

It is unwise and unjust to discriminate between one portion of the State and another. The Bill discriminates between the North and the South. Under the Bill, in the South we have to pay half the road board rate, while in the North we have to pay 10s. per thousand. A holder of a million acres in the northern portion of the State would have to pay under this Bill a vermin tax of £500, but if he were brought under the same provisions in the South-West he would only pay £50.

Hon. H. CARSON: I regret I was not here when the amendment was before us. It is impossible for the farmer to fence his water against the rabbits if he is going to carry on. How can he water his stock except by opening and shutting gates? I am not in agreement with Mr. Holmes' amendment. I think the amendment which would meet the wishes of members of another place, as well as here, would be one which would apply to the country within the boundaries of Nos. 1 and 2 fencibles, from the Bluff out to Nannine. This would apply to all the south-west division of the State and a little east of the south-west division.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That is the position.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is discussing the alternative amendment proposed by the Honorary Minister.

Hon. H. CARSON: If the Honorary Minister does not move the amendment I have suggested I shall oppose his, and endeavour to frame one which will meet the wishes of all.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: On a previous occasion I spoke against the proposal introduced by Mr. Holmes. We did not then know exactly what his amendment meant. It was not explained by the Minister in another place, and he may have misled some hon. members there. Many of those who voted against the proposal of this Chamber, however, knew the position. The difficulty has arisen because Mr. Holmes asked too much. Had he included the area within the rabbit-proof fence, between the two fencibles, and also the fence running from the Bluff up to beyond Nannine, that would have included the area between Yalgoo and Nannine, which was excluded by the Bill as it left this Chamber. The boundaries outlined by Mr. Holmes are more or less imaginary ones and leave out a big section of the country within the rabbit-proof fence. That part of the State would be a breeding ground for rabbits, and there would be nothing to prevent them from swarming down into that part of the country brought under the provisions of the Bill. I am prepared to admit that there are conditions in the North to which this Bill could not apply. Before Mr. Holmes' amendment would be accepted by another place he would have to include that big area of country between Yalgoo and Nannine, which is within the rabbit-proof fence. It is quite natural to exclude country outside the fence, but it has not been explained to my satisfaction why the area I have mentioned should be excluded.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I was under the impression that my amendment embraced the

point raised by Mr. Millington. Everything inside the rabbit-proof fence, according to the Solicitor General, was to come within the scope of the Bill, namely, up to the Murchison River or the No. 3 fence, but everything outside that was to be excluded. It is purely a misunderstanding.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Holmes' explanation about the Bill not being understood in another place is a reflection upon hon. members there. The two following clauses were repealed, and the Bill was made to apply only to one section of the State. My amendment would mean that it would apply to the pastoral areas with the exception of Clause 81, namely, that to do with the fencing in of water.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: How would the Honorary Minister define the responsibility of the owners of holdings representing one or two million acres? He says the only question in dispute is in connection with water supply but there are hundreds of other matters involved in the Bill which could not be satisfactorily applied to the northern areas. Some of the holdings in the North have no boundaries and no boards, and yet the Government could impose the maximum penalty or rate and spend the money on the eradication of rabbits in the South-West. The existing legislation for the North is far more stringent than that for the South.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: The Bill is to a large extent, drafted on the assumption that it would apply to the South-West division. I suggest that progress be reported and the whole matter gone into.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am agreeable to that course.

[The Deputy Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 11th December, 1918.

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

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

BILL—LOAN, £780,000.

Introduced by the Colonial Treasurer and read a first time.

MOTION—RAILWAY PORTER OAKES, TO INQUIRE BY SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth): [4.37]: I move—

That a select committee be appointed to inquire into the case of railway employee Oakes.

do not think many words from me are needed to convince the House of the desirability of carrying this motion. Those of us who heard Oakes's case put forward for the first time by the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) the other night must feel convinced that a grave injustice has been done to an old employee of the Railway Department.

The Minister for Railways: In what way?

Mr. SMITH: That is exactly what we wish to find out, and this is my reason for moving the motion. I am not satisfied that Oakes has received that justice which should be meted out to an old employee of 22 years standing. I am prepared at any time to rise in my place, and move for an inquiry into the grievance that any of our State employees may have. The member for Kanowna put the case clearly and strongly, and after listening to him I have no hesitation in saying that this is one of those cases that ought to be publicly inquired into. The Minister, in his reply, was not at all convincing. He assured the House that the appeal board, which had heard the case, had dealt with it fully and fairly, and had given a fair verdict, but I was not satisfied with that. I am specially struck by the fact that, although an appeal had been made to the Minister, he was obliged to admit that he had not even read the letters. This convinces me that this employee has not received that consideration or justice to which he is entitled at the hands of his employers.

Mr. O'Loughlin: Is it customary for the Minister to read all these documents?

Mr. SMITH: This was a special appeal to the Minister.

The Minister for Railways: There was an appeal by way of a deputation. What more do you want?

