

Hon. J. E. Dodd: Would it not be better to let them consider it?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: So far as the other point is concerned, I am inclined to take the same view as Mr. Dodd. It does seem to me to be rather straining the principle we want to get at to say that the number of the apprentices who are away shall not count, and that the number of the workmen who are away shall. I have no hesitation in saying that if by deleting all the words after "excluded" in Sub-clause (b) of Clause 4, the hon. member's objection can be met, I would say take them out, and leave it thus simply that the number of apprentices is fixed by the number of workmen actually employed. At all events, I hope that an effort will be made to place this Bill, or something like it, on the statute-book, because it seems to me it will be a bad thing, not only for the individuals but for the State, if we are going to throw obstacles in the way of young fellows learning a trade at a time when, above all others, we want to do everything we can to make them efficient workmen. If the House will agree to the second reading of the Bill I will consent to postpone the Committee stage until to-morrow. In the meantime inquiries may be made as to whether the deletion of the second paragraph of Clause 4 would meet the objections raised, and on the other hand I will consider the suggestion made by the hon. member. It is not the wish of the Government to force legislation through this House without those interested having ample time to consider it. I think the object of the Bill is highly desirable, and I think a good deal of wrong will be done if the passage of the measure is unduly delayed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 9.20 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 6th March, 1917.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read assenting to Sale of Liquor and Tobacco Bill.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Kalgoorlie Roads Board, By-laws under Health Act.

By the Attorney General: 1, New General Rule under Mines Regulation Act dealing with the use of intoxicating liquor; 2, Additional regulation under the Mining Act, 1904.

By the Minister for Works: 1, Alteration and amendment of uniform general by-laws for regulating the registration of camels and licensing of camel drivers; 2, Audit of Accounts of the Boya Quarry under the Government Trading Concerns Act, 1912 to 30th June, 1916.

PRIVILEGE—NAMING A MEMBER.

To Expunge from Official Records.

Mr. HOLMAN (Murchison) [4.55]: With the indulgence of the House, and on a question of privilege. I desire to move—

That the motion moved by the Premier, on which a division was called but not completed, on Tuesday, 27th February, 1917, as follows:—"That the member for Murchison be suspended from the service of the House," be expunged from the official records of the House.

My reasons for moving this are that, in the first instance, I knew at the time I was perfectly within my rights, as a member of this Chamber, in asking for information dealing with a certain matter. This has been more than borne out by a perusal of *Hansard*, which shows clearly beyond a shadow of doubt, that, up to the time when the naming took place, I was absolutely in the right and had done nothing which any Speaker could have taken a member to task for in the slightest degree. I have perused *Hansard* and am perfectly satisfied that this is so. I also wish to state that the Premier had no option, when the Speaker named a member, but to take the action which he took in moving the motion I have referred to. It did not matter how unjust the action may have been, it was still the bounden duty of the leader of the House to take the action which he did take on that occasion. I do not desire to stress or delay the matter in any way, but, as briefly as possible, to place the case through you, Sir, before members of the House, to show that an injustice has been done. Had I transgressed in the first place, which anyone will see from a perusal of *Hansard* that I did not do, though I was quite willing even before the Premier moved the motion to withdraw and apologise if necessary, the position might have been different; but on no occasion has any member been named for any offence without his having had an opportunity, before the actual naming, after he has been named, and also even after the motion has been carried suspending him, of making the *amende honorable*, and to be treated as an hon. member should be when he is willing to admit that he is wrong. At the same time, I was not wrong. As a member of this House I merely desired to have information given to hon. members, and I took the only opportunity I had of seeking that information. In the first instance, I was not in the wrong when I was named because I did not transgress at all. Secondly, I was quite willing, before the resolution was put before the House, to withdraw, even though I had not transgressed, and to apologise if I was in the wrong, which I was not. Later on I was also willing—in fact I did so—to withdraw and apologise, knowing that, whether a man is

right or wrong, it is his duty to conform to the rules and customs of the House, and I desired to follow that usual custom and observe the rules of the House. Knowing that the rights of hon. members had been encroached upon to a considerable extent during the previous week or two, I, as Deputy Speaker in this Chamber, and Chairman of Committees for five and a half years, considered it my duty to see that hon. members had preserved to them the right to place any matter before the House which they desired, and which is quite in order in accordance with the rules of the House. I am taking this action merely in order to protect the privileges of members of this House. I must admit that after the naming some of the expressions used were strong, but that was the result of the naming and I expressed my regret on that account. I do think that a great injustice will be done to myself if this motion is permitted to remain on the records of the House. I am satisfied that had a division been taken the result would have been to uphold my action and that it would have resulted in the defeat of the motion moved by the Premier. There are many things one might say on an occasion like this, but I have no desire to stir up what is now a matter of the past, and without going further into the question I shall content myself by repeating that I feel an injustice will be done to me if that record be not expunged. I move the motion which I have read.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [5.1]: I desire to support the motion and without doing so at length to briefly give reasons for doing so. In these days, when the records of the House become invariably a guide to the House, I do think it would be unwise for us to keep this motion on our records. In the interests of the honour of this Assembly itself I think it would be wise for us to as soon as possible blot out and forget this unfortunate incident in our history, so that never in the future shall a Speaker, whoever he may be, follow the ruling laid down by the then occupant. I trust that it may never be quoted as an excuse for similar conduct in the future. I therefore second the motion.

The PREMIER: (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [5.3]: I have no objection to the

motion. The incident which gave rise to this motion was most regrettable, and no one regrets more than I the necessity which arose for me to move that motion. As I have said, I have no objection to take to the record being expunged, for the simple reason that a division was never taken on it.

Question put and passed.

QUESTION—ESPERANCE WHEAT.

Hon. T. WALKER asked the Minister for Industries: 1, Whether his attention has been drawn to the following appearing in the *Kalgoorlie Miner* on the 27th February last:—"Regarding the sale of mallee wheat, Messrs. J. Stevenson and Stearne, of Kalgoorlie, approached the State Wheat Board regarding Esperance wheat and received a reply that they are not buying it. The farmers are, therefore, thrown on their own resources. Some are now selling to Mr. Harvey, of Boulder, and he is engaged carting to Norseman by motor wagon. The member for the district has asked the Government to help the farmers to dispose of their wheat. This year's yield is a very good sample of milling wheat and too good to be made use of for feeding stock." 2, Are the statements made in the above paragraph correct? 3, Has he or the Wheat Board taken any steps to meet the requirements of the mallee farmers in connection with the sale of their wheat?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIES replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by 1. 3, Yes, at the instance of the member for the district (the Hon. T. Walker) the Assistant General Manager of the Industries Department agreed that wheat might be sold by Esperance farmers under the Industries Assistance Board at 3s. 3d. per bushel on the farms and at 5s. per bushel in Norseman and Esperance. This arrangement was approved by a representative farmer from the Esperance district who was introduced to me by the Hon. T. Walker.

BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS (No. 2).

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray) [5.5]: I move—

That the Bill do now pass and the Title of the Bill be an Act.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.6]: I understand that this Bill is now before us for the purpose of it being read a third time.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Bill has been read a third time by order of the House, and the question is that the Bill do now pass and the Title of the Bill be an Act.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I recognise it is unusual in this House to oppose a motion of this character; that has been the practice here for many years. But we have our Standing Orders to guide us, and I wish to draw the attention of hon. members and of the people of this State to a decision in which it was held—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Bill having been discussed and disposed of, and read a third time, there can be no motion or discussion on the question that the Bill do now pass this House and that the Title of the Bill be an Act. The Bill has been read a third time. The procedure laid down by *May* is as follows:—

A Bill has been read a third time and further proceedings upon the question, "That this Bill do pass," has been adjourned to a future day. After the third reading of the Queen's Degradation Bill in the House of Lords, 10th November, 1820, the further consideration of the Bill was put off for six months. Such a course is impossible in the House of Commons, as according to established practice that question being practically obsolete is invariably omitted, though the form is preserved upon the Journal and thus according to establish usage a Bill when read a third time has passed and consequently the question thereon is not put from the Chair.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I desire to draw attention to what took place in connection with the Scottish Education Bill when under consideration in the House of Commons; and to the fact that in the House of Commons a motion such as this cannot be moved. The Standing Order of the House of Commons has been deleted, but I would point out that a motion of this character not only

has been moved but debated and negatived in some instances.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The question is that the Bill do now pass and the title of the Bill be an Act.

Question put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes	20
Noes	19

Majority for	1
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AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Smith
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. George	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Nairn	Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Foley	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Troy
Mr. Heilmann	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Holman	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. W. D. Johnson	

(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the Bill be transmitted by Message to the Legislative Council and their concurrence desired therein.

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

Ayes	20
Noes	19

Majority for	1
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AYES.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Smith
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. George	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Lefroy	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Nairn	Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Foley	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Troy
Mr. Heilmann	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Holman	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. W. D. Johnson	

(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [5.20] in moving the second reading said: Prior to the year 1893 all the land laws of Western Australia were provided by regulation, except as regards the granting of homestead leases, for which there was an Act. In 1893 the first Land Act was introduced into the Parliament of this State by the late Hon. G. Throssell, as Minister for Lands. Since that date there have been ten amendment Acts. Thus, we now have, besides the principal Act, no less than ten measures dealing with the questions of land settlement and land tenure. That fact makes it highly difficult in these days to follow a Bill amending the preceding Acts. Such Bills naturally touch on sections of the principal Act or of the amendment Acts. In order to assist hon. members to take an intelligent and practical view of this Bill, I have provided notes which are being circulated with the Bill itself. These notes will place hon. members in full possession of all the details of amendments provided by the Bill I am now introducing, and also will give them copies of those sections of exist-

ing legislation which are affected. The procedure is novel, but I feel sure it will commend itself to hon. members. I know how difficult it is occasionally to take a speedy and a correct view of many Bills coming before the House, on account of the difficulty of hunting up the sections dealt with by the amending Bill. The various measures introduced to amend the Land Act have invariably had for their object the assistance of settlement. For many years it has been recognised that the motto of the State of Western Australia should be "Produce, produce." We want people. Population is what we require. And without people we cannot have production. We often boast of the enormous territory of our State, forming one-third of the whole of Australia; but frequently we are not prone to recognise the fact that our enormous territory is occupied by only a little over 300,000 people. In my opinion it behoves the Legislature to do everything it possibly can, not only to encourage future settlement but also to assist those settled on our lands at the present time, to relieve them of any disabilities under which they may be working, and to encourage them in their efforts. Our aim, I think, should be to make the calling in which they are engaged as attractive as possible. Although we have an enormous territory, the strength of a country is not reckoned by its coastline and acreage, but is gauged by the number of people who inhabit it. As years go on, the jealous eyes of outsiders will be cast on this country if we do not earnestly and strictly engage in the occupation of settling our territory. Jealous eyes have already been cast on Australia, and there will be a repetition of this unless we fill up our enormous vacant spaces. We have in Western Australia a total area of 624½ million acres. Of that gigantic area less than 22 million acres are either alienated or in process of alienation, that is, through the conditional purchase system. If we have any faith in Western Australia, if we believe that our country is capable of carrying a larger population than it does at the present time, it is our duty to endeavour to encourage the settlement of our lands and also to encourage the people already settled on them. In addition to the area

of about 22 million acres already alienated or in process of alienation, there is nearly 200 million acres of land held under pastoral lease, timber lease, special lease, or gold mining or mineral lease; leaving a balance of about 406 million acres at the present time unoccupied. It is our duty, therefore, to use our best endeavours to settle this enormous territory as speedily as possible. To that end the conditions of settlement should be made as easy as possible and also as complete as possible. I propose, therefore, by this amending Bill, first of all, to reduce the maximum price of ordinary conditional purchase land to 15s. per acre. The lands of the State are the property of the State. The lands of the State are the national asset. But they are absolutely useless to the State unless they are settled. Any business man who undertook to settle an area of country with a view to gaining benefit from the settlement would consider firstly how he was to get people on the land. The State, as the owner of the land, gets all the benefit there is to be derived from settlement. The State receives railway freights, and the producers help to pay interest on our loans through the Taxation Department. Further, a policy of land settlement raises up a race of people who will be able to protect the country in its time of need. Thus the State gains in every way by the settlement of people on its lands. To my mind, it matters little what the State gets for its land as long as it is able to settle people on the land. I am even of opinion that if we could settle all the vacant spaces of Western Australia which are fit for settlement, and could guarantee that those vacant spaces would be successfully cultivated, it would pay the State over and over again, for the reasons I have stated, to give the land away. At the same time, I do not think the State should go as far as that except in individual cases. We now grant to a man who does not hold any other land, 160 acres free of cost. In going so far we have, I think, gone far enough. Still, we want to make the price of our ordinary conditional purchase lands as low as possible; and for that reason I propose to ask the House to make the maximum price of ordinary conditional purchase land 15s. per acre. Unfortunately, Western

