

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 29th September, 1943.

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

QUESTIONS (3).

POTATO GROWERS.

As to Number Licensed, etc.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE asked the Chief Secretary:

(i) How much money has been collected by way of licensing fees under the Potato Growers Licensing Act?

(ii) How many growers are licensed under this Act?

(iii) Does the Government consider that a greater area than last year will be planted in December, January, and February, and has it the assurance of the Commonwealth Government that sufficient manpower will be made available to harvest this crop?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) 1942, £377; 1943, £1,107. Total, £1,984.

(ii) 1,300.

(iii) Yes. It is hoped that sufficient manpower will be made available to harvest this crop.

FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT.

As to Receivers.

Hon. E. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary:

(i) What is the total number of officers of the Agricultural Bank who have at any time since the passing of the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act in 1930 acted as Receivers thereunder?

(ii) What is the total number of persons,

not such officers, who have so acted?

(iii) How many Receivers appointed under this Act were covered by Fidelity Guarantee Bonds?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) Eighteen.

(ii) Thirty-two.

(iii) Fourteen.

GNOWANGERUP NATIVE MISSION.

As to Educational Facilities.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

(i) Is the Government aware that an Aborigines' Native Mission is in existence at Gnowangerup and there are at least 50 natives and half-caste children for whom there is no provision being made to enable them to have some education?

(ii) Is the Government aware that there is a school building and quarters provided at the Mission, yet the Department refuses to appoint a teacher so that these children may be taught to become useful citizens?

(iii) Will the Government provide a teacher for these children? If not, why not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) Yes.

(ii) Yes. The appointment of a teacher is a Mission responsibility, but there is a shortage of teachers.

(iii) No. The Government does not appoint teachers for Mission schools.

BILL—FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. Sir J. W. Kirwan in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—New sections:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 2 had been agreed to.

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 to 7 of Subsection (4) of proposed new Section 2B the words "any local governing body in regard to the supply of electricity to the local governing body, or to the price, terms or conditions of such supply, the same shall be referred to and settled by an arbitrator to be mutually agreed upon and" be struck out and the words "the Municipality

of North Fremantle in regard to the supply of electricity to the municipality, or to the price, terms or conditions of such supply, the same shall be referred to and settled by arbitrators" inserted in lieu.

The matter was fully explained yesterday, and I have no desire to say anything further.

Hon. A. Thomson: Is the municipality at North Fremantle the only one that will be dealt with?

The HONORARY MINISTER: This amendment names the municipality concerned: no other will be affected. The amendment has the approval of all parties concerned.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: I move an amendment—

That in lines 8 to 10 of Subsection (4) of proposed new Section 2B after the figures "1895" the words "or if the parties are unable mutually to agree upon an arbitrator, then to the Electricity Advisory Committee appointed under the Electricity Act" be struck out and the words "and such arbitrators shall be the Electricity Advisory Committee appointed under the Electricity Act, whose majority decision shall constitute the award" inserted in lieu.

This will simplify the proceedings in the event of any dispute occurring.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd September.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [4.46]: Just six months have elapsed since this House very exhaustively debated a similar Bill, and I do not think it necessary to speak on this measure to the same extent as I did on that occasion. The Chief Secretary at considerable length and with great clarity, detailed the provisions of the Bill and told the House that, except for certain modifications, it is almost the same as its predecessor. As members are familiar with the main points I do not propose to refer to many of them, but will make some observations concerning the importance of the

coalmining industry as it affects the State at present. If, in so doing, I make some appreciative references to the men employed in the industry, it will be because in the recent past I have made it my business to meet a good many more of them than I had met previously and discuss the work with them. In that way I gained quite a lot of information that is valuable to me, and obtained a much better idea of the ramifications of the industry as well as the type of work the men are called upon to perform.

Throughout the world, coal is a key product. In some countries it is the key product because, without coal, they could not carry on any of their industries. The fact that coal is playing such a big part in the type of industry that is foremost today accentuates the position that has arisen in Australia. We talk of our broadness of vision and our democratic principles but, because of certain inactivities in the coalmining industry, the nation has approached a position of the utmost gravity. The reason, of course, is that thousands of colliers can refuse and are continually refusing to hew coal, with the consequence that essential industries are being very seriously tied up.

Because of strikes, hold-ups and stoppages the Governments in the Eastern States have had to make continual appeals to the men to appreciate the war position and to get on with their work. Quite recently—as late as Saturday last—the Coal Commissioner, Mr. Mighell, was forced to give a serious warning to the nation on account of the position that had been brought about by shortage of coal supplies. He said it had become necessary to urge the public of all the States—not only New South Wales—to assist the Government by curtailing the use of gas and electricity, as if this were not done a very severe form of rationing would have to be introduced. The Coal Commissioner is reported to have said—

If coal losses continued there would have to be very soon a severe rationing of coal for all purposes in all States. There was a distinct possibility of ceasing supplies altogether, even to essential industries of lower priority rating. During the last fortnight of ten working days, 80,000 tons of coal were lost in New South Wales because of stoppages for various reasons. It must be obvious that consumers cannot be provided with their coal needs while such losses continued.

That statement, although made in New South Wales, has a distinct bearing on this State, because as members are aware the whole of our gas supplies for the metropolitan area and one or two country centres are dependent upon Newcastle coal. Western Australia, being the most distant State, is likely to suffer the greatest loss if the severe rationing to which the Coal Commissioner referred is introduced. The Commissioner went on to say—

Today our transport, gas, electricity and industrial services and individuals are all gravely threatened because of very rapidly falling reserves of coal. Interstate consumers depended on both production and transport. The shipping control board, despite difficulties, has done its best to assist, but in the last fortnight many vessels had to be diverted to other cargoes because coal to load them was not available.

Therefore as regards our coal supplies from the Eastern States, the position is not so satisfactory. The Commissioner continued—

Nearly all stoppages had been of an industrial nature, and over matters in respect of which the Coal Commission had not the slightest jurisdiction. Industrial affairs were handled by the central coal reference board with local reference boards operating on every field and expressly appointed to deal expeditiously with all causes of dispute.

That is correct. The only observation I care to make in regard to the latter portion of the paragraph is that while boards have been appointed specially to deal with these disputes they have not been successful to the extent that we might have wished. That presents a wartime picture which one is justified in describing as scandalous and, from a wartime effort point of view, humiliating.

I referred to those matters because I want now to compare the position in Western Australia and to show that, so far as concerns our colliers, there is a striking contrast, one of which we might well be proud. Our colliers, I can say without fear of contradiction, have fully appreciated the seriousness of the position brought about by the war. They have, as far as lies in their power, endeavoured to meet it. Quite recently a machine was introduced into the district. I am sure that had it been introduced into the coalmines in the Eastern States it would have caused a tremendous upheaval; probably all the mines would have closed down immediately. Our miners had no particular liking for the machine, but

they recognised the position and said, "It is wartime. We have to accept this machine whether we like it or not. The position is all right so far as we are concerned." That is an apt illustration of how men in the industry have played the game. They are carrying on with their work, some of them under rather distressing physical conditions, as I have ascertained after talking with them.

That there has been a shortage of coal locally I do not deny, but it is not the fault of the men. It has been caused by other factors, among the foremost of which are the increased demand for coal and mining difficulties. Most of all has it been caused by the seriously diminished manpower. I have often wondered—and I think members will appreciate this point—what the position in this State would have been had the men in Collie, since the outbreak of the war, acted as big sections of men in the Eastern States have done. What a sorry predicament Western Australia would have been in had that been so and had we no coalmines within our own territory! Anything like the same percentage of stoppages, strikes or hold-ups by the men in this State would have meant the complete crippling of all our industries. It would have meant the curtailment of our transport system and, as we are in a country where our railways extend over long distances, probably most of our trains would have ceased to run.

It must be agreed that it is because of the activities of our miners that this State has been able to carry on as it has done, and we should recognise that fact. It seems to me as I read the newspapers that coalmine workers throughout the world are given to hold-ups, probably because of the nature of their work. In this State we have been very fortunate in having amongst the coalminers clear reasoning men, men who have a sense of national pride, who have grown up in the industry, and in many cases have grown old with it. It is for their benefit that this Bill has been re-introduced. We realise that not only the men who are employed underground but those who are working above ground are equally entitled to recognition for the task they have performed all down the years. Before the war and since we have had remarkable service from the coalminers of this State. We have to recognise that not only are men working underground essential to the industry but

that a certain number who are working aboveground are just as essential, for without them the industry could not operate.

The main points that brought about the loss of the former Bill were two in number. The first was as to the definition of mine-worker, and the other was as to the amount of money to be contributed by the mine proprietors. Had those two questions been adjusted probably this particular measure would not have come before us, for everyone would have been satisfied. On the last occasion there was a good deal of misapprehension as to what constituted a mineworker. I have collected a number of interpretations, and all those I have show that the definition of miner includes all workers about a mine. I go back to the days of the late Lord Forrest, in 1902, when the Coal Mines Regulation Bill was first brought down. On that occasion Parliament interpreted a miner to be any person employed in or about a coalmine. For over 40 years that has been the accepted definition. The Mine Workers' Relief Act, which is a measure of more recent origin, does not refer to coalmining, but contains a definition of a miner. The definition there is a person employed under contract of service in or about a mine performing manual or other labour either on the surface or underground in or as part of the general mining operations carried on in the course of the working of the mine. That is the most extensive definition of all, for it embraces practically everyone. The superannuation Act dealing with coalminers in New South Wales was quoted by me last year, but I can well repeat the information now. In that Act a mineworker is defined as a person employed whether underground or aboveground in or about a coal or oil-shale mine in New South Wales by the owner of the mine. One could quote other instances where the definition of a coalminer is that which is set out in this Bill. I trust that on this occasion the House will see fit to accept what is after all the universal definition of a miner. If it does that one of the bars to the passage of the measure will have been surmounted. Reference was made six months ago to the number of men who might be employed on the surface of mines, and the fear was expressed that they would be so numerous as to represent a big charge on the fund. The Chief Secretary in debating the previous Bill produced certain figures showing the number of

men employed about the surface of the mines.

I have here a most illuminating return showing the number of men employed on the surface of the mines on the Collie leases, and these total 84. I do not propose to go into details, but I want to inform the House that this return shows a wonderful period of service amongst the older men. One man who is still working there has been for 40 years working about a mine. He is working on the surface now because whilst employed below he met with an accident. Of these 84 men I find that 14 have an average of 22 years' service each. They are qualified to come under the Bill, having all been underground workers. I do not think that even the greatest opponent of the Bill would deny to that type of man some form of superannuation. This Bill, in my opinion, provides a very excellent form of superannuation indeed. Of the balance of 70 men, 10 who are working above ground have not worked underground all the time, but they have periodically had to go below and carry out necessary timbering and electrical and other work. They have to their credit 18½ years of good service each. That leaves 60 workers of the total number. Most of these are juniors who have an aggregate period of service of 158 years, or an average of 2½ years per man.

Many of those younger men will ultimately become underground workers. The point I make is that 60 out of the 84 men are not likely to be a charge upon this fund for many years. Meanwhile they will have been making regular contributions, and it will be long before they are likely to be a charge against the fund. There is therefore no fear that existing surface workers are likely to be a charge against the scheme. Any fears on those lines are ill-founded and are the result of misapprehension. The men at Collie feel that they have given of their best to the industry and are extremely anxious that the Bill should become law. The older and more mature section sometimes feel that the trend of modern thought is against them. Up to the present they have had a wonderful influence for good upon the field in general.