Mr. SMITH: I think the least the Minister can do is to read any communication of that sort which may be addressed to him. It is a very deplorable state of affairs for the Minister to have to admit in the House that he did not read the letters.

Mr. Munsie: He did not read the evidence. The Minister for Railways: I did not read the evidence.

Mr. SMITH: Incidentally the Minister was excused of having considerably delayed his reply.

The Minister for Railways: Have you seen the notes of the deputation?

Mr. SMITH: I do not think it necessary to go into the case in detail, because most members have had the matter brought fully under their notice. Briefly, Porter Oakes has been employed by the Railway Department for the last 22 years. He has an honourable record, without having a black mark against him. He is a married man with a family, although of course that does not count in the matter of doing justice to an employee. He was engaged

in the work of checking tickets on the railways, and in the course of his business he issued one of those paper tickets that are usually sold to passengers who board a train at sidings where there are no ticket officers. This ticket which Porter Oakes issued, was written in duplicate by means of a carbon. It was for a passenger who was travelling from Meekering to Northam and the fare was 4s. 2d. Nothing further was heard of this ticket until it turned up some weeks later and showed unmistakable signs of having been altered as from Northam to Perth and the amount of the fare was also altered. I understand inquiries were made by the Railway Department. They called upon Oakes, who on being shown the ticket, admitted straight away that the signature on it was his. He did not know what the whole thing was about, but the handwriting seemed to be so like his, it was such a clever imitation of his signature, that he had no hesitation in acknowledging it as his. Further inquiries were made and it was found that the ticket had been collected some time after it was issued, but by whom it was not known. Oakes was then suspended by the department. He appealed and was reinstated and he was not only reinstated, but the department paid him for the time he was off duty and paid his costs in connection with the matter. Strange to say, although they admitted he was not guilty, they did the extraordinary thing of fining him £1 and paying his costs. Oakes, considering that he was an innocent man, felt very sore over the matter, and it was only natural that he should feel that way. He took the usual steps to try and get justice, and the appeal board decided that he was guilty of an irregularity and not forgery. He re-entered the service, but still he had a stigma against his name.

Mr. Munsie: And as they say that the irregularity consisted of altering the ticket, he must have been guilty of having done it.

Mr. SMITH: If he is guilty at all, he is guilty of having forged the ticket and he should not be in the service. On the other hand, if he is not guilty, he should be fully reinstated without any punishment. I have only to remind the House of the famous McLeod case which was on all fours with this, and the extraordinary thing now is that the Railway Department still insist on using the carbon system of issuing tickets to passengers, notwithstanding the fact that it has been proved that they can be so easily altered. However, that is their business, but I would remind the House that McLeod's case was an almost similar one to this, and after having been unjustly punished, he stuck to his guns for a number of years. There were several inquiries and ultimately he was able to secure the appointment of a Royal Commission which completely cleared his character. That shows that no confidence can be placed in the Railway Appeal Board.

The Minister for Railways: Then it should be abolished.

Mr. SMITH: The fact remains that in connection with an exactly similar case in which McLeod was concerned, justice was denied to

that individual for a number of years, but he persisted in his demands for justice to such an extent that he eventually obtained it. This is a very similar case. I regret that the inaction of the Minister should make it necessary for any member of the House to move in this direction. In an ordinary business such a thing could not possibly occur. The matter would be dealt with in a sensible way and the individual concerned would be found guilty or not guilty. When an employee of the Government appeals for justice and is able to put up a reasonably strong case, it is the duty of the House to listen to him and if the Minister refuses justice we should see that the employee gets the treatments he deserves. There can be no doubt as to the manner in which we should vote on this question. The desire of hon. members is to find out the true facts of the case. I am not appealing to the House for consideration for this man if he does not deserve it. I want to find out whether his statements are true or not. It would be a lamentable thing, if such an old employee of the State as Oakes was punished unjustly. I have every confidence in submitting the motion for the consideration of members.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. C. A. Hudson—Yilgarn) [4.53]: I have been accused of not reading the evidence in the case in which Oakes, a railway employee, appeared before the appeal board appointed under the Railways Act. I plead guilty to not having read that evidence because at the time I made the statement it was not necessary for me to do so. After the decision of the board had been given, a deputation waited on me in connection with the matter and statements were placed before me by the members of the union concerned, and by Mr. Walker, the solicitor who represented Oakes at the hearing before the appeal board. All the evidence given before the appeal board was condensed by Mr. Walker in his statement to me, and I therefore failed to see the necessity for reading the evidence again in order to come to the decision which I arrived at. The accusation by the member for North Perth that I was negligent is one which is not true. He himself has not stated that he has read the evidence nor has he given any intimation that he knows what is in that evidence from which the conclusion was drawn by the appeal board. The whole force of these proceedings is such as to warrant me in thinking that there is something more behind this appeal than appears on the surface.

