

The Minister for Railways: The interest is not included.

Mr. MUNSIE: If that is so, the Estimates should not be submitted in this manner. Here is another enterprise of the Labour Government which will prove a success.

The Minister for Railways: So it will.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am glad to hear from a member of the National Government an expression of approval of a business undertaking or, more properly, a State trading concern. Many of the State trading concerns would show much better but for that measure forced through Parliament some time ago under which any profit from them goes into Consolidated Revenue, whilst any concern unfortunately showing a loss is debited with $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest on the amount of such loss.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—State Batteries, £85,270:

Hon. P. COLLIER: Can the Minister state what is the anticipated profit or loss? I should also like to have the figures for the two preceding years. I have been trying to unravel the information, but the figures seem very conflicting. The public accounts show that last year the revenue was £61,200 and the expenditure £83,367, leaving a loss of £22,167. But those figures do not correspond with the figures in last year's Estimates.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The figures I have refer, I think, to calendar years. For 1915 the expenditure was £47,080 and the receipts were £41,664, showing a loss of £5,416. For 1916, expenditure £51,622, receipts £45,639, loss £5,983. The expenditure for 1916-17 was £49,316.

Hon. P. COLLIER: That figure does not fit in with these Estimates, which state last year's expenditure as £83,367. However, the Minister's figure may not include tailings purchased.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Perhaps the leader of the Opposition has in view what he spoke of when on the Estimates generally, an item of £16,000 coming in from tailings. I have made inquiries, and find that that amount refers to an increase of realisation at Wiluna, which alters the figure somewhat.

Hon. P. COLLIER: The system was altered, in consultation with the Auditor General, just before I went out of office. But the batteries account does not show the true position. Hon. members may recollect that, in years gone by, the Mines Department purchased tailings and paid for them out of loan moneys. Now the department are treating those tailings and realising upon them, and putting the proceeds into revenue. That is equivalent to taking money out of loan and putting it into revenue. This explains the large increase in the totals, which have risen from £60,000 to £80,000 and £83,000. However, I suppose the system is run to-day on the same lines as all along. The estimated loss for the year is only about £8,000. If the department manage to keep within that amount they will do very well. In any case, I do not wish to criticise the State batteries, because if there is one sub-department of this State which is capable and efficient and run to the best advantage it is these batteries under their superintendent.

Vote put and passed.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned 1 a.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 27th March, 1918.

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

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.34]: I move—

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Totalisator Duty Act Amendment Bill being passed through its remaining stages at this day's sitting of the House."

My reason for asking for the suspension of the Standing Orders is, as I explained yesterday, that a great number of country members are desirous of not sitting on Thursday because of the fact that there are no trains running on Good Friday and it would be impossible for them to reach their homes in time for the Easter holidays.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What is the hurry about this particular Bill?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am proceeding to explain. The Bill to amend the Totalisator Duty Act has been passed by another place, and I understand it has been agreed to by the racing community. Of course it is the desire of the Government, from a revenue point of view, that this Bill shall pass through all its stages by Thursday, but in order to avoid meeting on Thursday, I desire, if it is the will of the House, to pass the Bill at this sitting. The reason for putting the Bill through at the present sitting is, as I shall explain when moving the second reading, that it will give us an additional revenue of £3,000 because, if it is passed before the holidays, it will apply to the races which are to be held during Easter week.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: That is the very best reason.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [4.36]: While thoroughly in favour of this Bill, there is a point in connection with the desire to pass it through its remaining stages to-day, or indeed to pass the Bill to-morrow to which I would direct the Colonial Secretary's attention. He will agree with me that there is a good reason why the Bill should not be hurried through; that reason is that the Totalisator Bill ought to be considered in association with the tax which it is proposed to impose upon book-

makers. The Treasurer in his Budget speech stated that he proposed to double the duty upon the totalisator, and also to impose a tax upon bookmakers. It is a pity that we have not these two Bills before us so that we might be able to see that the taxation upon each form of betting is equitable. If we pass the Totalisator Bill and impose a tax which will take away 12½ per cent. of the gross takings of the totalisator, the result will be that the patronage of the totalisator will unquestionably be diminished. We shall place a severe handicap upon the totalisator, and give a corresponding advantage to the bookmakers. The average man who invests money on the totalisator, or who makes his bets with the bookmakers, is a very careful calculator of odds, and though the Colonial Secretary estimates that the additional revenue which will be derived will be £3,000—I sincerely hope it will be so—I am afraid that the patronage of the machine will suffer considerably by reason of the very heavy tax it is intended to impose upon it.

