

association or authority outside the State recognised by the board'' are quite sufficient without these three organisations being mentioned.

The Minister for Education: We must have something to indicate what we mean.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The board can take these three organisations as a pattern or not as they please.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

## BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 6th September.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [6.3]: I support the principle affirmed in the Bill. It proposes to do away with school boards as constituted to-day where parents and citizens' associations exist. I have been able to compare these associations with school boards, and I say that in activity and calibre of work, and in other respects, the associations are far ahead of the school boards. The school boards, as we know them, adopt a more or less dictatorial attitude, but the associations closely study the interests of the children, both from the educational and recreation point of view. Much good work has been done by these associations. I happen to be President of one of these bodies. There are some people who condemn them, because they are performing work which it is thought the Government should do and pay for. I tell those people who condemn these organisations that work is being done which would not be carried out but for those bodies. If citizens are prepared to devote their time and energy and a little of their money to this class of work they should be encouraged. I know of one association which on a capital outlay of about £4, was able to raise as much as £72. The school teachers are safeguarded by the Bill. I know of no parents and citizens' association which has endeavoured in any way to dictate to the teachers. That is not their function. It would be their function to take up a case against the teacher, but there would have to be a good foundation for it before they did so, and a very strong case indeed before it would have any effect with the department. We are in a position to judge as to the value and calibre of these associations. I am of opinion they should now supplant the old school board. Even at Widgiemooltha a parents and citizens' association has been formed. If parents do not take an interest in their children who else can be expected to do so? I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Officers of association and appointment of school boards:

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: In connection with the ballot for the election of members of the board, will this be confined to those who are present at a meeting, or will the power to vote be extended to every member of the association? In my view every member should be entitled to vote on a question of this sort.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The Bill provides that the ballot shall take place at the annual meeting. Every member will be allowed to vote. Regulations governing the situation will be made under Clause 8.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Some provision should be made for the removal of any officer of an association on the ground of non-attendance or other reasonable cause.

The Minister for Education: Clause 8 provides for that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The more elastic the rules are the better it will be.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 9—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 13th September, 1922.*

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

### QUESTION—MINERS' PHTHISIS, SOUTH AFRICA.

Mr. UNDERWOOD asked the Minister for Mines: Is it his intention to lay all papers in connection with miners' phthisis in South Africa, as presented to the Mines Department by the Hon. J. Cornell, on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: The publications and documents were only loaned to the department and cannot be laid on the Table of the House except by consent of the Hon. J. Cornell.

#### QUESTION—RAILWAYS, OVERHEAD BRIDGE, MELBOURNE ROAD.

Mrs. COWAN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware of the great inconvenience, and possible danger to life, caused to the public by the absence of an overhead bridge at Melbourne-road railway crossing? 2, Is there any possibility of such a requirement being provided for the use of citizens? 3, If so, when is it likely to be proceeded with?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Some inconvenience necessarily occurs at all railway crossings which are provided with gates. 2, Yes. 3, When funds are available.

#### QUESTION—AERIAL MAIL, PORT HEDLAND LANDING.

Mr. LUTEY asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it a fact that a man, a plough, and six horses were sent up to Port Hedland to prepare a landing for the aerial mail? 2, What was the area of the land to be ploughed? 3, What was the cost of the work? 4, Who paid for it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, 50 acres. 3, £602. 4, Commonwealth.

#### BILL—CLOSER SETTLEMENT.

##### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [4.38]: In connection with this measure it is necessary to point out a few facts. During the debate some question was raised as to the right of the State to compel people, by means of taxation or otherwise, to dispose of their lands. I say unhesitatingly that no individual has a right to impede the progress of the State, and that if we find any individual doing so, it is our duty, as a Parliament, to stop him. Regarding the utility of the Bill, my opinion is that the measure is altogether unnecessary, and really not worth the paper it is printed on. There is an assumption that lands are being held up, that we have no lands for people, that there are many people desirous of obtaining country. The fact of the matter is that land in Western Australia is practically unsaleable. Any amount of land is for sale here, but there are no buyers. We hear a great deal about the unearned increment, and about people who have bought city lands or country lands and are holding them as investments. In reply, all I can say is that land in Western Australia, and more particularly in the metropolitan area, is as poor an investment as one could put one's money into. It will not pay anything approaching the rate of

interest one can get on money placed in the savings bank.

Mr. Munsie: That is questionable.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Land is not saleable to-day in the residential parts of the metropolitan area at what it was sold for 20 years ago.

Mr. Munsie: Oh!

Mr. UNDERWOOD: There are several members of this House, besides myself, who bought land years ago, and who now want to sell that land. I myself am not a seller, but some hon. members are prepared to sell now at less than they bought for 15 years ago, and they cannot get buyers.

Mr. Munsie: They were had in the early days.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I am the fortunate or unfortunate possessor of a small piece of land less than five miles from here, which was sold about 18 years ago at a sub-divisional sale. If I were forced to sell that land to-day, it would not bring half as much as it was sold for 18 years ago.

Mr. Lutey: You must have paid a false price.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I did not. I find in life that if one says a thing often enough, or hears it said often enough, that thing becomes in one's mind an established fact. In the minds of the people of Western Australia it has become an established fact that there is unearned increment in land, and that if a tax is imposed on the unimproved value of land the effect will be to break up big estates. I held that impression very firmly, and then the Federal Government came along with an unimproved land tax, and not only that, but a progressive land tax.

Mr. Lutey: With £5,000 exemption.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is not a big estate that is not worth £5,000. The impression was that that taxation would break up big estates.

Mr. Munsie: Has it not done so?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If it has done so, why this Bill?

Mr. Munsie: The Bill itself is no good. I am absolutely with you there. It will not get one acre of land.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the hon. member repeats that often enough, most people will believe him. We got the unimproved land tax in a progressive form, and now we have this Bill to try some other means of breaking up big estates. Now as regards the value of land, and the land that we shall get by this Bill. It is a fact that the only buyer of land in Western Australia to-day, to any extent, is the Government.

Mr. Munsie: That is why there are over 50 applicants, on the average, for every block of land thrown open by the Government.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Those applicants are guaranteed 10s. a day sustenance to live on the blocks.

Mr. Munsie: No, they are not.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, they are.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. Munsie: Only on the group settlements.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If they do not come under the group settlement, they come under the Agricultural Bank, or else under the Repatriation Department, from which they have £700 or £800 to draw. That is why these applicants are looking for blocks of land.

Mr. Munsie: They cannot get the blocks, though.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I know of land bought along the Bunbury line by a very old friend of mine recently, and he has paid for it less than the actual effective improvements on it are worth to-day; and that is not counting in the clearing. As to the scarcity of land, let me point out that the Perth City Council bought land within a threepenny tram ride of the Perth Town Hall on the Perry estate for about £15 per acre. And people say there is a shortage of land!

Mr. Munsie: What is that land good for? Residential purposes, and there is no tram.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: As to the unearned increment, and the enormous price of land, let me point to the Peel estate and the Bate-man estate, right near the city. How much did they bring? Possibly the Premier could say how much he paid for them.

The Premier: About 8s., I think.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: And that is land within easy reach of the metropolitan area! Can it be said that land is being held up?

The Minister for Works: Twenty years ago I was offered 20,000 acres there at 5s. per acre.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Take the Kendenup estate, including all improvements, and situated within a few miles of the best port on the Southern coast. It was sold for £1 per acre.

Mr. Munsie: And they are charging £17 an acre for some of it to-day.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Again, in the very heart of the city of Perth the Palace Hotel stands on what is possibly the best block for commercial purposes in Western Australia. It was sold for £40,000. To-day the building could not be erected for less than that sum. These are facts which require to be faced. We ought not to keep on thinking that what has been said in the past is true. Take Emanuel's buildings, sold at £47,000. Could the buildings be erected to-day for that sum?

Mr. Mann: They cost £52,000 to build.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yet the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) says we require the Como tramway because land is so dear, and consequently it is necessary to go out a bit to get cheap land!

Mr. Munsie: For what can you get land in the Mt. Lawley estate to-day?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: I do not know, but you can get it in Cambridge-street, Leederville, one of the best streets in the metropolitan area, for almost what you like to offer. I

know people who bought in the Church Lands estate, down Cambridge-street, close to Subiaco railway station, the best in the State. They cannot get to-day half the price they paid for the land.

The Colonial Secretary: City values are rapidly increasing.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes, I should think so when you are getting the Palace Hotel for £40,000, just about the value of the building! There is no shortage of land in Western Australia. I will sell the hon. member a block of land at the price I paid for it 12 years ago.

Mr. J. H. Smith: I will do the same.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It is not reasonable to expect to find buyers for land when the Government are practically giving land away and paying men 10s. a day to live on it.

Hon. P. Collier: Where is that; in the South-West?

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Yes.

Hon. P. Collier: Well, notwithstanding that, thousands of soldiers preferred to buy land in the Wheat Belt.

Mr. Munsie: And it cost them £28 an acre before they got it.

Mr. J. H. Smith: You cannot get it at all.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: A number of members of this House took up some wheat lands. I was one of them. I do not think any of them got out of that wheat land without a loss.

Hon. P. Collier: They all have it still.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: No, many got out at a loss.

The Minister for Mines: Others made a pot of money out of it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: None of them made money out of wheat land. Just a few words in regard to the vexed question in the Bill, namely, conditional purchase land. It has been contended that the Bill should apply to conditional purchase lands. A similar Bill was thrown out in the Council last year partly on that very ground. It has been held by some speakers that to apply such a provision to conditional purchase lands would be tantamount to confiscation, to a breach of contract. Any person holding more than 2,000 acres of first class conditional purchase land must have evaded the spirit of the Act to get that land. If it be true that one good turn deserves another, it must be equally true in respect of a bad turn; and so a man who has obtained his land by evading the intention of Parliament is not worthy of consideration. Those who own big areas of conditional purchase land have evaded the spirit of the Act, and Parliament is entitled to deal with them. Let me say I do not care what becomes of the Bill; it is not worth the paper it is printed on.

Mr. DURACK (Kimberley) [4.54]: I approach the subject with somewhat the same view as that held by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat. It may be admitted that the Govern-

ment have the right to compulsorily acquire land. Still we require to be careful about exercising that right. Where it is found that a man is not making full use of his land, and that a demand for land exists, it might be contended that the Government are justified in acquiring that land. But who is to determine the proper use of any land? If I consider that my land should be used for sheep or cattle, and if another man comes along and says I should be growing vines, it is not an easy matter to determine. The Premier, in moving the second reading, did not show any good reason for the Bill. In a casual way he told us there was need for it, and that certain lands required to be subdivided. He went on to say the Crown owned a lot of land adjacent to a railway between Flinders Bay and the Margaret River. Somebody had said there was a large area of land available between Northam and York, but the Premier explained that he had made inquiries and found it was not so, that the land referred to was being properly used.

Hon. P. Collier: The Premier did not say anything of the sort. Of course it is being used to some extent.

Mr. DURACK: This is what the Premier said—

The Bill will apply more to the South-Western portion than to the wheat belt. We hear a good deal about the land that is available in the wheat belt, and some have gone so far as to say that there are two million acres of available land between York and Northam, land which is not being utilised. So far as I know that land, it is very well improved, and is being used, that is to say, the land which is suitable for settlement.

He then went on to say that on making inquiries he had found there was no land there available, that if there had been he would have taken it. We hear a lot about the lack of available land, but the member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse) told us the other night that he knew of estates which could be purchased for £2 or £3 per acre. Land which in this State can be secured for £2 or £3 per acre would fetch anything up to £15 per acre if it were in any of the Eastern States. If the land is here, it is the duty of the Government to buy it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Some of you would have the Government for customer every time.

Mr. DURACK: It is quite an anomaly. Here we have a million square miles of land and a population of 350,000; yet it is suggested that we dispossess a number of holders in order to put others on the acquired properties! It is a bad advertisement for the State. What is the natural conclusion to be drawn by those outside the State?

Hon. P. Collier: A million square miles! You know that is not argument.