Australia contains a considerable area of land infested with poison plant. One does not like to advertise that fact, but, still, hon. members who have travelled Western Australia know that unfortunately this State does contain a considerable area of such land. A great deal of that poison country is fit for settlement and is at the present time profitably occupied. At the same time, members will agree that where people are faced with this poison plant to any great extent, we should have power to reduce the price to as low an amount as possible. In fact, I would go so far as to say that a man who, after occupying his land for 20 years or a lesser period, can satisfy the State that the poison has been thoroughly removed, might very well get his land for nothing. The Bill does not go as far as that, but it reduces the minimum price of poison land to 1s. per acre.

Mr. Underwood: And 20 years to pay it in?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. I am firmly of opinion that this is a wise thing in the interests of settlement, and I think it is fair and equitable in the interests of the individual. To encourage the settlement of the land we provide further that selectors shall be relieved of rent for the first five years of the lease. It is within the first five years of a man's occupancy of the land that he has the greatest difficulties to surmount.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Is the five years limited to poison lands?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, it extends to all lands. In a country like Canada a farmer can go on the land, put his plough into the ground and plough right ahead till dinner time. After dinner he can turn round and go straight back to where he started in the morning, without requiring any clearing of the land at all. In Western Australia the initial cost to the farmer is very great, due to the clearing of the land and the obtaining of water. There are two great essentials a man requires, namely to get his land cleared and watered. The want of water has been keenly felt in many places. Frequently when I ask a farmer why he does not keep sheep he replies, "I have no water." In my opinion wheat farming is not going to be made thoroughly profitable

to any man who has not sheep. Such a man may get a living, but he will never get any comforts. A man who keeps sheep in conjunction with his wheat farming will be found driving his motor car, while the man without sheep will have to be content to bump along in an old spring cart tied up with wire. Without water a man cannot keep sheep. There is so much expense in the early settlement of the land, due to clearing and watering it, that the Government consider it wise that the greatest possible relief should be given to the settler during that period. It is therefore provided in the Bill that the man who takes up land shall be relieved from the payment of rent altogether for the first five years. That five years period shall be added to the end of the lease. The selector will have to pay it in the long run, but he will be relieved for the first five years. We provide in the Bill for the protection of the holdings of men who are fighting for their country. I think hon. members will agree that such men should have no rent to pay while they are away.

Hon. P. Collier: That has been done by administrative act since the war broke out.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Our Land Act is a most elastic measure, and it is wonderful what can be done with it.

Mr. Hudson: And how one can tie things up under it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Especially when we find the lawyers interesting themselves in it. The Bill contains a provision to enable lessees of town and suburban lands to obtain the fee simple. There may be some difference of opinion in regard to this, but this elastic Land Act of ours enabled the prevention of the granting of land in fee simple without Ministers having to come to Parliament for permission. It is a principle in which I have every belief. I hope I may never have to introduce in a Bill anything which I do not honestly believe in myself. I firmly believe we will be doing a wise thing in this country if we allow people to obtain the fee simple of their land. There are many reasons for it, some sentimental and some economic. Probably the great reason at the bottom of it all is largely sentimental. The occupiers of land like to be able to say "This is mine." Very often it

is the great secret of success. I know some hon. members will say that when a man has mortgaged his land the land is not his. Still, at the same time, if he can get the freehold and is able to hand it over as security he is not only better able to get financial assistance, but he feels that if only he can wipe off the encumbrance, he will sooner or later obtain the freehold for himself.

Mr. Underwood: Squatters can get money on their leases. You still propose to lease pastoral lands?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, always. Hon. members will be able to see at a glance how the amendments affect the sections of the original Act. Clause 2 provides that where land is resumed from a person's holding and there is not sufficient other land in the vicinity to allow of land compensation, that person shall be allowed monetary compensation. In the parent Act provision is made only for the granting of other land in exchange for land resumed on a holding. This is often found to operate harshly when it happens that there is no other land in the vicinity which can be offered to the man by way of compensation for the land resumed from him. Consequently, in equity it is only fair that some other method of compensation should be provided in such cases. Again, at the present time if a conditional purchase holder is adjudicated bankrupt or insolvent, his land can only be sold by auction. That is sometimes found to operate against the interests of the man who holds the land. It is therefore provided in the Bill that if the land fails to sell by auction it can afterwards be sold by private contract if a suitable purchaser can be secured. It is a simple provision but I think it is an equitable and proper one. The present Act does already provide for the sale by a mortgagee either by auction or by private contract, therefore I think that in the case of a man adjudicated a bankrupt or becoming insolvent similar provision should be allowed because it is not only in the interests of a mortgagee who held a lien over the property but in the interests of the conditional purchase holder himself. We provide in Clause 5 of the Bill that the minimum price of land thrown open for orchard purposes may be reduced from £1 to 10s. an acre. In the Act at present in force the

minimum price of orchard and vineyard lands and small areas is £1 per acre and in order to encourage this class of settlement it has been decided to make the minimum 10s. if the land is not worth more than that price. Section 64 of the Land Act allows the holder of conditional purchase land—this refers to Clause 6 of the Bill—under residence conditions to apply, upon payment of £1, to come under the non-residence conditions. The amendment is to make it clear that in case of a lease acquired on the recommendation of the land board it is discretionary whether the applicant shall be relieved of the residence conditions or not. An applicant may tell the board that he is going to reside on the land, and the board may say we will accept this applicant because he says he will reside there and the applicant may be accepted in preference to others. The man may then go away and come back in two or three years time, put in his pound and ask to be allowed to come under the non-residence conditions. I think that is a bad thing to encourage.

Mr. Underwood: The man may have got the land over someone who would have resided on it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A man named Jones might come in and say, "I have a family of boys and I am going to reside on the block," and other applicants may not be able to satisfy the board that they will reside on the land, consequently the board gives the land to the man who says he will reside on it. But this man may go away and in two years time come back and on payment of a fee of one pound apply to come in under the non-residence conditions. That is wrong and not in the interests of those who have been refused. Section 5 of the Land Act Amendment Act of 1915 provides that cultivable and grazing land may be comprised in the same conditional lease and that where there is more than one-half grazing land the area may be granted under Part VI. of the Act. Putting this into practice it often occurs that a block is granted as a grazing lease which has considerable less area than the minimum of 300 acres. The minimum for conditional purchase land is 100 acres and where the land is taken up in one block and part of it is grazing land

and part cultivable land the conditional purchaser is allowed the minimum of 100 acres. Ministers in the past have been acting in accordance with this amendment. It is a consequential amendment following on the Land Act of last year. It is necessary and will make the Land Act more easily workable. Section 75 of the Principal Act provides that a selector's interest in a homestead farm shall not be liable to be taken in execution or to be subject to the provisions of Section 27 before the issue of the Crown grant. Section 27 provides for land of insolvents being sold for the benefit of creditors. This protection has been abused by selectors refusing to apply for the Crown grant after the occupation certificate, which is for seven years, has expired. The amendment to Clause 8 of the Bill is to provide that the protection shall cease on the expiration of the occupation certificate whether the Crown grant is applied for or not. This Bill is more of a Committee Bill than one for the House to consider.

Hon. P. Collier: It is a great pity you could not have consolidated the Act and amendments.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would have taken a long time to do that. I do not know if I shall have an opportunity of consolidating the land laws; time will tell. At any rate, I feel sure that with the information I have placed before members they are in a position to see exactly as we go along what the provisions are intended for. Clause 17 provides that the minimum price of poison land may be reduced to 1s. The provision is also made to apply to what is known as wodgil land. Any land known as wodgil land may also be reduced to 1s.

Hon. P. Collier: Is there a report of the board that wodgil land should not be cultivated at all?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is a report in my office at the present time. It is a very well thought out report and certainly very adverse to the wodgil, in fact the board in its report stated that the wodgil land generally seemed to be good sand-plain country and offered reasonable prospects for successful farming. The settlement of such lands was encouraged either actively or passively by different Government depart-

ments for cropping purposes. The wodgil lands have unexpectedly proved a failure.

Mr. Underwood: Why go on cropping?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The recommendations of the board are that wodgil lands shall be those on which the harmful species of wodgil already described or formed the dominal growth. The board, however, go on to say that they do not think it advisable to encourage the settlement of wodgil land, but if people are prepared to take it up the board consider that the conditions should be made as reasonable as possible. For that reason, if people desire to take up this land I am providing under the Bill that the land shall be reduced to the minimum price of 1s., the same as for poison land. According to the Act under which we are now working, it is provided that if a settler is more than twelve and a half miles from a railway he shall be relieved from paying rent for five years.

Mr. Underwood: Is that five years in addition to the other five?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, a settler would not come under that. It only applies to people taking up land now.

Hon. P. Collier: A man occupying land now and twelve and a half miles from a railway?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill provides that anyone who is more than twelve and a half miles from a railway line shall be exempt from paying rent for five years. A man may be living twelve and a half miles from a railway and may have to go 18 or 20 miles to a station or a siding. I am providing that where a man is more than twelve and a half miles from a railway station or siding he shall be enabled to get this indulgence.

Mr. Underwood: Suppose he has already been there for five or six years?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If so he can come under this provision, he will get further assistance and relief. Clause 21 provides for the exemption from the payment of rent for the first five years and also provides that the settler shall only pay during the first five years of his lease the interest on the survey fee paid on the land. The survey fees will be paid afterwards in instalments

as the settler begins to pay his rent. Clause 22 deals with the land for returned soldiers, to which I have already referred. Another clause in the Bill, Clause 24, deals with the question of the settlement of returned soldiers. This is a very important matter indeed. We have to see that we do not encourage people to go on the land unless they are likely to make suitable settlers and at the same time we want to give them every assistance possible.

Mr. Carpenter: You do not tell us what you are going to do for them.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think the House has been informed.

Mr. Carpenter: I have not heard it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The House has been informed that half a million of money has been provided.

Mr. Carpenter: How are you going to spend it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is to be spent through the Agricultural Bank improving the land. The Minister for Lands will allot the land and the Agricultural Bank, which is the only department having the required machinery, will see to the expenditure, and it will be responsible to a board composed of the Ministers for Lands from the various States.