The PRESIDENT: Would not the hon. member be more in order if he were to make these remarks when the Bill is being considered by the House?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I was connecting my remarks with the proposal that the Standing Orders should be suspended so that the Bill would pass through all its stages at the one sitting. My contention is that that course is not desirable because we ought to have before us the Bill which deals with the other form of betting, namely, the tax upon bookmakers, when we are dealing with that referring to the totalisator. If the Bill is passed before the Easter races, the totalisator, as I have already stated, will be severely handicapped, while the bookmakers will gain an advantage. The Government surely ought to have brought forward the proposal dealing with taxation of bookmakers at the same time as the Totalisator Bill. I know the Colonial Secretary is no friend of the bookmaker. Some time ago an attempt was made to abolish the bookmaker altogether, and I was one of those who, in the interests of the racing clubs, opposed that proposal.

The Colonial Secretary: Is the hon. member in order in discussing the Bill? I have had no opportunity of explaining the provisions of it.

The PRESIDENT: I still think that I was right in directing the hon. member's attention to the fact that his remarks should be made when the Bill is under consideration.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I am sorry, Mr. President, that you take that view. I was endeavouring to explain the reasons why this Bill should not be rushed through in one sitting of the House, when we have not before us the measure which will apply to the bookmakers. Surely I am in order in trying to establish that point. We are asked to adopt the unusual course of suspending the Standing Orders so as to deal with one particular Bill, and the Colonial Secretary states that he fears £3,000 may be lost to the State if the Bill be not passed to-day. I consider that the two taxes should be imposed at the same time,

otherwise the totalisator will be placed at a disadvantage, while the bookmaker will benefit, and no one desires to see that condition of things brought about.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.42]: I wish to direct the whole of my remarks to the question of the suspension of the Standing Orders. I object very strongly to the suspension of the Standing Orders so that we may put through the Totalisator Bill, or indeed any other Bill, unless very good reason is shown for doing so. The whole of our forms, with the traditions of generations behind them coming from the Mother of Parliaments, are to enable us to appreciate and discuss what is put before us. I admit that there are times when it is necessary and advisable to suspend the Standing Orders, but on an occasion like this, when we are dealing with the finances of the State, the proposal is most objectionable, and the only result will be to prevent an intelligent discussion as to whether the Bill is a good, bad, or an indifferent one. I am not going to speak on the Bill until we have had an opportunity of carefully looking into the matter. I have not seen it before to-day.

The Colonial Secretary: It was here yesterday.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The whole of my time and attention yesterday was devoted to matters dealing with the finances. The lever that the Standing Orders are being suspended for the convenience of country members who may be desirous of catching their trains to-morrow, and also that the Government may be able to collect a couple of thousands of pounds during the Easter holidays, is one which could be broken in the hand. As we are asked to suspend the Standing Orders in connection with a Bill which deals with the finances, I will not support the motion.

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central) [4.45]: I thoroughly agree with the remarks made by Mr. Kirwan and Mr. Sanderson. I do not know that during the whole of my experience in the House any Minister in charge of a Bill has asked for a measure, which has for its object the imposition of a new tax, to pass through the House in one sitting. I have not read the Bill and do not know its contents, and I intend to oppose the motion now before the House. According to the reading of the motion the Bill is one for the imposition of a totalisator duty. I understand from what I have read in the Press that it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill for the taxation of bookmakers. Both these Bills should be brought before the House at the same time in order that we may see if the tax presses unduly heavily on the totalisator, or presses unduly heavily upon the bookmaker. I shall be very surprised indeed if the House carries a motion of this description. I do not wish to block the Government in their efforts to obtain revenue, but I do not see that any harm would be done if the House sat to-morrow, although it has been announced in the Press that there will be no sitting then. In the meantime we would have ample opportunity for considering the provisions of this legislation.