Mr. DURACK: Perhaps not, but it is a bad advertisement for the State.

Hon. P. Collier: Some individual persons hold millions of acres of your million square miles.

Mr. DURACK: I do not know where this demand for land exists. A member of another place has assured me that between Pinjarra and the coast 70,000 acres are available at 7s. per acre.

The Minister for Mines: You will admit that there is any amount of room for land development along the railway system.

Mr. DURACK: Yes, but why take land from holders when there is so much available?

Mr. Willcock: Who says there is so much land available?

Mr. DURACK: Numbers of holders would be only too ready to sell at a reasonable price.

Mr. Willcock: And we shall be only too pleased to buy.

Mr. DURACK: No, you will not, except at your own price. I hope the Bill will not become law unless it does so in an amended form. In any case we must be very careful that we do not interfere with any of those fundamental principles upon which the stability and progress of this country and the British Empire have been established. I do not go so far as to say that there will be confiscation under the Bill, but I do say that it is getting very close to it. Whilst I am prepared to agree with the principle of closer settlement, and the advantages which must accrue in consequence to the community generally, we must nevertheless, if we are to dispossess holders, be very careful that we give a full measure of compensation.

Hon. P. Collier: The Bill provides for that.

Mr. DURACK: It is not always very easy to arrive at that compensation. It is quite possible that we may see open fields and have no conception of the labour that has been involved in bringing those fields to the position they are in. Private ownership of land is admitted in all countries and practically sanctioned by all legislatures. Going back to Biblical times, we find that there was communal ownership, and as civilisation advanced the rights of ownership became more firmly established. Going on still, other rights were recognised. In feudal times ownership was even more fully recognised, and in our own times the rights of ownership are not only recognised in the individual, but the right to sell or dispossess of the land is also recognised. The system was facilitated in Australia—largely through Torrens title—even more so than in England, where the system of entail was the general practice. If we are to recognise the advance of civilisation as being of benefit to mankind, we must recognise also as beneficial that system of private ownership which grew up with it, and this advance or development came about through the security that was given the individual in his right to the ownership of land. In putting the measure into effect we must be careful that we do not interfere with existing rights or do an injustice to anybody, and that we do not put back the hands of the clock. I might be permitted to read the basis upon which the foundation of France exists, a basis which is acknowledged to be sound. France has been very successful in establishing a rural population. The figures show that the rural popu-

lation of that country is between five millions and six millions as against  $1\frac{1}{2}$  millions in Great Britain. The system which has brought this about is worthy of consideration. The declaration of "The rights of man" on the 3rd September, 1791, says—

Property being an inviolable and sacred right, no one can be deprived of it unless public necessity commands it. There must be a legal constation of this public necessity and just and full indemnity. In case of expropriation for public utility the Tribunal Civil (Civil Court) must give its decision and also decide as to the compensation to the owner for "moral right." (Disturbance.) This is, as a rule, very substantial. Article 544 of the French Code says—"Le droit de propriété" is the right to hold, to enjoy and dispose of property in the most absolute manner. The State cannot interfere with the property owner unless he uses his property for purposes illegal and practices prohibited by laws and regulations. Article 545 says, "No one can be forced to sell or dispose of his property except in cases of absolute public necessity and in that case a just and equitable indemnity is to be allocated by decision of the Civil Court.

If you are dictated to in connection with your property, and as to the use you make of it, it is no longer your property. What I have read was confirmed by an edict issued on the 24th June, 1793, during the reign of terror. I know there are some who subscribe to the doctrine of the fruits of the earth for all and the land for no one, but that is not my view. I believe that the man who goes out and wrestles with nature is entitled to the fullest compensation, not merely the return of his money, with simple interest, but something more. If we are to stimulate land settlement we must establish in the minds of the individual a feeling of the fullest security. It is the individual owner we want to encourage and we can only encourage him to go on the land by making him feel that he is secure when he is there. Until I find something to the contrary, I shall firmly support the individual who has legitimately acquired land under the Crown and under the regnations in getting the fullest compensation if he should be dispossessed. I do not altogether see the necessity for the Bill, but acknowledging the principles of closer settlement I am prepared to support it in an amended form, and I shall reserve to myself the right in Committee to amend, indorse or reject any suggested amendments.

Mr. LATHAM (York) [5.12]: I propose to support the second reading of the Bill and while it may be said that I have changed my views somewhat since last session, I can declare that I have not changed them very materially. There is no doubt that there is need for the Bill. There is a clamour for such legislation, but we want to understand why it is required. To-day there are many people still seeking land in this great State

of ours. They are seeking it in the agricultural districts, which are adapted to cereal growing. When the Premier told us that the Bill would apply only to the South-West, where we have more Crown lands than we know what to do with for the next century, it made me wonder why the Bill was introduced. There are several reasons why people are calling out for a Closer Settlement Bill and one of them is that people are not likely to be content when land is not being put to the best use. Along the Great Southern line we may see land which is not under cultivation, but which perhaps is being used for pastoral purposes, or even for the breeding of stud stock, which is a valuable asset of the State. It may be also that the land is not suitable for the growth of cereals. I have the assurance of people around York, who are the big landholders, that there is not one holding land who is not prepared to sell a portion of it, retaining part for himself. We have to be careful about dispossessing of land those people who have a full knowledge of its peculiarities, for the purpose of settling other people upon it who do not understand the nature of the soil in that particular district. We must hesitate before we dispossess people of land with a view to settling on it people who know nothing about it. Another reason is that the railways are not balancing the ledger. We are always looking for an excuse and this is one of the excuses put forward, namely, that the facilities are provided but the land is not supplying the traffic it ought to supply for the railways running through it. Whilst I support the second reading, I say the greatest care must be exercised in administering this piece of legislation, for fear it will bring hardship upon some persons. Under the Closer Settlement Act of New South Wales 15 million pounds was spent in settling 5 000 settlers. It cost £3,000 per head to settle them. I admit a drought came along shortly afterwards, but a position of tremendous difficulty was created for the Government of that State.

Mr. Munsie: They paid too much for the land on which to settle those people.

Mr. LATHAM: Possibly. We have to be careful that we do not make the same mistake here that was made in New South Wales. I took it the Premier intended that this Bill should apply only to the South-West. I was dubious as to whether there was any necessity for it, but if it applies to the wheat areas too there may be some necessity for it. There is some unfairness about the Bill in that it does not apply to land held under conditional purchase. One thousand acres of good gimlet country is quite sufficient for one family. To-day people are permitted to take up to 2,000 acres of land. This ties up areas for quite a long time when those areas should be supporting two families. There is land in my district that is held in the same way and it should be supporting another family. I hope we will look into these matters, despite the

contracts arranged between the holders and the Government.

Mr. Mann: If a farmer had two or three sons ready to go on the land, would you still take it from him?

Mr. LATHAM: If a man has a dozen sons and half-a-dozen grandsons he must be considered. We must take into consideration the state of affairs existing to-day. I am not so much concerned about an Act of Parliament. I want to see people, who have land, encouraged to put it to the best use. I hardly know how to do that. There is no necessity for confiscation, indeed there is nothing of that kind in this Bill, but we have to be careful that the measure is not regarded as confiscatory. We do not want to upset the financial houses that are advancing money against these holdings. We must not interfere with the securities now offering. If we do that we shall depreciate the value of all the lands in the State. It would be a bad thing if, when this Bill became law, the financial houses drew in their securities and foreclosed on properties throughout the State. These are matters to which the greatest consideration must be given before the Bill becomes law.

Mr. Munsie: It is the financial institutions that govern the State and not Parliament.

Mr. LATHAM: They play a very big part in the development of the State. We do not sufficiently encourage financial institutions. The Government are expected to take the place of those institutions in every part of the State. Anyone who wants to take up land, or requires assistance for some industry, appeals to the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Because the financial institutions will not always provide the money.

Mr. LATHAM: It is because they are afraid of the securities.

The Minister for Mines: It is because they have to consult Sydney or Melbourne before they can enter into a bond.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not know as much about financial matters as the Minister for Mines. It is wrong that people should look so much to the Government. They cannot always find money for all purposes. We want money brought into the State, and we want people to buy land.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Would you agree to close down the I.A.B.?

Mr. LATHAM: If the hon. member wishes to close down the I.A.B. I will raise no objection, but I do not want to interfere with the securities of the institutions that are willing to advance money for the development of the State.

Hon. P. Collier: Your farmers will not talk like that.

Mr. LATHAM: Unfortunately many farmers do not look far ahead.

Hon. P. Collier: That is quite obvious.

The Minister for Mines: Will not closer settlement give a value to adjoining holdings?

Mr. LATHAM: If we create the necessity for closer settlement, the value of adjoining lands must be increased. We do not want people drawing money on properties which are not likely to be resumed or purchased under this Bill.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: This will make the securities stronger.

Mr. LATHAM: It will be for members to say what form the Bill will ultimately take. No doubt before it leaves our hands it will be made into something suitable for the requirements of the position. I see nothing in the Bill which will allow a man to retain a portion of his land for himself. He should be given that right, especially if he wants to use some of the land for his family.

The Minister for Mines: We cannot take it if he utilises it.

Mr. LATHAM: He may not be using the land to-day, but may desire to retain portion of it in order to put some of his sons upon it. Some consideration should be given to a man of that sort.

The Minister for Mines: Then the board could allow him to retain land in his own hands.

Mr. Marshall: There is a clause governing that.

Mr. LATHAM: If there is no provision of that sort in the Bill, we can introduce it in Committee. Some members said there was a certain tone of dishonesty about the compensation clause. Frequently values change from day to day. If there is a drought this year, the value of land will not be the same as it was the year before. When values were placed on land for taxation purposes they were equitable and fair at the time. It is unfair to suggest that there is anything dishonest because the price of land has not been increased or decreased for taxation purposes. I want to be fair to those people who are making their returns to the Taxation Department. If there are two mines alongside each other and one finds gold, the other necessarily increases in value if it is thought the gold is running into it. The Premier might well consider Lord Ashbourne's Land Act of 1899. A sum of money was advanced to purchase properties and the balance was paid on the time payment system, the money being collected by the landlord. We should give every encouragement to men who own their own land to subdivide it themselves and in that way induce other people to purchase it. Otherwise it may be found that repurchased land will fall back into the hands of one man at a later stage. I support the second reading, but reserve to myself the right to move amendments in Committee.

Hon. M. F. TROY (Mount Magnet) [5.25]: I do not know that the Bill is worthy of the attention that has been given to it by members, who fear that it will bring about confiscation and injure the State. I am of opinion the Bill will not do

that. It is not calculated to do either much good or much harm. It may be an experiment but it is a very timid one. The Premier is probably taking this step in the hope that it will popularise the principle of breaking up estates for settlement. I do not think the Bill will take us more forward than we are to-day. The amount of land tax acquired through the Taxation Department is very small. If properties are improved the land tax may almost disappear. I suppose the Bill is necessary, particularly because of the large areas that are held in the South-West. Land settlement in the South-West started off on the wrong basis. Land was taken up in areas that were altogether too large. After 70 years or more of colonisation, the progress made by the South-West has been such that the Government are compelled to introduce some measure of this character. The great South-West, which members speak of as the richest part of the State, has made less progress than other part of Western Australia. That is largely due to the fact that the land is difficult to deal with. The rainfall comes during the winter months and at one time, and the settlers have holdings that are too large for them to use properly. In the South-West on 200 acres of land properly cultivated and sweetened by draining, settlers can produce ten times as much as they can produce to-day from 1,000 acres.