Mr. Smith: Not so far as I am concerned.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Every person who has had anything to do with the matter so far has accused someone else. They pretend to be trying to clear the character of Oakes, but in doing so they are taking the opportunity of casting slurs on other people. The appeal board was attacked by the member for North Perth when asking the House to do justice to a Government employee. The hon. member's accusation is against the gentleman who occupies the position of chairman of that board, Mr. Davies, police magistrate of Perth, and to say that he was biased, to

say that he did not do justice to the matter, is to make an accusation which was unjust. A further accusation was made against Mr. Hope, who has for over 20 years been in the service of the Railway Department. Mr. Hope is a gentleman who, we were told the other night in the House, and during the progress of the deputation, was biased and that he would do anything in the interests of the Railway Department irrespective of whether it was just or otherwise. That accusation also is unjust and untrue. A further accusation was made that Mr. Hope had exercised occult influence over the other members of the bench, that he had hypnotised them, so Mr. Walker said. I have asked for a demonstration by Mr. Hope of his occult powers, but I have not yet been able to get it. Possibly if a select committee is appointed, the members of it will be able to secure it, but with regard to the main issue, is Parliament going to accept its own decision or is it to go back on it? On a previous occasion I drew attention to the wording of the Railways Act, which provides that in the case of the dismissal of an official of the department, or if he be fined, he has the right of appeal to the board. That board consists of the police magistrate, a member elected by the union to which the individual belongs, and a member appointed by the Commissioner of Railways. In this instance Mr. Davies, police magistrate, acted with Mr. Williams for the employee and Mr. Hope for the Commissioner. In establishing that board by Act of Parliament it was distinctly laid down that the decision of that board should be final. It was an extraordinary provision which was made for an employee to appeal from the decision of his employer. It was right, too, that he should have that appeal and the legislature said that the decision of the board, to whom he appealed should be final. Now we are asked to say that the decision given by Parliament when it passed that Act is not to be upheld. I have admitted that I have not read the evidence, and I do not intend to read it. The position was this: As has been pointed out by the member for North Perth, Oakes was charged with an irregularity and it was considered by the Commissioner, that the gravity of the offence demanded his dismissal. He had his appeal. The appeal court reinstated him, but fined him £1 for an irregularity and allowed him some costs. So that the House may be fully informed on the subject, perhaps it would be as well if I read the judgment given by the chairman of the appeal court, which is as follows:—

In this appeal Chas. Danton Oakes applies to this board and it has had the matter of his appeal before it. It appears, from what has been told us, that on the 19th July he was dismissed the service for an alleged irregularity in connection with the issue of railway excess ticket No. "J," 91151, between Meckering and Northam. I got the impression when this case started that the irregularity consisted of some

grave act of dishonesty on the part of Oakes, and the suggestion in my mind was that the ticket was issued by him for the purpose of defrauding the department. I think it is my duty at the outset to say that the suggestion I mention has been wholly dispelled, and that so far as Oakes' honesty is concerned (I speak for the whole board on this point), it has been proved not to be in any way at fault by whatever action he may have been guilty of in connection with this matter. Travelling between Meckering and Northam on the date in question, he issued to a passenger an excess ticket; the passenger took the ticket, and some dispute took place as to the fee required. Eventually the ticket was returned to the department, and some two months later an alteration of the ticket was discovered. The ticket was issued between Meckering and Northam, and the green ticket issued to the passenger showed the word "Perth" instead of "Northam," also the signature being out of place when compared. This immediately aroused suspicion, and Oakes was called upon by an inspector deputed to investigate the matter. It seemed to me that there were three or four suggestions open, as follows:—1, That Oakes issued the ticket in question for the purpose of making money out of it. 2, That he issued it to a friend for the purpose of franking him over the railway. 3, That the passenger to whom the ticket was issued altered the ticket himself for the purpose of travelling over the railway without paying his fare. 4, That it may have been altered since its being handed in to the department. Now, to deal with the fourth suggestion first. The ticket was received at Meckering by the officer there, and we are told that it was sent by him to headquarters, and that it would reach there, in the ordinary course of events, on the 30th April. When being checked at headquarters, it was found to be on the file for the month of April. For any person to attempt to utilise the ticket after that, it would mean that that person would not only have to have access to the file to secure the ticket, but that he would also have to have access to it for the purpose of putting it back. Now, if a person in the department sought to abstract the ticket, and use it for the purpose of making money for himself, there would be no necessity to re-write the signature on it, and, as Mr. Angel has put it, that person having access to the file there would also be no necessity for him to even return the ticket to the file in its altered state; he could have destroyed the ticket, and thereby absolutely precluded any prospect of the discovery of his action. So that I think, as reasonable men, we must dismiss that suggestion. Regarding suggestion No. 3, we saw Brooks in the box, and he seemed to be very straightforward. He did not strike one as being a highly educated man, and he would require, according to the expert witnesses, to have at least