Hon. A. Sanderson: Some time.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I do not know whether the other measure for the imposition of a tax on bookmakers will be brought down by to-morrow. If it is not brought down, then I think this Bill should stand over until we are in a position to consider both measures together.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [4.48]: I do not think this motion is an unreasonable one. In my opinion the best reason the Colonial Secretary gave is the one of which he seems to be half ashamed, namely, that he wishes to get as much revenue as he can out of the Easter meeting. It is true that the suspension of the Standing Orders must, or should, be approached with a good deal of diffidence. It is also true that the rules and procedure of this House are all too often lightly regarded by Governments and by leaders of the House, and I daresay I have offended myself at times in this respect. On this occasion, however, and for the reasons given by the Colonial Secretary, I do not think the motion is an unreasonable one. It is true that the Bill for imposing a tax on bookmakers—which I understand is part of the Government policy—I can hear no answer to this interrogation—

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: There is a suspicious silence.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: I do not know but that I shall change my mind after all. Are the Government frightened of offending the bookmakers? They seem to spend a good deal of their time just now endeavouring to avoid offending one class of persons or another, and to so great an extent that very little is done in any direction at all. Perhaps there may be a bookmakers' party in another place.

The Colonial Secretary: A tax on bookmakers is provided under the Stamp Act.

Hon. W. KINGSMILL: That is a satisfactory explanation, if the amendment of the Stamp Act is a satisfactory Bill. I will not, however, go back on the opinion I have already expressed, namely, that the attitude of the leader of the House in wishing to do a reasonable thing in order to collect this £2,000 or £3,000, which he can obtain from having the Bill enforced as an Act during the Easter meeting, is one to be commended. I propose to support the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders, though I do so with a good deal of reluctance.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan) [4.51]: It might help hon. members to make up their minds in this matter if the leader of the House would indicate what the Government intend doing with regard to bookmakers. If we knew what these intentions were, we would have no difficulty in making up our minds which way to vote. We do not know, indeed, whether a proposal to impose a tax on the bookmaker is going to be brought down.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: And whether the taxation of bookmakers will be in operation during the coming race meeting.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Even if that were not the case we might forgive the Government if we knew that it was their intention to bring down such a proposal within the next few days. I trust the Colonial Secretary will indicate to the House what the intentions of the Government are.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [4.52]: I understand that the leader of the House desires to meet the wishes of hon. members, and to enable them to get home to-morrow on account of there being no train service on Good Friday. In the circumstances it is reasonable that he should ask that the Standing Orders should be suspended. I am going to support him in the matter. I do not desire that this State or the Government should lose any money at all which they can get between now and the end of the financial year. We would not be acting properly if we denied the request which has been made to us. For these reasons, it is my intention to support the motion and I hope it will be carried.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [4.53]: In submitting this motion I did not for a moment think it would be necessary for me to go into the merits of the Bill. So far as the suspension of the Standing Orders is concerned, it has been customary ever since I have been a member of this House, not only here but in another place to suspend the Standing Orders altogether during the closing weeks of the session. As a matter of fact, that course, the suspension of the Standing Orders to permit of the passage of Bills and the consideration of Messages at one sitting, has already been adopted this session in another place. It is admittedly an objectionable practice, and I gave hon. members my assurance some time ago that I would not adopt this course unless it was absolutely necessary, but in this instance I do not ask hon. members by supporting this motion to pledge themselves to pass the Bill. If, after the motion is accepted, I fail to satisfy the House that the Bill is one that they ought to pass and pass at once, it will be quite competent for the House either to reject the Bill or to adjourn its consideration. What I ask the House to agree to is this, providing it is the will of the House that the Bill should pass and pass at once, that after hearing all that has to be said regarding it, members should be able to pass the Bill to-day instead of coming back to-morrow for that purpose. If, after the Standing Orders have been suspended, members find that they are not able to deal with the Bill within the time at their disposal, it will be competent for them to adjourn the question of its further consideration.

Question put and passed.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Land Act Amendment.

2, Treasury Bonds Deficiency.