In view of the support that was given to the measure on a previous occasion, I believe that members will now look upon

the position as one that can reasonably be accepted, without any fear of repercussions. My view is that all superannuation schemes will before long be absorbed in a national insurance scheme of some kind. That is one of the schemes that is likely to come into existence in Australia before many years. I was sorry when the proposals of the Menzies Government were abandoned, because I look upon a contributory superannuation scheme for all the workers of Australia as most desirable. I believe it would pay the Commonwealth handsomely. I have not taken out any relative figures recently, but I did so two years ago with regard to the old age, invalid and other pensions that were paid from which it appeared that Australia—Commonwealth and States—was paying out about £28,000,000 annually, or about £4 per head of the population. If that amount were transferred into an all-embracing scheme and supplemented by contributions from all wage and salary earners it would soon provide a superannuation scheme along generous lines for the whole of the people of Australia.

I believe that the receipt of a pension should be the right of every individual in due course. I do not think that because a man has been thrifty and has worked hard all his life, when the time comes that he can no longer work, perhaps because of ill-health, he should be denied the right to receive a pension. It should be insisted upon that a man contributes to the pension fund during his working years. It may be interesting to the House to know that the Collie miners have been contributing to a small superannuation fund for many years. I have already mentioned the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1902 with which the name of the late Lord Forrest will always be associated. That measure was amended in 1926 and provision was made for the creation of a fund known as the Aged and Infirm Coal Miners' Superannuation Fund, Section 22 of the amended Act reading—

All adult miners shall contribute the sum of 3d. per fortnight, and the owner of every mine shall contribute a sum equivalent to the total amount subscribed by the miners employed by him, and such contributions together with a sum equal to one-eighth to be deducted from the moneys received by the trustees of the Coal Miners Accident Relief Fund, under Section 72 of this Act, shall be paid to, and recoverable by, trustees to be appointed by the Minister for the purposes of

this section, and shall be paid by such trustees to the credit of a fund to be called "The Aged and Infirm Coal Miners' Superannuation Fund," and the said fund shall be operated upon by such trustees.

That fund was never able to pay anything like the amount of money that was necessary. I understand it is proposed that that fund shall be absorbed in this new scheme.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The old pensions fund will be superseded by the new scheme.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes. The old scheme will be no longer operative. I think I have indicated that the world-wide accepted definition of "miner," so far as I have been able to ascertain the facts, is "A person who works on or about a mine." The only other point I shall mention is one in which I was in agreement with most members who opposed a similar Bill last session, that of the contribution by the mine owners. The Chief Secretary has pointed out that their contribution has now been limited to 2d. per ton. That is a concession which must be regarded as quite satisfactory. It will safeguard the position of shareholders. The Bill further provides that if at any time the amount of money paid by the shareholders exceeds 2d. per ton, the excess amount shall be refunded; and that is quite fair. I hope that on this occasion the Bill will be passed, and that it will be taken through Committee without amendment.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan): The Bill is almost identical with one that was introduced last session. My objections to the present measure are the same as those I advanced against the former Bill. In the first place I consider it a mistake to introduce a sectional pensions scheme for one class of worker only. That is a course which to my mind, would be justified only if it could be shown that the section of workers concerned was suffering a particular hardship and was deserving of consideration above the rest of the workers in the State. I hope that the time is not far distant when we shall have a comprehensive pensions scheme in which all sections of the community will participate. We have at present the Commonwealth old age pensions scheme, which has two outstanding defects. The first defect is that the amount paid as an old age pension is quite inadequate to enable the pensioner to live a decent life. The second is an equally serious

defect and is that it not only discourages but penalises thrift.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You are quite right.

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: Why try to push forward a scheme like that dealt with by the Bill when we have good reason to suppose that a comprehensive pensions scheme will be introduced shortly? I have had occasion recently to inquire to some extent into the American pensions scheme which was introduced in 1936—only seven years ago. The scheme that was formulated was the result of a great many years of expert investigation all over the world. It is a contributory scheme. The pensions paid are adequate and amount in some cases to as much as 80 dollars per month, which would be something like £25 in Australian currency. No deduction is made from the pension because of property the pensioner may have accumulated during his working years. Moreover the pensioner is allowed to earn additional money up to the extent of 15 dollars per month, which would increase the amount available to the pensioner by something like £1 per week. The underlying idea is that the man who works makes a contribution to the wealth of the country, and he should be allowed to work so long as he is able to do so. I do not intend to say any more about that scheme but I would certainly like to know why a scheme along somewhat similar lines could not be made operable in Australia.

Our present old age pension scheme is wrong from those particular points of view I have mentioned—the amount of pension is inadequate and the scheme not only discourages but penalises thrift. My second objection to singling out this industry for specially favourable treatment is that in the past it has not made a proper contribution to the well-being of the State; nor is it making any such contribution at the present juncture. We hear a good deal of talk about the establishment of secondary industries. I am afraid we shall find it impossible to establish secondary industries that will have any chance of competing with those in other parts of the world unless we make better use of the fuel we have at our command now. To achieve that end would mean an enormous increase in the quantity of coal produced and a considerable decrease in the price

charged for the coal. Not only will that apply to the establishment of new secondary industries. Our existing industries will be increasingly dependent upon Collie for a cheap fuel supply. Every farmer in Western Australia is penalised because of the high price of Collie coal.

The gold mining industry will, sooner or later, have to depend upon Collie for its fuel supplies, and that fuel will have to be available at a much cheaper rate than it is at present, and what will be required is an increased output at a lower price. I do not intend to make any attempt to apportion the blame between the owners and the workers for the unsatisfactory conditions that prevail in connection with our coal industry. A Royal Commission investigated the problem very thoroughly 10 years ago and appeared to apportion the blame equally between the two parties. The Commissioner pointed out that the owners earned excess profits amounting to £312,000 per annum over a long period of years, and that the miners had been paid 73 per cent. more in wages than was earned by miners on the Goldfields. He pointed out that for 11 years the price had been 5s. 6d. per ton in excess of what it should have been, that the Government railways had paid £75,350 per annum excess price and that the East Perth Power House had paid £23,000 per annum excess price. That means to say that those two public concerns had paid an excess price of over £1,100,000 over a period of 11 years. I have never heard questioned those conclusions of the Royal Commissioner, who set out exhaustive details in support of his statement. Private consumers were, of course, penalised proportionately.

As the result of the Royal Commission the price of Collie coal was brought down from 17s. a ton to 12s. 7d. and later to 11s. 10d. a ton. Since then the price has steadily increased until at present, I understand, it is 20s. per ton. It would be interesting to know the exact nature of the agreement between the Commonwealth and State Governments with regard to the present production of Collie coal. The recommendations of the Royal Commissioner were never put into effect, and it is certainly obvious that the combined influence of the company and the miners was too strong. As I mentioned before, I do not particularly blame the miners, but I would certainly be pleased

to know that under the existing conditions the industry is making the biggest contribution it can to the well-being of the State, and we should certainly be satisfied on that point before we say anything about starting a pensions scheme such as that outlined in the Bill. I know that to some extent the miners have modified their opposition to the introduction of labour-saving machinery, but all the references to that matter that I have read in the Press have indicated that the men make it a condition that the installation of labour-saving machinery shall not mean any reduction in the number of men employed.

To my mind the introduction of any such device ought to mean an increase in the number of men employed. There should be increased output, together with a decrease in the price of coal, and consequently a large increase in consumption. All those things could be accomplished. I have discussed this matter with men highly competent to express an opinion, and they say without hesitation that by the introduction of labour-saving machinery such a reduction in the price of coal might be made as to ensure a great expansion in consumption, with reductions of many shillings per ton. The object of introducing labour-saving machinery is, of course, to produce a greater quantity with the same number of men, or to produce the same quantity with a smaller number of men; but, in view of the fact that the installation of labour-saving machinery would undoubtedly reduce the price of coal, I think there is no doubt that the demand would increase to such an extent that not only would all the present number of men be employed, but an increased number. And in a general way, particularly in regard to mining, I think it may be confidently asserted that labour-saving machinery improves the conditions of the men employed and improves their pay.

It is always the experience that the introduction of labour-saving machinery makes it possible to pay a higher wage and to give better conditions to the men employed. I have heard many men competent to express an opinion criticise most severely the methods at present adopted in the operation of these collieries. I have been told—and whether the estimate is exact or not I am not able to say, but I have no doubt it is somewhere near the mark—that something

like 40 per cent. of the coal opened up is lost, possibly never to be recovered, because of the ineffective method by which the mines are worked. I do not intend to discuss the details of the Bill except in one respect.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What about the present contracts the mines have?

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: I do not know anything about that aspect. I think that those are facts which should be placed before us so that we may know something about them, but we are told nothing. We are not told what hours the men work or what wages they receive. We have no information about the contracts. The thing is merely forced on us in this fashion.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The company is only allowed to make £18,000 profit a year, however much coal it produces. The thing is absurd.

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: When the Bill was last before the House, so far as I am aware no opposition to it was voiced by Amalgamated Collieries until portion of Clause 21 was struck out. Then, I think, many members were approached—I know I was—and the Bill which up to that stage had been entirely acceptable to Amalgamated Collieries, suddenly become desperately objectionable. Now, why? The position of Amalgamated Collieries was that they made themselves good fellows to the men at no cost whatever to themselves, because they could pass the whole of the cost on to the preference shareholders. There are several things that should be borne in mind. The preference shareholders provided the whole of the capital. The preference shareholders did not participate in any way in the excess profits, which, according to the Royal Commission, amounted in 11 years to over £1,100,000 from the Government alone.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The preference shareholders never had any claim to excess profits.

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: That is so.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Or they would not be preference shareholders.

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: That is the point I wish to make. The preference shareholders did not participate in any excess profits.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That is their own fault.

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: And for that reason they are entitled to the agreement under which they became preference shareholders. They ask for nothing more. Now, how is the company situated? It is a Western Australian company having a capital of £250,000 comprising 200,000 preference shares carrying a maximum preference dividend of 8 per cent., but no voting power so long as they receive such dividends. There are also 50,000 ordinary shares of £1 each, which carry voting power and control of the company. So long as the preference shareholders receive their 8 per cent. dividend, they are not entitled, under the company's articles of association, to receive notice of or to attend any meeting of the company or to vote, unless their rights are affected. I think I have given evidence in this House on many occasions of my opposition to high rates of interest, but one has to admit that so far as preference shareholders are concerned, 8 per cent. is not a particularly high rate of interest, when the preference shareholders provide the whole of the capital and have no say whatever in the management of the company.

Hon. W. J. Mann: No; not the whole of it. The £50,000 was put up by outsiders.

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: No. The ordinary shareholders did not put up any capital. That was "bunts."

Hon. W. J. Mann: The preference shareholders knew the conditions as to that when they applied for their shares.

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: Quite! All they now ask for is that those conditions shall be carried out, and that this Parliament shall not confiscate their rights. There are certain conditions under which preference shareholders are entitled to attend a meeting and to vote. These conditions are, if their rights are affected, as follows:—

On any proposal to issue debentures or mortgage the company's assets beyond a certain amount and on any proposal to issue shares preferential to the existing preference shares.

On any proposal to amend the memorandum or articles of association in such manner as will impair the preferential rights or voting powers of preference shareholders.

They are entitled to attend any meeting, and vote, where either of those things is con-

templated. I think it is Subclause (6) of Clause 21 which proposes to take that right away from them altogether. It proposes that this Parliament pass legislation depriving the shareholders of any right in the event of their dividend being decreased below the amount agreed upon. On each of these proposals the preference shareholders have the same right to vote as ordinary shareholders. It is that right which the Bill proposes to take away. In the ordinary course of events the company's contributions to the pensions fund will be paid by the company and so reduce the company's profit, the same as any other official out-going. But this did not constitute any reason why the rights of shareholders as between themselves should be interfered with. They are contractual rights upon which the shareholders invested their money in the company and obtained their shares.