Mr. Underwood: And that board will spend the money right royally just as the Esperance commission has done.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am sure that the money will be properly administered.

Mr. Carpenter: Are you going to spend that half-million on ordinary land settlement?

Mr. Underwood: Is there any chance of getting a job on the board; that is what I would like?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member is getting off the track.

Mr. Underwood: I want to get on the board.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The board in Melbourne will consist of the Ministers for Lands from the various States and we as a Government will be responsible to the board for the expenditure of the money. It is proposed here that the Government may declare any Crown lands open for

selection by persons who have been on active service with the naval or military forces.

Mr. Carpenter: There is not much in that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is a good deal in it.

Mr. Carpenter: Anybody can get that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is provided also that a special Land Board may be appointed.

Mr. Underwood: That is what I want to get on.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This board will be composed of officers of the Lands Department.

Mr. Underwood: Can't you ring in an outsider; I am getting old you know?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is no good putting men on the land if they are not fit for the work. These men will go before the board and they will have to be selected and it is proposed, through the Agricultural Bank, to clear areas of land and prepare them for these men. It is intended to erect buildings and provide water supplies so that these men may go to work at once.

Mr. Carpenter: Under ordinary conditions.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They will get 160 acres for nothing and the interest they will have to pay will be $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Mr. Underwood: What will the members of the board get?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They will not get anything at all. I can see the hon. member is looking for a soft billet.

Mr. Underwood: I did not get one on the Esperance commission.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How can you let them have money at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. when you are paying 5 per cent. for it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the special concession which the soldier is getting.

Mr. Carpenter: And the only one.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I thought the repatriation fund was going to provide for the difference.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have no money from the repatriation fund. This is a difficult matter to deal with and we hope to be able to meet all the difficulties as they crop up from time to time. The Gov-

ernment are perfectly serious in their intention to get to work. We have surveyors in the south-western area—

Mr. Underwood: They ought to be at the Front digging trenches.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Many of these men are old, and I do not think that remark is altogether fair. There are many reasons why some people cannot go to the Front; all are not constitutionally fit.

Hon. P. Collier: The clearing in the South-West is going to be a big problem.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If we are going to settle the lands of Western Australia we have to tackle that problem and we must clear a certain amount of land before we put these men on it. All the details have to be carefully thought out. We have our surveyors at work and they are selecting the land, and I can assure hon. members that it is not my desire that there should be any waste of money or energy over this matter. The Minister for Industries is very earnest about it, and I am sure that he and I will, together, be able to carry out something which will be satisfactory not only to the State, but also to the soldiers. My friend is always called by the House an optimist. I like an optimist, and I like to deal with one, but while I am not going to be a pessimist the Minister for Industries and I will work together, and if my colleague gets too optimistic I shall have to keep him in check.

Hon. P. Collier: The *Primary Producer* will always keep him in check.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The only other important provision in this Bill, and it is perhaps the most important and difficult to deal with, is the question of pastoral leases. As hon. members know our pastoral leases expire in 1928. The late Government were desirous of tackling this question, but it is a very difficult one.

Hon. P. Collier: We did not tackle it because we were so heavily interested in the Eucla millions.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Deputations waited on the late Government time after time and it was recognised that something would have to be done to give the pastoral lessee some security of tenure. Many of the lessees are not prepared to go on im-

proving their holdings for carrying a greater number of stock unless they get security of tenure.

Hon. P. Collier: It is that business of security of tenure that prevented us from putting capital into the Eucla land.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In the early days no one thought of borrowing money, but now, with the assistance of borrowed money, properly expended, people are able to get on much more quickly. If we attempted to develop this country without borrowed money we would certainly fail.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the view we took, but we were generally condemned.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We want to give the pastoral lessee security of tenure so that he may be able to go to his banker and give him some security for the money which he desires to borrow for the development of his holding. The Bill provides for more rigid stocking, also for the expenditure of money in improvements. The stocking clauses in the old Land Bill were not very rigid. I have raised those conditions very considerably and I have also provided for the expenditure of money on improvements, and this has not been done in any previous Land Bill. The Minister will always have power to give relief, if relief is necessary, but at the same time I think it is a wise thing that we should, in granting pastoral leases provide that the lessee should be obliged to spend a certain amount of money in a given time in improving his holding, and he should be obliged to stock it. Under those conditions we will be doing good to the State and I think it will encourage settlement in those parts.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is an honest attempt to deal with the question of pastoral leases. If we are to deal with this matter effectively we should have some classification of our pastoral leases, more especially in the far north. The Bill provides for the granting of pastoral leases for a term expiring on the 31st December, 1948. The amount of rent depends on the pastoral capability of the country and its distance from a port or railway, and it is provided

that the rent shall not be less than the rates at present in force, except in special cases to be approved by the Governor, and it shall not be more than £3 per thousand acres. At the end of fifteen years the Bill provides for the reassessment of the remainder of the term of the lease, but that the rent shall not be increased more than 50 per cent. on the rent fixed at the time of the granting of the lease. The pastoralist should have his position distinctly defined. In order to do that some classification of the country has to take place. The Government are desirous of allowing the pastoralist to have an opportunity, if he likes to take it, of coming under the provisions of this Bill at once, and obtaining an extension of his lease. The Bill further provides that the holder of an existing lease may surrender it, and apply for a new lease.

Mr. Underwood: Suppose he holds more than a million acres now?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He would not be able to take under this Bill more than a million acres.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Then he could surrender any portion of the million acres that he likes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: He cannot take more than a million acres. The Bill gives the pastoral lessee the right to apply for a new lease pending the fixing of the rental, because it will take some time, and must do so, to properly classify this country and arrive at what the land is really worth. If he likes to apply he must pay double the rent fixed for the surrendered lease. In that way we expect not only to give relief to the pastoralists themselves and encourage further development, but we expect under this provision to bring in a considerable amount of revenue to the State. The Bill also provides that, if the lessee is dissatisfied with the amount of rent determined for the new lease, he may before the issue of such lease revert to his surrendered lease. These are the principal provisions of the Bill and I think hon. members will recognise that it is necessary and right that we should for the benefit of the State give every possible encouragement for the further stocking of our pastoral areas. We have in this State at the present time only

about five million sheep and 800,000 head of cattle. We should be able to carry very considerably more stock than that. In fact, in this enormous country I think there are greater capabilities in front of us than in the carrying of merely five million sheep.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is a poor old country that will not do better than that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. At the same time I recognise that the pastoralists are not paying a sufficient rent in these northern areas, where so much more could be got out of the land. I am not bringing the land in the south-western division under this provision dealing with pastoral leases, because I recognise that there is a very great difficulty in that, and that it will take some considerable amount of thinking out before anything further can be done in that direction.

Mr. Willmott: The land is open for selection at any time still.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Only on a 12 years' lease.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: These pastoral leases are not heavily stocked, and at the same time they are, as the hon. member says, open for selection.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What do you propose to do with the South-West, the Eucla lands?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We intend to leave them as they are for the present. We recognise that the settlers in the Eucla division are in a position now that they are not able to do anything with the country. It requires a great deal of capital to work it and I do not think they would be able to get the capital if they required it. Much has also to be spent on water. Moreover, I think there will be great difficulty in that country in regard to dogs.

Mr. Underwood: The clause referring to pastoral leases only refers to the north then?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am anxious, as we all are, to do something more than we have done up to the present to encourage people to produce in Western Australia. We are importing at the present time bacon, butter, cheese, eggs, tinned milk, and other goods to the value of

£846,943 up to the year, at all events, 1915-16. We imported a little wheat and we import flour, oats, malt, oatmeal, bran, potatoes, onions, to the value of £311,828, and jams, jellies, fruits, etc., to the amount of £236,803, or very nearly £1,400,000 worth of stuff which, in my opinion, ought to be produced in Western Australia. With proper development in the South-West we should certainly produce all that we require in the way of butter for ourselves, and there is a certainty that there are, although the extent of good land may not be very large, many areas in that country suitable for close settlement. I think with the climate and other conditions we should be able to produce in that country all the butter that is required for our own consumption.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Is the Minister aware that the production of cream is greater in proportion in the eastern wheat belt than it is in the South-West?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I know they have sent a lot of cream down in the winter months from the eastern wheat belt and that is why I am so anxious to see the farmers keep some stock. It is through these by-products that good farming is brought about. All farmers should have pigs, a few cows, and sheep. We should encourage settlers to carry on an industry such as this. We all have faith in this country and I am sure that under proper conditions and with the help of Parliament and the Government of the day Western Australia, at any rate, should not for long be importing over a million pounds worth of stuff that can well be produced within our own borders. All our efforts should be put forth to settling the people on the land in this State, and if that is done it will not only be beneficial to those who are in the country now, but also to those who come after us. I commend the Bill to the attention of hon. members. I have endeavoured to give them all the assistance possible to enable them to see clearly what the provisions of the Bill would be likely to enact and I have supplied them with notes on the question. It is not a party measure, and hon. members on both sides of the House who are interested in the development of the country should see that it is in the interests of the State to pass the Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: It is not a party measure, but it is most important.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are all anxious to see Western Australia go ahead and become that important part of the great Australian Commonwealth that we feel it is bound to be in the future. Some 17 years ago, when administering the Department of Mines for three years, hon. members paid me the compliment of passing the Mines Estimates in 20 minutes. I can assure hon. members of this, that I have only one object in view in the administration of the Lands Department, namely, the advancement of Western Australia, and the interests of those engaged on the land. There is not one provision in this Land Bill which affects myself personally. I do not hold an acre of leasehold country and all my land is in fee simple. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. UNDERWOOD (Pilbara) [7.44]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned until Thursday next.

The PREMIER (Hon. Frank Wilson—Sussex) [7.45]: I cannot agree to an adjournment until Thursday next. We want to finish the business this week.

Mr. Underwood: You have no chance.

The PREMIER: We will attempt to do it at any rate. There is very little business left on the Notice Paper. It is the wish of the majority of members to finish by this week if possible. If we cannot do so we shall have to sit until the following week. I cannot agree to the adjournment of the debate beyond to-morrow, but we have no intention of forcing the Bill through. There are other hon. members who would be agreeable to continue the debate.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I cannot go through it by to-morrow, and I defy anyone else to do so.

The PREMIER: I think the hon. member can do it if he will devote the necessary time to it.

Motion put and negatived.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

BILL—FRIENDLY SOCIETIES ACT AMENDMENT.

All Stages.

Received from the Council, and read a first time.

Second Reading.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister—Perth) [7·49] in moving the second reading said: This is only a small Bill, although it amends a very important Act. The four amendments which the measure proposes may be described almost as formal, inasmuch as they are introduced by mutual consent between the Registrar of Friendly Societies and the friendly societies themselves. Their aim is the better working of the friendly societies under altered conditions now obtaining, partly by reason of the war, and partly on account of the time which has elapsed since the principal Act was passed in 1894. The first amendment affects Section 15 of the parent Act. The investment of the funds of friendly societies is somewhat limited at present. When the existing legislation was passed, no Commonwealth Government existed; and consequently no provision was made for the investment of the funds of friendly societies in Commonwealth securities. At the present time it would be a great convenience to the friendly societies to be allowed to invest their funds in Commonwealth stock. The Commonwealth Treasurer is quite willing, and even anxious, to accept the money. In order to legalise the matter, however, this amendment is necessary.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why limit the amendment to Commonwealth securities? Why not include State securities?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): State securities are included in the principal Act. The object of the second amendment is to give friendly societies a freer hand in investing their money in freehold property. The existing legislation provides that they may invest in the erection of buildings, and may take mortgages; but an important omission is the power to hold freehold lands. By reason of this the power of friendly societies as mortgagees is much restricted. They may of course sell; but they cannot take

over freeholds over which they hold a mortgage, if their moneys are not paid. To remove that anomaly is the object of this second amendment.