some knowledge of penmanship to be able to forge a signature. But even if it was done, where was the necessity to alter anything on the ticket except the destination station? In addition to that, we have the man's own sworn statement that he went to Northam and drew his pay; I understand that his movements have been traced, and that he purchased another ticket to Perth, and he did not use the Meckering-Northam return portion until on his return trip to Meckering. In view of these facts, I think we must also dismiss that suggestion. Now, regarding the suggestions (Nos. 1 and 2) that Oakes did it for the purpose of making money, or for passing his friend over the railways free. In each of these cases, if Oakes did so, he would then be dishonest. But we have satisfied ourselves that there is no dishonesty on his part. There was another suggestion, that someone had done it for a joke; well, people do not usually do this class of thing for a joke, so that I don't think we can give it any serious consideration. We are now back on to the point as to whether Oakes altered the ticket himself. On this question a very great deal of the evidence has revolved. As soon as the discovery of the altered ticket was made, investigations were set on foot. Oakes was called into the inspectors' office. At the time, there were two inspectors there (not by design), and the second inspector was sufficiently close to hear, perhaps not a complete discussion, but he declares he heard, and had a recollection of, the principal features of the matter. Mr. Storman gave his version of the proceedings. He said that he wrote out a brief account of the interview, which he swore embodied Oakes' statement regarding the ticket. He said that Oakes admitted it was his signature and that he signed it and inserted the name "Perth" and Mr. Drown bore Mr. Storman out so far as that statement is concerned. It appears that certain other statements were not embodied in the account sent to the Chief Traffic Manager, and a good deal of criticism took place, but I don't think we are seriously concerned in that. As against that statement, we have the statement made by Oakes that he said the writing was not his, but that it was like his. He came back the next day and suggested that it was a clever forgery, and he has maintained that attitude ever since. These were the men who were supposed to have put the third degree on Oakes when they took his statement. The finding continues—

Apart from the fact that the two senior officers referred to are of some high standing in the service and of high reputation, we have the statement that Oakes himself said that his memory was not too good. Putting it in that light, can any responsible body of men accept Oakes' version of what took place as against that of the two senior officers? Therefore, I think the only reasonable conclusion we can come to is

that the statement of the officers is correct. After considering the whole of the facts, I have come to the conclusion that there is evidence here from which a reasonable body of men must draw a reasonable conclusion, viz., that Oakes is the person who altered the ticket. And, having come to that conclusion, it seems to me that the main feature of the inquiry is presented to us in the latter portion of the sitting, and which is found against Oakes. Some question has been raised as to what was referred to as "Star Chamber Practice" and Mr. Haynes invited an expression of opinion on that point. In this opinion, I do not speak for the other members of the board, I can only refer those persons to the practice adopted commonly by the police in taking statements (whether it is good or bad is a matter of opinion). When a man is arrested, or rather before being arrested, when suspicion rests upon him and a statement has to be taken a procedure somewhat similar to that operating in the Railways is followed; his statement is then read over to him, and is signed by the suspected party. If a person is brought up in the Railway Department, it seems to me, if he is not able to recollect the incident or the circumstances surrounding the incident, the only sensible thing for that person to do is to say straight out that he cannot remember it, and time to think it over would have been given him; it seems apparent to me that such a course as that was open to Oakes. There was another point I have omitted to refer to when considering which person's statement should be accepted—that of Oakes or those of the two inspectors—that is, the incident which took place in the office. Oakes said that he came back and asked Mr. Drown to ring Mr. Stormon and tell him he wanted to see him, but Mr. Drown stated he did not know why Oakes wanted to see Mr. Stormon, as Oakes did not tell him. Oakes' statement is a complete contradiction to that—that is the point on which Mr. Drown would be personally concerned. Now, to my way of thinking—and it is the only reasonable conclusion to come to, which is backed up by evidence—Oakes, having made out the ticket and seen that the pencil did not transfer the carbon through on to the green ticket, then did or sought to do what he knows, and knew then, was wrong, namely to make the ticket which was illegible legible, and it struck me that he was not guilty of any very serious irregularity, although I am told that the department does view it somewhat seriously. If my conclusion is correct, then Oakes has brought some of the trouble upon himself, because if he did do so and had owned up to it at the time the investigation officer questioned him I don't think the present lengthy proceedings would have been at all necessary. We have come to the conclusion that Oakes should be reinstated, and that his reinstatement should take place as from the date on which he was dismissed, but in lieu of that punishment, I think the case will be met adequately if he be fined £1.