The ordinary shareholders agreed to the preference shareholders receiving 8 per cent., or, if that amount was reduced, to their having the right as expressed in the articles of association of voting and taking part in the control of the company. Mr. Mann made a point of the fact that, if through any reason the company contributed in any year more than was required, the excess would be refunded in the following year. As the Bill stands the contribution, whether excessive or otherwise, will be made entirely by the preference shareholders, and when the time comes for a refund it will be made to the company and not to the preference shareholders. The people who pay the excess are specially debarred by Subclause (6) of Clause 21 from getting back money paid in excess.

The Chief Secretary: Can you show that in the Bill?

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: Yes, Subclause (6) of Clause 21 is that which prevents the preference shareholders from getting anything back. There is a provision that if the amount is overpaid, the excess shall be refunded to the company.

The Chief Secretary: I want to clear that up.

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: Subclause (6) seeks to alter the rights of the preference shareholders by compulsorily reducing their dividend, denying them the dividend they are entitled to, and altering

the cumulative preference shares to non-cumulative shares. If the dividend is not paid in one year, it must be made up in a future year. The Bill takes away that right. To my mind it has nothing to do with the scheme of the Bill and nothing to do with the pensions. It is no business of this House to say to what extent the articles of association shall be varied, or what section of shareholders shall be called upon to make this contribution. And not only that! The introduction of Subclause (6) seems to assume that the company will not be able to pay dividends. Inability to meet dividends may arise from a number of causes, and good causes. The company may make losses in other activities which have nothing to do with the coalmines at all. It also seems to be assumed that the company carries on coalmining only. That may be the position at present, but most companies have power to and may at any time undertake other branches and activities of trade and business, and lose money on those. Even now Amalgamated Collieries have an investment of 4,778 preference shares in the Collie Power Company.

There can be no question that Subclause (6) is a confiscation of rights between shareholders in a company, and I suggest it would be a very dangerous precedent for this Parliament to interfere with the articles of association of the company and break an agreement made between different sections of the shareholders. There is provision also that the coal owners shall elect a member to the tribunal. The preference shareholders will not do that. The people who pay will not have a voice in the election of the tribunal, just as they have no right to a refund of any money they may have overpaid. The preference shareholders are not entitled to attend meetings or to see a balance sheet. Ordinary shareholders get a balance sheet and this one that I have—the last one, I believe, that was issued—is unique. I have never seen a balance sheet like it. I do not know to what extent the Companies Bill which is under consideration by this House deals with a matter of this kind, but I know that no member of this House, even in regard to such a comparatively unimportant matter as the club to which he belongs, would tolerate for one instant the issuing of a balance sheet such as this. This is how the company spent its money—

To audit fees, directors' fees, depreciation, donations, exchange, general expenses, taxation, insurance, legal costs, rent, rates and taxes, stamps and telegrams, stationery, printing and advertising, salaries, travelling expenses, telephone subscriptions, workers' compensation, insurance, etc., £54,759.

I should be surprised if even our present Companies Act permits the presentation of a balance sheet of that kind. All those things are lumped together and the total of £54,759 is placed alongside.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is a wonder the Taxation Department accepts that.

Hon. L. Craig: The Taxation Department would obtain the details.

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: It might but there are people who have invested their money in the concern and who are entitled to see something of the kind. The majority of ordinary shares—26,000—are held by two people.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: How many preference shareholders are there?

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: I could not say offhand. I take it the information could be obtained from the company. There is a large number.

The Chief Secretary: There are 217.

Hon. SIR HAL COLEBATCH: The two people I have mentioned hold 26,000 ordinary shares, which represent about one-tenth of the capital and those two people have complete control of the company. From a balance sheet like this, how is it possible to say what the returns from the company are? No dividends are paid to the ordinary shareholders but one never hears any complaint about the matter from them. How do we know what happens to the funds? Apart from the objections I have advanced to the principle of a sectional pensions scheme like this, it would be quite safe to say that if the Bill were passed the preference shareholders would have no objection whatever to paying the money, provided it did not interfere with the agreement they have entered into and provided they were allowed, as the articles of association provide at present, voting power in the event of their dividends being reduced.

Legal opinions have been sought on this question and they differ. Unless Subclause (6) means what I say it means, to attach any meaning to it whatever is extremely difficult. I am sure this

House does not wish to pass legislation that will lead to litigation with a view to having the meaning of the legislation defined. If that should happen, it would be a monstrous injustice to preference shareholders, because they would have to put up the money to fight the case. I hope the House will reject the Bill, until such time as the Government has seen fit to appoint a Royal Commission or to take some other step to see that the industry is put in order with maximum advantage to the State. If the Bill is passed, I shall move in Committee to strike out Subclause (6), which is of a confiscatory nature and has no connection with the real purpose of the Bill.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban): When a similar Bill was before us last year, I opposed it and I oppose this measure on the same ground, namely, that I cannot see why one small section of the community should be singled out for this benefit. I should like to see every man at the age of 60 able to enjoy a pension and none more so than the miner, but I would like to point out that the Collie miners constitute a very small portion of the mining community. Normally there are 15,000 men employed in goldmining and only 790 are engaged at Collie. Those are the latest figures I have been able to obtain and they are only approximate. Obviously, goldmining is many times more important than coalmining. We also know that goldmining is far more deleterious to the health of the miner than is coalmining. Why should we ask the people of this State to pay for pensions for a small section of miners and not for the large section who produce so much wealth which is exported out of the State and who take far greater risks?

I look upon this Bill, should it be passed, as the forerunner of other measures with a sectional basis. How anyone can vote for this measure and fail to vote for a Bill providing pensions for goldminers, I do not know. If members vote for this Bill they must agree to the provision of pensions for goldminers, for there is a far greater argument in favour of a scheme for the latter. True, it may be said that for goldminers there is the Mine Workers' Relief Act, and apparently a measure of that kind has not been necessary for coalminers up to the present. I am not concerned for the moment

with the question of who is to pay—the preference shareholders or the ordinary shareholders—because, as a matter of fact, the people of this State will pay. It is well known that from the point of view of the people of Western Australia over the past years, it would have been far better had coal never been discovered at Collie because the thermal unit of that coal is so much lower than that of Newcastle coal.

In normal times Newcastle coal can be imported and used on the railways at a much cheaper rate than is involved in the use of Collie coal. However, I would strenuously oppose our not using Collie coal to the maximum extent, even if it does cost more. But I cannot see why we should ask the people who use the railways to pay out more money still in order to benefit a few workers in this State. It is rather strange that the Bill which was presented last year was a private member's Bill. Now, for some reason or other, the Government has sponsored this measure. Had the Government introduced a comprehensive Bill to cover all workers, I would have agreed to it.

The Chief Secretary: Who told you that the other Bill was a private member's Bill?

HON. H. S. W. PARKER: I was under that impression. If I am wrong, I will withdraw. I am glad my attention has been drawn to the mistake. However, I should have thought that the Government, having found out the views of the House on the previous measure, would bring down a more comprehensive proposal rather than what amounts to practically the same Bill as was originally introduced.

HON. G. FRASER: You would still be against it even if it were a comprehensive Bill!

HON. H. S. W. PARKER: I would not. I thought that soothsayers were not permitted to foretell the future. Apparently the hon. member in his new walk of life has been able to see up into the sky. We have heard of the Commonwealth Government's intention to introduce a comprehensive social service scheme and I think that is the proper course to take. As a matter of fact, there is a pensions scheme for every person in Western Australia who requires it. Why should we supplement that scheme when we cannot pay our way? The State was re-

cently able to pay its way and show a surplus, but only at the expense of not maintaining in good order its public buildings and utilities. True, there was a very good reason for the failure to carry out maintenance work, inasmuch as labour and materials were not available. As soon as that deficiency is rectified the State finances are bound to show a deficit. In spite of that, there is in this Bill a proposal to embark upon a pensions scheme. The railways have always been a burden on the State and now the railways are to be asked to pay a pension to one section of workers.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Do not be funny! The owners and the men are to contribute.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Why should not the coalminers have a scheme such as so many industrial organisations have established, without worrying us? I have no objection to their having pensions if they pay for them. In this instance it is not the owners, but the people of Western Australia. They will pay the whole lot, although that fact is covered over like a nice sugar-coated pill. The poor unfortunate public will have to meet the cost, and, as I am elected by the public and not by the Government, nor by the workers of Collie, I say distinctly that it is my duty as representing one-third of the electors of this Chamber—

Hon. J. Cornell: That is hardly correct; they did not take the trouble to vote!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That is so. They realised there was no occasion to, but I still represent them. It is my duty to point out that if this Bill is passed the public will pay. That is not right. We should have a comprehensive measure and not one for a small section of the community. If we assume that they work five days of eight hours each per week—which is not asking much of any man—then they work 270 shifts a year. While on holidays they would miss ten shifts, which leaves actually 260 working shifts. To get the benefits of the Bill all a miner need do is to work 60 shifts in the last year. So long as he works for three months in the last year he has done sufficient. He need only work on 400 days in the period of the last five years; or 500 days during the period of the last seven years of his employment. This seems to indicate that we have arrived at Utopia. I wish that in my early life I could have got into such

a position that when I reached the age of 60 I would be refused permission to work at my occupation, but would be given a pension—especially in view of the fact that of all the mineworkers in Western Australia these are the highest paid. I am sorry I cannot get any figures later than those contained in the report of Dr. Herman in 1933. The manner in which he points out the difference between the wages of the Kalgoorlie miner, or the goldminer, and those of the coalminer, is rather significant.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Many variations in wages have been made since then.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Dr. Herman's report at paragraph 123 states—

—it will be seen that for an 8-hour shift the rates were respectively at Collie and Kalgoorlie for—

Carpenter—	24s. and 18s. 4d.
Blacksmith—	24s. 2d. and 18s. 4d.
Striker—	21s. 8d. and 14s. 10d.
Winding enginedriver—	24s. 7d. and 18s.
Fireman—	22s. 2d. and 15s. 4d.
Tool sharpener—	22s. 10d. and 16s. 4d.
Mechanical and electrical fitter—	24s. and 18s. 4d.

If we vote for this Bill we must the more readily give a pension to the goldminer. The coalminers do have a chance, on these figures, to make some provision themselves. Dr. Herman's report at page xli. states—

From the date of the Hibble (Commonwealth) award of the 22nd September, 1920, to the date of the Walsh (State) award of the 25th October, 1931, contract and daily rates of pay at Collie averaged 73 per cent. more than those of the Kalgoorlie gold workers. Since the Walsh award the excess has been 30 per cent. (Sections 124 and 127).

During the former period—
The figures are misleading.

Hon. T. Moore: You are not game to read them.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I will quote them—

During the former period the coal workers were paid for wages about £2,430,400. At gold workers' rates they would have been paid £1,026,200 less. The coal produced from all mines at Collie during this 11-year period was 5,214,000 tons (Section 126). There is no reason to believe that the gold worker has not been receiving a fair wage; there is every reason to believe that the coal worker should not receive more than the gold worker (Section 125). The levy for unfairly high remuneration paid to the Collie coal workers by the rest of the community during this 11-year period was 3s. 11d. per ton (Section 126), or £93,300 per annum. Since the Walsh award

the levy has been and still is about 1s. 7d. per ton (Section 127), or about £34,800 per annum.

So that in 1933 the State was paying £34,800 per annum more than if the gold-mining rate of wages had been applied. It is common knowledge that well over 90 per cent. of Collie coal is consumed by the Railways and the Electricity Department. Therefore all this money is paid to foster a most expensive industry. Now we are asking the public to put its hand into its pocket to provide a pension for the highest paid miner in Western Australia. Members can readily understand why I must oppose the Bill. I will not support any measure for sectional benefits, but I will support a Bill which seeks equally to better the conditions of all workers.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East): I supported a similar measure last year and I am pleased now to support this Bill. It seems to me that an industry such as coal-mining should be able not only to pay an adequate wage to its workers but that when they reach the age of 60 years it should, with the support of the Government, be able to pay a reasonable pension to its employees.