The Minister for Works: It is not the drainage of the holdings so much as getting the water to the sea; and the individual cannot do that.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I have seen land on which people have been poor for years, and where the crops have been washed away by the water. To-day that country has been drained and much more of it is being made use of. I visited a community a little while ago in another State, and found that the people are now living on 50 acres instead of 300. They have clubbed together and struck a rate, and borrowed from some financial institution or the Government. With that money they have drained the country, with the result that land which was under water 20 years ago is now being highly cultivated and is worth £100 an acre. If the South-West could be thickly populated and money could be raised for draining the land where that is required, and sweetened in this way production could be increased one hundredfold. From the standpoint of the people who want land, the man who holds land without using it is not entitled to hold it, because the interests of the State and the people are paramount. So far as I can see, the Bill does not imply anything suggesting the confiscation of land. Should the measure be passed and land held by any settler be taken over by the Government under its provisions, it will be largely to the advantage of the settler himself. The ordinary settler cannot sell land to-day because the inducements are not present. The only buyer in the field is the Government. There are some

who say that land values have increased in Western Australia. I do not think they have. The only increase that there is has been caused by the Government buying land for repatriation purposes. There are very few private land buyers.

Hon. P. Collier: None for large estates.

Hon. M. F. TROY: No, because the people have not got the money. Land has increased in value merely because of the activities of the Government. As a result, people secure more for their land from the Government than they can hope to get by selling their land to a private buyer. With the member for York (Mr. Latham) and other hon. members, I think conditional purchase land should be included under the Bill. I do not look upon it as a breach of contract to resume land held by a man under conditional purchase conditions, under the terms of the Bill. If it be a breach of contract regarding conditional purchase areas, why is it not a breach of contract regarding the resumption of freehold land? The member for Kimberley (Mr. Durack) made much ado about the man who holds the freehold of his property. There is no such thing as freehold in this or any other country, because the Government can step in and take such land and, furthermore, the fact that the Government always have the right to tax that land is evidence that it is not freehold. I think pastoral estates should be covered by the Bill as well. Large pastoral holdings close to railways and ports should be secured for closer settlement. I do not want to dwell upon this at length beyond to say that I have always held the opinion—and I have told the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo) this more than once—that the only way by which we can develop lands in the Gascoyne areas close to the port, is by cutting up the large sheep stations into smaller holdings and giving the selectors a few thousand sheep to start with, insisting, at the same time, upon those settlers making experiments with their land to demonstrate the productive capabilities of the holdings. The same thing applies to the Murchison district. As an instance of what I speak of, there is an estate of over a quarter of a million acres of land bordering on the coast and within 100 miles of Geraldton. In the interests of the country, it is unfair that land should be held as it is in such large holdings and carrying only one family where it should carry ten families or more. In the interests of the State, such holdings should be taken over and a larger number of people settled on them.

Mr. Durack: With compensation?

Hon. M. F. TROY: Yes, I have always advocated that. The holders should be compensated for the improvements and the compensation should be reasonable.

Mr. Durack: It should be full and ample compensation.

Hon. M. F. TROY: What does the hon. member mean by that? I agree that there should be reasonable compensation for disturbance.

Mr. Durack: We think there should be ample compensation.

Hon. M. F. TROY: What does that mean? What may be regarded as ample compensation may be absolute robbery of Government funds.

Hon. P. Collier: The same as with the oil prospectors. Perhaps that is what is called "ample" compensation.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Exactly.

The Minister for Works: You would not ask these men to start over again?

Hon. M. F. TROY: No person owning a station will have to start in life again. The stations are so valuable that if they were taken over, the pastoralists would not need to start again; their families might have to do so. I have held the opinion that the members of the family, provided they make use of the station, should be entitled to a share of the property resumed and cut up. Western Australia is a new country and I agree with the member for Kimberley that it is a great pity and unfortunate, that a Bill of the description under discussion should be necessary in a country comprising a million square miles of territory with a population of 350,000. That point is all right; but let us fairly face the position that not all that million square miles is suitable for closer settlement, nor is all that land get-at-able. Much of it is not suitable for closer settlement. We have to admit that within the safe rainfall area, there is unfortunately a comparatively small proportion of good land suitable for closer settlement purposes. Hon. members can take a line from the Murchison River and proceed, not too far to the eastward, down to Esperance and, apart from the Kimberley areas, they will have all the good land in Western Australia within the safe rainfall belt comprised within that boundary.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: There is none in Kimberley; it is all gone there.

Mr. Durack: There is plenty there.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Most of the coastal land has gone.

Mr. Durack: Not at all.

Hon. M. F. TROY: It is as well to admit that a lot of the land within the safe rainfall belt is not good land.

Hon. P. Collier: Are you remembering the hardships experienced in the North-West?

Hon. W. C. Angwin: And the white ants?

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. M. F. TROY: The land in the South-West is not uniformly good. It is patchy. I do not think that there is any other State in Australia where the land is so patchy as in Western Australia. We must face that position. We must pursue the policy of settling as many people as we can in the South-West to build up the industries of this country. I take no notice of the statement that the financial institutions may become alarmed at the contents of this Bill. As a matter of fact the financial institutions do not advance money to any extent on properties in Western Australia unless the properties are well

improved. Hon. members know from their experience that they cannot go to financial institutions and ask for advances on their properties unless their holdings are productive to a high degree.

Mr. Angelo: You are wrong.

Hon. M. F. TROY: There are some pastoral propositions, I know, upon which advances have been made. I know Dalgetys, for instance, have made advances on personal security and on properties with good possibilities.

Mr. Angelo: And the chartered banks, as well.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Very few of them. If it is a case of improved land that is within a good rainfall area and capable of producing wealth, the chartered banks may come in; otherwise, they leave such propositions to the Government. There is little tendency on the part of the financial institutions to help in the development of the State, particularly in the initial stages.

Mr. Angelo: In the short period of three years, the banks started a number of new stations in my district.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The financial institutions know that their security will be improved provided the Government are purchasers. Owners of land are almost certain to get a better deal if they dispose of their properties to the Government than if they sell to a private individual, because the Government realise their obligations to the owner and the money expended by the owner in improving his property is always covered by any offer of purchase.

Mr. Angelo: It is impossible to say they always do that.

Hon. M. F. TROY: That is not done by the financial institutions. I do not object to the provision relating to the appointment of a local member on the board. My experience is that a local member is necessary.

Mr. Munsie: Do you agree that the local member should be a member of the Primary Producers' Association?

Hon. M. F. TROY: No, and the Bill does not provide for that.

Mr. A. Thomson: Has that been suggested?

Mr. Heron: Yes, by a member of the Country Party.

Hon. M. F. TROY: That is so. I think the members of the board should include a gentleman who has a knowledge of local conditions, because that is a very important matter in connection with the resumption of land. I need not stress that necessity except to say that we have all discovered—and the Government have found it out for themselves—that land we thought valuable at one time and capable of growing cereals, is not now regarded as good land, in consequence of which the Government will not make advances on that land in these later times. To my great surprise I found out that the Agricultural Bank will not advance on York gum country, which, in days gone by, we all understood to be the



very best land for wheat production. To-day, as far as possible, the Agricultural Bank is only advancing on salmon gum and gimlet country. From their experience they regard that as the best type of country. In consequence of this, they will not advance against a lot of land in Western Australia which the Government have sold at high prices.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: That country is marked on the maps as good land.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Still, they will not advance against that land although they regard, and sell, that land as of good quality. Experience has taught the Government and the Agricultural Bank officials that that land is not as productive as they thought it to be. In the interests of the State there should be a man with local knowledge appointed to these boards.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: He should not be tied to any political association.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Certainly not! The Bill does not provide for any such thing.

Mr. Pickering: It may apply to a Nationalist as well.

Hon. M. F. TROY: In some parts of the country where some of the land is not wholly cleared, an official might go through and instruct more clearing to be done. Such an action would have disastrous results, because the salt would rise and that would settle the whole property.

The Minister for Works: And in some parts of the South-West, it would mean that the grass would not grow.

Hon. M. F. TROY: A local man would have a knowledge of the country and would be able to offer an opinion on the quality of land and whether in the interests of the State certain land should or should not be cleared. I do not look upon the Bill as a very important one. I am hopeful that one day, by some means or other, large areas will be resumed and made reproductive. I know that while we have land held by a few people there is no possibility of populating this State, and the residents will be burdened by excessive rates throughout their lives. One of the greatest handicaps to the successful development of the primary industries of Western Australia, whether mining, pastoral or agricultural, is the high railway rates, and while large areas of land are held unproductive, we have no possibility of overcoming that difficulty.

The Minister for Mines: You must remember that the facilities cannot be provided unless there is a fair amount of production.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Quite so. I also know from experience that the more people who live in a given locality and the greater their production, the greater is their social life and the personal comfort they enjoy and the more valuable their property. Go to Dalwallinu on the Wongan Hills line: because that place is highly productive and land has a value. Go to Kellerberrin and the same applies. But one can go to other parts of the State where the same progress has not

been made with land settlement and the same attention has not been given to production and the land is not nearly so valuable. This is bad for the people and bad for the State. I support the Bill, but I consider it not a good Bill because it does not go far enough.

Mrs. COWAN (West Perth) [5.46]: I am prepared to support the Bill. Although it does not go far enough, I think it is the beginning of what we need very badly. Last year we thought we were going to accomplish something in this direction, but we did nothing—

The Premier: We did.

Mrs. COWAN: Because it was not passed in another place. We hope that this Bill will be put into such a form by the amendments which will be submitted in Committee that it will be passed, and that it will mark the beginning of the acquisition of these unused lands. Two years ago we had a report by men who were surveying land and who saw the use to which it was being put and were in a position to form some idea of its quality. If anyone was in a position to judge of the quality of land, surely such men would be. They reported that there was 2½ million acres situated seven miles from existing railways between York and Beverley on the west and going east to Dowerin, Cunderdin and Quairading and that only one million acres of that was developed in an agricultural sense. I am glad to know that the Premier has recognised this, because he proposes to devote three millions of the money which is to come for work in the Wheat Belt. The three millions is to be advanced to the wheat farmers already on the land who have 600 acres or more cleared.

Hon. M. F. TROY: They will want it, too.

Mrs. COWAN: I have no objection to them having it, provided their land is developed. Last year when I spoke of this land, I was told that it did not exist and I was also told that all the land that was worth while utilising was being utilised.

The Premier: Oh, no.

Mrs. COWAN: I have very distinct recollection of being told that I knew nothing of what I was talking about. I think I did know something about the matter, and I am prepared to take the report of these men who were in a position to know. Otherwise they have no right to be in their present positions and their reports on matters affecting this country should not be accepted at any time. We believe that the advantages will be very great indeed, that many people will find employment and that the three millions will be expended in the very direction and in the very areas in which we were given to understand there existed no land of any account that was not being utilised. This Bill will help that proposal, because it will induce owners to part with their land at reasonable prices if they cannot get the labour to develop it for themselves, or they

will be obliged to give it up and let others who can work it come in and do so. Therefore, I am glad to support the Bill. I am pleased to accept the measure so far as it goes. If it is not quite as satisfactory as it might be in its early operation, it can easily be amended by Parliament.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. R. S. Sampson—Swan) [5.50]: Reference has been made to my attitude in respect to this Bill last year. I shall nothing extenuate nor ought withdraw. I feel that in all loyalty I can say that, if the Bill went further, my support would be given to it. I appreciate the fact that the Premier has again brought it forward, and I hope members in another place will realise the necessity for it and this time will pass it. If perchance there is a disagreement with another place, I hope this House, so far as is constitutionally possible, will insist that the provisions which are desired by the Government be retained. The method of basing the purchase price as set out in the Bill is a democratic one.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, it is not, because you give owners an opportunity to revalue their land.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That right extends for only 30 days and after that period the valuation stands. The member for York (Mr. Latham) referred to land held by different holders for their children. A provision to that effect would be justifiable if the land were being worked for the children, but it would be distinctly unfair if an owner of land were permitted to hold it out of use for his children or his children's children.

Mr. A. Thomson: Do you object to a man providing for his children?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; it is the duty of everyone to ensure reasonable provision for his children.