Returned to the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

**BILL—GENERAL LOAN AND IN-
SCRIBED STOCK ACT AMENDMENT.**
Report of Committee adopted.

**BILL—TOTALISATOR ACT AMEND-
MENT.**

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.50] in moving the second reading said: The object of the Bill is not to impose a new tax, as might have been thought by the remarks made by some hon. members this afternoon. For many years past there has been a totalisator tax in this State and there has been no tax upon bookmakers, and it would be just as consistent to say that there should not at any time have been any tax on the totalisator unless there was a corresponding tax on the bookmaker, as it is now to suggest that it is improper to increase the totalisator tax without at the same time imposing a tax on bookmakers. If in the past there had been a tax on the totalisator and on the bookmaker, each adjusted so as to make a fair balance between the two, it would be a perfectly legitimate argument to say that no interference should be made with the one unless it was made with the other at the same time. As a matter of fact, we have had a totalisator tax. There has been 10 per cent. deducted from the public out of the totalisator during the whole of the time it has been in operation, and there has been no tax upon the bookmaker. The purpose of the present Bill is to permit the racing clubs to deduct from the totalisator investments, instead of the 10 per cent. that they have been deducting in the past, $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., an increased deduction of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The whole of the increased deduction of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. goes to the Government, and also an additional one per cent. from the clubs. In the past, of the deduction of 10 per cent. made by the clubs, $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. has gone to the Government and $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. has been retained by the clubs. Clubs have also retained the whole of the fractions and the whole of the unclaimed dividends. The proposal under this Bill is that the clubs shall deduct $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. instead of 10 per cent., and that they shall hand to the Colonial Treasurer six per cent. instead of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., thus having for themselves $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. instead of the $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., which they have enjoyed in the past. In other words, the clubs themselves will contribute an additional one per cent. to the revenue, and the patrons of the totalisator, the race going public, will contribute another $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In regard to the fractions and the unclaimed dividends, the Government also propose to collect from the clubs six per cent. of the fractions, and six per cent. of the dividends remaining unclaimed after the expiration of the period of three months. The West Australian Turf Club, the body governing horse racing in this State, say that in the circumstances they consider the proposal a fair one and offer no objection to it. No objection has been raised from any of the amateur racing clubs in the State. We know that the proprietary clubs have objected,

not to the increased contribution from the public, but to being called upon to pay the extra one per cent. themselves. The Government take the view that if the amateur racing clubs can afford to make this additional contribution the proprietary racing clubs should surely be able to afford to do so as well. Last year the totalisator tax brought in £14,000. For the full year it is estimated that the new tax will bring in £28,000, that is allowing for a slight diminution in revenue, because the Government's share of the new tax will be six per cent. instead of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as in the past, which is more than double the amount. The estimate for a full year is an increase of from £14,000 to £28,000. For the balance of the present year it is expected that this tax will bring in an additional £3,000. That is if the Bill is passed in time to obtain revenue from the Easter races. The question of imposing taxation on the bookmakers has been raised and provision is made in the Stamp Act Amendment Bill which will be brought down as soon as it is passed in another place for a stamp on bookmakers' tickets, following the practice which has recently been adopted, and I believe with satisfaction, in the other States of Australia. As members are fully aware if I had my way there would be no tax on bookmakers' tickets because the bookmaker would be abolished. The House on a former occasion took another view and decided that the bookmaker should not be abolished, and the Government in the interests of the State have been compelled to propose this tax on bookmakers' tickets.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Is the bookmaker legal in this State?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. I think the bookmaker is legalised by custom. This House on a previous occasion refused to abolish the bookmaker and thereby really strengthened his position, and the court has taken the view that the bookmaker is really legalised by custom and refuses to punish him, so that the law has come into disuse.