Hon. J. Cornell: That argument applies with equal force to goldminers.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: To my mind it applies to all industries, goldmining included. The only objections raised against this Bill appear to be that there is some unhappy arrangement between the shareholders of the Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. and a number of individuals who bought preference shares. I assume they bought those preference shares of their own volition because the shares offered a favourable avenue of investment. If those people have been receiving 8 per cent. interest, and still are receiving that amount, they are doing better than most sections of the investing community.

Hon. L. Craig: This Bill proposes to take that away.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The Bill places the burden fairly equitably between the ordinary shareholders and the preference shareholders. They are both receiving dividends from the industry and to my mind they should both contribute to this scheme. Another argument used against the Bill is

that it appears to be the first of its kind. This, to the alarm of Mr. Parker, is the first occasion that a section of the community has been singled out for a pension such as this measure envisages. That is a very weak argument. A start was made many years ago with the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. That was sectional legislation, and no-one would say that it has not been of the greatest blessing to the men engaged in the gold-mining industry.

Hon. J. Cornell: There is a mountain of difference between the principles contained in the two measures.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I do not agree. However, I can inform members that the men engaged in the goldmining industry are wholeheartedly for this Bill. I hope and feel sure that within a short time we will have another somewhat similar measure brought down to provide a pension for the workers in the goldmining industry. Everyone will agree that that industry should provide a pension for the men who have worked in it for the required period, when they have reached the age of 60 years.

Hon. L. Craig: What about the timber workers?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: All men, no matter in what industry they are engaged, should receive an adequate pension from it on reaching the retiring age.

Hon. J. Cornell: Including the legal profession?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: It is hard to place the members of all professions in the same category. Some have more ample opportunities to provide for their old age than those engaged in coalmining, goldmining, or the timber industry. Mr. Parker said that if the Government brought down a comprehensive measure he would agree to it. Unfortunately that has not been done, but the Government has gone part of the way and made a start. The principle will become enlarged as the years go by. I see no reason why the hon. member should not support it at this stage.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I think this Bill brings very forcibly before us the necessity for granting additional power to the Commonwealth Government, because the matter

of pensions is one that to my mind will have to receive far greater attention in the immediate future, and I am afraid it can be dealt with adequately only by the Commonwealth. Under the Mine Workers' Relief Act, we have the position that when men become eligible for an old age pension, they must apply for it. Many of the miners, because they have contributed to the fund for years, feel that it is not right and proper for them to be compelled to apply for an old age pension. For some reason or other quite a number of people, even in these days, feel that there is some disgrace in accepting an old age pension.

Hon. L. Craig: It shows a very good spirit, anyhow.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: A similar situation will arise under this measure. If the Bill becomes law, the Collie miners will contribute towards a pension, and then when they become eligible for an old age pension, they will be required to make application for it and the fund will be relieved to that extent. The only way the difficulty can be overcome would be by the Commonwealth Parliament amending the Invalid and Old Age Pensions Act. I hope that during the present session of the Commonwealth Parliament, something along those lines will be done. When a coal mine worker, under this measure, becomes eligible for a pension, he should receive it.

Hon. L. Craig: But that would relieve the Commonwealth of responsibility of paying the old age pension.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The situation is a very difficult one, and that is why I remarked earlier that I believe the complete answer to providing an adequate pensions scheme is to grant additional power to the Commonwealth to deal with the matter on an Australia-wide basis. Seemingly, however, that desirable state of affairs will not come about immediately, and meanwhile it is only right and proper that the coalminers, goldminers and others engaged in vital industries should be provided for. This Bill represents a start, and because of that there is no valid reason in my opinion for its being opposed. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

On motion by Hon. L. Craig, debate adjourned.

BILL—WOOD DISTILLATION AND CHARCOAL IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [7.36] in moving the second reading said: This important Bill, by which authority is sought to establish the wood distillation and charcoal iron industry in this State, is the culmination of years of earnest endeavour on the part of the Government to lay the foundations of heavy industry in Western Australia and is yet another step forward by the Government in its programme of development of secondary industries. The widespread nature of the investigations made into the many matters relating to the proposal for the establishment of this industry and leading up to the introduction of the Bill is a long but interesting story, and I propose to recount as briefly as possible the most important details. It is, of course, recognised that sound economic development demands that a country have primary and secondary industries growing side by side and utilising to the full all its natural resources. Secondary industries calling for large capital outlay are difficult to establish on a small scale. Once started, however, they bring other industries in their train. It is generally recognised, too, that the basic iron and steel industry is a necessary foundation for the successful industrial development of a country.

Consideration by the Department of Industrial Development of the desirability of establishing the iron and steel industry and utilising our natural resources, led to the setting up by the State Government in January, 1941, of a panel of experts consisting of Messrs. Fernie (Director of Industrial Development), Wilson (State Mining Engineer), Bowley (Government Mineralogist and Analyst), Forman (Government Geologist), Mills (Chief Mechanical Engineer, Railway Department), Gregson (Utilisation Officer of the Forests Department), Bayliss (Professor of Chemistry at the University) and Tomlinson (chairman of directors of Tomlinson's Ltd.), to investigate and prepare a report on the possibilities of establishing the industry. The duty of the panel was to collect all available information and data regarding raw materials, smelting processes and markets.

It has been known for many years that large quantities of high grade iron-ore exist in Western Australia. Likewise, too, there exist in Western Australia deposits of other raw materials, including limestone, which is necessary for the successful establishment of the iron industry. Extensive deposits of this material are to be found right throughout the State, the cap limestone being most suitable for a blast furnace for the production of iron. In respect to coking coal for use as a fuel, there are no known deposits in this State, and thus the panel had to consider the problem of obtaining a substitute. It was found that our hardwood timbers could be utilised in the production of charcoal, and the investigations made by the panel established the fact that the charcoal produced from our timbers is superior to coking coal, and that the iron produced through the use of charcoal is of higher quality than that produced through the use of coking coal.

On ascertaining these facts, it became necessary for tests to be undertaken to discover the best method of producing charcoal from our timbers for use in the proposed industry, with the result that it was decided that the wood distillation process was the best for the purpose. A pilot plant was set up at the University in order to discover the yields of charcoal and by-products from our hardwood timbers under this process. The results were most satisfactory. It was found that the charcoal yield was excellent both in quantity and quality, and that by-products such as acetate and naphtha, or wood alcohol, could be produced.

Dealing with the actual smelting of the iron and its production, the panel investigated processes operating in Scandinavia, Russia and India. It also investigated details of the electric smelting process operating in Norway. After considering these various processes, the panel recommended the blast furnace system operating at Mysore, India. There the system has been successfully carried on since 1923. It was thought that this would be more suitable for the needs of Western Australia, particularly in the early stages of the development of the industry. The electric smelting process operating in Norway could not be embarked upon in this State owing to the cost of cur-

rent. That process was not an economic proposition.

With the collection of all relevant details and reports on the developments in various parts of the world, plans were drawn up for the establishment of a large scale industry with a production capacity of at least 50,000 tons of charcoal iron per year at a port adjacent to the South-West timber areas, and it was proposed to use ore from the magnificent deposits at Koolan Island. However, in the existing war situation and consequent upon difficulties in respect to the supply of materials, manpower, etc., it was found inadvisable to proceed with such a major undertaking, and it was agreed that a smaller proposal should be developed, providing for a plant with a maximum production capacity of 10,000 tons of charcoal iron per year. It was thought better to accept this small-scale proposal as against the larger one, it being better to proceed carefully with the establishment of the industry instead of engaging on the larger proposal without having practical experience of the production of iron with charcoal as a fuel. It would be better for the future of the industry and the taxpayers as a whole, to establish the industry on a small-scale basis in a steady and sure way, and to use the small-scale industry as the foundation for a larger one to be established in the future.

With these considerations in mind, the panel appointed a special committee consisting of Messrs. Fernie (Director of Industrial Development), Reid (Under Treasurer), Wilson (State Mining Engineer) and Bowley (Government Mineralogist and Analyst) to develop plans for a small-scale plant in the vicinity of Perth, the site selected being at Wundowie, where a combination of very favourable circumstances should make it possible for the industry to be established. Here there is a deposit of limonitic iron ore, highly suitable for the purpose of the industry, the surrounding country carrying the required supply of timber. Situated on a main railway line and adjacent to the Goldfields Water Supply main and in close proximity to the local market for pig iron, the site selected has many obvious advantages.

In September, 1942, representatives of the committee appointed to concentrate on the smaller proposal proceeded to Newcastle to consult the technicians of the Broken Hill

Co. Ltd. Weeks of consultation ensued and the project was examined from all angles. Searching investigations were made and as a result a most comprehensive report was submitted shortly afterwards by Mr. J. Young of the Broken Hill Pty. Co. Every phase of the proposal has been dealt with. This report, together with the advice of our own technical officers and other very highly qualified technical men now in Western Australia, indicate that there is every possibility of the setting up of a new industry on sound economic lines. Mr. Young's report can be made available to members if they desire to peruse it.

On the wood distillation side of the plant, enquiries were made in America of a leading American chemical engineering firm with a view to obtaining complete plans and specifications of the latest type of refinery. That firm is the Vulcan Copper and Supply Co. of Cincinnati, U.S.A. It is proposed that the plant shall incorporate the very latest American practice, which has been responsible for a favourable change in the economics of wood distillation. The actual plant itself is to be fabricated completely in Western Australia to the American designs. Thus, with the advice of the Broken Hill Pty. Co. on the design and operation of the blast furnace and accessories, supported by data from plants in various part of the world, and also with advice of Brassert and Co., consulting engineers of London and New York, on the suitability of jarrah charcoal for smelting purposes, together with the advice of our own technical advisers, the committee submitted its report in November, 1942. In order that members may have an opportunity to study the report at leisure, I propose to read it, so that it will appear in "Hansard." I think it wise to read the report and have it in "Hansard" for record purposes, because it is really the basis of the Bill. The report reads—

Investigations into the proposal to erect a charcoal-iron blast furnace have now reached a stage where it is possible to advance estimates of costs of erection and operation in support of a recommendation that the Government proceed with the installation of this project.

Proposals.—In brief, it is proposed to erect a small blast furnace to produce up to 10,000 tons of pig iron per year, by smelting iron ore with charcoal made from our hardwoods. In the preliminary discussions leading up to the design of a plant, the Broken Hill Pty. Coy., Ltd., were very helpful in suggesting types of plant, layout and methods of operation.

Charcoal for fuel will be produced by the destructive distillation of wood in externally heated retorts. Experiments carried out under the supervision of the Government Analyst have yielded the information on which the design of the retorts has been based.

In the design of this section, consideration given to the value of the volatile products driven off from the wood during distillation confirmed the opinion that a refinery to handle these products would operate ideally in conjunction with a blast furnace. To illustrate this interdependence, wood tar from the refinery may be burnt to raise steam in the main power house: after generating power, the steam exhausted from the engines will be taken back to the refinery to carry on the distillation processes. This report will, therefore, include a recommendation that a refinery be included to operate in conjunction with the blast furnace.

A diagrammatic flow sheet is attached to this report as Appendix 1, to illustrate the operation of the complete project.

Products and Markets.—The main products of such an installation will be pig iron, acetic acid and wood naphtha, in approximately the following quantities:—

Pig iron, 10,000 tons per year.

Acetic acid, 480 tons per year.

Wood naphtha, 112,000 gallons per year.