That is the statement of the magistrate. It sums up the whole position. Having that statement before me, I did not think it necessary to read the whole of the evidence, and I do not intend to do so now. The question of costs arose. Mr. Haynes asked the board to allow the following costs in connection with the case:—£4 1s. 5d., Brooks' witness fee; £3 3s., handwriting expert's fee (Hyman); 16s., advertisement in "West Australian"; £28 17s., T. Walker's fee; 7s., photographs of tickets; £18 4s., shorthand reports (W. E. Hale), 10s., Mr. Haynes' visit to Meckering; total, £55 19s. 3d. Mr. Angel strongly opposed the application on the grounds that no mention whatever of dishonesty was made either in the letter sent to Oakes requesting his defence against dismissal, or the letter conveying his dismissal, and that there was absolutely no necessity to bring a legal representative into the matter. After discussion, the chairman agreed to allow the following costs: £4 1s. 5d., Brooks' witness fee; 16s., advertisements in the "West Australian"; total £4 17s. 5d., which expenses were necessary in order to clear Oakes's name from the imputation of forgery. It was on that decision that an appeal was made to me as Minister. Mr. Walker and others attended. On the question of costs, let me draw attention to one fact: after some discussion, during which Mr. Walker had elaborated, as he did in the House the other night, Oakes's case, criticised the judgment of Mr. Davies and generally dealt with the board in his own peculiar manner, I tried to get from him what he really wanted. I said, "This is coming back to the question I asked you at the inception, as to whether I am asked to review the decision of the court or not." Mr. Walker replied, "You are asked to review it, but legally you cannot. It is a final court. But something might be done. I should say you could return that £1 fine and pay his costs." In regard to the costs, I have already pointed out that, under the Railways Act, solicitors are not entitled to appear before the appeal court. If these costs were allowed, the board would not be acting in accordance with law. Subclause 4 of Section 74 of the Government Railways Act provides that no solicitor or counsel may appear and be heard before the board. In this case the solicitor was not heard, but he attended to watch the proceedings, and it is now sought to get a remission of the fine, together with payment of his costs, and 18 guineas charges for the shorthand notes. I leave it to the House as to whether they are going to uphold the decision of Mr. Davies, which was given on sound grounds. Oakes was found guilty of an irregularity and was fined £1 on that account. There was a suspicion of dishonesty against him involving him in £4 or £5 of costs to clear himself of that charge. Those costs were allowed him by the appeal board. He is reinstated and any suggestion of dishonesty is removed. All I can say is that it is sought by this motion to recover the costs he incurred in defending himself. I oppose the motion.

Mr. WILLCOCK (Geraldton) [5.13]: I think it will be necessary to amend the motion by deleting the words "select committee" and substituting the words "Royal Commis-

sion." Members are aware that the session is drawing to its close, and therefore if a select committee be appointed it will automatically lapse when Parliament is prorogued. Consequently, if the select committee be not formed within the next week, it will not have an opportunity of sitting at all. So if the House thinks an inquiry is desirable, it will be necessary to have that inquiry made by Royal Commission instead of by select committee. I do not wish to go over the whole ground again. Sufficient has been said, first on the Railway Estimates, and again here today, and the House is fully seized of the facts. Most unbiassed people will say that there has been a miscarriage of justice.

The Minister for Railways: Then I am biased, I suppose.

Mr. WILLCOCK: No, I said "most unbiassed people"; I did not say all of them. I have no axe to grind in connection with this question. I have had nothing whatever to do with it. But naturally I took an interest in the matter. I read a considerable portion of the evidence, and I have been unable to find any proof of the charge. I am unable to discover in the evidence any proof that Oakes altered the ticket or was guilty of dishonesty or even of irregularity. On that point there is no evidence except the statement made by him when in an excited condition, having just had a charge of a very serious nature preferred against him; and that statement he subsequently denied. The department can produce no other evidence that he altered the ticket or even did anything irregular. When charged with this serious offence, Oakes admitted that it was his signature, or that the signature was like his; but as soon after as he possibly could he endeavoured to retract that statement, saying the signature was a clever forgery. I do not want to take the attitude of asserting that every time an employee has unsuccessfully appealed to the Appeal Board he should come to Parliament and endeavour to get the board's decision upset. But in this particular case it seems to me, personally—I will put it that way, irrespective of the Minister or anybody else—that this man was not guilty of any irregularity. In those circumstances I think that any action which can be taken to clear the man's name ought to be taken. Even a man charged with a criminal offence and found guilty is entitled to have his name cleared if evidence afterwards comes out proving that he was not guilty. In the circumstances I think we should have a Royal Commission appointed. In the first instance the course was adopted of approaching the Minister in charge of the department and asking for a remission of the penalty. Many people considered that Oakes was not guilty of the offence, and the course was accordingly adopted of appealing to the Minister in control of the department by a suggestion that in view of the circumstances he might see his way clear to remit the fine, which remission, of course, would carry with it the payment of any costs incurred by Oakes. The Minister did not see his way clear to agree to that

course, and therefore the only other course remaining for Oakes for the purpose of clearing his name is to come to this House and ask for a Royal Commission to go right into the matter.

Mr. Foley: Provided those costs were paid, do you mean, there would not be much trouble about clearing the man's name?

Mr. WILLCOCK: No; I do not mean that at all. But as things are, the fine remains against him. The opinion of the general public seems to be that Oakes has been guilty of dishonesty, notwithstanding the decision of the board which was read out by the Minister today. That decision does not reach everybody, and the stigma remains on Oakes's name. As regards the costs, the Minister has said that no charge of dishonesty was made against Oakes; and yet the chairman in allowing the costs of the attendance of the witness Brooks and also the cost of the advertisement in the "West Australian" said it was necessary for Brooks to attend in order to clear Oakes of the imputation of forgery. By the use of that phraseology the chairman expressed his agreement with the view that there was an imputation of forgery against Oakes.