Mr. Hudson: You provide only for purchase; not for obtaining foreclosure.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): It is the same thing.

Hon. T. Walker: The object of this amendment is to give that power full effect.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY (Honorary Minister): Yes. The third amendment is agreed to by both the registrar and the societies as essential. During recent years there have been several deplorable cases of defalcation in the funds of friendly societies, involving the loss of thousands of pounds. In one instance at least—where the loss was very heavy—the registrar had strong suspicions; but he was without power to step in and make an examination of the society's books; otherwise that defalcation would have been discovered and stopped much earlier than it was. The amendment provides that the registrar, who is also the Government Actuary, may, where he deems it necessary, make an inspection of the books of a friendly society. The provision is welcomed by the societies, because they know they can live only so long as they retain public confidence. The provision is necessary from the registrar's standpoint, because he is really responsible for the funds of the societies. The responsibility may not be a strictly legal one; but still, the registrar, in his actuarial capacity, has the right to say what benefits the societies shall pay, so that the funds may always be in a sound position. The public look to the registrar to perform that duty. This proposed amendment, therefore, will prove helpful from the point of view of both the registrar and the societies. The fourth amendment is rendered necessary by the fact that numerous members of friendly societies have joined the Australian Imperial Forces. Soon after the outbreak of war, power was given to the societies to suspend, with the approval of the registrar, contributions where desirable. This course necessarily involved considerable risk, because while contributions were suspended, the societies remained liable to pay full benefits. In

order to legalise the position, and give the registrar power, at his discretion, to alter the contributions, or let them stand over—where it is safe to do so—in the case of men who have taken up arms, the fourth amendment is proposed. The Bill is not really debateable matter, because it is the result of agreement between the registrar and the societies. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. FOLEY (Leonora) [8-56]: As one who has taken an interest in friendly society work, and has something to do with the management of one of the largest friendly societies in this State, I support the second reading, knowing that the proposed amendments are really needed. However, as in the case of every other measure introduced, there are difference of opinion as to the best possible mode of amendment. The Minister made his first point in regard to investment of funds. Existing legislation provides that societies may invest in State bonds, among other securities; but there has been difference of opinion whether they could invest in Federal stock. When the wave of patriotism swept over Australia, many who never previously wanted to do so expressed a desire to invest friendly society funds in 4½ per cent. Commonwealth debentures. Eight per cent. is frequently obtainable in other directions; but if the societies are patriotic enough to accept 4½ per cent. from the Federal Government, surely no one will wish to stop them from doing so. As regards the Minister's second point, the friendly societies have at present no power to hold land in fee simple. They must sell such land as soon as possible. Had they the right to hold such land, and to make use of it while holding it, they would not be obliged, as they frequently have been, to sell at a loss property falling into their hands. Had this provision been in existence, many losses sustained by friendly societies would have been avoided. I therefore commend that provision to the House; but in Committee I shall move an amendment regarding the powers of trustees. At present, in the event of a trustee's dying or resigning, it is necessary to call a general conference of all the branches of the society, throughout the State, for the purpose of electing another trustee. If it

be necessary to call a conference of all the branches of a society to appoint a trustee it will prove a very cumbersome piece of legislation. The amendment I intend to move will allow of the committee of management appointing a trustee, that appointment to be ratified at the next succeeding conference of the society. The clause also deals with finance and the financial administration of a society. In the parent Act it is provided that the trustees may do certain things. The amendment will allow them to do certain other things; but everything that they shall do must be subject to ratification by the committee of management. When any society other than a friendly society appoints trustees, those trustees do not have to go to the shareholders before they make a deal. They first make the deal and afterwards report it. If the trustees have to call a meeting of their board of management before they can lend money, there will be very little money lent. Again, no man should be called upon to ratify something over which he has no control and which he has had no opportunity of fully inquiring into. The trustees, before they decide to lend out certain money, will assuredly satisfy themselves that it is a good investment. Yet they have to consult the committee of management. Before that consultation can be of any real value, the committee of management ought to be in a position to know whether the investment is a good one. I am quite sure trustees of sufficient ability and integrity can be found to invest the funds of a friendly society. Under the proposed amendment each member of a committee of management will have to take the responsibility of spending other people's money without first inquiring as to whether that expenditure or investment is judicious. Of course any institution of the sort should be open to the fullest inspection. But the registrar desires to be able to inspect at any time. I believe it would be a good thing to withhold that power from the registrar and vest it in the Minister. If an inspection has to be made, the Minister alone should have the power to order that inspection, which could be carried out by an officer of the public service, thus avoiding the establishment of an additional costly office. The registrar is certainly the right man to say whether an inspection is necessary, but it

should be for the registrar to recommend to the Minister, with whom the decision should be left.

The Premier: You do not want the Minister to go through the books, do you?

Mr. FOLEY: No; but after all, the society is under Government supervision, and if the power of ordering an inspection were left with the Minister it would give greater satisfaction to all concerned. One of the amendments deals with the question of the men at the Front. There has been much discussion in our friendly societies as to what they are doing for the men at the Front. I am proud to say that they are doing more for their members at the Front than is any friendly society in the Eastern States. The registrar has laid it down that every case for the suspension of payments is to be submitted for his personal inspection. This removes the responsibility from the board of management, and brings every member of the society on a plane of equality with his fellows. The present Act does not give the registrar the right to do certain things which he contends should be done. Nevertheless he is doing these things to-day in the interests of the relatives and dependants of the men at the Front. If the amendment proposed by the Minister is carried, it will give effect to one of the best provisions ever inaugurated in a friendly society.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have doubts about that.

Mr. FOLEY: So had I before I went thoroughly into the question. In the case of a single man, who has joined a friendly society since the war, going to the Front and leaving dependants, if there is no suspension of payments the registrar considers that man's case with those of married men with dependants. Again, such a man, a member of a friendly society, gets a rate of insurance which he could not get from any insurance company in the State. After all, friendly societies are only mutual advantage societies. Every penny saved by a friendly society goes to improve the solvent position of that society in regard to its obligations, and is not turned into the individual pockets of the shareholders. In many cases members of friendly societies who cannot go to the Front are paying the fees of others who have gone.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Under the Bill they will not be able to do it without the consent of the registrar.

Mr. FOLEY: But I want to make it as clear as possible, so that it shall be known to all. The amendment proposed by the Minister does that. I will support the second reading. In Committee I shall have a few amendments to move. The Bill will benefit the friendly societies from a point of view of administration and it will give the executive officers the right to conserve the interests of individual members of the society.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: (North-East Fremantle) [8-13]: I hope the Committee stage will be left over until to-morrow, for in Committee the Bill will require some consideration. We have not yet had any opportunity of discussing the amendments. The member for Leonora said he did not think it fair that trustees should have to call a meeting of the society for the purpose of granting a mortgage. There is nothing in the Bill dealing with mortgages at all. The provision referred to deals with the selling of land. The Bill is introduced to give friendly societies the power to sell land in respect of which mortgages have been granted.

Mr. Foley: That is the point I wish made clear.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But the Bill places in the hands of a few individuals, the committee of management, power to sell properties without reference to the members who are practically the shareholders in the societies.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): That is the position to-day.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, the societies have no power to sell land to-day. Their difficulty is in respect to the sale of property. There is no difficulty in the matter of their purchasing land. I notice, too, that the registrar is given, to a very large extent, the absolute control of the actions of every friendly society.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Why should he not have? It is his duty to see that the societies are kept solvent.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Some societies, I believe, have not taken the same steps as others in the matter of availing themselves of the privilege contained in the 1914 Act. It is

well known that some of the insurance companies will not insure men going to the Front. In 1914 an Act of Parliament was passed empowering the societies to suspend the contributions by any member of a friendly society during his period on active service, while at the same time, if they so desired, they could pay, either wholly or in part, the benefits to which such member of a society is entitled, in the case of sickness or death, that being the position under the 1914 Act, I maintain that if this Bill be passed the registrar will be in a position to step in and tell any society that it must not continue doing that. The friends of many members have been paying in additional moneys in respect of men who have gone to the Front in order to secure these benefits; but under this Bill the registrar will have power to say that the society must not in future continue to pay those benefits.

Mr. Foley: Where is that power contained in the Act?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The hon. member will find it in Section 6 of the Act.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): The registrar's duty is surely to protect all members of friendly societies.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am aware what the registrar's duty is. We have been told on many occasions that it is the duty of the registrar to protect the finances of friendly societies. I agree entirely, but it is rarely indeed that we find in actual practice that the registrar is doing a great deal to that end. Year after year we see the funds of friendly societies mounting up, and yet we are told that some of the societies are unfinancial. It is quite true that if all the members were to die at once some of the societies would not be able to find the money to pay the death benefits, but it is not at all probable that all the members will die at once.

The Premier: Is that any argument why greater power should not be given to the registrar to ensure the solvency of societies?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, it is not.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): Under this Bill the registrar would have to make periodical inspections.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The registrar never challenged the solvency of the societies except in that remote contingency, which is not likely to arise. As I have said,

the funds of the society have been steadily mounting year by year. Take Western Australia in 1906 the total capital value was £108,285.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): How many members of friendly societies are there?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: And while we are now told that it is necessary, owing to the position of these friendly societies, that closer supervision should be given by the registrar for the express purpose of keeping them in a thoroughly financial position, we find that in 1915—although there is need for this extra precaution—the funds of the societies had increased to £215,741. That was in ten years—an increase of approximately £44,000. The Bill sets out that the privileges in the 1914 Act may not be exercised except with the sanction of the registrar. In other words, we are not going to allow members of friendly societies to assist their brothers at the front except with the sanction of the registrar.

Mr. Foley: It does not mean that at all. This Bill is the result of a conference of representatives of friendly societies.

Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister): You are barking up the wrong tree. Wait until we get into Committee and I will give you all the evidence you want on that point.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Section 3 of the 1914 Act provides—

During any such suspension the member in whose favour it has been granted shall not be called upon to make any contribution in respect of which it has been granted, but after the end or determination of the suspension he shall, except in so far as the society by resolution passed at a general meeting of the members otherwise determines, be liable to pay all such contributions as would have become payable by him but for the suspension at and in such time and manner and in such instalments as the committee may decide. Notwithstanding any suspension the member affected shall be entitled to all such benefits which he would have been entitled to if he had paid his contributions. Under this Bill, Subsection 2 of the section I have just read is amended by the addition of the following words:—"subject to any

suspension or modification of such benefits which the committee may from time to time with the approval of the registrar deem just or expedient."

Mr. Foley: And rightly so.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I maintain that the men at the front should be permitted to receive all the privileges of the 1914 Act, without any interference by the registrar or anybody else.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Power to dispose of land held by way of investment:

Mr. FOLEY: I move an amendment—

That the words "with the consent of the committee of management or of a majority of the members of a society or branch as the case may be present and entitled to vote in general meeting" be struck out.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: My desire is just that the words "committee of management" should be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can move his amendment first.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I hope the member for Leonora will not press the amendment because it is contrary to the principal Act. Instead of improving the original Act the hon. member by his amendment will weaken it. I have no objection to the other amendment he is suggesting regarding the appointment of trustees.