Mr. Davies: You mean while they are children.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: We should not in this way give owners an opportunity to evade the provisions of the measure. If the land is held for the children, it should be utilised as provided in the measure. Reference has been made to conditional purchase land and no doubt the arguments advanced will be seriously considered by the Premier. I hope the Bill will be passed, because I consider it will be in the best interests of the State to place it on the statute-book. Unless the Bill goes through, we must continue to have vast tracts of country undeveloped and unutilised and the country will lack the stability which would be the outcome of such a measure as this. The great bulk of the people of the State are earnestly desirous that something in the nature of this measure shall become law, and I hope that on this occasion the Bill will have a safe passage.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [5.54]: I support the Bill and express my regret that the measure introduced last session did not become law. Had it done so, we would by now have had some experience as to whether it would attain the objective of bringing into use land adjacent to our transport facilities. There is a clause which alone would justify one in supporting the Bill, and I wish particularly to direct attention to that clause, because it gives the Government power to do what it never previously could do. It is a power which was certainly needed by the Government, especially when considering closer settlement for the State. It provides that once this measure becomes law, the Government shall have power to say upon what terms and conditions the land shall be sold for closer settlement. Members will realise that if the Bill is going to be effective at all, this is the clause which will make it effective.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: No, there is nothing in that clause.

Mr. Munsie: They have no power under that clause. It is nullified absolutely by Clause 7.

Mr. DAVIES: I read it to mean that once the measure becomes law the Government will have one of three methods of acquiring land. First of all, the owner will be given the option of subdividing it and putting it up for sale. If he does not do that, the Government will tax it.

Mr. Munsie: How much?

Mr. DAVIES: That is another point.

The Premier: More than the man would be likely to pay.

Mr. DAVIES: I admit that the tax proposed might not be effective. Thirdly, if the owner fails to subdivide and notifies the Government to that effect, Clause 7 will become operative. This clause, however, will, generally speaking, be inoperative, because owners will certainly subdivide their land or pay any slight increase of taxation under this measure.

The Premier: It is not a slight tax.

Mr. DAVIES: If it is 3d. in the pound, the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) indicated the other night that the amount would not be very great. Looking back over the last 20 years we recall that the Labour Party in the Federal Parliament, when land taxation was first proposed by the Commonwealth Government, brought in a tax designed to burst up big estates.

Mr. Munsie: It succeeded pretty well, too.

Mr. DAVIES: Since then 15 or 18 years have passed and the big estates are still in existence, notwithstanding the amount of taxation placed upon them.

Mr. Munsie: They are not in existence to the extent they were previously.

Mr. DAVIES: Let me remind members that, within a radius of eight miles of Perth there are three vast estates, Waterhall, Bushmead and Talbot, within the boundaries of the Swan Road Board and adjacent to Guildford. These estates have been paying taxation since the Federal Government first im-

posed its land tax. To-day estates are being subdivided. What I consider the most effective provision of this Bill is the one which members of the Opposition say will be ineffective. I refer to paragraph (iii) of Sub-clause 2 of Clause 6, which reads—

The owner shall cause the subdivisional lots from time to time as required by the board to be offered for sale by auction or private contract at such reasonable upset prices and upon such reasonable terms and conditions as the board may approve.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: But the other applies and knocks that one out. Do you think any man would be mad enough to let the Government settle the basis when he might go to arbitration under the Public Works Act?

Mr. Munsie: He has a right to go to arbitration.

Mr. A. Thomson: Why not?

Mr. Munsie: If the owner refuses to do what is stated in paragraph 3, what happens then?

The Premier: The Government can take the property.

Mr. Munsie: Yes, but under what conditions? The conditions of Clause 7.

Mr. DAVIES: I am bound to admit, after the years which have gone by, that what formerly we thought would prove effective has proved ineffective. Therefore let us give this measure a chance. The only effective means we have of improving the Bill is to submit amendments in Committee. Let us get to that stage if possible. The Premier in his Budget Speech last night referred to settling 1,000 persons as vine growers. They would take up 50-acre blocks, he said. The capitalisation of 13-acre blocks in the Swan valley to-day is £1,150.

The Premier: That is very dear land.

Mr. DAVIES: The whole of the Swan valley is dear land.

The Minister for Works: There are numerous districts of Western Australia in which one can grow vines.

Mr. DAVIES: I do not know that that has been demonstrated.

Mr. Pickering: Vines are grown at Coolup and Boyanup.

Mr. DAVIES: That is so.

The Minister for Works: There is a man successfully growing vines down the Great Southern Railway.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The best dried fruits on the market come from Coolup.

Mr. DAVIES: Undoubtedly the best vine lands of the State are to be found in the Swan valley.

Members: No!

Mr. Simons: There are two million acres of vine lands in this country.

Mr. DAVIES: Better than the Swan valley vine lands?

Mr. Simons: Not better, but equal to them.

Mr. DAVIES: There is the clause in the Bill, however, and I cannot read it in any other way than I have stated. If for no other reason the House should, I think, give the Government the power sought in the mea-

sure. The most effective means by which the Government could bring about their desire to render lands adjacent to the railways productive would be to introduce a simple tax on undeveloped land. This measure is called a Closer Settlement Bill. Unless the Government want estates for closer settlement, the measure, even if enacted, will not become operative. The Government have told us that their chief reasons for bringing down the Bill are to provide traffic for the railways and land for the people. Where the object is closer settlement only, the measure may not prove as effective as the Government believe. There are in this country thousands of blocks which are only a fair holding for a man and his family, thousands of blocks to-day unproductive.

Mr. Munsie: Many of them have been surrendered to the Agricultural Bank, I take it.

Mr. DAVIES: I am sorry to have to say it, but going home last night in the tram I was asked by a man how many blocks I thought had been surrendered in this State. I may say that I myself spent three hours in the Lands Department looking for a block, and failed to find it. The officers of the Lands Department could not give me a block elsewhere than at Esperance, though that was a very good block. The person with whom I was speaking in the tram told me that 6,000 blocks had been surrendered in this State. That is a startling statement.

The Premier: It is not a true statement.

Mr. DAVIES: I hope it is not true, but that is the information that was given to me by the man in the tram last night.

The Minister for Works: By some irresponsible person.

Mr. DAVIES: I suggest that the only effective means at the disposal of the Government is to tax undeveloped land in the country that is capable of producing. That is a simple matter. I shall support the measure in the hope that after 12 months' experience of it we shall know whether it works effectively. I am bound to express my deep regret that the measure of 12 months ago did not pass, since in that case we should now be in a much better position to judge of the value of this legislation.

Mr. A. THOMSON (Katanning) [6.9]: I did not say very much when a similar Bill to this was before the House last session. I did, however, endeavour to secure the insertion of certain amendments.

Mr. Munsie: You succeeded, too.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Amendments providing that those whose lands it was proposed to take under the measure should have an opportunity of revaluing their properties from a taxation point of view. I took that stand last year, and I see no reason to depart from it now.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It is a wrong system, all the same.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is purely matter of opinion. I do not think members of this Chamber have any intention of supporting

legislation which would be the means of doing any private citizen an injury. I believe in proper compensation being paid to the people whose land the Government propose to take.

Mr. Munsie: At the same time, do not you believe that those people should pay fair taxation to the Government in existing circumstances?

Mr. A. THOMSON: The position is that those people to-day are paying fair taxation.

Mr. Munsie: Then why give them the right to revalue?

Mr. A. THOMSON: That is all very fine. The Bill contains a clause for revaluing. It is not compulsory, however, for the Commissioner of Taxation to accept that revaluing. He can appeal against it. I wonder whether the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) is prepared to maintain that the cases cited by the member for Collie (Mr. Wilson) in connection with lands cleared for soldiers represent fair values.

Mr. Munsie: Those are not unimproved values, but improved values.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Very well. Does the hon. member suggest that a board composed as this Bill proposes would accept those valuations and pay those men the enormous costs mentioned by the member for Collie?

Mr. Munsie: Clause 7 deals with that matter. It refers to improvements.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I shall not recede from the attitude I adopted on last session's Bill. I shall support the second reading, in the hope that when the Bill is in Committee some of us may be able to convince hon. members that certain amendments are necessary.

Mr. Munsie: To include C.P. and leasehold lands as well.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. A. THOMSON: I have always maintained that we must be careful to see that Parliament does not do anything which may affect securities in this State. I do not wish to cast any reflection upon hon. members opposite, but we know that when they came into power we had what was termed, rightly or wrongly, "the Bath blight."

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We had the law carried out.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Just so, but it was alleged that that action seriously affected the values of landed securities in Western Australia.

Mr. Munsie: I admit that it did, but the land agents were responsible for that, and not the land holders.

Mr. A. THOMSON: We want to be very careful in this matter, particularly as land settlement represents the only hope Western Australia has of getting out of its present financial difficulties. By passing a law such as this we may possibly affect landed securities and so retard land settlement. I am of opinion that the Government have already full power and authority to purchase all the land they require.

Hon. T. Walker: Without this Bill?

Mr. A. THOMSON: Section 12 of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act Amendment Act of 1919 provides—

(1) The Governor may, subject as hereinafter provided, compulsorily acquire private land for the settlement of discharged soldiers or their dependants, under the provisions of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1918: Provided that the compulsory provisions of this Act shall only apply where the private land proposed to be acquired exceeds £5,000 in value, exclusive of improvements, unless in the opinion of the Minister it is necessary for the better and more economical subdivision of any Crown lands, including land acquired under the principal Act, to acquire adjoining private land.

(2) In this and the following sections of this Act, the term "private land" means land alienated by the Crown for an estate in fee simple, other than land granted to trustees by way of endowment, or as a reserve for any public purpose; and the term "owner" means any person who, as trustee, executor, administrator, life tenant, mortgagee, or otherwise howsoever possesses the legal power of sale of private land in fee simple, whether with or without the consent of the Supreme Court, or of any person having any estate or interest in the land.

Power is also given in Section 25 of the same Act that if any land compulsorily acquired is not disposed of to discharged soldiers within two years after the termination of the war, such land may be thrown open for selection under the provisions of the principal Act without restriction as to the class of selectors. Section 93 of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act brings in everyone who served in the late war. It is quite clear that the Government have full power, without the aid of fresh legislation, to acquire land.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—The board:

Mr. A. THOMSON: I move—

That progress be reported.

There are several amendments which members would like to place upon the Notice Paper prior to discussion. It would be fair to the Committee that those amendments should not be sprung upon them.

Hon. P. Collier: You cannot speak on this motion.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I am only giving my reasons.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot give his reasons.

Motion put and negatived.

The PREMIER: There has been ample time for hon. members to put amendments on the Notice Paper. However, should there be any clauses which members may consider should be given more consideration, I will provide a further opportunity for discussion.

Mr. A. Thomson: I will accept that.

Mr. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause 1 the word "three" be struck out.

I move the amendment with a view to inserting other words.

The Premier: What do you propose?

Mr. LATHAM: I propose to amend the subclause to provide for five members of the board.

The Premier: What is the object?

Mr. LATHAM: We propose to add further words to the subclause to provide that one of the additional members shall be a rural property owner, another the nominee of the Primary Producers' Association, and the fifth member to be the nominee of the Associated Banks.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member wishes to provide for a member of the board with local knowledge of a district, that position is already covered. I do not quite understand why the member for York wishes to have the clause amended in the direction he has suggested, and he has advanced no reason for the alteration. Hon. members will agree that the board is to protect the interests of all concerned, and the owner of property is capable of dealing with his own interests. If the hon. member considers that the board will not be fair to everyone, he is entitled to adopt that attitude. We purchase a great deal of land now through a board appointed under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act.

Mr. Latham: That is all right; that is not under an Act like the Bill under consideration.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. member wish the Committee to believe that nominees of political organisations should be on the board?

Mr. Latham: I think it would assist.

The PREMIER: I do not think so. I do not know why a representative of the Associated Banks should be on the board. I do not think they would want a representative. The Bill is designed very carefully so as to protect the securities of people who have advanced money for the development of our lands. Every Government has made a point of protecting the man who has advanced money for the development of land. One hon. member contended that the Government should do all the work. We do not want to do that, and so we have protected those who have advanced money for the purpose I have indicated. When it comes to a matter of spending the State's funds to purchase land

for settlement, I think the board proposed in the Bill is better than the one proposed to be substituted by the hon. member. What is the reason for the appointment of a representative of the Associated Banks?