It is considered that there would be no difficulty in disposing of these amounts of the various products. Consumption of pig iron in W.A. is now about 5,000 tons per year, so that about half our pig would be available for export. Regarding acetic acid, our estimated yield would supply three-quarters of Australian consumption in 1938-39. This consumption has been steadily rising, and since the outbreak of war, acetic acid has been in short supply and severely rationed. Acetic acid has wide applications in commerce, and its use for the production of cellulose acetate, the basis of various synthetic fabrics, has made it the most important of organic acids. Wood naphtha is used as a denaturant for commercial alcohols, as a solvent and in blended fuel for internal combustion engines: it is considered that it may be used in the proposed blend fuel of petrol and ethyl alcohol. The proposed selling price of wood naphtha (1s. per gallon) is less than 1/12th of the present market price, and it is considered that disposal will be ensured at this price.

Site.—A site for these works has been chosen at Wundowie, 41 miles from Perth on the main Perth-Northam line. At Wundowie is one of several small iron-ore deposits which occur in our coastal hills. There is another at Coates' Siding (43m) and a third at Clackline (51m) which can also be drawn on for ore, if, and when, required.

At Wundowie the works will be well situated with regard to the centre of pig iron consumption. They will be built on Crown land, immediately adjacent to a railway, and only half a mile from the G.W.S. main pipe line. They will be situated centrally to a large area of

Crown land from which timber will be cut for fuel. A suitable site exists for a small town where employees will be housed, but no provision is made in the estimate of cost for the erection of houses, other than staff houses. It is presumed that the Workers' Homes Board, or some other housing authority will assume responsibility for the provision of the township houses.

A locality plan is included as Appendix 2.

Raw Materials.—The necessary raw materials for this project have been thoroughly investigated. These are:—

- (a) **Iron Ore.**—Deposits at Wundowie and Coates' Siding have been sampled by shaft sinking and a sufficient quantity of ore of satisfactory quality has been located to indicate ensured furnace operation for a period of at least 15 years. Further developmental work will be carried on in conjunction with quarrying operations. Recovery of ore will be cheap, as the ore bodies are either exposed, or covered by shallow overburden, while the situation of the quarries is either at the furnace site, in the case of Wundowie, or about three miles distant, for Coates' Siding ore.

Reports on these deposits by the Assistant State Mining Engineer are attached as Appendix 3a.

- (b) **Timber.**—The Forestries Department has carried out a survey of available timber, suitable for charcoal production, in this vicinity. Reports by the Deputy Conservator of Forests, which are attached as Appendix 3b, indicate that sufficient timber for at least 50 years operation is available within a 15-mile radius of Baker's Hill. Much of this is from private property, but from Crown land alone, sufficient timber for three years' operation can be obtained within three miles of the plant.

- (c) **Limestone.**—This will be obtained from the abundant supplies on the Perth coastal plain.

Estimated Capital Cost.—Working drawings of the layout of works, and details of the blast furnace, accessories and charcoal retorts are sufficiently advanced to enable the construction to be commenced at once. From these drawings, the cost of the blast furnace and accessories, including charcoal retorts, condensers and storage tanks, is estimated at £95,000. In addition to this, a refinery to purify the products of distillation is estimated to cost £30,000. This cost has not been taken out in detail, but is estimated from the cost of modern American refineries. Details of such plants are not available but are being sought from America.

Details of the estimated capital cost are in Appendix 4.

Economics.—In the study of the economics of the project, it has been thought desirable to compare cost of production with normal mar-

ket prices in pre-war years, bearing in mind that early establishment would give an initial advantage of prices which are greatly inflated by war demands. In the case of cast iron, however, it is thought that the present price will be maintained for many years, and this has been accepted as the ruling price.

The estimated annual income is £101,230 made up as follows:—

Pig iron, 10,000 tons at £6 17s. 6d.—
£68,750.

Acetic acid, 480 tons at £56—£26,880.

Wood naphtha, 112,000 gallons at 1s.—
£5,600.

The estimated annual expenditure is £76,360 (see Appendix 5) so that the anticipated gross profit is £24,870, or approximately 24.5 per cent.

The capital ratio (i.e., rates of capital cost to annual value of products) is 1.24; this compares with some of the best American practice.

The prices assumed for acetic acid and wood naphtha are considered extremely conservative, as it is realised that these products will have to compete with synthetics after the war.

Expert Advice.—The best expert advice obtainable in Australia has been obtained in respect to the production of pig iron.

The recently developed "Othmer" direct process has been selected for the recovery of direct acetic acid. This process has been responsible for the great improvement that has taken place in respect to the wood distillation industry during the past four or five years. The value of the acetic acid produced by this process is four times that of the former product calcium acetate and recovery costs have been halved. The Vulcan Copper and Supply Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A., have been responsible for the development of the process on a commercial scale and the Company supplies and guarantees the operation of its plant.

The Company has been approached to supply plans and details for the construction of a plant in Western Australia, and asked if they would be prepared to send a representative to this State to supervise construction.

Recommendations.—The Committee feels that the foregoing report presents a faithful and conservative view of the prospects of the proposed new industry. At the same time it is realised that war conditions may upset the most conservative of estimates and that the establishment of the industry at the present time will be attended with a certain amount of risk.

The Committee has fully considered the risk involved against the advantages to be gained from the establishment of the iron industry and recommends that the Government make available £150,000 for the complete project, and that the construction of the blast furnace and accessories be put in hand immediately.

That report was signed by the Under Treasurer, the Government Analyst and Mineralo-

gist, the State Mining Engineer and the Director of Industrial Development. I regard that report as a most important document and for that reason have read it in full rather than select some extracts and comment upon them. The report was considered by the Government and it was decided to go ahead with the establishment of the industry. All that now remains to be obtained is parliamentary approval of the proposal.

It will be noted from the report that it is considered there will be no difficulty in disposing of the various products of the industry. Consumption of pig iron in Western Australia is estimated at 5,000 tons per year. Therefore, half of the pig iron produced will be available for export. Whilst our estimates are based upon a local consumption of 5,000 tons, it would be safe to assume that after the war local requirements will be considerably in excess of that quantity. It is probable therefore that the whole of the pig iron produced in the plant will be consumed within the State. If, on the other hand, it becomes necessary to export pig iron, it is considered there will be no difficulty in finding markets for it, particularly in view of the fact that the type of iron produced with charcoal is of a higher quality than that turned out where coking coal is used. I am informed that charcoal iron usually invites a premium of £1 per ton above iron produced with coking coal. Industrialists from all over Australia have assured the Minister for Industrial Development that there will be a ready market for the high grade iron which it is proposed to produce in this new industry. It will be noted from the report that the estimate of income has been made from the sale of charcoal pig iron on the basis of the existing average price of iron produced in other States. We therefore have a margin of upwards of £1 a ton which pig iron will be capable of commanding under the charcoal process.

The price of £56 per ton, on which our estimates are based for the sale of acetic acid is the pre-war wholesale price which obtained in America and England. It will be appreciated, therefore, that the cost of landing acetic acid in Australia before the war was far in excess of £56 per ton. However, for the purpose of estimating the income to be received from the sale of this acid the pre-war wholesale price obtainable in

America and England has been utilised as the basis of our figures. The price on which an estimate has been made for wood naphtha is the low figure of 1s. per gallon. In 1938 and 1939 wood naphtha of the quality which it is hoped to produce in this State was 4s. per gallon in England. Thus, a very conservative price has been set down for this article.

The report states that the Vulcan Copper and Supply Co. of U.S.A. has agreed to supply all plans and details to enable the plant to be constructed. The company, however, could not send a representative to this State to supervise the construction of the plant. Fortunately, one of our local factories is at present completing an almost identical plant for use in the power alcohol industry, and the experience obtained in the erection of that plant will stand us in good stead when the new plant is being established at Wundowie. Regarding the site for the proposed new industry, preliminary work has already been carried out and a small number of men are working there. From the standpoint of suitability and from the economic viewpoint, it is considered that we could not possibly find a better site than the one which has been chosen. Iron ore and timber supplies are on the spot. A railway, a main road and the pipe line of the Goldfields Water Scheme are nearby, whilst the market in which most of the pig iron will be consumed is also close at hand. This, with the estimates of costs, etc., indicates that the economics of the proposal are therefore as sound as they could possibly be.

Turning now to the Bill itself, as the long Title sets out, its object is to enable the Government to establish plant and works and carry on therein the industries of producing wood charcoal and other products by processes of wood distillation, and with the use of charcoal so produced, of producing charcoal pig iron and steel, and thereafter selling the various products or using them for Government purposes. Since the establishment and carrying on of the industry will be the first project of its kind in this State and will therefore be of an experimental nature, it is considered to be an industry for governmental enterprise.

Because of the industry's experimental nature the Government considers that the legislation authorising its establishment should be as elastic and flexible as is reasonably

possible, and to that end desires that the proposed enterprise shall not be carried on as a State trading concern under the more rigid provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act, 1916. That Act is more appropriate in connection with an undertaking which has passed beyond the experimental stage and has become an established and going concern. There is a proposal in the Bill, therefore, that the plant and works established thereunder shall not be deemed to be a State trading concern and shall not come within the provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act, 1916.

Again, because of the experimental nature of the industry it has been considered advisable to provide in the Bill that the legislation shall be administered by the Minister for Industrial Development, and that the establishment and carrying on of the plant and works shall be controlled by that Minister through the Department of Industrial Development but under the immediate management of a special board of management which will consist of persons possessing the necessary expert knowledge and practical experience. That board is to be called the "Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry Board of Management." It is to consist of five members appointed by the Governor and they will hold office during the Governor's pleasure. One of the members of the board will be nominated by the workers in the industry, which will ensure direct contact between the workers and the management. The board will be a body corporate and will be empowered to do all things in connection with the exercise of its functions which a body corporate can lawfully do, but will not be able to hold or dispose of land.

The Bill sets out the various functions which the board of management shall exercise. Generally, these functions will be concerned with the management of the industry. In addition, they will include the power to consider, and make to the Minister recommendations relating to policy and administration. There is a provision in the Bill expressly authorising the Minister for Industrial Development to establish the industry for and on behalf of the Government, to do so at any time and from time to time and in any part or parts of the State. The authority is limited to the establishment, maintenance and carrying on of

works, plant and undertakings for the purpose of producing charcoal and other products by a process of wood distillation, and of producing charcoal iron and steel by the use of charcoal as a fuel, and to the selling or other use by the Government of the various products which are produced.

Provision has been made for the manner in which lands may become available for the establishment of the plant and works: For instance, land belonging to the Crown may be dedicated; private land may be compulsorily acquired under the Public Works Act, and the Minister may purchase land from private owners who are willing to sell voluntarily. All land compulsorily acquired or purchased may also be dedicated to the purposes of the Bill and shall vest in the Crown. The Bill specifies the sources from which moneys will be available for capital expenditure and working capital required for the establishment and carrying on of the industry. These moneys will include funds appropriated by Parliament, income derived from the industry, and moneys which the Minister may be required to borrow from the Treasurer to discharge liabilities. For purposes of administration, proper control and supervision, all such moneys will have to be paid into a special account at the Treasury, the moneys from time to time in the account to be applied only to the purposes of the industry.

The special account at the Treasury will be operated in such manner as may be prescribed by regulations from time to time. This provision is similar to that contained in the Workers' Homes Act, with respect to the operation of the Workers' Homes Fund. It is not desirable that a rigid method of operation of the account be specified in the Act itself, and as a consequence provision is made for regulations to prescribe the method of operating the account so as to permit variations in that method whenever circumstances warrant a change being made. There is a provision in the Bill which gives to the board of management authority to appoint and dismiss staff and employees whenever necessary. As regards daily and weekly employees, the board of management will be empowered to delegate its power to a member of its salaried staff. These powers are vested in the board of management with a view to ensuring easy and expeditious administration and management, but the

Minister will always be able to exercise a proper control over the board of management as regards the number of officers and other employees who are appointed or employed by such board. All persons employed, however, will at all times be under the control and direction of the board of management.

