the wealth comes from the primary industries. It seems to me that the primary industries are going to pay more than their share under the provisions of the Bill. If we are to have a measure of this description I should like to see districts declared. That has already been done voluntarily. For instance, the Broomehill road board contribute £50 a year towards the debt incurred by the Katanning Road Board over the erection of the Katanning hospital and its equipment. If we had provision whereby we could declare certain districts, then it would be possible to give those districts what was really the intention of the department at one stage, namely the establishment of what were called the large country or base hospitals, and the subsidiary hospitals in the outlying districts. While I am in sympathy with the Minister's desire to raise money for hospital administration, I regret that I cannot support the imposition of the tax proposed.

MR. COWAN (Mt. Leonora) [8.36]: This is a Bill on which I should like to express my views. In the district I have the honour to represent, there is a hospital financed by public subscription backed by a Government subsidy. This hospital is managed by a local committee in an able and thorough manner. We are very proud of that institution and it is the only one of its kind between Kalgoorlie and Meekatharra that can boast of a medical man being in attendance. We feel it is necessary to strain every effort to keep it up to its high state of efficiency. I claim that the Government's greatest responsibility is to help the community, and if the Bill before us is going to provide a more uniform and just way of solving the problem of finance for these grand and most necessary institutions, I for one will do all in my power to assist to get the Bill through. I hope the

Bill will be given sympathetic consideration by every hon. member.

On motion by Mr. Davy debate adjourned.

BILL—MUNICIPAL AND ROAD DISTRICTS ELECTORAL.

Second Reading.

Order of the day read for the resumption of the debate from the 7th November.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lucey in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of Division (5) of Part III. of Road Districts Act:

Mr. LATHAM: I intend to vote against this provision for the alteration of the franchise. During the past fortnight nearly every member representing a country district has received a protest from a local authority against this intended alteration. Of course I know it is useless to express our views on the clause, but at the same time I sincerely hope the Minister will give consideration to the representations of local bodies who are best qualified to express an opinion as to whether the method now employed is or is not sufficient to meet all requirements.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Whom do they represent?

Mr. LATHAM: The people who pay the rates. The principal functions of the local bodies are to see that the money they receive is properly spent, that when roads are built those roads are properly maintained. What will happen will be to make road boards and municipalities political, which they are not to-day.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: Is that your great fear?

Mr. LATHAM: In our local governing bodies at the present time there is very little of it. I venture to suggest that at not a single election has this question ever been discussed. I know that the Bill will be carried, but consideration might be given to the protests of the local authorities.

Mr. FERGUSON: I also oppose the clause in the interests of the ratepayers, more particularly in the country road districts. There are something like 130 road boards in the State whose ratepayers are represented by over 1,000 members. With half a lifetime's experience as a member and chairman of a board, as president of the association of boards and a member of the executive of the Road Boards Association, I can count on the fingers on one hand the number of road board members who approve of this principle.

Mr. Griffiths: There were only two at the last conference.

Mr. FERGUSON: I have found another one since. Perhaps he has been speaking to the Minister for Works. I believe it is the almost unanimous wish of the 1,000 odd road board members, who are giving their services free and doing a great work to assist the development of the country districts, that the existing voting provisions should be continued. It is very difficult for members of road boards to understand why the president of their association, the Minister for Works, insists on foisting this provision on them against their will. While the Minister may regard it as a matter of policy, it is a great pity that he should try to force it down the throats of people who are absolutely opposed to it.

The Minister for Works: I do not see that it has anything at all to do with them.

Mr. FERGUSON: But they are the only people with whom it has anything to do.

The Minister for Works: They are not the people who pay the rates.

Mr. FERGUSON: They are the representatives of the people who pay the rates.

The Minister for Works: They are the representatives of the people who have four or five votes.

Mr. FERGUSON: For a Parliamentary election the principle of one-man-one-vote is all right, but the bulk of the work of road board members is to levy a rate on the landowners and spend the money in the interests of the people who pay it. Surely it is reasonable that the people who pay the larger amount of rates should have the say in the election of representatives! Is it fair that a man who pays £500 in rates should have only the same voting power as a man who pays 5s.?

The Minister for Works: Of course it is.