Mr. Latham: To protect their own interests.

The PREMIER: With every respect for the banks, I do not agree that anyone outside should appoint a nominee on this board; the House should not accept it.

Mr. A. Thomson: The Government would have the selection.

The PREMIER: No, we would not. Of course, I knew that this proposal was coming forward.

Mr. Latham: We did not keep it a secret.

Hon. P. Collier: This is the first shot.

The PREMIER: It is no surprise to me.

Mr. Durack: Then you are fully prepared to meet it.

Hon. P. Collier: We did not think you would have the hardihood to bring it forward.

The PREMIER: I know the member for York is sincere, and thinks he is doing the best for the country in bringing forward this amendment. All the same, I think he should pause before going on with the amendment. At any rate, I cannot accept it.

Mr. Durack: There is always safety in numbers.

Hon. P. Collier: Make it 20, then.

The PREMIER: That is so.

Hon. P. Collier: The whole of your executive could become members if the board were made one of 20 members.

Mr. Johnston: At any rate, they would be trusted then.

The PREMIER: I hope the Committee will not accept the amendment. I do not know that big boards are as useful as small boards. Members are mistaken when they read into the Bill any attempt at confiscation. The member for Sussex correctly described this Bill last session. There is no intention to injure anyone under it, and members, if they look through the measure carefully, will see that there are ample safeguards. All we say is that land adjacent to railway lines, and suitable for closer settlement, should be cultivated. I hope the amendment will not be pressed.

Mr. PICKERING: I certainly press the amendment.

The Premier: It is your amendment, is it?

Mr. PICKERING: There is nothing unusual in having people of great experience on such boards as that indicated in the Bill. I am not satisfied that the boards appointed by the Government have the capacity they are supposed to possess.

The Premier: The Bill is the same as that of last year.

Mr. PICKERING: No, it is not. Last year the Bill was before members in the closing hours of the session and we could not go through it very carefully. We did not have an opportunity to analyse it adequately.

Hon. P. Collier: You spoke at length on it.

Mr. PICKERING: I may have done so, but in very few words. I have had time to reconsider the position and to deal with the matter in what I think is a better way.

Hon. P. Collier: There was plenty of time to consider the Bill.

Mr. McCallum: Conference had not met at that time.

Mr. PICKERING: We are satisfied that all possible safeguards should be taken in such a measure to protect vested interests. The credit of the State depends upon the security that landholders are prepared to advance. The Bill will undoubtedly lead to mistrust in land securities. No exception can be taken to a movement to see that the interests of those concerned in land are safeguarded. No exception, therefore, can be taken to our proposal that one of the members shall be a nominee of the Primary Producers' Association.

Hon. P. Collier: Is that all you want?

Mr. PICKERING: That is one of the things.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Have you ever heard of such a proposal being introduced into a Bill before?

Mr. PICKERING: Western Australia is a great country and we should lead with new proposals.

Hon. T. Walker: Then we may want a nominee of the Labour Party!

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We have never wanted one.

Mr. PICKERING: At any rate, we should have a nominee.

Hon. P. Collier: Are you serious?

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Why not have a parson on the board?

Mr. PICKERING: That is not necessary, but we think that a man who has the confidence of the primary producers should be a member of the board. We want to nominate a man to this board.

Hon. P. Collier: I admire your frankness.

Mr. PICKERING: It is worthy of admiration. We require to have confidence in the board. We have no confidence in the board proposed by the Government.

Mr. Munsie: How many people have confidence in the Primary Producers' Association?

Mr. PICKERING: Probably as many as have confidence in the Trades Hall. Our object is to put on the board three persons who shall not be Government employees, and we want one who will represent the Primary Producers' Association. The board proposed in the Bill is not satisfactory to us.

Mr. Simons: Why not name Monger in the Bill?

Mr. PICKERING: We do not want him.

Mr. Simons: But he may insist upon it.

Mr. PICKERING: In any case, the Bill is futile, and I should like to see it thrown out. Justice must be done to the landed interest. We are involved in a policy of land settlement, yet we have here a measure which will destroy all confidence in land tenure. The board will virtually deal with every question that comes before it.

Hon. P. Collier: And Cabinet at its discretion will accept or reject the board's recommendations.

Mr. PICKERING: Cabinet will not depart from the recommendations of its own board. The whole power of the Bill will devolve on the board.

Hon. P. Collier: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. PICKERING: I trust hon. members will have at heart the interests of the land holders.

Hon. P. COLLIER: I admire the frank way in which the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) has stated his views. His leader was more cautious. He did not tell us straight out that it was proposed to have a representative of the Primary Producers' Association on the board.

Mr. Latham: I mentioned it.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Not in the emphatic manner of the member for Sussex. This is the most astounding proposition, the most impudent I have ever heard put forward in the House. It is the first fruits of the all important conference recently held in the city.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Soviet government.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Last year the member for Sussex approved in whole-hearted fashion of the Bill, but now he has recast his views. He asks that a political organisation shall nominate a member of the board. Let us see where that may lead us. On the executive of the Primary Producers Association are many owners of large areas of land. It is quite conceivable that the first duty of the board will be to deal with some of the holdings of members of that executive. So we might easily have a member of that executive sitting in judgment upon the rights of another member of the same executive, deciding whether the land owned by the president of the executive, Mr. Monger, should be compulsorily acquired for the purpose of closer settlement. The hon. member said he wanted an impartial board. Would a member of the executive be impartial in a case such as I have indicated, in a matter affecting one of his own colleagues on the executive? The thing is ridiculous. I did not think it possible that any such proposal would be submitted in the House. The hon. member will next want a representative of the Primary Producers Association on the Supreme Court bench. I am not going to worry about the amendment, because except a few benighted members on the cross-benches nobody would dream of introducing so pernicious a principle into the business of the country. We might as well hand over the whole government of the State to the Primary Producers' Association, at whose direction this amendment has been moved. It is evidence of the militant spirit in the minds of that executive. The hon. member would have us believe that the board has the final say in the acquisition of land for closer settlement. In truth

the Board can only recommend to the Government, who will have to accept responsibility for any action taken under the Bill. This is the first time we have seen this hydra-headed monster display its fangs in this Chamber, and I hope it will be scotched in such a manner as will have the effect of making those responsible for the amendment think very carefully before again submitting anything of the sort.

Mr. A. THOMSON: One would naturally expect the Leader of the Opposition to make capital out of the amendment. One member of the board is to be an officer of the Department of Lands and Surveys and another an officer of the Agricultural Bank. This legislation will take away from land owners their inherent right to cultivate their land as they think fit after having complied with the conditions under which they took up their holdings.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: The intention is to take the land from the people who are not cultivating it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But it is proposed to give the board authority to say that certain land is not being properly utilised. Representatives of country constituencies are not asking anything unreasonable in requesting that one member of the board be a representative of producing interests. It would not be fair to landowners to place such power in the hands of an unscrupulous Government. I do not say that the present Government are unscrupulous, but we may have a Government who might be carried away by a popular cry and who might do a distinct wrong to land owners.

Hon. P. Collier: Of course we might have a Country Party Government some day.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Quite so. I shall be prepared to discuss that at the proper time.

Mr. Simons: It will not get past the discussion stage.

Hon. P. Collier: Will not the third member of the board represent the producers?

Mr. A. THOMSON: No; he is to be appointed from time to time by the Government.

The Minister for Works: The clause distinctly says that he shall.

Hon. P. Collier: He shall have local knowledge.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: How could he have local knowledge unless he was a producer?

Mr. A. THOMSON: He might be a surveyor. The Government who intend to acquire the land will have a preponderance of representation on the board.

The Minister for Works: They have to find the money.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But the Government propose to take from the people that which by law belongs to the people.

The Minister for Works: That does not touch the point you are arguing.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It does. The Leader of the Opposition said the board had no authority to acquire the land, but he must ad-

mit that if the Government did not act on the recommendations of the board—

The Premier: They could not act on any other.

Mr. A. THOMSON: But the Government under the existing law have power to acquire as much land as they want.

Hon. P. Collier: If the recommendation of the board did not commend itself to the judgment of the Government, they would not give effect to it.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Then why have a board?

Hon. T. Walker: To inquire.

The Premier: No Government would pay a penny more than the board recommended.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I agree; that is why we want proper representation on the board. Representatives of country districts have had to take up the cudgels on behalf of constituents because the Works Department, in resuming land, has on various occasions done serious injustice to the owners.

The Minister for Works: I would like to know the cases.

Mr. A. THOMSON: Land has been resumed and the owners have not received adequate compensation. One man said, "We have to submit. What is the use of fighting the Government?"

Mr. Willcock: The Government have been bled more over land resumption than over anything else.

Mr. A. THOMSON: There have been a number of instances in which land owners have been well bled by the Government.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Give the instances.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I do not intend to quote them here, but if necessary I could bring the men to Perth. The request for representation on the board is not unreasonable. Why should the Government have two nominees when they are out to compulsorily acquire land belonging to the people? If the board consisted of five members instead of three, one might be a representative of the associated banks, who have advanced money and whose country managers have a fair idea of land values.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: A bank manager could be appointed as the third member of the board.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The board will have the right to say whether land is being properly utilised, and we shall not be giving the land owner a fair deal if we appoint two Government officials who must naturally be biased by their instructions from the Government.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You insinuate that the Government would give them instructions?

Mr. McCallum: He said so.

The Minister for Works: The Government's instructions might be better than those of the Primary Producers' Association.

Mr. A. THOMSON: The Committee should see that no injustice is done to any section of the community. If members have

confidence in a board of three, they should have confidence in a board of five.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The member for Katanning, quite inadvertently, I think, referred to the two members of the board receiving instructions from the Government. Would there be any possibility of a representative of the Primary Producers' Association receiving instructions from his executive?

Hon. P. Collier: Oh no!

Mr. Simons: He would not last ten minutes if he did not.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** In the light of the published reports of the recent conference—

Hon. P. Collier: And some not published.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Surely it is not unreasonable to suppose that the representative of the primary producers would receive his instructions before he went to the board, and would be accountable to the executive, instead of to the Government of the day, who in turn are accountable to Parliament. We are dealing with the liberties and privileges of the people, and if we attempt to tinker or tamper with them by providing for a representative of one political body, then every political body in the State has an equal right to ask for a representative. The Country Party should regard the amendment as an attack on the rights and liberties of the people of the State. The member for York asks for a board of five instead of three, one to be from the Primary Producers' Association.

Mr. Latham: As an expert adviser.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I hope class legislation of this description will never be suggested again. We have long been endeavouring to get away from class distinctions and now we are asked to go back. Presently we shall be like shackled fools.

Mr. SIMONS: This amendment represents the cheekiest proposal ever written into the records of this Parliament. It is a gross indecency in a political sense.

Mr. Pickering: You are a good judge of that.

Mr. SIMONS: Having been associated with some of the Country Party members, I am an excellent judge. This proposal, apart from its audacity, is backed up by a very unfair imputation against the character of the average Government officers who sit on boards of this kind.

Mr. Pickering: It is their ability.

Mr. SIMONS: It is their inability to accept orders from an outside executive that gives rise to the objection. The member for Katanning said that the Government officers would accept instructions and directions from the Government. He wishes to neutralise that influence by having on the board a member of the Primary Producers' Association, who would also have to accept instructions.

**The Minister for Works:** From whom?

Mr. SIMONS: From the Primary Producers' Association. Would not the association presume to instruct this delegate? It pre-

sumes to instruct the Premier and Ministers, and presumes to possess the right to whip them when it thinks they have misbehaved. Can we expect that organisation to have any mercy for its nominee on a board of this kind? The nominee would be sent to the board by the executive of the Primary Producers' Association, the members of which do all their producing between Wellington Street and St. George's Terrace.

Mr. A. Thomson: That is not correct.

Mr. SIMONS: It is correct. This is one of the first signs that members of the Country Party are taking their orders from an extraneous body, whose ambition it is to domineer and control the politics of the State. Since the Farmers and Settlers' conference, in almost every measure we can trace the control of this outside executive, which presumes to enjoy the privilege of controlling Parliament, and bodies such as this board which are the creation of Parliament. I hope this proposal will be rejected because of its audacity.