The Minister for Railways: Which was entirely removed.

Mr. Munsie: Then why fine Oakes £1?

The Minister for Railways: Because he altered a ticket irregularly. He says he did.

Mr. WILLCOCK: The solicitor who appeared for Oakes would not have been there at all had not the imputation of forgery been made. The solicitor was introduced into the matter because of the charge of forgery and the consequent possibility of criminal proceedings. For the same reason it was necessary to have a record of the evidence which could be sworn to, and accordingly a professional shorthand writer was employed to take a verbatim note. I do not wish to dwell on the subject. Sufficient has been said to warrant the appointment of a Royal Commission of inquiry. I hope the House will agree to the amendment, because if the motion is carried and a select committee appointed, it will be almost impracticable to do anything before the session closes.

Mr. SPEAKER: I can accent the first part of the hon. member's amendment, namely to strike out the words "a select committee." If those words be struck out, and if the hon. member then moves to insert, in lieu, the words "a Royal Commission," it will be necessary for him also to insert the words "in the opinion of this House." It is not competent for the House to order the appointment of a Royal Commission.

Mr. WILLCOCK: I will follow the course suggested by you, Sir.

Amendment (that the words "a select committee" be struck out) put, and a division taken with the following result:—

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|-------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 21 |
| Noes | .. | .. | .. | .. | 21 |
| <hr/> | | | | | |
| A tie | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0 |

AYES.

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Angelo | Mr. Money |
| Mr. Broun | Mr. Nairn |
| Mr. Draper | Mr. Pickering |
| Mr. Duff | Mr. Plesse |
| Mr. Durack | Mr. Pilkington |
| Mr. Gardiner | Mr. R. T. Robinson |
| Mr. George | Mr. Teesdale |
| Mr. Hudson | Mr. Thomson |
| Mr. Lerroy | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. Maley | Mr. Hardwick |
| Mr. Mitchell | (Teller.) |

NOES.

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Lutey |
| Mr. Brown | Mr. Mullany |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. Munsie |
| Mr. Collier | Mr. Rocks |
| Mr. Davies | Mr. Smith |
| Mr. Foley | Mr. Stubbs |
| Mr. Green | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Griffiths | Mr. Veryard |
| Mr. Holman | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Jones | Mr. O'Loughlin |
| Mr. Lambert | (Teller.) |

Mr. SPEAKER: I give my casting vote with the Noes, thus protecting the revenue.

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [5.28]: The suggested appointment of a Royal Commission having been negatived, I desire to say a word or two in favour of the appointment of a select committee. If a select committee is appointed and gets to work forthwith, there will still be an opportunity for getting to the bottom of the case before the session closes. The Minister in his speech laid stress on the question whether this House is going to alter its own decision; and the hon. gentleman read the section of the Railway Act which distinctly states that the decision of the appeal board shall be final. However, the House previously reversed its own decision in this respect, when passing a resolution recommending the appointment of a Royal Commission into the McLeod case. That precedent would justify the House in again altering its decision on this occasion. There is not the slightest doubt that the appeal board made a mistake in the McLeod case, and I am satisfied in my own mind that they have made a mistake in this case also. I cannot understand the finding, even as read by the Minister here this afternoon. It is unjust to the employee to say that no charge of forgery was laid against him. In point of fact, that really was, in the first instance, the charge.

The Minister for Railways: Forging what?

Mr. MUNSIE: The altering of a ticket, which action would be tantamount to forgery, inasmuch as the employee would be altering the destination of the ticket from Northam to Perth for the purpose of collecting extra revenue, which presumably he would then put in his own pocket. That was the contention. That was really what Oakes was charged with first.

The Minister for Works: How could he collect the extra money when he left 4s. 2d. on the ticket?

Mr. MUNSIE: That is all the more reason for saying that the decision of the appeal board in the case of Oakes was utterly absurd and ridiculous, seeing that there was no possibility of his profiting illegally. No motive has been shown up to date, either before the appeal board or anywhere else, for Oakes to alter the ticket; none whatever. He could not derive any pecuniary benefit from such an action. Certainly, he was not making any alteration with a view to assisting a friend, as has been suggested by way of motive. The very substance of what the man was charged with, the board say he is guilty of, and they fine him £1. If the evidence was sufficient to enable the chairman to reach the conclusion that Oakes was guilty of altering the ticket, the fine of £1 was no sufficient penalty. There is no question about it. He did not alter the ticket at all. I want to know how it is when one writes out a ticket with the carbon between the two sheets, that the carbon copy is correct and the original incorrect.

The Minister for Works: Was the carbon copy correct?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes. The witness who purchased the ticket stated that it was issued to him from Meckering to Northam and that it was issued correctly. When it gets to the audit office, "Northam" is partly rubbed out and "Perth" written over it. Those who were there and saw the photograph of the ticket say that "Northam" had been there at one time and that 4s. 2d. had been there also. In the face of that evidence I cannot for the life of me see how one can have the idea that the man would go into a dream, for so it appears, and rub "Northam" out and write "Perth" on top. It is ridiculous to me. I do not believe the man did it, and if he did not do it he is entitled to justice.