Mr. FERGUSON: We have one ratepayer who pays £500 and another who pays 5s., and according to this clause each will have the same voting power. That is absolutely unfair. There are many other amendments that the road boards have been requesting for years, but the Minister refuses to grant them until they have approved of this fad of his. I hope that Government supporters who represent country districts and know full well that the people they represent do not want this provision will persuade the Minister not to insist upon it.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I join in the protest against this provision. Representing as I do the Nungarin, Merredin, Westonia, Kellerberrin and Meckering-Cunderdin boards, I have received from them a united protest and a request that I should oppose this provision with all the eloquence and insistence I can bring to bear. From whom has the Minister had a request for this alteration? From none of the 130 road boards that are managing the local affairs of this State has a request come forward. At the last conference only two voted in favour of this fad, so that we have the proportion of 130 to two. For years the boards have been asking for other amendments to the Act and have been promised them, but now the promised amendments are grouped with this provision which is absolutely repugnant to the great majority of road board members. The Minister cannot tell us of any request for this provision, but he knows of many amendments that have been requested and promised for years. Those amendments are now bound up with this proposal with the implied intimation that, if they do not accept this alteration, they will not get the other amendments.

Mr. BROWN: I have opposed this principle ever since I have been in Parliament. I have an idea that a ratepayer owning property in more than one ward has to declare the ward in which he desires to vote. It is decidedly unfair that a man who pays £100 in rates should have no more voting power than a man who pays half-a-crown. The maximum number of votes he can exercise is four and that is not a large number.

The Minister for Works: Why do you stop at four?

Mr. BROWN: I think we are generous to stop at four.

The Minister for Works: If your argument is sound, why limit the number?

Mr. BROWN: The man who pays the greater amount of rates should certainly have greater voting power. Would the management of local affairs be any better if the board members were elected by those ratepayers who pay only half-a-crown a year? I maintain it would not be. It does not concern such ratepayers whether the rates are increased. They have so little property that they would be liable to put up the rates as high as possible. The man who is paying £100 should certainly enjoy a greater privilege than the man who pays only a few shillings. I have no doubt that this one-man-one-vote principle is part of the policy of the party in power. They believe strongly in it: I think it is on their platform, and I suppose the Government have no alternative to bringing it forward. Every session amendments have been introduced, but the Bill has been lost owing to this clause. Yet the Minister brings it in again, knowing full well that another place will not pass it.

Mr. Teesdale: I think he will get it through here.

Mr. BROWN: I consider the Bill is camouflage from beginning to end. The Government have done their duty to the Trades Hall by bringing it down, because it is one of the planks of their platform. I suppose they have been dictated to by their masters, and, if the Bill is thrown out, they will be able to say, "We brought it down, but the other House refused to pass it."

The Minister for Works: See if you can persuade another place to pass it for us.

Mr. BROWN: I certainly shall not.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: You are imputing motives.

Mr. BROWN: I hope the Committee will be divided on the question.

Mr. DAVY: I suppose the member for Pingelly is right in saying that it is part of the policy of the Labour Party that every one human being should have one vote and it is also part of the policy that one vote should have one value. For reasons that seem good to the Labour Party they have departed from that, and as soon as that is done, it is difficult to draw the line, as was admitted by the Premier when he introduced the Electoral Districts Act Amendment Bill.

The Minister for Agricultural Water Supplies: It is a very sound principle.

Mr. DAVY: Adult suffrage with one-man-one-vote is a sound principle when the

people electing the representatives have charge of them body and soul, like members of Parliament. If the Minister happened to be the holder of shares in a company, he would become indignant if it were suggested that he, holding 1,000 shares, should have no more voice in the management of the company than Bill Jones holding one share.

The Minister for Works: There are quite a number of companies that do not concede greater voting power.

Mr. DAVY: Yes; they are not conspicuous for their success, and are not really run to show a profit to the shareholders.

The Minister for Works: They get a return of profits on their trading, at any rate. They are nearly all co-operative concerns.

Mr. DAVY: But co-operative concerns are a different proposition. People do not put their money into a co-operative concern to get profits. We do not find shareholders in a co-operative company holding big wads of shares. Most of them would hold practically an equal number of shares—the qualification shares—in order to be entitled to trade in the company and get a special privilege. If the Minister put capital into a company as a sound investment, he would expect to have a little more voice in the management than a man who held a very much smaller number of shares. With the powers that local authorities have at present, their position is analogous to that of a company. We can hardly expect a large property owner who is paying heavy rates, not to desire a little more voice than has the man paying the minimum. I agree it is difficult to draw the line. The Minister for Works interjected a little while ago, "Why four votes; why not more?" I am not prepared to say how far it should go, but the present principle has been recognised for a long time, and until we are prepared to give local authorities very much more extensive powers than they have at present, there is no earthly reason why the system should be altered.