**THE PREMIER:** We mean to be quite fair in this measure. Every safeguard has been inserted for the protection of the property of the landowner, and the security of those who lend money. Provision is made in Clause 7 for arriving at the value of the land.

Mr. Pickering: We have not agreed to that yet.

**THE PREMIER:** In the event of the amount not being agreed to, the question can be settled by arbitration.

Mr. A. Thomson: Will not that put the land holder to considerable expense?

**THE PREMIER:** No. The Bill also gives the landowner the opportunity of revaluing his land. If a man improves his land and pays the additional taxation he can keep it. It is only proposed to take unimproved and unutilised land. No one need fear that he will be deprived of his land. No Bill could be more fair than this one.

Mr. PICKERING: I am not satisfied with the explanation of the Premier. We do not agree with the proposed system of valuation.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I rise to a point of order. Are we not discussing the composition of the board, not the valuation of land?

**THE CHAIRMAN:** We are discussing the composition of the board.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not know what special knowledge an officer of the Lands and Surveys Department has to enable him to arrive at the productive value of land. We prefer to have on the board a man who has an intimate knowledge of this question.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I rise to a point of order. We are dealing with Subclause 1 and not Subclause 2.

**THE CHAIRMAN:** I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the question before the Chair.

Mr. PICKERING: There should be five members on the board, instead of three.

Hon. T. Walker: Why not have 50, and give us all a chance.



Mr. PICKERING: A board of five would enable the party to which I belong to obtain representation for the interests it represents. We are afraid we shall not get proper consideration.

Hon. P. Collier: Has your Association no confidence in the Government, although half the members of Cabinet belong to your party?

Mr. PICKERING: We are afraid the Government have too much confidence in the board. Three is an unfortunate number, especially when all three are to be appointed by the same person.

Hon. P. Collier: But three members of the Cabinet belong to your party.

Mr. PICKERING: We do not like those—I thought the Leader of the Opposition was referring to the members of the board. By the addition of another two members to the board, interests requiring representation would be enabled to get it. The board as proposed by the clause would not be of such a nature as to inspire confidence in the people whom the measure will affect. If the Government had provided that one of the three members of the board should be nominated by the Primary Producers' Association, the position would be quite different. The interests affected are vital to the State, vital to the policy of land settlement. I hope the Committee will consider carefully before rejecting the amendment. Much more is bound up in it than the Opposition appear to grasp. We fear that the powers of the board under the clause as it stands may be exercised to the detriment of the best interests of the State.

Mr. MUNSIE: Is this Parliament to legislate in order to put members of a particular organisation on a board? In half an hour I could lay my hand on six men in this town who own fairly large areas of land, areas such as are likely to come within the scope of the measure, and who are not members of the Primary Producers' Association.

Mr. A. Thomson: On a point of order. The member for Sussex was restricted to discussing the question of three members or five. Is the member for Hannans now in order?

The CHAIRMAN: The Deputy Leader of the Country Party, in moving his amendment, gave as a reason that he desired a member of the Primary Producers' Association and a representative of the Associated Banks to be appointed members of the board. The member for Hannans is in order in discussing that aspect. I hope, however, that hon. members will confine themselves as closely as possible to the amendment before the Chair.

Mr. MUNSIE: What is to become of the landholder who is not a member of the Primary Producers' Association? If he is to be given consideration, who is going to nominate his representative on the board? I endorse the Premier's statement that every protection is given to the landholder by this Bill. In fact, there is so much protection given to the landholder that the Bill, if passed, will prove absolutely useless, and will not bring to the Government a single acre of land.

The Minister for Mines: The aim of the Bill is not so much that the Government should get land, as that the land should be put into use.

Mr. MUNSIE: I have no objection to giving the Bill a trial, if only for the purpose of disillusionising the Premier as to his idea that he will get land for closer settlement under the measure. As for the amendment, I hope it will be defeated, if only in view of the reasons advanced in favour of the increase.

Mr. LATHAM: Possibly the Committee are overlooking the fact that the reason why the Primary Producers' Association were particularly mentioned was that they are considered to be more competent to give expert advice in this connection than any other organisation. The Agricultural Bank management will be able to advise the Government so far as the bank's interests are concerned, and the Lands Department will advise regarding surveys. But the third member of the board, the local representative, might have very little idea of the value of land, or of its use in small holdings. Therefore, we suggest that an organisation specially qualified to do so should nominate the proper man for the job. The board should be competent to subdivide repurchased lands into blocks on which a man can make a living. The suggestion that one of the two additional members should come from the executive of the Primary Producers' Association has merely emanated from the Opposition. We might get a man from the back blocks, say from Bruce Rock.

The Minister for Works: But he would get his instructions from the executive of the Primary Producers' Association.

Mr. LATHAM: The members of the board will be above suspicion, and will not get orders from anybody.

The Minister for Mines: How are the Associated Banks interested?

Mr. LATHAM: In that they have made advances against the lands.

The Minister for Mines: Will the Associated Banks be sellers in any cases?

Mr. LATHAM: There are already two nominees from Government departments, namely, from the Agricultural Bank and the Lands Department. Due consideration will no doubt be given to the abilities of the persons to be appointed from those departments. What we want to ensure is that no injustice shall be done to the man from whom the land is taken, and also to ensure that the man who gets the land will make a success of it after he has got it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The board will have no power in that respect.

Mr. LATHAM: The board will make recommendations to the Government as to the subdivision of land acquired, and presumably the Government will follow those recommendations.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Have the Associated Banks demanded representation?

Mr. LATHAM: Neither the banks nor the Primary Producers' Association have demanded anything.

The Minister for Works: But the thing was pretty well discussed at your recent conference.

Mr. LATHAM: The matter was discussed when the farmers came to a common centre to exchange opinions on various subjects of mutual interest, just as the unions assemble for the purpose of discussing matters of common interest and arriving at an understanding with regard to them. Everyone wishes for the better organisation of our people, so as to get the best results. Why should not representatives of the people meet in assemblies and discuss matters of common interest? It is suggested that the Bill means confiscation.

Hon. M. F. Troy: Your own side said that.

Mr. LATHAM: If it is a matter involving confiscation, that is all the more reason why we should give it more consideration. The board will mean the salvation or the failure of the measure.

Mr. Mann: There is the right of appeal.

Mr. LATHAM: How many people can afford to go to the Supreme Court to contest an appeal under this Bill? We should avoid that necessity. I was anxious that the Premier should agree to the adjournment of the Committee stage of the Bill, so that we could go into the Bill with him.

Mr. Munsie: You wanted another conference.

Mr. Wilson: You wanted to give him instructions.

Mr. LATHAM: There was no suggestion of giving instructions. I have made out a fair and reasonable case why a nominee of the Primary Producers' Association should be provided for. My object is to secure the best and most competent board to deal with this question. I congratulate the Premier on the attention the Committee is giving to this Bill, and particularly on the full attendance of Opposition members.

Mr. Munsie: That is more than we can say of the Country Party when industrial matters are before the Chamber.

Mr. LATHAM: Evidently the Opposition realise how important the Bill will be to the State.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: We do.

Mr. Wilson: We are watching the Bulgarians.

The Minister for Mines: Is it not possible that the nominee of the third interest may be a member of the Primary Producers' Association?

Mr. LATHAM: I cannot say that it is.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: At any rate, we are watching events.

Mr. LATHAM: We want to avoid any chance of the best advice not being available on this board, and, for that reason, we ask that our association shall have the right to nominate a man and that his name shall be submitted to the Government.

Mr. Wilson: That will be the end of it.

Mr. LATHAM: I do not say that even then we shall have this man appointed. It can be left to the members of the Government to decide that question.

The Minister for Mines: What about a representative of the settlers who have to take over the land?

Mr. LATHAM: The nominee we propose would be able to do justice to both the buyer and the seller.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Therefore you want an independent party.

Mr. LATHAM: We have enough of the independent party; we want an interested man.

Members: Of course you do.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: We want an impartial man.

Mr. LATHAM: We want a man with knowledge of the position, and the Government want advisers with that knowledge.

Mr. Lambert: What about the Government's expert advisers?

Mr. McCallum: Evidently a man cannot be independent and give good advice as well.

Mr. LATHAM: If a nominee of the Primary Producers' Association be appointed, he will be prepared to give the Government a fair deal. I do not think a dishonest man would take the position.

The Minister for Mines: Such a man would not remain there long.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: But they are all honest men!

Mr. LATHAM: I would be the first to assist in putting out a dishonest man. The Country Party offer this suggestion in the best interests of the State, and to help assure that this legislation will be successful.

The Minister for Works: Your fight should have been on the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. LATHAM: The board is the all-important feature of the Bill so far as we are concerned. It means failure or success, despite what the Minister for Works has to say. An incompetent board will mean that their mistakes will make a failure and farce of the whole Bill.

The Minister for Mines: It is rather a novel suggestion that a member of such an association should be on the board.

Mr. LATHAM: It may be novel, but we make the suggestion that it would be in the best interests of the State for such a man to be appointed. To look upon it as a political idea, is not right or fair.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The member for York has made many absurd misstatements and also remarkable confessions. He states that the Primary Producers' Association representative on the board would be able to advise the Government on all matters affecting the land. How can one member have a knowledge of everything concerning the country? The member for York claims

powers for his association's representative that no man can possess.

Hon. P. Collier: But the Primary Producers' Association's representative is to be a man with super knowledge!

The Minister for Mines: We have provided for a local man, because we recognise the importance of local knowledge.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I fear the appointment of a representative of the Primary Producers' Association because he would be a member of the executive of that organisation; he could not be anyone else.

Mr. Latham: Not necessarily so.

Hon. P. Collier: It would be highly probable.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The member for York said that the Primary Producers' Association representative would be elected by the whole of the primary producers. I have in memory the election of McGibbon. A real farmer and a bona-fide man was a candidate for that particular position, but McGibbon was recommended to the wheatgrowers by Monger.

The Minister for Mines: Does he come under the figure "3" or "5"?

Hon. M. F. TROY: He comes under neither. He was not a primary producer, but the "Primary Producer" newspaper published a special edition, copies of which were sent throughout the country, recommending that no man but McGibbon should be elected, with the result that McGibbon was elected in preference to a bona-fide farmer. The member for York urged the necessity for a representative of the Primary Producer's Association on the board and stated his reasons in support of that contention. He said that that representative would be elected by the primary producers throughout the country, and endeavoured to show how fair that gentleman would be. I pointed out how the election would probably be carried out, to show that his object would not be achieved. The danger is that the nominee of the association would be a member of the executive, and it has to be remembered that members of the executive are among the largest landholders in Western Australia. They are men who would be affected by this measure.

Mr. A. Thomson: That statement is hardly correct.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Monger is one of the largest landholders in this country.

The Minister for Mines: You would not object to him making good use of his land.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I do not object to that, but the Bill is for the purpose of securing more settlement upon the land.

Mr. A. Thomson: No matter whether a man is using his land or not?

Hon. M. F. TROY: We want to put 12 settlers where one obtains now. There would be a danger in appointing a member of the executive of an organisation so vitally interested. Who will find the money for the purchase of land under the Bill, the Government or the Primary Producers' Association?

The Minister for Works: The Government are responsible.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Then the Government should deal with this matter.

The Minister for Mines: The new settler has to find the money eventually.

Hon. M. F. TROY: Quite so. Then again the Primary Producers' Association is not representative of the farmers of Western Australia. It represents a minority of them.

Mr. Johnston: No, a majority of them.

Hon. M. F. TROY: No matter to what locality hon. members may go, they will find that the majority of the people are not affiliated with the Primary Producers' Association. I know that as a fact. I am not prepared to believe that the members of the Country Party have not got their instructions, but that body suggests that that association should have the right to nominate a member of the board. If the Primary Producers' Association were representative of 90 per cent. of the people on the land, it might be different.

Mr. Latham: We do.