Mr. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [5.32]: I support the motion in this instance, but I should like to express an opinion that something should be done to prevent the House being made the vehicle for inquiry every time a man has a grievance. It is a nice pitch we are coming to when 50 members have to sit here for two or three hours and discuss something that should be left to a board of appeal composed of honourable men, who, according to some members, have no reputation to take away. It is a scandalous thing that we should sit here in judgment on them. If these men have not the reputations which it is stated they have, then they should not be where they are, but we have no right to sit here and take their reputations away on the evidence which has been submitted. The hon. member, Mr. Munsie, has stated that he is perfectly certain the man Oakes never altered the ticket. He knows nothing about it, any more than I know that the man did alter the ticket. It is quite time these boards of appeal were dissolved and an end put to this wretched farce, if this sort of thing is to go on.

Mr. Munsie: It is time the Railway Commissioner came to his senses and prevented the issue of these tickets at all.

Mr. TEESDALE: Are we to have a repetition of this kind of thing right throughout the

State, because every man who has had a grievance during the last two or three years, following the cases of McLeod and Oakes, will come here and ask to have their grievances redressed. I have a right to express my opinion, and I say it is a ghastly shame that the reputation of certain men should be taken away—I refer to those men who sit in high places. There is too much of this kind of thing in Western Australia, this slinging of mud, and it is time it was finished. It is not right to waste the time of 50 members of Parliament on these grievances. I admit this man has a grievance, but let it be redressed by the right parties. This man Oakes has some little ground for having his case brought forward, because we have already broken the rule in the case of McLeod. It is only on that ground that I shall vote for the motion.

Mr. SMITH (North Perth—in reply) [5.35]: I am thankful for the little consideration which the member for Roebourne is extending to me this afternoon. He admits that porter Oakes deserves some little consideration, as he has a little ground for complaint, and for that reason he intends to vote for the motion. I hope the hon. member will be a little more considerate for this man Oakes who has had a serious charge levelled against him. I deny that there has been any slur or accusation made against the appeal board in the nature which the member for Roebourne has stated here to-day. I think he has exaggerated things considerably. I simply stated that I was not satisfied with the decision given by the appeal board in this case, but I did not accuse the board of giving an improper decision or being prejudiced. I said that I was not satisfied with their decision. This is one case in which the House is justified in rendering assistance. I should like to say that I think it was very ungenerous on the part of the Minister, especially being a member of that honourable profession, the legal profession, in practically accusing the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) in moving in this matter because he had not been paid his costs. Such remarks were most uncalled for.

The Minister for Railways: You made an accusation against me and the appeal board.

Mr. SMITH: It was very unjust that the Minister should accuse the member for Kanowna of bringing this matter forward because his costs had not been paid. My motion does not contemplate dealing with the costs at all. It is an inquiry into the case of railway porter Oakes. The select committee would have no power to order the payment of costs, but if the committee think they are justified in recommending that the Government should make some payment of the costs, well and good. But in my motion there is not the slightest suggestion that the committee should consider the question of costs at all. All the committee will be concerned about is that this man shall have his character cleared, and I understand that is all the man Oakes asks for. I do not think there is anything further for me to answer. The case has been thoroughly thrashed out. The member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) made a point very clear

that escaped my notice, and that was that the ticket had been altered after it left the hands of Oakes. The great point made by the chairman of the appeal board was that the ticket had been altered by Oakes to cover up some irregularities, but the witness who bought the ticket stated emphatically that when he received the ticket it was in order and intact, and if any alteration was made on the ticket afterwards Oakes was not the man who made it, because he had not the opportunity. I do not know how the magistrate overlooked that important point.

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

| | |
|--------------|----|
| Ayes | 31 |
| Noes | 11 |

Majority for 20

AYES.

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Mr. Angelo | Mr. Mitchell |
| Mr. Angwin | Mr. Money |
| Mr. Brown | Mr. Mullany |
| Mr. Chesson | Mr. Munsie |
| Mr. Collier | Mr. Nairn |
| Mr. Davies | Mr. Pickering |
| Mr. Draper | Mr. Pilkington |
| Mr. Duff | Mr. Rooke |
| Mr. Durack | Mr. Smith |
| Mr. Green | Mr. Stubbs |
| Mr. Griffiths | Mr. Teesdale |
| Mr. Harrison | Mr. Troy |
| Mr. Holman | Mr. Veryard |
| Mr. Jones | Mr. Willcock |
| Mr. Lambert | Mr. O'Loghlin |
| Mr. Lutey | (Teller.) |

NOES.

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Mr. Brown | Mr. Plesse |
| Mr. Gardiner | Mr. R. T. Robinson |
| Mr. George | Mr. Thomson |
| Mr. Hudson | Mr. Underwood |
| Mr. Lefroy | Mr. Hardwick |
| Mr. Maley | (Teller.) |

Question thus passed.