Mr. FOLEY: I have no wish to press the amendment in its entirety. I contend that an amendment should be made to provide that the Committee may authorise the trustees to do these things, but to have to call a meeting every time the trustees are going to deal with £50 or £100 will be too much to ask of a body of men.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: It will not amount to anything if we leave it to a meeting to consider it after it has been done.

Mr. FOLEY: The Parliamentary draftsman was of the opinion that the Act already provided for it, but I wanted

to be doubly sure. I think, however, I had better let the amendment go, and with the permission of the Committee I will withdraw it.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The amendment which I wanted to move was to strike out the words in the second and third lines "of the committee of management." This clause only deals with the selling of land.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: It deals with Section 15 of the principal Act, which covers three pages.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The whole clause deals with the sale of land. I do not know what is in the original Act because we have had this Bill before us for only half an hour and there has not been an opportunity to go into it.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Section 15 of the principal Act deals at great length with the investments of the friendly societies and how much may be dealt with, and the course that has to be adopted. The clause in the Bill is an addition to Section 15 of the principal Act and that addition has been made because there is no power given to the friendly societies to hold land. The clause in the Bill will give them the power to hold land in addition to everything which is set out in section 15 of the original Act. If we strike out the words suggested by the hon. member the trustees will be able to do what is proposed without the consent of the Committee of management and that will not be desirable.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I do not intend to move the amendment.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Insertion of new section after section 17:

Mr. FOLEY: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 the word "registrar" be struck out and "Minister" inserted in lieu.

If the Minister has full control, I know that the registrar, if he has a case he is suspicious of, will put it before the Minister.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I trust the hon. member will not insist on this amendment, because it is one that I cannot consent to. The clause provides that the registrar shall make an investigation in cases where he believes the societies' funds have been wrongly invested. There have been serious

defalcations and it was thought that the registrar should have a free hand to be able to step in when he may think it necessary so as to make an investigation. That will be a decided benefit because it will inspire confidence in the public when they know that the registrar is really the auditor. What knowledge can a Minister have in regard to society books and investments?

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. GREEN: I would certainly like to see provision made in a consolidating measure which may be brought forward in the future for the registrar to audit the branch books of all friendly societies. Something of a similar kind is done in regard to roads boards, and I am satisfied that the leakage of the funds of branch societies arises from the fact that the auditors usually appointed from the branches are persons who take an interest in the work, but who are quite unfitted to audit the books. The consequence is that some man who has a particularly ornate collar and who is kept up to it by the secretary is elected as auditor. He has not much knowledge of the books and the secretary can generally bluff him if he desires to do so. The funds of friendly societies are not what they should be. It will be a costly affair to send the Registrar of Friendly Societies around the different lodges of the State. The difficulty could be got over by having the books sent down to Perth, and the bank slip from the manager of the bank showing the amount of the bank balance could be affixed. These funds will not be put upon a business basis until something like this is done. I hope the honorary Minister will give an undertaking that he will do something of the kind.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The complaint of the member for North-East Fremantle was in regard to the vast sum of money which friendly societies were possessed of. If that is so it is not asking them too much to pay for their own audit instead of asking the Government to do so. The Government cannot be expected to audit the books of friendly societies any more than those of any other society. The Government have always treated friendly societies very well. There is an actuarial calculation made every five years and the trustees are supposed to pay for that, but in my time that was

made free to all societies and was a very considerable benefit to them. That is after all as good as an audit. It shows whether they are in the position to pay more benefits or not. The hon. member's amendment is a far-reaching one, and I cannot accept it, but will bring it under the notice of the Colonial Secretary.

Mr. FOLEY: There is a slipshod manner in the way of keeping books in many of the different friendly societies. The best system is the one adopted by the Australian Natives' Association. They send their books down to the head office in Perth every six months and the general secretary of the association audits the books and returns them. He is the best man to know whether they are in order or not. I wish, however, the Minister would see if he could not formulate some scheme for the auditing of the books. There is scarcely any money lost at all with these friendly societies.

Mr. Green: It is always hushed up for the good of the society.

Mr. FOLEY: I have never found anything wrong which has not been remedied, and upon which the fullest light has not been played.

Mr. GREEN: It is proposed that the audit fee should be paid into the Government. It would mean that there would be a uniform system of book-keeping on the part of friendly societies. It is absurd that there should be twelve different societies of the kind in the State whereas there ought to be only one. Any increase of staff that may be necessary would be well paid for out of the audit fees received. It would also be a guarantee that the present sixes and sevens method would be abolished altogether, and a guarantee that a uniform method of book-keeping would be instituted. The present system involves a tremendous amount of work. Whilst a large amount of the funds of the different branches goes towards the management, the expense largely arises from the involved system of splitting up the sick fees, each member being on a different percentage basis for sick pay according to the age. This could well be abolished.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I move—

That progress be reported.

I want to make some enquiries before going any further.

Motion put and negatived.

Clause 6—Amendment to Section 3 of amending Act of 1914 :

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY : I think the hon. member will be satisfied if he will turn to the amending Act of 1914. He said that the Act was passed in 1914 allowing the Societies to give certain benefits to men who had gone to the Front, that is to say the contributions were to be suspended, etc. He will see under Section 2, Subsection (c), that it says that this may at any time be removed by the committee or registrar notwithstanding the period fixed. There is no alteration at all in the 1914 Act. It is only bringing it into line with that Act.

Mr. FOLEY : Representatives of every friendly society in the State, after giving the matter consideration at their meetings and referring it to their boards of management, sat in conference with the Registrar of Friendly Societies on the subject. The present amendment was deemed to be the solution that was going to benefit them, and it was agreed to unanimously. We have given these societies every consideration and are conserving the interests of the men who have gone to the Front. Every one of the societies is satisfied that this is the best that can possibly be done.

The Premier : You are conserving the stability of the Societies.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : I will accept the hon. member's statement that the societies have conferred and approved of this. I am not in a position, however, to know whether the societies have approved or not.

Hon. J. D. Connolly : The whole of the amendments contained here have been mutually agreed upon.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : I understand that they wanted certain amendments put into the Bill, but whether this was done or not I do not know. I was justified in asking that progress should be reported in order to find out whether the amendments had been approved of or not.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—agreed to.

New Clause :

Mr. FOLEY : I move—

That the following be added to stand as clause 8 :—“ Section 12 of the principal Act is hereby amended by adding to paragraph B of subsection 1 the following words :—‘ Provided that on the death or resignation of a trustee the committee of management, or by whatever name called, may appoint some other person as trustee in his place and every such appointment shall be subject to confirmation at the next general meeting of the society.’ ”

Hon. J. D. Connolly : I accept the amendment.

Mr. FOLEY : If a trustee dies or resigns a general meeting of the society has to be called and members have to be sent from all parts of the State. It involves a useless expenditure, and it is a wise thing in the interests of friendly society work that this new clause should go in.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and returned to the Council.

BILL—FRANCHISE.

Council's amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair ; the Attorney General in charge of the Bill.

Amendment—Clause 2, Subclause 3, add the following proviso :—“ Provided that if such person is a married man and absent from the State, and his wife remains in occupation of the dwelling house, she may, on application to the electoral registrar, be registered as an elector on the household qualification in the place of her husband ” :

The ATTORNEY GENERAL : I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Subclause 3 of Clause 2 provides that any person on active service who at the commencement of such service was enrolled or qualified as a Legislative Council elector as a householder occupying a dwelling-house shall retain such qualification so long as he

continues the tenant of such dwelling house, whether in the State or absent from the State. The Council's amendment is that the wife of such a man may on application be placed on the register in the stead of her husband. The husband is head of the house, and he would be the householder in the ordinary way under the Electoral Act; consequently he would be the only person entitled to enrolment. The Council's amendment allows the wife, during the husband's absence on active service, to be enrolled. I see no objection to the amendment.

Question passed, the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a Message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES.

In Committee.

Mr. Holman in the Chair; Hon. J. D. Connolly (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Fire districts:

Mr. FOLEY: I move an amendment:

That the following words be added:—

“But such order shall only be made by the consent of the local authorities interested.”

Before one district is joined to or amalgamated with another, its consent should be obtained. In the event of disagreement, one district desiring to amalgamate with another and this other refusing, the Government would arbitrate.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Districts generally will not desire to be joined.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: At least a month's notice has to be given.

Mr. FOLEY: I know that, but I want prior consent as well.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not think there is any necessity for the amendment. The clause deals with the joining of districts and also provides for amalgamation of districts, the object being economy of administration. Then it goes on to say—

Before any such order is made, at least one month's notice of intention to make the order shall be given to the local authorities concerned.

This restricts any arbitrary recommendation by the board. We shall never get economical and efficient working unless some power of compulsion is provided. The same provision is made in the Health Act. When the recommendation for amalgamation is made the matter must first come before the Minister, who brings it before Executive Council. A month then elapses to give opportunity for the local authority to be heard by the Minister. If the Minister thinks the recommendation is arbitrary, he goes no further with it. If the consent of every local authority is to be secured, efficient administration can never be hoped for.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I oppose the amendment. In Western Australia there are many opportunities for economising by amalgamation, but when the suggestion is submitted to the local authorities they invariably turn it down. For various petty reasons, they will not submit to amalgamation. The only way to economise in fire brigades administration is to give the board power to bring about amalgamation of the local authorities. There is no danger of the board doing anything detrimental to the interests of property owners in any district, because one-third of the board is composed of representatives of insurance companies, who will see to it that the fire brigades are established in those places where they will be of greatest use. There is ample protection for the local authorities without giving them the right to veto the proposal for amalgamation.

Mr. FOLEY: No law in the State gives the Minister power to amalgamate two roads boards, yet the hon. member would give that power to the fire brigades board. It is too drastic a proposal altogether.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This is a very proper clause. The question of fire brigades is of small importance in comparison with the amalgamation of local authorities. The management expenses of the fire brigades will have to be borne by the local authorities whether they are amalgamated or not. Under the proposed amendment there might be a sensible proposal for the formation of a fire district, comprising a number of small municipalities or roads boards, yet because one of these stood out the proposal could not be rendered effective.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

[*Mr. S. Stubbs took the Chair.*]

Clause 6—Constitution of board:

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

That the word "nine" in line 2 be struck out.

Personally I am of opinion that nine members is sufficient. However, this amendment is an alternative proposal to that which I have on the Notice Paper. If I fail to carry the amendment on the Notice Paper, I wish to have an opportunity of putting an extra member on the board. This opportunity will be afforded if I can induce the Committee to strike out the word "nine."

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Let this pass, and if your latter amendment be not agreed to I will consent to a re-committal.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. GREEN: I move an amendment—

That the word "nine" in line 2 be struck out and "ten" inserted in lieu.