Hon. M. F. TROY: The association does not represent 20 per cent. There are vital objections to this proposal, and one is that the nominee of the association would be influenced by the executive. The members of the Country Party are influenced by the executive now. All boards in Western Australia have been appointed by the Government and have been responsible to the Government alone, not to any outside organisation. We should follow that practice here.

Mr. LAMBERT: I am pleased to see by the trend of the debate that the Committee are not going to stultify themselves by accepting the amendment. We have lately seen a good deal of the political insolence of this outside party—the Primary Producers' Association.

Mr. Latham: You have seen it?

Mr. LAMBERT: I am not speaking to the hon. member, although I may have him in mind when speaking of political insolence.

Mr. Latham: On a point of order! Is the member for Coolgardie in order?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member should speak to the amendment as closely as possible.

Mr. LAMBERT: As to the demand that a member of the Primary Producers' Association should be placed on the board, I do not know whether that nominee would represent the mining section, the pastoral section or any other section. We could not have better evidence of political insolence than is afforded by the amendment. I regret that the Government should have brought down so ineffectual a measure; but we need not make the proposed board even more ineffectual by conceding this insolent demand from the Country Party. It is time the Primary Producers' Association got a political smack in the face.

Mr. Pickering: On a point of order. The hon. member is not discussing the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is discussing the reasons given by the member for York when moving the amendment. The

member for York said he wanted to have a member of the Primary Producers' Association on the board.

Mr. LAMBERT: Because their insolent demand is being shown up in all its nakedness, they do not like it. I hope the Committee will not support the amendment, this insolent demand of the executive of the Primary Producers' Association.

Capt. CARTER: The Country Party are asking that "three" be struck out and "five" inserted in lieu. The reason given, especially by the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) is that they distrust the Government responsible for the creation of the board. If they distrust the Government in the appointing of three members of the board, how can they trust Cabinet in the appointment of five? Of course I know they want the additional two members to be appointed on the recommendation of the party, perhaps of the party outside. However, that would still leave the balance of power in the hands of the nominees of the Government. No reference has been made to the cost of the board. If for no other reason than that of economy, I hope the amendment will be negatived and the board restricted to three members. I am surprised at the suggestion that the Associated Banks need the proposed protection. When the Associated Banks really desire a representative on the board, Parliament may be prepared to consider the appointment of such representative. It is more probable, as suggested by the Minister for Mines, that the Associated Banks would not allow a member of any of their staffs to take a seat on the board. In any case, one or another of the banks probably will have so large an interest in the property proposed to be resumed, that in very deed the bank will be an interested party; so that contention is blown out.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I support the amendment in order that the board may be brought into conformity with the several other boards appointed to deal with land settlement and agriculture, such as the Industries Assistance Board, the Board of Trustees of the Agricultural Bank, the Wheat Board, and the Soldier Settlement Board. None of those boards has a majority of public servants in its composition.

The Minister for Mines: Who nominates them?

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is not the point; the point is the composition of the board. The majority of the trustees of the Agricultural Bank are not public servants.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is a board of three.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Only one is a public servant. On the proposed board I want to see a majority outside the Public Service. There is on the Industries Assistance Board a member of the executive of the Primary Producers' Association in the person of Mr. Moran. Certainly he was not nominated by the association. From the remarks of hon.

members opposite it would appear that membership of the Primary Producers' Association, which is keeping the Government in office, is to be looked upon as a detriment to appointment to the proposed board.

The Minister for Agriculture: According to you, no public servant is worthy of a seat on the board.

Mr. JOHNSTON: That is not so, but I do say that the public servants ought not to have a majority on the board. One member of the board should be not only a member of the Department of Lands and Surveys, but should be also a licensed surveyor. There is not a majority of public servants on the Soldier Settlement Board. Mr. Sutton is the only public servant on the Wheat Board. I appreciate the value of the services of public servants in their proper capacity, but if we are to have a majority of public servants to deal with resumed properties, then we should not have a board at all, but should let the department do the work, and so save the cost of the board. Let us have on the board men outside the Public Service.

Mr. Simons: And outside of executive control.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I do not want executive control; but surely the farmers through their executive should have representation on the board! I am surprised at the suggestion that the Primary Producers' Association should be practically debarred from appointment to the board.

Mr. Simons: We are appalled at the indecency of the proposal.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I am surprised that the hon. member should desire the appointment of a non-unionist farmer instead of a good unionist farmer. It has been suggested that a representative of the associated banks should be one of the members of the board. If the Government could find a man of keen business acumen and with a good knowledge of agricultural land, it would be true economy to appoint him. The Government could then depend upon acquiring the land as cheaply as possible for the benefit of the settlers to be put on the land.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Do you want a representative from the Westralian Farmers' Bank.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I want a representative of the Primary Producers' Association, and a majority of the board to be other than public servants.

The Minister for Mines: You have been arguing that other boards have been satisfactory.

Mr. JOHNSTON: I want this one to be satisfactory also. If it is strengthened by the addition of two members the Government will be acting wisely.

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

Ayes	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	33
Majority against			23

## AYES.

Mr. Denton	Mr. C. C. Maley
Mr. Durack	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Piessé
Mr. Johnston	Mr. A. Thomson
Mr. Latbam	Mr. J. Thomson
	(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Carter	Mr. Money
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munster
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. O'Loughlin
Mr. Collier	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Sampson
Mrs. Cowan	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Davies	Mr. Simons
Mr. George	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Gibson	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Heron	Mr. Troy
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Walker
Mr. H. K. Maley	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Mann	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Mullany
Mr. McCallum	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move an amendment—

That after "time" in line 4 of Subclause 2, the words "but such member shall not be a member of an executive or nominee of an executive of any political party or organisation" be inserted.

The discussion to-night has convinced me of the necessity for this amendment. It was stated that a member of a certain political party was desired as one of the members of the board, and the Minister for Mines interjected—"It does not say that the third member shall not be a member of the Primary Producers' Association." This shows the necessity for guarding against the possibility of any such appointment being made. The political parties in this State include the Nationalists, Liberal, Primary Producers, Labour, National-Labour, Metropolitan, and Independent, and it is not right that any one of these organisations should be able to nominate for the board a person who is a member of its executive. The board should be independent and in a position to act without fear of offending any executive. The Government intend to buy land and to pay for it, and the members of the board responsible for recommending the purchase should be free of any political party. If we should have to take our seats on the other side of the House within the next few weeks, the Labour Party might ask for the appointment of one of its executive members.

The Minister for Mines: Then you could reply that only the other day you had moved an amendment against it and therefore could not agree to it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: We must safeguard the interests of the purchasers of the land—the people who are to be settled on the land.

The Minister for Mines: Could not the Government safeguard the interests of all?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is what I am suggesting. I want the people of the State to get a fair deal. To this end we must have a board composed of men entirely free from any political organisation. The Bill does not say that the third member of the board shall not belong to the Primary Producers' Association. In view of the remarks of Country Party members to-night, and the interjection of the Minister for Mines, it may well be assumed that the third member of the board will be a nominee of the Primary Producers' Association. The Government should have a free hand in the choice of those who shall form this board.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The member for Williams-Narrogin argued that he wanted five members to compose the board, to ensure that the majority should be men who are outside the Civil Service. I asked by way of interjection who appointed the members of existing boards, and he admitted that the Government had done so, and that although a member of one board happened to be a member of the Primary Producers' executive—he had not been nominated by them or selected because of that fact—he had rendered good service to the State. If the hon. member was satisfied with the operations of existing boards appointed by the Government, he should be able to trust us to make similar appointments in the future. The best man we can get may be an ardent political supporter of some party, but he may, nevertheless, be a fair-minded man and be able to do excellent service to the State. When the Government make an unwise choice, that is the time to find fault with them.

Mr. PICKERING: The member for North-East Fremantle has conferred a gratuitous insult upon the Primary Producers' Association.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I did not mention that organisation in my amendment.

Mr. PICKERING: Most of the men who would be eligible for appointment on this board probably play an active part in some political organisation. On that ground they should be better able to understand all those questions of importance to the State. If we pass the amendment we must overlook the claims of many eligible men. After the amendment is defeated I intend to move that a proviso be added to the clause stating that the third member of the board shall be a member of the Primary Producers' Association.

Hon. P. COLLIER: In ordinary circumstances I would not support a proposal of this kind, but we are now dealing with a Bill under extraordinary circumstances. We have been told to-night the length to which certain members, urged on by a certain organisation, are prepared to go—

Mr. A. Thomson: That is not correct.

Mr. Pickering: You cannot prove it.

Hon. P. COLLIER:—in order to colour legislation which might affect the interests of the landowners of the State. This is the first attempt on the part of that organisation—I will not say, to pollute the legislation of the country—to secure their own way, but it has failed. Although the Bill may not impose an obligation upon the Government to appoint a representative of the Primary Producers' Association upon the board, we know the amount of pressure that will be brought to bear upon the Government, should this Bill pass, when the appointment of members of the board is under consideration. We know very well that a certain executive, through their representatives in this Chamber and in the Cabinet, will endeavour to have on the board a member directly representing their interests. In order to relieve the present and any future Government from such insidious pressure, it is advisable to carry the amendment. Previous boards were appointed prior to the rise to eminence and power of the Primary Producers' Association, and therefore the Governments of previous days had an absolutely free hand to select men fitted for the duties. But we must look at the situation now confronting us. Let the present Government be protected by the adoption of the amendment. Intriguing, autocratic juntas must be put in their proper place. We know that the Primary Producers' Association are opposed to the Bill in principle. No one will welcome the amendment more than the Premier, though the hon. gentleman may not vote for it.

The PREMIER: As to this amendment, the member for North-East Fremantle must be joking. Cabinet can be trusted to accept its responsibilities in regard to appointments. It would be a great pity if the amendment found a place in the Bill. Pressure has never been applied to me since I have been in office, and I do not think it is likely to be. Mr. Moran, a member of the executive of the Primary Producers Association, is a member of the Industries Assistance Board, and has done very good work there.

Mr. PICKERING: I hope the mover of the amendment will not persist with it. Underlying the attack on the Primary Producers' Association and its executive is, no doubt, an indirect attack on other organisations and other executives, or a warning to them to "keep off the grass." I am perfectly sure that any member of any organisation to which I belong would, if appointed to a board, act in the best interests of the State. It is essential that the third member of the board should be cognisant of all the circumstances of the agricultural industry. He should be able to advise the other members of the board as to the danger of turning land from sheep raising to, say, dairying. It is essential in the interests of the country that the board should be widened, and that its personnel should be such as to command the confidence of the people. I hope the amendment will be defeated.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I trust the member for North-East Fremantle will withdraw his amendment. I deprecate the Opposition's attack on the Country Party, who are in no wise controlled by any outside junta or body. I was surprised to hear the member for North-East Fremantle say, "Our duty is to look after the buyers of the land, and not the sellers."

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I said nothing of the kind.

Mr. A. THOMSON: That shows the necessity for members on the cross benches putting up a legitimate fight for what they consider is right. I hope the amendment by the member for North-East Fremantle will be withdrawn and if that is done, I hope to move a further amendment that will meet the contentions on both sides. My amendment would be to the effect that the third member should be eligible for re-appointment, be a person practised in agriculture and having local knowledge, and be appointed from time to time.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The member for Katanning has misrepresented me.

Mr. A. Thomson: I had no intention of doing so. I took a note of what I thought you said.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I said we should have an independent board and I also said that there might be members of the executive of the Labour Party who, if a Labour Government were in office, might say: "We are here to look after the buyers of the land." I was replying to the argument by members of the Country Party who want a man on the board to look after the interests of sellers of land.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. A. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 5, after "person" the words "practised in agriculture and" be inserted.

Hon. P. Collier: That is unnecessary.

Mr. A. THOMSON: It is not superfluous.

The Minister for Mines: Yes it is.

[Hon. G. Taylor took the Chair.]