Hon. J. M. Drew: Although it is against the law.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is against the law and the courts have held that custom has established his position.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Has the Supreme Court taken any action?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think the case ever went so far as the Supreme Court. I only regret that the Chamber thought differently from myself and did not abolish the bookmaker; he is therefore still with us. Personally, I hope it will not be long before an opportunity will be given to the Chamber of reversing its decision. The Government consider that at the present time they ought to obtain greater revenue from horse-racing, and we propose therefore to make a moderate increase in the totalisator tax, and as soon as the measure is brought from another place in the Stamp Act Amendment Bill provision is made for the stamping of bookmakers' tickets in the same way as is done in other parts of Australia. I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central) [5.5]: I certainly cannot speak on the principles of the Bill as I have had no time to consider the measure. We have had the Bill before us for five minutes and we have listened to the Colonial Secretary's speech, but that is not enough to enable members to come to a determination. I simply rose to point out one thing. The Colonial Secretary laid a certain amount of stress on the fact that the bookmaker in the past has not been taxed. He should be well aware that the bookmaker in the past has been a rogue and a vagabond. Under the Act any bookmaker who is convicted twice is a rogue and a vagabond and I think that is the position which obtains to-day. I am surprised that any court of justice in Western Australia should recognise custom and take cognizance of the fact that this Chamber or any other Chamber should pass a vote in favour of the bookmaker. Has there been any Act passed that legalises the bookmaker?

The Colonial Secretary: No.

Hon. J. M. DREW: That complicates the matter still further. When the taxation measures are before this Chamber the question of the bookmaker will come up for consideration. Is that not the position?

The Colonial Secretary: Yes.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I am opposed to the bookmaker in any shape or form. As to the measure before the House I know nothing about it and three-fourths of the members of the House have not had time to give it careful consideration, and if it is passed to-day it will stand as one against the Legislative Council. I should have liked to sit again to-morrow so as to give the Bill proper consideration and thought, and pass it into law so that the Government can obtain the £3,000 which they are after.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.7]: I really must congratulate the leader of the House on his adroitness and dignity in dealing with this Chamber. As a piece of political work, the manner in which he gets his own way is magnificent.

Hon. J. Ewing: He does not always get it.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: He gets it more often than I wish. Let me re-call to members very briefly what transpired the other day. Let this go through and discuss the financial position of the country on the Estimates.

The Colonial Secretary: The Appropriation Bill.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Shall I be permitted without interruption from the leader of the House to make my remarks. This is an impression on the ordinary mind. Let us pass these little Bills, and let us have a full dress debate on the financial position of the country, which is of enormous importance to us, on the Estimates, or if it pleases the leader of the House on the Appropriation Bill. What kind of debate shall we have? All these small technical matters come up for discussion. Here is the key to the situation. We find ourselves passing the second reading of this Bill admittedly without proper discussion, for I have not looked at the Bill, and I am not criticising the second reading, nor shall

I the clauses in Committee, but the Government come down with a Bill like this and we pass it through without any preparation. The Government tell us they are looking after the financial interests of the country. It seems to me a deplorable state of affairs. I am not in a position to pass any financial Bill until we have given the fullest consideration to it. I want to form my opinion of how it affects the country directly or indirectly. We see how public opinion is drifting in this morning's paper; we see that conferences of municipal councils, and Chambers of Commerce are being held—bodies representing different sections of the community and both pointing in one direction, and what do they say of the present financial position. Let members read it for themselves. I do not wish to delay measures because what is the position as we have it just now. On the voices this Council which is specially appointed to protect the rights and privileges and interests of what we call the property classes of the country is putting through legislation like this. Members are responsible to their constituents and to their own consciences; they have stiff consciences and easy constituents. My constituents want to know what is going on, and I shall tell them. We find members from the north supporting this measure, while the taxation falls chiefly on the metropolitan and the metropolitan-suburban residents. That is where we find the majority of the taxpayers, and I shall be able to go to my constituents and tell them that it is to suit the conveniences of the Country party.

Hon. H. Stewart: Question.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Let members recall what was said by the Colonial Secretary a few minutes ago. I say it is to serve the convenience of the Country party.