The Minister for Works: It is preliminary to the extension of powers.

Mr. DAVY: I do not see why they should have the extended powers proposed. It is Parliament's function to pass laws concerning the domestic life and the civic life of the people. Local authorities may well be restricted to the powers which they now have and always have had. The man who pays a larger amount of rates should have a little more voice in the expenditure of the money

than the person contributing a much smaller amount. The change proposed by the Bill does not strike me as highly important, but I know of no demand for it. I dare say nothing can stop the measure from passing here, but I consider it should not have been read a second time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To hear the speeches of some hon. members opposite, one would think we were in the Middle Ages. That young Australians of the present day should advocate plural voting, four votes for one man, must shock democracy. There are no more Conservative men in the British Empire than can be found among hon. members opposite. Plural voting in local government has been abolished in Britain. Western Australia is the only country retaining it. It is said that because the road boards have not asked for this Bill, it should not be passed. Fancy the people of this country waiting for the Legislative Council to ask for its franchise to be amended! That is a complete analogy. The thing is too ridiculous altogether. The local authorities are asking for extended powers, and I am ready to go a long way to meet them in that respect. Many of the functions of this Parliament could well be performed by the local authorities, especially in view of the long distances obtaining in this State. But while those functions are discharged by Parliament, the men and women of Western Australia have a voice in framing the policy. I am not prepared to transfer those functions to bodies elected by plural voting. That would be a retrograde step. Therefore, before deciding what extended authority to give to local bodies, we must fix the basis of their representation. Then Parliament can make up its mind what extended authority to grant. I fully appreciate the work of the local governing bodies throughout the country. The argument as to the amount of rates paid deciding the voting power might with equal logic be applied to the amounts of land tax and income tax paid. The latter position did obtain once, but is now a thing of the past.

Mr. Ferguson: Have the local authorities asked for this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; and I do not expect them to ask.

The Premier: Who ever wants to yield up power?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Fancy waiting for the thirty old gentlemen in the Legislative Council to ask us to amend their

franchise! That is what the hon. member suggests in regard to the local authorities.

Mr. Ferguson: Parliament makes laws; the road boards do not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Every other country has advanced in this respect. Western Australia alone lags behind in local government franchise. In England the local authorities control police and many other things, but there is no plural voting. I have been bombarded, and previous Ministers have been bombarded, with requests for increased authorities to be granted to the local bodies. If they are to get many of the authorities they ask for, their franchise must first be amended. The increased authorities will not be granted to a select few. As soon as the basis of representation is broadened, more interest will be taken in the work of the local authorities, and there will be much more competition for seats on the boards, which will occupy a far more important place in the life of the country.

Mr. Davy: Party politics will come in then.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That does not follow at all.

Mr. Mann: It has happened in New South Wales.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Only one party can get there now.

Mr. Davy: That is not so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If representation is to be confined to one party, and the other party is to have no say, the position is illogical.

Mr. Davy: There is no question of party politics at present, though holders of different political views have seats on local governing bodies.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The great bulk of the people are not interested in local governing bodies because they know they cannot exercise any influence there, but must be outvoted.

Mr. Latham: About 30 per cent. only of those entitled to vote for another place actually do vote.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But they do not vote, because they know they will be out-voted.

Mr. Davy: The greater interest taken in this House is because the fate of Governments is decided here.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am genuinely anxious to make the position of

local governing bodies more important than it is to-day. I believe they could do better and more valuable work if they were given the authorities they seek. I am prepared to go a long way on the road they ask me to travel, but this must be the foundation upon which additional powers must be based.

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

Ayes	16
Noes	13

Majority for .. 3

AYES.

Mr. Chesson	Mr. Millington
Mr. Collier	Mr. Munro
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Panton
Mr. Cowan	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Kennecally	Mr. Withers
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Lamond	
Mr. McCallum	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Maley
Mr. Davy	Mr. Mann
Mr. Doney	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Latham	Mr. North
Mr. Lindsay	

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Angelo
Miss Holman	Mr. J. M. Smith

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 6, 7—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 9.21 p.m.