Mr. A. THOMSON: The reason for the amendment is that the board will inquire into the suitability and requirements for closer settlement, of any lands held in fee simple but unutilised and unproductive. Subclause 2 of Clause 3 sets out what land shall be deemed unutilised and unproductive within the meaning of the Bill and I consider that the third nominee should have a thorough knowledge of, and be practised in agriculture.

The Minister for Mines: The land might be required for horticultural purposes.

Mrs. Cowan: Or for viticultural purposes.

The Minister for Mines: How can he have local knowledge unless he is practised in agriculture, or horticulture, and so on?

**Mr. A. THOMSON:** The man may have local knowledge of a district, but it is possible the Government may appoint the town bellman.

**The Minister for Works:** You surely do not say the Government would be foolish enough to do a thing like that?

**Mr. A. THOMSON:** I do not.

**Hon. P. Collier:** The member would have to possess local knowledge of the matters under inquiry for the time being.

**Mr. A. THOMSON:** I hope the Premier will accept the amendment, and we will then make sure of having a man practised in agriculture and having local knowledge.

**The Minister for Mines:** How could he comply with the requirements of the clause unless he had that knowledge?

**The PREMIER:** If the member for Katanning reads the clause carefully, he will see that the man to be appointed must have a local knowledge of the matters under inquiry for the time being. In those circumstances, he must have a knowledge of the matters concerning the land and the use to which the land is to be put. I thought at first that the amendment might be acceptable, but it is clearly provided for in the clause as it stands.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Inquiries of boards:

**Hon. P. COLLIER:** I move an amendment—

That in line 3 after "simple" the words "or held under the Crown on conditional purchase lease or otherwise" be added.

The amendment deals with a subject which received a good deal of consideration on the second reading of the Bill. There was a fairly general consensus of opinion that the Bill should cover land other than that held in fee simple. The member for York who has a considerable experience of conditional purchase land in the wheat areas, has pointed out that many men hold areas larger than they can properly utilise. I see no reason why we should not include conditional purchase land or any other land, the only test being whether the owner is putting that land to the use contemplated by the Bill. If the owner of land, no matter how it is held, comes within the scope of Clause 3, it should be competent for the Government to acquire it for closer settlement.

**Mr. Johnston:** It should be liable to forfeiture under the Act.

**Hon. P. COLLIER:** I know that the improvement conditions applying to conditional purchase leases have not been rigorously enforced in the past. It may be that considerable areas held under conditional purchase conditions are forfeitable under this heading, but the Government have not enforced these improvement conditions to that extent. There can be no objection to the provisions of the Bill applying to such land. In this view I am supported by Mr. McLarty, than whom there is no better authority in

Western Australia on such questions, in his evidence before the Select Committee appointed in another place. Mr. McLarty expressed his opinion very emphatically that power should be taken to acquire conditional purchase land as well as freehold property. He also expressed the opinion that fully 50 per cent. of the land held unutilised along existing railways was conditional purchase land. Therefore if we do not include conditional purchase land in the Bill, on the statement of Mr. McLarty it will mean that at least half the land which to-day is being held unutilised along the railways will be exempt and beyond the power of the Government to take for closer settlement. In some of the States of the Commonwealth where they have similar Acts—

**The Premier:** In Victoria I suppose?

**Hon. P. COLLIER:** Yes, in Victoria they have power to take conditional purchase land. I fail to see why conditional purchase land and other leasehold land should not be included.

**Mr. MacCallum Smith:** Have not the Government power to take it now?

**Hon. P. Collier:** I do not know. I know that under the terms of conditional purchase certain improvements have to be effected.

**Mr. Davies:** They are not very stringent.

**Hon. P. Collier:** No, especially when the land is held under residential qualifications. Then the improvements are very slight. The Government have certain power in this direction, but it has not been exercised to any great extent.

**Mr. MacCallum Smith:** It may not be exercised under this provision.

**Hon. P. COLLIER:** Still the power should be taken. This is the only measure under which land can be compulsorily acquired, except by forfeiture for non-compliance with the conditions. My amendment covers not only conditional purchase land but all land held under lease, such as grazing and pastoral leases. Why should there be any exemption? If in the interests of closer settlement it is desirable that land should be compulsorily acquired, I see no reason why pastoral or grazing leases should not be taken.

**Mr. MacCallum Smith:** Pastoral leases can be forfeited now if the conditions are not observed.

**Hon. P. COLLIER:** But those conditions are negligible.

**Mr. Davies:** The Bill will not apply to pastoral leases.

**Hon. P. COLLIER:** Under my amendment it will.

**Mr. Davies:** No, it applies to only the South-West division.

**Hon. P. COLLIER:** We can alter that by a further amendment. However, there are pastoral leases in the South-West division. I had a big pastoral area in the South-West division in the days when the shepherd kings of Eucla held sway. Logically the Committee cannot refuse to include all land in a Bill of this kind.

Mr. MacCallum Smith: Already the Government have a special right to resume pastoral leases.

Hon. P. COLLIER: Even though the owner of a pastoral lease has complied with the terms of his lease, it may still be evident that in the interests of the State his holding should be subdivided for closer settlement. In such a case, surely we should have the right to resume the property and subdivide it! Why should we exempt the holders of pastoral leases? If the principle be good in the South-West in respect of agricultural lands, surely it is good too in portions of the State where the pastoral industry is carried on! There should be no exemption whatever. The Bill should apply to all forms of land tenure. If the Bill be justifiable at all, it should be given general application.

The PREMIER: There is a great difference between leasehold and freehold land. Land held under conditional purchase is really leased land, the lease depending on the payment of half-yearly fees and the fulfilment of certain improvements conditions, plus residence in most cases. Moreover, the area of conditional purchase leases is limited.

Hon. P. Collier: Still it is quite possible for a person to hold more than he can properly use.

The PREMIER: That is so, for he may hold both freehold and conditional purchase land. Can we resume land which is merely leased, and on which the payments and improvements are being maintained? We can, of course, but I do not think we ought to. During the last three years we have had special inspectors going about forfeiting conditional purchase leases. If the holders of these leases are doing all that is required of them, how can we say that the land is not being properly utilised? The same applies to pastoral leases. The holders pay a rental under a lease subject to certain improvements and hold the land for a certain period, after which it reverts to the Crown. We cannot lightly set aside a lease. I do not suppose there is 1,000 acres of pastoral land situated within a reasonable distance of a railway and not being utilised to the best advantage.

Mr. CHESSON: The Bill should apply to all land. The object is to settle people on the land and to ensure that the land adjacent to existing railways is put to productive use. A lot of the land alongside our railways is conditional purchase land, and if we restrict the Bill to freehold land, we shall not effect much settlement. I am satisfied that much pastoral land is not being put to its full use. No injustice will be done by including conditional purchase land, as the board will safeguard the rights of holders.

Mr. PICKERING: I oppose the amendment. Conditional purchase and grazing land is land in process of alienation, and has been taken up under certain fixed conditions. Most holders have fully improved their land within the meaning of the Act and many have over-improved it. Since 1914, however, the cost of improving land has been practically pro-

hibitive. Anyone who attempted to improve land on a large scale would be over-capitalising his holding. This is a vital point which must be considered by the board when assessing the unimproved value of land to be acquired. It is unreasonable to expect that people who took up land immediately preceding, or following, the declaration of war should be able to improve it as well as people who took up land before that. The cost of fencing and other materials and of labour has increased considerably. The Crown has power to enforce improvement conditions and we have the assurance of the Premier that it is almost impossible for settlers to escape the fulfilment of their obligations. Is it desired to make the conditions absolutely intolerable?

Mr. Munsie: No; but people who want land should be able to get it.

Mr. PICKERING: The proposition is being made untenable.

Mr. Willcock: We want to make people produce something from their land.

Mr. PICKERING: The great danger is that we do not know where the Bill begins or ends. There is nothing to show what area of land a man might hold.

Mr. Munsie: He might hold the lot.

Mr. PICKERING: Under a penalty clause which, if some members had their way, would be increased. My object has been to endeavour to make the Bill less dangerous, but the whole tendency has been to make it as hard as possible for the community, upon whom the State so largely depends. I am astounded at the attitude of members towards the primary producers. The aim seems to be to increase taxation and make the conditions more onerous in order to burst up estates whether large or small.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I support the amendment. I do not think those who took up conditional purchase land two or three years ago should be brought under this Bill, but if conditional purchase land has been held for 10 or 15 years, and only a small portion of it has been improved, steps should be taken to ensure that it is brought to its full productive use. At any rate, the board may be relied upon to do a fair thing by one and all. If we had laid it down long ago that our pastoral lands could only be held, provided a certain number of men were employed upon them to a given area, the population of the State would have been much larger and the production much greater than it is to-day.

Mr. JOHNSTON: There is a great difference between conditional purchase land and unimproved freehold estates. In most cases the conditional purchase settler has not been long upon the land, but nevertheless, he is complying with the improvement conditions. There is also a contract between the Crown and the conditional purchase land holder. Most of the land in the Wheat Belt is held under conditional purchase conditions, and there is no doubt about the improvements that are being effected there.



There is no necessity to bring such land under this confiscatory measure. Indeed, it is not right that the holders of such land should be interfered with whilst they are carrying out the improvement conditions. There is very little to complain of as regards the enforcement of the improvement conditions. I shall vote against the amendment.

Hon. M. F. TROY: I support the amendment, because I do not see any distinction between freehold land and leasehold land in connection with a Bill of this character. Whatever the conditional purchase holder is entitled to, the freeholder is also entitled to. Mostly the freeholder is a conditional purchase holder who has complied with the conditions of his conditional purchase lease. I, as a conditional purchase holder, am willing to take the risk of this measure; indeed, I would welcome it if the Government purchased my property. There are quite a number of pastoral areas in the South-West district. Some of them are poor land for pastoral purposes, because they have carried heavy timber. For that very reason they are good agricultural land. The rainfall on the gum belts with deep soil makes those belts good agricultural country. At present, if a man takes up an agricultural block on a pastoral lease, he has to pay for the improvements in a lump sum, and not over a term of years. If there is no harm to the freeholder under this Bill, how can there be any harm to the leaseholder under it? I do not deny that the conditional purchase holder on the wheat belt has done more development in 10 years than the old settler in 50 years. But there are conditional purchase holders alongside the railways who are holding land out of use. As regards the man who is holding such land out of use because he is utilising other land some distance away, I say we want that unused land from him.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 10.59 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 14th September, 1922.*

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

### BILL—PUBLIC EDUCATION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

### BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

### BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [4.35]: Although this is a very small Bill, it is of some importance. At the same time, I shall not detain hon. members very long in moving the second reading. The object of the Bill is to amend the State Trading Concerns Act of 1917 by striking out the proviso to Section 25, which prevents the Government consummating the sale of any State trading concern without the consent of Parliament. Last session I asked the Leader of the House whether it was the intention of the Government to bring forward a Bill of this character. The Minister assured us that it was the intention of the Government to do so. A similar question was put to a Minister in another place, and he too said it was the intention of the Government to introduce such a Bill. The session passed by and no Bill was placed before hon. members. During the course of the Address-in-reply debate this session, I drew the attention of the Leader of the House to the fact that there was no mention of the Bill in the Governor's Speech, and I informed him that if the Government did not intend to introduce such a measure, I would endeavour to do so and so test the sincerity of Ministers on the point. The Minister made no reply to the matter when he was closing the debate on the Address-in-reply. I have kept my promise and I have introduced this small Bill in order to ascertain where we stand regarding the State trading concerns. I will not discuss the merits or demerits of State trading. All I desire to do is to see that the Government have an ordinary business opportunity to negotiate the sale of these concerns. No individual could negotiate a sale or a purchase with his hands tied. No Government can dispose of any State trading concern advantageously to the State if their hands are tied by having to go to Parliament for permission to sell. Following ordinary business conditions, a person will not place the whole of his cards on the table if they are to be submitted subsequently to another body and, perhaps, be turned down to his disadvantage. The Government must have power to consummate a deal. We are supposed to have responsible government and, therefore, Ministers must take the responsibility of their actions. The Government are really pledged to deal with these State trading concerns and all I seek