Hon. H. Stewart: No, country members.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member is repeating himself.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I was going to say country members. To suit the conveniences of country members we are not going to consider the Bill, but to pass it. I do not care a rap myself, and as far as I am concerned I shall not take any further part in this Bill on the second reading or in Committee because I am not acquainted with the clauses, and I am therefore not in a position to discuss the Bill. Owing to the question of time we cannot give any consideration to the details of the Bill. As far as the second reading is concerned, we can see the magnetic power of the leader of the House over this Chamber, and I warmly congratulate him from a political point of view. Unfortunately I have not that power, but I am able, thanks to the forms of the House even if the Standing Orders are suspended, to make a protest in as brief and dignified a manner as I can, and there the matter rests.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [5.14]: I am glad none of the members opposed to the suspension of the Standing Orders called for a division. I did not so much protest against the suspension of the Standing Orders as against the Totalisator Bill being brought

forward whilst the tax on bookmakers was still held back. I say the totalisator and the bookmakers are competing for the money which those who go to race meetings speculate on the races, and we ought to have before us when considering this question of doubling the totalisator duty the extent of the duty which it is proposed to place on bookmakers. I was one of those who, when the question of the abolition of the bookmakers came before the Chamber, strongly supported their retention, because I believed that if we were to abolish the bookmakers the racing clubs would not be able to carry on. But I am thoroughly in accord with the Bill. I would be the last to do anything that would cause the Treasurer to lose the £3,000 he expects, and I am sorry he is losing the taxation from bookmakers during Easter. I certainly think it would have been much better if we had full and complete information regarding what is to be done in respect of the bookmakers. I do not like the idea of doubling the taxation on the totalisator while the bookmakers remain practically untouched.

The Colonial Secretary: That is not correct. It is not being doubled.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The amount which the Treasurer expects to get under the Bill is estimated to be twice that which he previously got. I understand that he previously got £14,000 from the totalisator tax, and that he expects to receive £28,000 next year. So, when I say that twice the amount will be received from the totalisator, I fail to see how that statement can be incorrect. I think the taxation upon the two forms of betting ought to have been imposed simultaneously. It was because of that I said what I did regarding the suspension of the Standing Orders. While I sincerely hope the expectations of the Government will be realised in regard to the Bill, and while I am glad the measure has been brought forward, I am glad also that the Government propose to secure more taxation from the bookmakers, who, I understand, have not hitherto contributed very largely to the income tax. The registered racing clubs in Western Australia are supporting this proposal. Those clubs have already contributed very largely, not only to the Treasury but also to the Federal entertainments tax and to the patriotic fund. I have here some interesting particulars from the last report of the committee of the Kalgoorlie Racing Club. Last year the Kalgoorlie Racing Club, under the totalisator tax, paid £1,598, making a total of £22,000 paid to the Treasury under this head since the Act came into force. In addition to that, the unclaimed dividends have been donated to local charities as in past years. Further, the Federal Entertainments tax paid by the club for the year amounted to £539. In addition the club has paid the State Government for the water used, the total amount paid since the inception of the Mundaring scheme being £11,805. Then again, the patriotic fund has been increased by a total of £7,500 from this club at Kalgoorlie. The figures relating to this club are very similar to those relating to the Boulder Racing Club. In addition to their contribu-

tions which I have enumerated, those two clubs have maintained their respective courses as public parks for the people of the goldfields. They are not opposed to the Bill, in fact, they are in favour of it. But, when taxing racing, one has to be careful not to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. The people of Western Australia, like all other people, must have some form of amusement, and personally, I think the best form is to be found in well conducted racing. I hope that, if the Government intend later to impose any further taxation—and I am afraid that, in view of the finances of the State it will be essential that still further heavy taxation shall be imposed, including further taxation on racing—great care will be exercised to see that the source from which the taxation comes shall not be injured.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (North-East) [5.21]: I would have opposed the passing of the Bill in this hurried manner had not the leader of the House given us the assurance that the West Australian Racing Association did not object to it. If they do not object, presumably we need not worry ourselves much about it. The Colonial Secretary, although he did not go very elaborately into the Bill, made a somewhat remarkable pronouncement in connection with the bookmakers. I remember that when we were considering this question on a previous occasion one member of the House remarked that the totalisator was a distinct form of the gambling evil. It appears to me the Colonial Secretary has now laid it down that it is not gambling in itself which is evil, but it only becomes evil when associated with the bookmakers; that so long as we gamble by means of a machine, and the Treasurer can get some revenue from that machine, the Colonial Secretary is quite prepared to overlook the evil. I am not sure that, from the revenue point of view, the Bill will work out as anticipated. Competition is fairly brisk between the bookmaker and the totalisator. Those who go to races are pretty keen calculators, and if the tax on the totalisator is raised, or the percentage taken from the money invested is increased, I should say that a fair proportion of the business will revert to the bookmaker. As a matter of fact, the bookmaker can now compete with the totalisator and pay a pretty heavy license fee. Therefore, we shall be placing the totalisator at a disadvantage if we further tax it. However, that is a matter for the Treasurer. He calculates that he is going to get an additional £3,000 this year. If he gets it I do not know that we can raise any objection to it. But it is most remarkable, the hurried manner in which these matters are brought forward. The present Government have been in office for some months, and one would have thought they have had time enough in which to consider their financial proposals. But it appears to be a sort of week-end affair. It suddenly dawns on them, and they rush their proposals in when country members are anxious to get away. I know, of course, that members of the Chamber are over-worked. We have had some pretty heavy debates during the session, and I suppose the leader of the House is anxious to