Later on I intend to move that after "one member shall be elected by the registrar of the volunteer fire brigades" the words "one member shall be elected by the Fire Brigade Employees' Industrial Union of Workers" be inserted. It has been generally recognised in advanced industrial countries that a representative of the workers in a particular industry is frequently taken into confidence by the board of directors with a view to making suggestions to the management. The moneys furnished for the management of the fire brigades board are furnished in different quotas by the insurance companies, the Government, and the municipalities. Under this proposal we would have a representative of the fire brigade union on the board. He would necessarily be a man of some weight in the union and would know his business, and would be a valuable asset in the counsels of the board in furnishing them with first hand evidence upon any question which might be discussed. Members of the board

do not get a true reflex of what is happening in the different fire brigades, and everything has had to filter through the chief officer in the past. The whole truth has not always reached the board and a portion of it has been withheld. Any representative appointed to the board from the union would be only one out of ten members of the board. He would be able to furnish valuable data with regard to the actual working and the establishment of brigades. It has been said that the expenditure by the board has been unduly large, but if so it has not been spent in large wages to the employees, because these are lower paid in this State than in any other of the Commonwealth except South Australia. Such a representative of the union, having the confidence of every member and consequently every employee of the fire brigades in the State, would be able to bring first hand information to the board, as well as throwing light upon suggestions to scrap certain machines or fire apparatus, and other matters of the kind.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: What position would he be in if he found himself in opposition to the superintendent?

Mr. GREEN: The superintendent is not all powerful on the board. This representative would only have the weight that one man in ten would carry on the board. We have men on the board possessed of considerable experience on many things, but without much knowledge in regard to the working of fire brigades.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I would suggest that as the Minister in charge of the Bill has consented to recommit it, the hon. member should postpone his remarks until the re-committal.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I will not promise the hon. member to re-commit the Bill for other amendments than those proposed by the member for North-East Fremantle.

Mr. GREEN: Then I will continue my remarks. There will be nothing like union domination on the board. The services of such a man as I suggest would be of the utmost value upon the board. The fire brigades in the State have been dominated by a gentleman who considered that he had a master mind. I believe he got a medal on

one occasion from the old country for his efforts in organisation. This gentleman considered that he was chief of the fire brigades and was the be-all and end-all of that organisation. He got in champion boxers and heavy weight lifters and gentlemen of that calibre to constitute his staff. The men in the past have been living under a system of tyranny, and were afraid to call their soul their own. Whilst the regulations of the fire brigades provided that every employee in order to reach the board must write a letter to the chief, when it came to write upon a matter with which the chief did not entirely agree with, these letters were suppressed. Since the inauguration of the union, however, we have had a fair deal from the board. In the past it has been impossible for the employees to have their views conveyed to the board. When at a function the other evening an employee referred to a petition, the chief expressed surprise saying that the matter had never come before his notice and asked the deputy chief whether he was aware of it.

Mr. Taylor: Do you mean their communications were intercepted?

Mr. GREEN: Yes, continually, prior to the inauguration of the Fire Brigades Union. That charge can be substantiated any day in the week. My point is that if a permanent fireman were appointed to the board, it would result in a saving. I wish to say here that the fire brigade in Perth is most efficient; the number of saves is remarkably large and the number of serious fires remarkably small. If my amendment be agreed to, it will mean the men will have one representative in ten, and I urge that his services would be valuable to the board, and his advice probably be responsible for the saving of hundreds of pounds.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not think the hon. member can be serious in moving his amendment.

Mr. Green: I rise to a point of order. I trust the Honorary Minister will not make a reflection of that kind. I am serious when I ask for anything or make any statement in this House.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Why you have been out of order for the past half-hour.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is a reflection on the Chair and should be withdrawn.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If the hon. member says he is serious in his amendment, I can only say that he is extremely serious in an absurd manner. There is no justification for the proposal contained in the amendment, and there is no precedent for it. The arbitration court deals with the question of wages and conditions of the employees, which is the only possible question with which the management board can be concerned in so far as the employees' interests are affected. Were the amendment carried, the position might arise that a fireman might be sitting in judgment on the superintendent. The fire brigades are a disciplined body in the same way as the police and the military, and it would be an unthinkable position to have one of the employees sitting in judgment on the superintendent or other senior officers. The employees already have representation through the local bodies, and through the volunteer brigades' representative. They are also represented by the Government nominee. At present the member for Murchison is one of the Government nominees and is the chairman of the board. I do not think there is any necessity whatever for the amendment.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am surprised at the argument put forward by the Honorary Minister. A precedent can be quoted in the case of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, in which a member of the lumpers' union was appointed to the board. And in that case it can be shown that the advice of that representative of the men resulted in savings to the State. Regarding the Honorary Minister's objection of lack of precedent, I think it would be a good thing for Western Australia in some cases if this Parliament established a few more precedents.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The last speaker was not quite correct in saying that the lumpers' union representative on the Harbour Trust was appointed as the representative of the men. The position is entirely different. In the case of the Fire Brigades Board, the fireman is under the direct control of the chief officer. The Harbour Trust, on the other hand, is not the employer of the union representative on the board.

Mr. Munsie: But he is there to look after the interests of the employees.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No, he is there to look after the interests of the State.

Mr. Munsie: Would he be there if he were not a member of the lumpers' union? You know he would not.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: He is appointed to the board to represent the general community. The Fremantle Lumpers' Union is not his employer, and cannot take him to task, or sack him for any action he might take as a member of the Harbour Trust. I rose merely to point out the difference in the case of the Fire Brigades Board and the Harbour Trust. In the one case the man proposed to be appointed would be entirely under the jurisdiction of the chief executive officer, while in the other case he is an absolutely free agent. Personally I do not care whether a fireman is appointed to the board, but if so I would not care to be in his place.

Mr. CARPENTER: I am sorry to differ with the member for North-East Fremantle, but I think he has taken a wrong view. The proposition which the member for Kalgoorlie has in mind offers an exact parallel to what exists on the Fremantle Harbour Trust. In connection with the appointment of a lumpers' representative on the trust, the question was not who was to pay him or who was to be his master, but simply whether the men working on the wharf and on the river had not as much interest in the affairs of the harbour as any other section of the community; and it was decided to give the employees some representation on the board. The representative was appointed to look after the interests more particularly of the trust's employees, and that is the point of the present amendment. The employees of the fire brigades have as much right to conserve their special interests as the fire insurance companies have to conserve theirs. The contention of the Minister, that the employees' conditions are fixed by the Arbitration Court, is specious, because only part of their conditions are so fixed—hours and wages. There are a hundred and one things which the Arbitration award does not and cannot touch, and those details are known only to the men themselves. Thus a repre-

sentative of the employees would be in a position to give valuable advice to the members of the board. In good work-shops elsewhere, though not in this State, it is a common practice to offer rewards to employees for valuable suggestions in connection with the working. That has good results, and it should be applied here.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That can be done now.

Mr. Green: Suggestions are turned down now.

Mr. CARPENTER: If there is no precedent for the amendment, we are here to make a precedent.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I support the amendment, because I take rather a broader view of the matter than that taken by the Honorary Minister and by the member for North-East Fremantle. An experienced fireman appointed to the board would not devote his whole time to the discussion of the working conditions and remuneration of firemen. I would not support such an appointment for such a purpose. Some hundred permanent employees are connected with the boards, and they are all experienced fire fighters, and therefore their representative should be able to offer valuable suggestions as to fire fighting. The representative of the employees would also be valuable as regards affording the board advice respecting industrial conditions. If the volunteer fire brigades elect a special representative, why should not the permanent employees do so? The functions of the representative of the volunteer brigades are not limited to the discussion of the special activities of volunteer brigades; and so it would be with a representative of the permanent employees. To my mind his position would in many respects resemble that of the lumpers' representative on the Fremantle Harbour Trust. Let it be remembered that the arguments advanced to-night by the member for North-East Fremantle were for a long time advanced against the appointment of a lumpers' representative. Moreover, an attempt was made to limit the functions of the lumpers' representative to industrial conditions. It is probable that a representative of the permanent firemen will prove of greater advantage to fire fighting generally than any other

representative, in the way of inducing the board to take the most effective precautions. The daily experience of the permanent fire fighters should be made available to the board. The amendment will constitute a wise precedent.

Mr. TAYLOR: The arguments advanced in favour of the amendment surprise me, hingeing, as they do, on the appointment of a lumpers' representative on the Fremantle Harbour Trust. The value of a firemen's representative on the board, according to supporters of the amendment, would be due to the fact that he is a fire fighter. If that is so, any other employee in any other industry who has followed it for a number of years, would be an expert capable of offering advice to the board of directors, if he were employed by a company.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: So he does offer good advice.

Mr. TAYLOR: Let hon. members point to any company in this State or elsewhere which is successfully carried on with an employee on the board of directors. In mining, would a board of directors apply for advice to the man who has worked underground up to the age of 50 or 60?

Mr. Green: No; because the directors are boddlers sitting in London and know nothing of mining. That is the curse of mining.

Mr. TAYLOR: Can it be shown where an employee has been placed on the board of directors of a mine? If any hon. member can do that I will be prepared to support the amendment. If we agree to the amendment we will place the man himself in a false position. Such a representative on the board might be a good fire fighter, but he might not know anything about management. Does any company ask its employees to take a seat on the directorate?

Mr. Munsie: Yes, the Ford Motor Car Company.

Mr. TAYLOR: No; that company only invites suggestions from its employees. We certainly would be putting an employee in an awkward position if we placed him on the board. Moreover, a fireman at Fremantle would not fall into line with firemen at, say, Kalgoorlie, or even at Cue. They would have different ideas altogether.

Mr. Munsie: What about the men representing the volunteer brigades?

Mr. TAYLOR: They are in a different position. Nothing will convince me that it is possible for an employee to have a seat on the fire brigades board.

Mr. Green: Perhaps the time is not ripe.

Mr. TAYLOR: If it waits for the hon. member's intelligence to ripen, it, it will remain evergreen.

Mr. Green: You are getting your bristles up now.

Mr. TAYLOR: The amendment is absolutely absurd, and I will not vote for it.

Mr. MUNSIE: I am surprised at the supposed arguments which the hon. member for Mt. Margaret has advanced. He has asked that we should quote a precedent, but I want to hear some arguments advanced before I refuse to support the amendment. I can remember the hon. member agitating for workmen's inspectors. Were we not establishing a precedent by appointing them?

Mr. Taylor: They were then in other mines.

Mr. MUNSIE: We are only asking now for the permanent employees the same concession which is extended to the volunteers. The volunteers have the right to appoint a representative on the board. If any hon. member can show me that by appointing a permanent fireman we shall be establishing a precedent and doing something wrong to the brigades generally, I shall be prepared to listen to him. All are represented on the board excepting the permanent men themselves. Therefore, why not be just and give them representation as well? If such a representative can turn the heads of the other members of the board, then he will indeed be a worthy representative. The present system of carrying on the business of fire fighting in this country needs to be improved. Let us have this alteration. I hope the amendment will be carried.

Mr. GREEN: The strongest objection to the amendment came from the member for North-East Fremantle, yet that member represents a district which has within its close proximity an almost parallel example. There a man was taken from a particular industry in which he was engaged and he was given a voice in the management of the harbour.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: He was not an employee of the Harbour Trust.

Hon. W. C. Angwin : And he never was in his life.

Mr. GREEN : Well he was a lumper. Is not that work closely associated with that which is carried on by the Harbour Trust ? Undoubtedly it is. If any man was fitted for the appointment it was the man who was selected.

Hon. J. D. Connolly : The cases are not at all parallel.

Mr. GREEN : A precedent was established on that occasion, and it went three parts of the way that my amendment proposes to go this evening. If we place on the board a man who by his knowledge is peculiarly well fitted to assist the board with advice, it will be a remarkably good thing for the administration of the board. The member for Mt. Margaret challenged me to show a single instance in the mining industry of an employee being on the board of directors. That inability in me, I would remind him, is no proof that my proposal is unsound. I am convinced that if the man whose appointment I contemplate was added to the board, his assistance to that board would be invaluable.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : If there is any employee of the Fire Brigades Board who would refuse to give the board the benefit of any valuable suggestion or recommendation, he is not fit to be a member of the brigade. There is no occasion to go to America for examples of asking employees for suggestions, for we have that system in operation in Fremantle. It is true that a representative of the workers was appointed to the Fremantle Harbour Trust, but he was in no sense an employee of the trust.