Another matter dealt with in the Bill is that concerning claims and legal proceedings by the Minister, and against the Minister. It is provided that the board acting for the Minister may make the claim or commence the proceedings. Claims or actions by persons against the Minister are to be made or taken against the board. This provision is consistent with the provisions in the Government Railways Act, 1904, whereby the Commissioner of Railways sues or is sued in his corporate name instead of the Minister for Railways being the plaintiff or the defendant. Necessary provision has been made for the auditing of the books and accounts by the Auditor General. For this purpose the Minister must cause a balance sheet and other necessary financial statements to be compiled each year, and when he has made his audit thereof the Auditor General must furnish his report. The Auditor General, if he thinks fit, can arrange for periodical or continuous audits, and in relation to the audits to be made by him, will have all the powers in relation to audit contained in the Audit Act, 1904. There are other provisions in the Bill, most of which are of a machinery nature.

That I think covers the important proposals in the Bill, and I sincerely trust that it will have the full support of members. In conclusion I would like to pay a tribute to the members of the panel and the committee for the manner in which they have collected all the necessary details to enable this proposal to be brought before Parliament; to the representatives of private enterprise and particularly to the Broken Hill Pty. Co., which made available the services of its leading technicians in an advisory capacity; and to all others associated in the proposal. They have all made it possible for a start to be made in what I regard as the most important industry ever established in this State. I think I have covered with a fair amount of detail this very important proposal and I hope that members in giving consideration to the Bill will have due re-

gard to the effect that the establishment of heavy industry in this State will have on the future of Western Australia. If we are to make substantial progress with secondary industries, it is absolutely essential that we shall be able to produce in our own State the very basis of many secondary industries. According to the report which I have read in full to the House, it appears that we shall be able to produce here a commodity that will bear more than favourable comparison with similar articles produced in other parts of the Commonwealth. In these circumstances I hope that the Bill will be received sympathetically by members, and that before long the industry will be an established fact.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: Can you tell us the number of men who will be required to complete the structure within 18 months?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I could not state that without referring to the files. We have the number. When we deal with the Bill in Committee I will give the hon. member any information he desires. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. L. Craig, debate adjourned.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [8.17] in moving the second reading said: By this Bill it is proposed to amend the Workers' Homes Act, 1911-1941, so as to provide for the erection of small dwelling houses, the letting of these dwelling houses on a weekly tenancy basis to persons who could not otherwise afford to obtain a house under the provisions of the Act, and the making of advances to householders for the purpose of improving dwelling houses. The principal Act was passed in 1911 for the purpose of enabling the Government to erect and dispose of workers' dwellings, and to make advances to people of limited means to provide homes for themselves. A board called the Workers' Homes Board was constituted under the Act to administer its provisions.

The Act is divided into five parts. The two we are mainly concerned with in this Bill are Parts III. and IV., the former dealing with the provision of workers' dwellings under leasehold provisions, and the latter

with the advancing by the board of an amount not exceeding £900 by way of mortgage for the purpose of erecting a worker's dwelling. Under the leasehold provisions the board erects houses on land which it has acquired. These houses are disposed of on a deposit of £5, the purchaser thereafter paying a weekly instalment which covers interest on the capital value of the house, a repayment of its capital cost, insurance, rates and taxes, plus ground rent. Payments are spread over a long term; and after having paid for the home a purchaser may, if he so desires, continue his payments on the land and so acquire the freehold. The limit of the advance is £900, but by paying a larger deposit than £5 the purchaser can secure a house costing more than that amount.

In recent years the leasehold section of the Act has become very popular, and more applications are now being received under Part III. than under Part IV. Under the latter part advances are made to workers owning their own land, the deposit required on application being 10 per cent. of the security. Provided the land reaches a value which is equal to 10 per cent. of the total security—namely, the land plus the proposed building—and the application is in order, the land is acceptable as a deposit. Although there is an advance limitation of £900, the applicant may, if he so desires, provide any additional cash necessary to secure a home at a greater cost than that amount. The Workers' Homes Board has been in operation for 31 years, and during that time has enabled many thousands of workers to acquire their own homes. It would be safe to say that, had the board not existed, many people would not be purchasing or owning their own homes today.

Applications to the number of 5,549 have been approved by the board since its inception, the expenditure being approximately £2,000,000. Of these applications 1,550 have been approved under the leasehold section for an expenditure of £617,000, whilst 3,800 freehold applications have been approved for an expenditure of £1,400,000. The financial activities of the board, as reflected in the figures, are interesting. At the 30th June last the capital of the Workers' Homes Board stood at £966,000, representing £717,000 advanced from General Loan Fund, £181,000 borrowed by the board

from the State Superannuation Fund under the borrowing powers recently granted to it, and £68,000 due to the Commonwealth Bank under the Commonwealth Housing Scheme. In addition to this capital, the board has reserve funds amounting to £90,000, most of which are invested in housing property. As at the 30th June, 1943, £460,000 was owing to the board on account of freehold properties under Part IV., and £470,000 for leasehold properties under Part III. The amount owing to the board on properties reverted to it was £21,000, whilst the value of the land purchased and dedicated to it was £47,000.

It will thus be seen that the board is in a fairly strong financial position. It is meeting the full charges for interest and sinking fund on the amount advanced to it, is making regular repayments to the Commonwealth Bank for the money advanced to it by that institution, and is also redeeming debentures issued to the State Superannuation Fund for money borrowed from that body, in addition to which it has been able to make small annual contributions to Consolidated Revenue. The board has done excellent work in the way of providing modern equipped houses for workers, although it is felt that there is need to reduce building costs. Houses built under the supervision of the board can compare with any that are being built elsewhere in Australia.

Just before the commencement of the war, the cost of providing a five-roomed brick house, which would be the normal requirements of a worker with a family, was between £850 and £900. The repayments were involving the purchaser in a weekly payment of between 26s. and 27s.; and while this payment was probably less than a house purchaser would have to pay if he were being financed by any other means than through the Workers' Homes Board, the payment was too high for the more lowly paid worker. The board attempted to meet the needs of such workers by providing wooden dwellings, and many of these have been built in the metropolitan area. The weekly instalment on such houses has varied from 14s. to 19s., according to the size of the house; but it is not every worker who desires to live in a wooden house.

Then again, there are many workers who do not desire to become house-owners. On

account of the migratory nature of their employment the burden of buying a house imposes an undue liability on them, and in some cases prevents their free movement from one part of the State to another. The Government feels, therefore, that the powers of the board should be enlarged to enable houses to be erected for rental purposes, and in order to give effect to this it is proposed by this Bill to amend the Act to provide that the board may use any available dedicated land, and purchase or acquire and set aside lands, for the purpose of erecting dwelling houses thereon, to be let to workers on a weekly tenancy basis. Provision has been made in the Bill by which these weekly tenancies may be converted into perpetual leaseholds under Part III. of the Act, thus enabling the occupier of the dwelling to become, in time, the owner thereof.

There is a definite dearth of houses available for renting, and it is felt that this need should be met. It is not proposed, of course, that the board should make the whole contribution to the meeting of this need; but if the Bill is approved it will be used as an experiment to see whether or not it is possible to reduce the cost of building by erecting groups of houses, using as much prefabricated material as can be provided. Members may be aware of the fact that this type of building has been made available in South Australia for some years past, and has proved highly successful. It may also interest members to know that the scheme was adopted by an anti-Labour Government, the idea being to provide cheap rented houses for workers in order to prevent a rise in the basic wage, thus attracting industry to South Australia. In this respect the scheme has proved highly successful there. It is hoped to provide under this scheme a commodious four or five-roomed cottage at a rent not greater than 19s. a week.

There is a provision in the Bill by which the board will be enabled to financially assist householders to meet the health requirements of a local authority where it is considered by the board that such householder is not in a financial position to provide the finance himself. It will be recalled that recently a Housing Committee was appointed for the purpose of investigating the housing problem, and one of the matters mentioned in the report of that committee was the large

number of houses in which certain facilities did not comply with the health requirements. It was found in the course of the inquiries made that financial stringency on the part of the householder or owner, as the case may be, was mainly the cause of his inability to comply with health requirements. The Bill enables the provision by the board of the necessary finance for the making of small alterations to houses, and for connection to the sewerage scheme.

The idea of making advances for these small alterations is not new. During the depression the Government provided loan moneys so that the Workers' Homes Board could make advances for the purpose of renovations, the purpose then being to encourage employment. Under that arrangement no losses have been sustained by the board. In making these advances the board will not be limited to workers within the meaning of the Act. An advance will be available to an applicant provided his financial position is such as to justify the board making the advance. In other words, this assistance will only be given where, in the opinion of the board, the owner's financial position is not sufficiently strong to have alterations effected without the board's assistance. I have covered in the main the proposals embodied in the Bill, which I trust will meet with the approval of the House. It is considered that by its proposals a step forward will be taken towards providing some of the housing requirements of the people, which will no doubt be urgently needed in the post-war period. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [8.30] in moving the second reading said: This is a very important measure in which I know the goldfields members will be particularly interested.

Hon. J. Cornell: You are going to try compulsion to start with.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the hon. member will give the Bill his very solid support I think it will be advantageous.

Hon. J. Cornell: I do not know whether I shall do so.

The HONORARY MINISTER: By this Bill it is proposed to amend the Mine Workers' Relief Act, 1932-40, which provides for the compensation of men prohibited from employment in the mining industry on account of silicosis advanced and tuberculosis, or tuberculosis separately. Under the Act a tuberculosis miner is compensated financially, as are his wife and children, if any. However, he is not examined again by the laboratory, nor is he given any medical or surgical treatment. He can go where he likes, do what he likes—and infect other persons.

A person notified by the Minister that he has been found on examination to have early silicosis or advanced silicosis is not prohibited from working in the mining industry. Many continue in the industry even though they have been advised in their own interests not to do so. Once, however, the mine worker becomes infected with tuberculosis, the Act provides that he is to leave the industry immediately. He then receives compensation up to an amount of £750 which is paid to him either at so much per week or so much per month, or otherwise. When this amount has been expended the miner is entitled to receive benefits under the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, to which he has been a contributor.

Fortunately, medical and surgical science is ever progressive, and one of the advances made in recent years has been the successful treatment of tuberculosis when the disease is not beyond a certain stage, the treatments being of several kinds. Opinions obtained from medical men in America, South Africa and Australia confirm the belief that if the disease is detected at a certain stage, there is a good chance of a cure being effected. It is considered that the time has arrived when this treatment should be made available to our infected miners. By the Bill, therefore, it is proposed that men afflicted with tuberculosis only, shall be enabled, if they so desire, to undergo expert treatment which our medical men consider will result in many cases in cures being effected.

Hon. J. Cornell: You say "if they so desire." So it is not compulsory?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No.

Hon. J. Cornell: What happens if they do not so desire?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member can cross-examine me in Committee. I understand that the reason why the Bill has not been applied to those affected with silicosis is that the medical profession is of the opinion that a cure of this disease cannot be effected. There is a provision in the Bill which states that the miner, once having elected to undergo treatment—that is what the hon. member referred to—must carry on such treatment, otherwise the board may sue for the cost of treatment incurred to the date of the cessation of such treatment. In the event of the mine worker receiving treatment without such treatment proving successful, then he will be discharged from treatment but will continue to receive financial compensation from the Mine Workers' Relief Fund for the rest of his life. If, on the other hand, the worker is successfully treated, he may either return to the mining industry as a surface worker only, subject to laboratory examinations at six-monthly intervals, or engage in any other occupation.