relieve members and let them have a holiday. We have to take all these things into consideration. The Colonial Secretary appears to have very great consideration for members of the Chamber, and is most anxious that they should not be over-worked. The general public have an idea that we are not over-worked. If we are to deal hurriedly with matters affecting the pockets of the public, I think there will be further adverse criticism levelled at this Chamber. In my opinion measures of this description, involving amendment to Section 4, amendment to Section 5, and amendment to Section 7, require careful consideration. It is necessary that we should compare these amendments with the sections of the parent Act before we can arrive at their true meaning. The Colonial Secretary has a pretty good grasp of what it all means, but we are supposed to consider these questions for ourselves. However, he is prepared to take the responsibility of passing this measure, and most of those who have spoken say that they are not particularly interested. So long as the House is prepared to view taxation proposals in that way, well and good. But in connection with the taxation of the bookmakers, I would have liked to see the two proposals come along together. However, that again is a matter for the Government to decide. They have brought this measure forward and, as I have said, solely on account of the fact that the West Australian Racing Association do not object, I see no reason why I should object either.

Hon. R. J. LYNN (West) [5.26]: This is a simple measure and I am only sorry that the Treasurer is unable to introduce others of a similar character. I do not think the House need worry itself about the bookmaker. The racing clubs, in issuing licenses, will regulate that phase of the question. When the licenses are issued to bookmakers the racing clubs will see that the totalisator is not affected in its revenue. Although the Colonial Secretary has said the amount of revenue to be received will be only £28,000, considering that the tax is an increase from 2½ per cent. to six per cent., I think the revenue will be considerably more than the Colonial Secretary has stated. He has probably given us the minimum, and the actual amount will be found to be in excess of the minimum stated. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [5.28]: I would like to correct a possible misapprehension that may result from the remarks made by Mr. Kirwan, who said the totalisator tax was to be doubled. While it is true that the revenue to be received is more than double what has been received in the past, it is inaccurate to state that we are prejudicing the totalisator by doubling the tax on it. The present tax is 10 per cent. It is not proposed to double that and make it 20 per cent. The increase, so far as the public is concerned, is only an increase of 25 per cent., an increase from 10 per cent. to 12½ per cent. Then, of the 12½ per cent. the Government will take six per cent. instead of only 2½ per cent. out of the 10 per cent. So, whereas the

Government are to get more than double the previous revenue, the increase, so far as the investors are concerned, is an increase of only 2½ per cent. Therefore, it is quite inaccurate to state that we are doubling the tax on the totalisator as against the public. In respect of the competition between the bookmaker and the totalisator, in addition to the reasons given by Mr. Lynn, I think anyone who follows the dividends paid and the betting quotations published after each race meeting—that is the only feature of racing that interests me at all; I do not go to the races, but I always compare the totalisator dividends with the bookmakers' prices, and I fancy that if patrons of the racecourse did the same it would be a mighty bad lookout for the bookmakers. In the great majority of cases the totalisator treats its patrons much more generously than does the bookmaker. Then, of course, a large percentage of the bets made through the totalisator are on the place machine, and represent a form of betting in which the bookmaker as a rule does not indulge.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT—EASTER HOLIDAYS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [5.35]: I move—

“That the House at its rising adjourn until Wednesday next.”