Mr. Green : He was a worker in the industry.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN : In the case of the appointment of a fireman to the Fire Brigades Board he would continue to be an employee of the board. He would be a servant of the board at 10 minutes to 12 o'clock noon, and a master when the board met at 12 o'clock. I refuse to believe that the board would not welcome suggestions from any fireman in their employ. I contend that we should not put an employee of the board in the false position that would undoubtedly be his if he were appointed to the board. There is no

analogy whatever between the appointment to the Fremantle Harbour Trust alluded to and the proposed appointment to the Fire Brigades Board.

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

Ayes	14
Noes	20

Majority against .. 6

AYES.

Mr. Carpenter	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Foley	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Green	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Walker
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. O'Loghlen
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Robinson
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Smith
Mr. Connolly	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Taylor
Mr. George	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Verryard
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Letroy	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Nairn	Mr. Hardwick
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

[Mr. Carpenter took the Chair.]

Mr. HOLMAN : I move an amendment—

That the words "one of whom shall be appointed president of the board" be struck out.

In my opinion those best able to appoint a chairman are the members of the board. The board consists of representatives of several different bodies and these should all have a voice in the election of their chairman or president.

Hon. J. Scaddan : In all other bodies in which there are Government representatives the Government appoint the chairman.

Mr. HOLMAN : In the case of the Children's Hospital Board the member appoint their own chairman. If no other bodies were represented on the board there could be no objection to the Governme

appointing a chairman, but this is a decided departure from a democratic order of things. In the past the selection of the Government nominee has been of such a nature that with one exception he has been appointed to preside over the board. The exception I referred to was the case of a new man, and it was decided by the board to appoint an older member to the position. I do not think it would be wise for the Government to take upon themselves the nomination of the chairman or president of the board at all times. Previous chairmen of the board have conducted the business in a splendid manner and there has been no complaint against them. I am the president of the board now and am the Government nominee, but I see no necessity for this departure. If the Government claim that they have the right to make this appointment, the municipal bodies which are represented on the board could also claim a similar right.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The local authorities wanted the Government nominee to be the chairman.

Mr. HOLMAN: Some of them might do so. I do not think that the Government nominees should have any preference over others.

Mr. WILLMOTT: I agree entirely with the member for Murchison, and cannot see any reason why the Government should appoint the president of the board. The Government already have the right of appointing two nominees. Although under the present President, matters have worked well, if it is to be laid down that one of the Government nominees shall be chairman, the time will arrive when serious friction will occur in the board.

Mr. FOLEY: I think it was due to delicacy that the member for Murchison expressed the view he has. The hon. member claimed that matters always worked smoothly in any deliberative Assembly which had the right of selecting its own chairman. I could quote instances where such has not been the case.

Hon. J. Scaddan: This House for instance; that is not going far from home.

Mr. FOLEY: The member for Murchison himself on one occasion took serious exception to the rulings of the chairman appointed under the procedure he now advocates, and the House supported him

to the extent that it to-day resolved the member for Murchison was in order. As to the position of local bodies, I would point out that the Government pays large amounts in subsidies, and that a portion of those subsidies is expended by the local bodies on fire brigade work in their district. The interests of the insurance companies are always diametrically opposed to those of the local bodies and of the Government also.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Hear, hear! That is the whole point.

Mr. FOLEY: In proof of this, notice has been given of several amendments for a reduction in the representation of the insurance companies. The insurance representative represents insurance interests not only in Perth but throughout the State; and very properly he looks at everything through insurance spectacles. The local bodies look to the Government nominee to hold the balance fairly between them and the insurance companies. Even in the event of a serious fire the local bodies and the Government, I contend, suffer to a greater extent than the insurance companies.

Hon. J. Scaddan: The insurance companies do not suffer at all.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am in favour of the Government having the right of appointing the chairman. Fire fighting machinery is largely, if not wholly, maintained in the interest of the insurance companies, and they are not put to any inconvenience or expense in the matter, for it must be remembered they collect premiums to meet the cost of fire protection. The Government have had now some years' experience in the administration of this Act, and it is apparent they have arrived at the conclusion that it is desirable the Government should have the right of appointing the chairman. In my opinion there is overwhelming argument in favour of that proposal, and I hope the Government will stand firm on the point. It is well known that in the past the insurance companies have tried to dominate the board in the insurance interest, and the Government have at last realised the necessity, in the interests of the State, for checking that pull.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The excellent arguments used by the last two speakers

make it unnecessary for me to detain the Committee. The member for Murchison is mistaken in supposing that this limitation of the chairmanship represents an innovation. The New South Wales Act contains a similar provision. This Bill has been drafted as it stands at the request of 40 local governing bodies. The Government believe the Bill to be the right thing, and the only people who disagree with it are the insurance companies. The people represented by the local bodies are, after all, the people who pay. As for the insurance companies, the more money spent the better for them.

Mr. Foley: That is a good argument in favour of State insurance.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am not in favour of State enterprise as a rule, but fire insurance is a matter which I think the State might handle. The chairman is to be a Government nominee by the special request of the local governing bodies.

Hon. T. Walker: Did they ask for that from fear of the insurance companies' representatives?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Yes.

Hon. T. Walker: Do not you think the Minister can be influenced by the insurance companies more readily than the local bodies can?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: No; certainly not. The two Government nominees will see that a minimum amount is spent.

Mr. Munsie: Has the chairman of the board a deliberative vote, as well as a casting vote?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I think he has two votes.

Mr. HOLMAN: The argument of the Minister might have some force were it not for the circumstance that the representatives of the local governing bodies, if they desire to have one of the Government nominees as chairman, can always vote for the Government nominee and so, with the two Government nominees, invariably have a majority. With the Government nominees the local bodies' representatives would number five out of a total membership of nine. The insurance companies derive the greatest advantage from fire fighting. But who pays the piper?

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The people.

Mr. HOLMAN: Undoubtedly. From my experience of public matters, it is unwise to restrict the chairmanship as here proposed. The strongest man, with the greatest administrative ability, should be appointed chairman. The selections of the local governing bodies are just as wise as those of the Government. The local governing bodies pay three-eighths of the contributions, and have three-ninths of the representation. The Government pay two-eighths of the contributions, and have two-ninths of the representation. The insurance companies pay three-eighths of the contributions, and have three-ninths of the representation. The balance of the representation goes to the volunteer fire brigades, representing 400 voluntary firemen, who do their work for practically nothing and therefore are entitled to representation on the board. Why should not the representative of the volunteer firemen, if he is the best man on the board, be appointed chairman? The limitation of the chairmanship is utterly undemocratic. I disagree with the Minister's statement that the limitation is not an innovation; but I would not oppose it merely as an innovation. I oppose it because it will work in an undesirable way. I may mention that I myself have been a Government nominee for years. The Government nominees of the future may not be the same as to-day. Mistakes may be made by future Governments in making their nominations. The work of the chairman is considerable and of great importance, over £20,000 being spent in wages and upkeep out of an annual revenue of £30,000. If the selection of chairman is limited to two men—

Hon. J. D. Connolly: It is not. The Government can nominate from the whole State.

Mr. HOLMAN: But of the two men nominated by the Government one is to be chairman. The Government have frequently made unwise selections.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The chairman of the Harbour Trust is appointed by the Governor.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: He is recommended for appointment by the Trust.

Mr. HOLMAN: If there were any doubt about the wisdom of the selection of the chairman, I would not dispute the fact that

the appointment of the chairman should be subject to confirmation by the Governor. But let the members make the recommendation. Then those who were responsible for the appointment could have the chairman removed from his position in the event of him not giving satisfaction. It would be a bad state of affairs if that were not so, and as the member for Leonora pointed out, we had a shining illustration of this only quite recently.

Hon. T. WALKER: The hon. member has the best grounds on which to base his amendment. First of all the proposal in the measure is an innovation without any corresponding advantage to be gained. The only argument advanced by the Honorary Minister in favour of the proposal contained in the measure is that we shall get economy by this means. We are by no means sure of that. If economy has to be effected it has to be by smooth working and by the intelligence of the chairman of the board, and we have no guarantee that the nominations by a Government are always the best. There are instances when men left to themselves would choose a better chairman than the Government would impose on them. The management of the board would depend upon the collective wisdom of all. Is the chairman to be a puppet of the Government? What are his functions when he gets there as chairman? He is simply chairman with all the functions, and no more functions, of a chairman. He carries the influence of the Government with him in that position, but he has no governmental authority to suppress discussion or even to direct it. He is the servant of the board in the same way as the chairman here is the servant of the House. There can be nothing so inimical to the smooth working of the board as imposing a chairman on them to say you shall have this or you shall have that chairman during your term of office whether you like it or not. If there is anything likely to lead to expense and the neglect of business and general mismanagement, it is to have a man presiding over you whom you cannot remove and who is disagreeable to those who have to do the work. What do the Government expect to gain by nominating a particular chairman? Will the Government tell us that he will have

certain instructions given to him, that he is not to allow this or that thing to pass? Is there any intimate living connection between him and the Government once he gets in the chair? He is an ordinary chairman, once he is in the chair; there are no relationships between him and the Government, and the Government can have no check on him once his appointment is gazetted. Neither the Government nor the members of the board can take him to task. What will become of the essential *esprit de corps* of the board if this innovation is persisted in? There are serious dangers in the proposal, which is a gross departure from all principles of democracy, and implies a doubt of the capacity of all other members of the board to wisely elect their own chairman. What will the local authorities think of it?

Hon. J. D. Connolly: The local authorities have asked for it.

Hon. T. WALKER: It is for the Minister to resist demands for ill-advised change and innovation. The board is a self-governing body, and the Minister is attempting to put an excrescence upon it. Under the proposed provision nothing can be expected but a dissatisfied, inefficient and, withal, costly body.

Amendment put and negatived.

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

That the word "three" in line 5 be struck out and "two" inserted in lieu.

The statements made by the Minister show clearly that the insurance companies are not entitled to the representation they have on the board.

[Mr. Holman resumed the Chair.]

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not wish to offer any objection to the amendment, but I would like to point out what its effect will be. It will reduce the representatives of the insurance companies from three to two, will have the effect of increasing the representation of the local authorities by one. I agree that the insurance companies need not have proportionately the same representation as the local authorities or the Government. The more expenditure that is incurred the better it will be for their fire risks. The representation does not affect

them very much and I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

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

That the following words be added to the clause:—"One member shall be elected by the municipal councils and road districts mentioned in Part 4 of the Second Schedule to this Act."

My idea is to give the metropolitan area one representative and the country districts another on the board.

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

Clauses 7 to 18—agreed to.

Clause 19—Meetings of Board:

Mr. WILLMOTT: What is the meaning of "local committees"?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The board is a board of management, and every municipality has a right to elect a local committee.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 20 to 25—agreed to.

Clause 26—Power to purchase property for stations, etc:

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

That the following proviso be added to Subclause 1: "Provided that any real property acquired by the board, or either of the boards to which the board is successor, from a local authority without pecuniary consideration, if no longer required for the purposes of this Act, shall re-vest in the local authority, subject to the payment by the local authority to the board of the value of the improvements (if any) effected thereon after such acquisition."