Monetary compensation ceases as soon after discharge from curative treatment as is decided by the Mine Workers' Relief Board. If, before obtaining full-time work, the mine worker earns any income, the board at its discretion may decide to pay him only the difference between the gross earnings and the gross benefits payable from the fund. The Bill provides that all expenses and charges in connection with the treatment are to be paid by the board of the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. It further provides that if a mine worker who has been treated and issued with a certificate that he is free from tuberculosis, does not re-enter the mining industry, he may nevertheless receive further medical examination when that course is approved by the Minister. If at any such re-examination he is found to be suffering from tuberculosis he shall be entitled to further curative treatment and to a continuance of the monetary benefits from the stage where they ceased at the conclusion of his previous treatment. It is stated by the medical profession that whilst the infection may be a new one, there is no means of proving that it is not a recurrence of the old infection, therefore treatment should be provided at all times as may be necessary. It is pointed out that the mine worker who does not return to the mining industry, and

who subsequently is again infected with tuberculosis, will receive his benefits from where they previously ceased. If the mine worker returns to the mining industry and becomes again infected, he will be treated as though infected for the first time and will receive his benefits accordingly, including, if necessary, a further sum of £750. This is so because of the more hazardous nature of the work undertaken by the man who returns to the mining industry.

That briefly explains the proposals in this Bill. It is proposed that treatment will be administered by Dr. Henzell of the Woorloo Sanatorium and Dr. Muecke of the Perth Hospital. It will be left to those medical men to determine whether the mine worker will be placed in the tuberculosis clinic at the Perth Hospital or the Woorloo Sanatorium. It will be their responsibility to decide whether the patient will be likely to respond to treatment, and also as to what type of treatment shall be given. The board is quite financial and will be able to pay the expenses incurred in connection with the proposed scheme. I understand that at the present time the Bill will cover 20 men, and that the consensus of medical opinion is that the results which will be obtained in treatment will be most satisfactory.

Hon. J. Cornell: If a man says he will have treatment, he comes under the Act?

The HONORARY MINISTER: If he decides to come under the provisions of the Act he will have to continue receiving treatment or else pay for the treatment he has received.

Hon. J. Cornell: If he does not decide to continue, will the payment of his compensation continue?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I cannot give a reply to that now.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is what I want to know.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Bill has the approval of the Mine Workers' Relief Board, and the heartiest support of the Department of Health, and it is hoped that Parliament will approve of it, so that the benefits and blessings of modern medical healing may be available to those who unfortunately become stricken with this disease. The Government and the people of this State are fortunate in having at

their disposal the services of Dr. Henzell, whose appointment has been of tremendous advantage to patients suffering from this terrible complaint.

Hon. J. Cornell: I think too much is expected of him.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He is doing a magnificent job and he is very keen on pushing ahead with the work. He is backing this Bill to the limit. Although the measure does not cover very many men, it is a step in the right direction and I hope that, if it is passed, every man who can benefit by its provisions will decide to do so. Attention must be paid to the opinion of medical men. Both Dr. Henzell and Dr. Muecke—and Dr. Henzell is a specialist—are of the opinion that these men have a chance of being cured.

Hon. J. Cornell: This Bill will apply not only to the 20 men referred to but to any others who may be affected.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is correct. It is considered that there are 20 men at present affected. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILL—ROAD CLOSURE.

Second Reading

THE HONORARY MINISTER [8.43] in moving the second reading said: Each session it has been found necessary to submit a Road Closure Bill and this session has proved no exception. I doubt, however, whether a smaller Road Closure Bill has ever been introduced in this House. The Bill has to do with land at Collie. Lots 473 to 478 fronting Medic-street, Collie, are backed by Lots 481 to 484 fronting Johnston-street in that town. All of these lots are held by the Roman Catholic Church, and a right-of-way runs between Lots 477 and 478. To enable the church to consolidate its holding, it is proposed to close this right-of-way and open one between Lots 478 and 479. The proposed right-of-way will be resumed from Lot 478, and the land in the existing right-of-way given in exchange therefor. The Municipal Council of Collie, as well as the Town Plan-

ning Commissioner and the Surveyor General, are in favour of the proposal, and I trust, therefore, that no objection to the proposal will be raised by this House. I have a plan which indicates the right-of-way to which I have referred, and this I propose laying on the Table of the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

**BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS
ACT AMENDMENT.**

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [8.47] in moving the second reading said: By this Bill it is proposed to amend the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906-41, to enable the appointment by a municipal council of a councillor as honorary treasurer without his incurring disqualification; to prevent electors residing in adjoining districts voting as absentees unless such electors are also residing more than five miles from a polling booth; to give certain council officials, whose duties may bring them into direct conflict with ratepayers and councillors, the right of appeal to a magistrate against dismissal; to give the Minister power to extend the time for the holding of the annual general meeting; to meet the position which arises when insufficient nominations are received for the positions of municipal auditors; to meet the position should no nominations be received for the office of mayor; and to meet the position should a council resign or there be insufficient councillors in office to form a quorum.

Proposals to permit of the appointment of honorary treasurers and to give the Minister power to extend the time for the holding of the annual meeting were approved by both Houses in legislation presented last session, and therefore need no comment at this stage. Absentee vote officials have complained of electors who live in adjoining districts, sometimes within a few hundred yards—sometimes less than one hundred yards—of the boundary of the district in which they are entitled to vote, taking advantage of the absentee voting procedure.

Hon. J. Cornell: As they did under the Electoral Act.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. It is considered that these special facilities should be restricted, so far as practicable, and it is proposed therefore that such electors shall not be entitled to vote as absentees unless they also reside five miles from the polling place. A proposal introduced last session that town clerks, engineers and building surveyors should not be dismissed from their office except with the Minister's approval was rejected in this House, principally on the ground that the power should not be vested in the Minister. Members are aware that the Road Districts Act provides that no secretary shall be dismissed without the approval of the Minister in charge of local government matters.

The proposal that these senior officials, whose duties may bring them into direct conflict with councillors and ratepayers, should be given the right of appeal against dismissal was originally submitted some years ago by the Country Municipal Association, and was later endorsed by the Local Government Officers' Association. At a recent deputation to the Minister for Works from the Country Municipal Association, the proposal was again submitted and strongly supported by the mayors of some of the larger country towns. The members of this deputation stated that they would have been quite satisfied with the right of appeal to the Minister, but were quite prepared to accept any other appropriate appeal authority.

Last session Sir Hal Colebatch, I think, mentioned that an appeal board should be provided. We propose to appoint a magistrate to act as the appeal board. The proposal in the Bill, therefore, is that the officials concerned shall have the right of appeal to a magistrate within 14 days of receipt of notice. This is a very fair proposition. Personally, I prefer the provision that is in the Road Districts Act, but this should meet all the objections raised in this House last session. During the war years considerable difficulty has been experienced by some municipalities in obtaining any or sufficient nominations for the two positions of auditor. As the Act does not stipulate what action should be taken under these circumstances, it is proposed in the Bill that the Minister be given certain powers to over-

come temporarily any such difficulty. Provision is also included to give a majority of the councillors power to elect a councillor as acting mayor should no nomination be received for the position of mayor. In consequence of a strong agitation in a certain metropolitan municipality recently, it appeared possible that the council as a whole might resign. It was then ascertained by the department that no provision was made in the Municipal Corporations Act to define action to be taken under such circumstances. The Bill proposes to give the Governor power to appoint a commissioner pending the election of a new council. The provisions proposed are the same as those embodied in the Road Districts Act, which gives the Governor power to appoint a commissioner should there be no board or insufficient members to form a quorum. It has been found necessary on a number of occasions to appoint commissioners for road districts. Some provision of this nature should certainly be embodied in the Municipal Corporations Act, otherwise the executive officers would be left without legislative direction in the administration of their municipalities. My remarks explain the provisions contained in the Bill. They have all been requested by the local authorities or their associations. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan): I support the second reading. When a similar measure was before us last session I took strong exception to the provision that a dismissed municipal officer should have the right of appeal to the Minister. It seemed to me, as well as to the majority of members, that that was an entirely improper function for a Minister to exercise. Personally I would be prepared to trust the municipal councils to do the right thing. I did suggest during the debate last session that if some right of appeal were desired, a board might be established consisting of the resident magistrate for the district, together with a representative of the council and one of the employees. The provision for the appointment of the resident magistrate amounts to practically the same thing, because each side will have an opportunity to place its case before the magistrate. The other provisions are necessary and have long been desired.

HON. J. CORNELL (South): I have a vivid recollection of a case that occurred quite recently. For over 30 years, in this instance, the council had tried to put a man out, and it finally succeeded. Two or three other key men also went. These officers are entitled to some protection. I do not know that we need give them any better protection than the right of appeal to a magistrate. Had the officer, to whom I first referred, been employed by a road board, his case would have been dealt with by a magistrate and a decision given. The present position is that he has no redress, although public opinion is that he is entitled to it. I hope that on this occasion the Council will agree to give these officers some protection. After the last measure was defeated I was approached by more than one municipal officer. As a result, I arranged for a deputation to the Minister, who was good enough to receive it. The deputation made out a case, and the Minister has now brought down an amending Bill in order to clear up the situation. I support the second reading, and hope that the Bill will be agreed to.

HON. G. FRASER (West): This Bill will give general satisfaction. Certain employees of local authorities felt that some members of the council were prejudiced against them, and were endeavouring to get rid of them. If the efforts of such councillors were successful, the employees had no redress. The protection given by the right of appeal to a magistrate opens up an avenue through which a decision can be arrived at as to whether such dismissal was just or otherwise. One or two local government officers to whom I have spoken on this matter have informed me that they are quite satisfied with this provision.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [9.1] in moving the second reading said: This small Bill seeks to amend the Road Districts Act,

1919-42, and has the approval of the various local authorities and their associations. The first amendment deals with the question of the abolition of wards. A metropolitan road board recently decided to abolish all of its wards. It was then found that, although the Act defines the procedure to be adopted in regard to elections when a district is divided into wards, no procedure has been prescribed to meet the position which arises upon their abolition. An amendment to Section 13 of the Act is therefore proposed to meet the situation.

A proposal in the Bill seeks to overcome a difficulty in regard to the holding of extraordinary elections in the North-West. Under the Act it is impossible to comply with the prescribed procedure in that portion of the State. The Act stipulates that an extraordinary election must be held within two months of the date of the vacancy occurring, that the closing day for nominations shall be 28 days prior to election day, and that nominations may be lodged within 35 days of the closing date, the total of these two periods exceeding the prescribed two months. A period up to three months is proposed in the Bill.

Another proposal deals with absentee voting. The Act provides that any elector who intends to be absent from the district in which the election is being held may record an absentee vote. Absentee vote officials have complained that this facility is being availed of by persons living in adjoining districts, sometimes only a few hundred yards from the boundary of the district in which they are entitled to record a vote. It is considered that voting in absence should be restricted so far as practicable and reasonable, and an amendment is therefore proposed whereby an elector residing in an adjoining district shall not be entitled to record an absentee vote unless he resides more than five miles from the polling place.

The Bill also deals with the election of a chairman and vice-chairman of a board. The Act provides that at the first meeting after every annual election, the board shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman, and that if by reason of an equality of votes or any other reason the board cannot do so, the Minister shall appoint a chairman and vice-chairman. The Great Southern Road Board Association has suggested that the road board should be given a further opportunity after the first

meeting to arrive at a decision before the Minister is called upon to make an appointment. An amendment proposes, therefore, to meet the desires of the association, it being considered preferable that these appointments should, if at all possible, be made locally.