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN (South) [5.36]: Can the Colonial Secretary give us any idea as to when the business of this session will close? The elections for the Legislative Council take place very shortly. The date of the polling is six weeks from next Saturday, and if we adjourn until Wednesday I suppose it will not be possible to finish before a week, or two weeks, or possibly three weeks, after that. Another place is going on with a certain measure which, it is said, will take a month or two months; so that there is just a possibility of very little time indeed, or even no time, being allowed to retiring members of this Chamber to travel through their constituencies prior to the biennial elections. Of course from the point of view of those of us who are not going up for re-election this may seem immaterial; but what I am thinking of is that if this House is sitting while Legislative Council elections are in progress it will form a precedent for the future—a precedent which the Colonial Secretary will agree is a most undesirable precedent, especially in view of the vast extent of many of our provinces. It is quite impossible to travel over some of these provinces in six weeks; and the date of the elections, as I have said, is only six weeks from next Saturday. I feel perfectly sure the Colonial Secretary is looking after that as-

pect of the matter, and that he at any rate will use his influence with the Ministry to ensure that reasonable time is given to retiring hon. members to place their views before their electors prior to polling. It would not be too much if this House asked the Colonial Secretary to give an assurance that there will be at least a clear month in which to travel through the provinces. It is very simple for members representing Metropolitan and Fremantle constituencies; but the matter wears a very different aspect for country members. It is of very much concern to them, and I do not think there is a precedent for it. Always there has been a considerable space of time before an election for the Council, during which members could properly place their views before their constituents.

Hon. C. SOMMERS (Metropolitan) [5.38]: The leader of the House may himself have to stand for re-election, and it is painful to reflect what might happen to this Chamber during his absence. As regards the large electorates referred to by Mr. Kirwan, it is most important that all the time requisite should be afforded to hon. members seeking re-election.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [5.39]: I fully appreciate the point raised by Mr. Kirwan, and I shall certainly represent the matter to the Government. This session has been a most extraordinary one so far as regards the time of the year in which it has been held, and that sort of thing; and I sincerely trust we shall never go through a similar one. If I thought that in adjourning to Wednesday next we should be delaying matters at all, I would not have proposed it. But we are absolutely dependent on another place. I shall make representations on the lines suggested by Mr. Kirwan, because I realise it would be utterly unfair that members of this Chamber should be expected to fight their elections and at the same time attend this House.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 5.40 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 27th March, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

RETURN—PUBLIC SERVANTS AND COMMONWEALTH ALLOWANCES.

Mr. ROCKE (South Fremantle) [4.40]: I move—

"That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing—1, The number and names of officers in the public service of the State in receipt of allowances from the Commonwealth Government; 2, the number and names retaining such allowance for their own use without proper authority."

I asked for this information by way of question some time ago, and in reply the Premier said it was not possible to supply it in answer to a question. In consequence of this I have put my request in the form of a motion for a return. In asking for this information I have no feeling against any individual officer; but I do think certain officers are receiving money to which they are hardly entitled. In my opinion, this money should be diverted into the State Treasury.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [4.41]: I have no objection to the motion. The information can be obtained, and I shall be prepared to lay it on the Table. It will take a little time, of course, as a number of departments are concerned in the matter. The information shall be supplied as soon as possible.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST REGULATIONS, TO DISALLOW.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [4.42]: I move—

"That the amended regulations of the Fremantle Harbour Trust (relating to charges), which were approved by His Excellency the Governor in Executive Council on the 6th day of March, 1918, and placed on the Table of the House on the 12th day of March, 1918, be disallowed."

I am not moving this motion in the belief that the Government do not want additional revenue from the Fremantle harbour. It is well known that, owing to the scarcity of shipping, the revenue has fallen off considerably, and the Fremantle Harbour Trust have had to increase their charges for harbour dues, as has been done in the other States. My objection to the regulations is on the score of differential treatment meted out to West Australian manufacturers as against manufacturers in the Eastern States.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): There is no differential treatment.