When the board came into existence they took over all the properties of the local governing bodies which were used for fire brigade purposes, that is the land and buildings, and did not pay anything for them.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I thought it was all paid for.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. The Bill provides that the Fire Brigades Board can sell this property if it is not required for fire brigade purposes. The proviso merely

gives the local authority power to pay the value of any expenditure by the board upon the property, so that it can revert to the local authority which owned it previously.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: On the passing of the 1908 Act were not the land and the buildings valued and taken over?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It may have been valued for fire brigade purposes but they never paid a penny for it.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I thought the insurance companies had to pay two-eighths or three-eighths.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Nothing has been paid to the local authorities.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I am doubtful as to this amendment. At the time of the passing of the principal Act, in 1909, there were a number of municipally owned fire brigade stations and buildings. It was then decided that, the Government having given the land and the municipalities having erected the buildings thereon, the whole organisation had been furnished between the two, and that it would not be a fair thing to let the board take over the property free, but that the board should pay in the proportion of three-eighths. The whole concern was valued, and the insurance companies paid to the board three-eighths, and the property was handed over. The payment made was, of course, not made to the local authorities. If the amendment means what I think it means, the effect of passing it would be to upset the whole arrangement, and the board would have to pay over again for the whole of the properties. I suggest the hon. member should not press the amendment. If the position is as he states, I will have the amendment moved in another place. If the position is not as he believes, I cannot accept the amendment.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The position is clear enough. Grants were made to the local authorities by the Government for municipal buildings. A large number of municipalities built fire brigade stations on those grants. The land and the buildings were transferred to the board without a penny of cost. Now I want to provide that if the board no longer require the buildings and land, these shall revert to the local bodies.

Mr. Chesson: I think you are right in what you state.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I am quite sure I am right. Notwithstanding the provision in the principal Act, the local authorities did not receive one penny.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: That was their contribution to the board. The insurance companies paid in cash.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The board took over everything except the men, and the men they kicked out. An injustice is likely to result to the local bodies, because the board, who care for nothing except revenue, may allow disused buildings to become eyesores. The request I make is only a fair one.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Has any local authority asked for this provision?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Yes; several have. It was inserted in the Bill at their request.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: When the original Act was passed, in 1909, there were a good many municipally-owned fire brigade stations; in fact, except at Perth they were all municipally owned. The Government contributed the land, and in many cases gave grants for the buildings. These properties were taken over by the board. It was foreseen that injustice would result to the local governing bodies and the Government if the insurance companies did not contribute. Accordingly, Section 41 of the principal Act provided that the companies should contribute their quota. The companies, in fact, put in money as against the land and buildings put in by the Government and local bodies. I will accept the amendment; and, if the position is not as the hon. member believes, then the amendment will have to be struck out in another place.

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

Clauses 27 to 29—agreed to.

Clause 30—Board's proposals to be submitted to local authority:

Mr. MUNSIE: The intention of the clause is to give local authorities some control, but as the clause is worded they will not have any control at all. Will the Minister give an undertaking that the local governing bodies shall have some say as to

the means of fire protection to be adopted when they are paying their quota towards it?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: The object of the clause is to cover the position referred to by the hon. member.

Mr. Munsie: But it does not.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not know that we can do any better. There is a provision in the clause that the local authority may make representations and appeal to the Minister.

Mr. MUNSIE: While I admit that the clause is a new one, I realise the difficulty in suggesting an alteration. We have had a long debate about the Government appointing two members, one of whom shall be chairman, but when the Government have the right to appoint those men to the board, one of whom shall be the chairman, the Minister will be guided by what the board says. This clause has been added for the purpose of giving local authorities some control, whereas, as it is framed, it will not give them any.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 31, 32—agreed to.

Clause 33—Approval of officers of volunteer brigade:

Mr. WILLMOTT: Is there not a mistake in this clause? The marginal note refers to the approval of "officers," while the clause itself refers to "members."

12 o'clock midnight.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I think the clause is all right as it stands. "Officers" and "members" mean one and the same thing.

Mr. Willmott: If the Minister finds he is wrong, will he have it amended in another place?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Yes, I will do that.

The CHAIRMAN: The clause refers to Section 33 of the Act, which deals with the principal officer.

Mr. FOLEY: I think the word "members" is quite in order, for the members of a volunteer brigade have to be elected.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: If necessary I will have it amended in another place. It

shall be inquired into. In my view "officers" and "members" mean the same thing. It is a mistake in the marginal note.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the Minister is wrong, because in every volunteer brigade there is a number of officers. If the clause is not amended I shall deem it my duty as chairman to alter the marginal note to conform with the clause, although as a private member I am inclined to think that the marginal note is right and the wording in the clause wrong.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 34 to 39—agreed to.

Clause 40—Annual estimate of expenditure:

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the second proviso in Subclause (1):—"And shall supersede the estimate made for that year under the District Fire Brigades Act, 1909."

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 2, after the word "district" the following words be added—"save and except as hereinafter provided."

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to Subclause 2:—"Provided that the Minister shall determine what amount of loan moneys have been expended in the Perth district in the erection of executive offices for the Board and residences for the officials of the Board, and the estimated expenditure for interest on this amount and contribution to the sinking fund shall be apportioned between the several districts in the manner specified by the next succeeding clause."

Certain executive buildings have been built in Perth which are simply used for the whole State, and the municipality of Perth does not want these buildings to be a charge upon it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The executive offices erected in Perth are only a portion

of the Perth Fire Brigade Station. They certainly are elaborate enough for a town of a population of five million people. If these buildings are to be a charge upon all the other local authorities the charge will be a heavy one.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is not to be charged to all the others, but the Perth City Council does not want it all to be a charge upon it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do object to a building in which only one room is used for executive purposes being charged to all the others. This is bound to create a good deal of trouble.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is left to the determination of the Minister as to what is a fair amount to charge for interest and sinking fund to the whole State and how much to Perth. It does not say that the whole of the expenditure in Perth shall be distributed over the entire State.

Hon. J. Scaddan: It defines the basis upon which it can be spread over. The Bill already provides as to how the administrative expenses are to be charged.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Does this mean that if the Perth station cost £10,000 and the residence and offices £2,000 only, interest and sinking fund would only be charged on the latter amount?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: It is for the Minister to decide.

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

Clause 41—Contributions towards expenditure:

Mr. FOLEY: I wish to amend this clause, as the matter is a vital one. In this State the Government are paying a higher rate in proportion to what the insurance companies are paying than in any of the other States of the Commonwealth, and the local authorities are paying a higher rate than those in the other States. It pays the insurance companies in the event of a fire to have an efficient fire service more than it does either the Government or the local authorities.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It would pay them better to have none at all, for then they would charge higher rates.

Mr. FOLEY: If a man is covered by insurance all that he loses is the difference

between the amount of the insurance and the value of the property. The local authority in the event of a fire only loses the value of the rates that would have been paid had the property been there. The insurance companies, however, stand to lose a great deal more than the others do if there is a fire and no efficient fire service. Accordingly, they should pay a good deal more than they do pay towards the upkeep of the brigades.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The insurance companies pay nothing; they merely contribute my money and yours.

Mr. FOLEY: In New South Wales the contributions are one-third each for the Government, the local authorities, and the companies. In Victoria they are similar. In South Australia they are one-third for the Government, two-ninths for the local authorities, and four-ninths for the companies. Yet in South Australia premiums are lower than here. Even if the companies attempted to raise premiums in Western Australia, we could meet that move by establishing State insurance. The Perth fire brigade, though it may be, as claimed, the acme of perfection, is much more costly than the Adelaide one. As regards rates, that for a brick dwelling in Perth is 3s. net, in Sydney 2s. less 10 per cent., in Melbourne the same, and in Adelaide 2s. 6d. less 10 per cent.

Hon. J. Scaddan: But that low rate applies only to special classes of buildings. Quote the rate for factories.

Mr. FOLEY: The rate for factories is 9s. in Adelaide, and 9s. 6d. in Perth. In the table I have before me, all the Perth rates are higher except in one instance, where the difference is only one penny. At the present time the Government and the local authorities are paying too much for fire insurance, since they do not receive as much benefit as the insurance companies do from the fire brigades. I propose to move an amendment making the Government's contribution three-ninths instead of one-fourth.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Would such an amendment, increasing taxation, be in order?

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Leonora cannot move to increase taxation.

Mr. FOLEY: If we cannot increase the amount the Government have to pay, would we be in order in moving an amendment

that the amount of the local authorities should be increased?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: So far as the contributions are concerned, it makes no difference whatever if we increase the amount the insurance companies have to pay, because they will immediately raise the premiums to make up the difference.

Mr. MUNSIE: The local governing bodies sent along a suggestion that a clause should be inserted to give the Government or the board power to say what was a fair rate of insurance to be charged by the companies in the various districts, or that a State insurance department should be established. I think an amendment might be made to this clause giving the Government power to say what rate of insurance shall be charged by companies in the various districts.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: Such an amendment as that suggested by the hon. member would be foreign to the title of the Bill. This is a Bill for the management of fire brigades.

Mr. Munsie: What are fire brigades for but to protect the interests of the people; we could do this by placing the power in the board's hands.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: We could not insert anything in the Bill having reference to the rates of fire insurance companies.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 42 to 46—agreed to.

Clause 47—Recovery of contributions, and further contribution for delay in payment:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The local authorities at some period of the year generally find themselves in financial difficulties. If the Honorary Minister had had experience of local bodies, he would know that many of them from October or November to March have no revenue coming in at all. I move an amendment—

That the word "twenty" in line 5 be struck out and "five" inserted in lieu thereof.

Hon. J. D. Connolly: Make it ten, and I will accept it.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: But I do not intend to amend the maximum.

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

Clauses 48 to 82—agreed to.

First Schedule—agreed to.

Second Schedule:

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

That in Part 2 the words "Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Collie, Geraldton, Northam, Wagin, York, Beverley, Kellerberrin, Merredin, Toodyay, Greenmount, and Swan" be struck out.

I do this with a view to forming a new part, Part 4, comprising the country districts.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: In Part 2 Victoria Park is by error included among the roads boards. I wish to have Victoria Park transferred from the road districts to the municipalities.

The CHAIRMAN: I will treat that as a clerical error and have it attended to.

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

That in Part 3 the words "Cue-Day Dawn, Meekatharra and Black Range" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I move an amendment—

That "Menzies" be inserted in the road districts.

Amendment put and passed.

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

That the following be added to stand as Part 4:—"Municipal Districts: Albany, Bunbury, Busselton, Collie, Geraldton, Northam, Wagin, and York. Road Districts: Beverley, Kellerberrin, Merredin, Toodyay, Greenmount, Swan, Cue-Day Dawn, and Meekatharra."

Amendment put and passed; the schedule as amended agreed to.

Third Schedule:

Mr. WILLMOTT: I move an amendment—

That in the third line, after "steam" the words "or motor" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. S. STUBBS: The rates appear to me to be very high. There might be a fire in a town and a cottage, the owner of which had not insured, might be burned down. Is the sum of £5 that he would apparently have to pay for fire service a reasonable one in such circumstances?

Hon. J. D. CONNOLLY: I do not think such a case is likely to occur. If the cottage was situated within easy reach of an engine it should be insured.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The rates are fairly high for persons who are already assessed at five-eighths of the total cost of the upkeep of the brigade. The insurance companies, however, only pay on the income they receive from insured properties.

Schedule as amended put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 12.55 a.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 7th March, 1917.

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