The most important provision of the Bill has been introduced at the request of the Great Southern Road Board Association and the Local Government Association, and proposes to give road boards authority to combine the several rates, namely, road, loan, health, vermin and light, into one column in the rate book and into one aggregate total in the rate notice. This proposal is endorsed by the departmental road board auditors and inspectors and, if approved, will eliminate the multiplicity of money columns in the rate book and a substantial amount of clerical work. Under this method a rate book will cover three years' transactions instead of one as at present. This provision will in no way interfere with the preparation of separate estimates for each separate activity, and the rate notices will show the amount levied against each activity. Credits to the various separate accounts will be calculated by taking the proportion each bears to the total rate receipts. A few road boards have had this method in operation for some years. The legal position being somewhat obscure, it is now desired to put the matter on a proper legal footing to enable other boards to introduce the system without fear of challenge.

Hon. J. Cornell: It will simplify matters.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. The only other provision in the Bill deals with the limitation of six months imposed by Section 344 of the Act in connection with the taking of proceedings in respect of offences against the Act or by-laws. It has been represented by various local authorities that the period of six months is too short, particularly now when there is a shortage of staff with which to police the Act and by-laws. This applies mainly in connection with the building by-laws. The Bill proposes to extend the period to 12 months, which is considered to be reasonable. This covers the proposals embodied in this Bill. As I stated at the outset, they have been requested by the various local authorities and their associations. The proposals have the approval of the de-

partment, and I trust that the House will approve of them. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West): I support the Bill. Some of the amendments are long overdue. I would like to know why provision is made for the approval of the Minister when a road board desires to aggregate various rates in one sum and enter them in one column of the rate book. Some boards have been asking for a considerable time for permission to do this, but I cannot see why it should be necessary to get the Minister's approval before making the change.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (in reply): I think the hon. member must have misunderstood me. Several road boards have already adopted the system, but the legality of their action is not quite certain and, in order to make the position legal and encourage other local authorities to simplify their books in the same way, the amendment has been introduced.

Hon. H. Tuckey: But the Bill says that the alteration shall be subject to the approval of the Minister.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—New section:

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I will not stress the point, but I still think it wrong for a road board to have to ask the Minister for approval to alter its system of keeping the rate book. If a road board desires to bring about the alteration as authorised by this clause, there should be no need to secure the approval of the Minister. I wondered why the reference to the Minister's approval was included.

THE HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know of any special reason for its inclusion, but probably it is considered desirable.

Hon. L. Craig: It might be designed to cover any unspecified rate.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7, 8, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—COMPANIES.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 22nd September. **Hon. J. Cornell** in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The **CHAIRMAN:** Progress was reported after Clause 36 had been agreed to.

Clauses 37 to 46—agreed to.

Clause 47—Specific requirements as to prospectus:

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (1) of Part A before the word "contents" the word "abridged" be inserted.

It is suggested that the complete memorandum shall be printed in any prospectus. Those of us who have been associated with companies know that the memorandum will sometimes consist of seven or eight closely printed foolscap pages; and it seems to me entirely unnecessary to print the whole of it in a prospectus. It is available to any member who intends to invest in a company at the registered office of the company or at the Registrar's office.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY:** I oppose the amendment. What the hon. member has said is sufficient argument for the retention of the clause as it stands. The prospectus may contain an abridgement of the memorandum if it is published as a newspaper advertisement; but where that is not the case, the whole memorandum should be made available to the public.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I think the Chief Secretary is confused. The prospectus that is issued for the public to peruse must contain the memorandum and I consider that that is unnecessary.

The **CHIEF SECRETARY:** It is necessary for the protection of the public, which surely has some rights in these matters. Is it right that we should force a member of the public who desires to consider investing in a company to go to the registered office of the company or to the Registrar's office to peruse the memorandum?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: This seems to me to be a new departure. One company with which I am associated has a memorandum containing 23 foolscap pages, closely typed. It is a normal procedure for a person intending to invest in a company to go to

that company's office and ascertain what is contained in its memorandum and articles.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This provision is taken word for word from the English Act. If it is considered to be necessary in England, we should be prepared to adopt it.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If the prospectus is a newspaper advertisement, the memorandum need not be included in it.

The Chief Secretary: Look at Clause 48.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not see that that alters what I am suggesting.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 48 to 58—agreed to.

Clause 59—Prohibition of provision of financial assistance by company in certain cases:

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (1) be struck out.

No such provision appears in the New South Wales Act and I can see no reason why Subclause (1) should be included in the Bill. The effect of it is that a director of Foy & Gibson, for instance, will not be able to purchase an article from that firm on credit.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This provision was taken from the English Act. Subclause (2) covers the provision that appears in the New South Wales Act. The inclusion of the subclause is considered necessary.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Joint Select Committee gave careful consideration to this provision and it was decided that a director should not be placed in a position to receive treatment better than that afforded ordinary shareholders. A director might hold an over-riding number of shares and might exercise his voting power to lend himself as much money from the company as he chose. That sort of thing should be avoided.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am assured that if the subclause is left in the Bill it may have the effect of causing a great many small pastoral companies to go out of existence. The subclause should not have the effect of preventing any director from dealing with his own company.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know that we can accept the expression of

opinion by Mr. Parker that the subclause would prevent a director from being a customer of his own firm.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: He will receive financial assistance if he is supplied with goods on credit.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think any reasonable individual would accept that view. The object of the subclause is really to prevent the director of a company from obtaining from his company a loan of such dimensions as might possibly land the company in serious financial trouble.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: At the end of each month the books of a firm like Foy & Gibson would show many thousands of pounds owing by various customers. All that represents financial assistance. I urge that Subclause (1) should not be retained in the Bill seeing that a similar provision does not exist in other statutes and we are supposed to be bringing this legislation into line with that prevailing elsewhere.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The object of the clause was to avoid cases arising such as a director borrowing £90,000 on the security of his shares valued at £90,000. The director might die and then the company would be landed in an extremely difficult position. The subclause was included for a very good reason although I can see the possibility of some slight difficulties with regard to pastoral companies.

Hon. G. FRASER: This subclause gave rise to a lot of discussion but it should be retained in the Bill. I forget the exact circumstances that gave rise to its inclusion.

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

Ayes	6
Noes	13
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Majority against .. .	7
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AYES.	
Hon. Sir Hat Colebatch	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. J. A. Dimmity	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. W. H. Kitson	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 60 to 100—agreed to.

Clause 101—Publication of name of company:

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of paragraph (a) of Subclause (1) the words "together with the words 'Registered office'" be struck out.

Those words are, in fact, of no value. Under the existing Companies Act the registered office of every company has to be marked up describing it as such outside the office. At present the provision applies to foreign companies only. All other Companies Acts are the same as ours, apart from those words "registered office." The virtue of a registered office is for the service of notices. However, before one serves a notice which needs to be served at the company's "registered office," one ascertains definitely where that registered office is situated. A company may have moved from its registered office without painting out its own name and those words "registered office."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Will the retention of the words do any harm? I fail to see that it will. Some companies carry on business in two or three places, and any one of those places ought to be available for the purpose of serving legal documents.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The "registered office" is the registered office of the company. No prudent person would ever serve a notice at the company's "registered office" without first ascertaining where the company's registered office is. Walking along the street in the office portion of Kalgoorlie, one sees numerous boards which state that they indicate the registered offices of companies, whilst those companies may have moved away or gone out of business. Under the clause such a company as Dalgely & Co., Ltd., would have to put up the words "registered office" on every one of its offices all over the country.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I understand that we ought to have a provision relative to the "registered office." Mr. Parker would probably be better satisfied if the words "and every place in which its business is carried on" were struck out.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I should not mind that. I have endeavoured to point out that every other State Act has exactly this provision and has found that the printing or painting of the words "registered office" outside an office is of no use, value or effect, for the reason that a company may change

its office and not paint out the words "registered office" or its name where it was last located, with the result that the words are misleading. Apparently in every State and in England it has been decided not to force companies to put the words "registered office" outside their premises.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I assume that these words must be placed outside a company's office and if they are not, it is an offence. If a company shifts its office and omits to remove the notice from the former premises, I take it that would be a contravention of the Act.

Hon. L. Craig: No, it could put a new name on its new office. It does not say that a company shall not have two notices.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: But surely it would be an offence if it had the words "registered office" over some place which was no longer its registered office.

The CHAIRMAN: There are several dialogues taking place in Committee on the matter and I suggest that the clause be postponed and that we proceed with clauses on which some progress can be made.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I think we are making progress.

The CHAIRMAN: We get on very well when there are no amendments, but not when there are amendments.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I do not think there is any occasion to postpone this matter.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The Royal Commission endeavoured to keep these clauses in conformity with sections in other Acts in Australia. I do not remember that this question was discussed by the Committee. I see no objection to it. If the words are in other Acts elsewhere, I do not think we have anything to object to.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 102 to 111—agreed to.

Clause 112—Annual return:

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I move an amendment—

That the following words be inserted at the beginning of paragraph (xx) of Subclause (1):—"Except where a company is a proprietary company."

This paragraph provides that in respect of all companies the annual return to be lodged with the Registrar of Companies shall be accompanied by a balance sheet and auditor's report and this notwithstanding the fact that

some companies are not required to lodge a balance sheet of any sort. The Bill proposes to go to the other extreme and compel all companies, public or proprietary, to lodge a balance sheet at the Companies Office. Exemption has always been the recognised right of proprietary companies and the amendment I have suggested will bring this provision into line with similar enactments in all the other States of Australia and in England.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Special provision is made in this Bill for private companies and as all companies are expected when presenting an annual return to present a balance sheet, why should proprietary companies be exempt? Documents lodged with the registrar are subject to inspection by the public or anyone who may be interested, such as creditors or prospective creditors, and the hon. member has not said anything to provide justification for exempting proprietary companies from the necessity of furnishing this document.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: A good deal has been said about the desire to bring our company law into conformity with that of other States. In the other States this particular provision is included in the terms I have suggested by this amendment. Every other Companies Act provides that the balance sheet of proprietary companies shall not be lodged with the annual return. In its original form the Bill contained the provision I seek now to include by my amendment and the Royal Commission considered it should be in this form.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot say whether the recommendation of the Royal Commission was the same as the hon. member's amendment. While it has been the desire to bring our company law into closer conformity with company law elsewhere, it does not follow that we do not desire some alteration in certain directions. If we think an improvement can be made on other company law we propose to include such improvement. The Committee must decide whether there is any valid reason why a balance sheet should not be lodged by proprietary companies when the annual returns are lodged.

Hon. G. Fraser: I think the clause is as agreed on by the Royal Commission.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is likely that private companies will increase in Western Australia

in the future. They will trade with the ordinary public and consequently I see no great objection to a balance sheet being made available at the Companies Office. There is something in the clause which I do not understand. It says that the report, balance sheet and so on shall be accompanied by a copy of the report of the auditors thereon. Private companies are exempt from audit.

The Chief Secretary: They can have an audit if they so desire.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I think the position is that they must have an audit unless a resolution passed by a general meeting decides otherwise. Most pastoral companies will not have an audit and so will not be able to send a copy of the auditor's report to the Companies Office. It is no great hardship for a private company to submit a balance sheet. It must submit one to the Taxation Department. It would only have to file a similar return, together with some extra statements, in the Companies Office.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Subclause (7) of Clause 137 reveals the very point raised by Mr. Craig. How can an auditor's report be attached to a balance sheet if there is no auditor for a private company? It is recognised in every other State of Australia that the proprietary companies have the right to refrain from sending a balance sheet to the Companies Office. Admittedly they lodge one at the Taxation Department, but private companies have always had their privacy recognised. Why should the public have the right to inspect these balance sheets at the Companies Office on the payment of a small fee of 1s.?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The proprietary companies were exempt in the 1940 Bill. Of what value is the balance sheet of a private company when published to the world? Mr. Craig said that one must be sent to the Taxation Department, but that is secret. If I wanted to do business in a big way with a private company I would make inquiries beforehand through the Trade Protection Association. The balance sheet is of no value. This particular clause differs in every Act. The Federal Companies Act and the New South Wales Act have no such provision.

Amendment put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.21 p.m.