Ballot taken and a select committee appointed consisting of Messrs. Nairn, Mullany, Green, Willcock, and the mover (Mr. Smith); with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to report this day week.

Mr. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.55]: I move—

That the evidence be not printed and that ten typewritten copies be provided.
My object is merely to save expense.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think we had more typewritten copies than ten last time. I fancy it was 12 copies.

The Colonial Treasurer: You cannot get more than ten copies from one machine. For more than that it will be necessary to type it twice.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am informed that we can have ten copies from one operation of the machine. Therefore the motion will stand.

Question put and passed.

RETURN—RETURNED SOLDIERS AND LAND SETTLEMENT.

Mr. DUFF (Claremont) [5.56]: I move—

That a return be laid upon the Table of the House showing, 1, The number of returned soldiers who have been settled on the land. 2, The area and location of the land taken up. 3, The value of each area which has been allotted to them.

I do not anticipate any opposition to the motion. Public concern and anxiety is growing in regard to the position of the returned soldiers desiring to go on the land. Hon. members will agree that it is a question which will not permit of delay. This view is borne out in a cablegram published in the "West Australian" a few days ago as follows:—

London, Dec. 9. Numerous steamers are being diverted for the purpose of repatriating Australians and New Zealanders, including a number of large insulated vessels, and also many liners never previously at the antipodes, so that considerable tonnage will be available in March and April to lift the Government's purchases of dairy produce, wheat, and wool.

In view of that, is it not well to know what provision has been made? I have had a little experience in repatriation work, having been connected with the office of repatriation and compensation in Africa for some two years. I believe the people in Australia to-day do not recognise the immensity of the work before them, nor do they recognise that the responsibility is ours, and that any monetary sacrifice we may make is inadequate as compared with the sacrifices that have been made by the soldiers at the Front. Therefore, I hope I shall not be viewed as an alarmist when I say we should be up and doing, and taking a bigger interest in the repatriation of our soldiers who are to return to us in large numbers in a very short period.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. B. Lefroy—Moore) [6.1]: The return asked for by the hon. member is now being prepared, and will be laid upon the Table promptly.

Question put and passed.

BILL—CONSTITUTION FURTHER AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 6th December.

Mr. THOMSON (Kataanning) [6.2]: I consider that the leader of the Opposition is to be commended for having brought this matter before the House. The question is one above party politics, and the Bill is consistent with the spirit of the times. Some effort should be made to meet the extraordinary cases quoted by the sponsor of the Bill. I do not know that I am quite prepared to go as far as the leader of the Opposition proposes, but I certainly consider we should have some definite amount fixed as regards rental. I also consider that those who have a vote for the Upper House should have some small stake in the country. I trust this House and the leader of the Opposition will be prepared to

accept the small amount of 5s. per week. Taking into consideration that the average rental of a house in the metropolitan area is from 17s. 6d. to 25s. per week, one must realise that in fixing the amount of 5s., we shall be going a long way to meet the wishes of the leader of the Opposition. That hon. gentleman stated that South Australia had given soldiers the franchise for the Upper House. I regret that he did not embody a similar provision in his Bill. For my part, I consider that anyone who has gone forth to fight for the country is entitled to the fullest electoral privileges. I hope, therefore, that when the Bill is in Committee a clause to that effect will be added to it. In all sincerity, I say the man who has risked life and limb for the country is justly entitled to exercise the full franchises in the government of the State. The returned soldier is fully entitled to that privilege. As regards the rental of 5s. per week, one can hardly rent a room in the metropolitan area at that rate. The member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen), I believe, stated that on the timber mills rentals are 6s. 3d. per week.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is so.

Mr. THOMSON: It is plain, then, that the fixing of the 5s. rental goes a long way towards meeting the wishes of hon. members opposite. I repeat that I consider all men who have seen active service should have the right to vote for the Upper House.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [6.6]: My intention is to support the second reading of the Bill, although in my opinion its provisions do not go far enough. However, when the measure reaches the Committee stage, I propose to submit an amendment providing what I believe is fully the desire of this party and fully the desire of the country; that is, an adult franchise for the Legislative Council. Let me say here that I am surprised and disappointed at the Premier's attitude on this Bill. The hon. gentleman traced the so-called liberalisation of the franchise for the Upper House in this country from the initiation of responsible government. But he was not prepared, so he said, to go any further to make one step in advance of the position which now obtains in that respect. Whilst I am surprised and disappointed, I can at least concede this to the Premier, that he is honest. He has taken up the attitude which to him is the natural one, because he represents the old Conservative influence in this country. I realise, and I willingly concede, that the Premier, in determining that his attitude towards this Bill must be a hostile one, is taking up an honest attitude and one that is natural to him. We cannot follow him in that respect, but can only express our surprise and disappointment that one who leads a National Government, one who has mouthed so long and so often the sentiment that the great struggle so recently terminated is one for the purpose of conceding to all classes the fullest liberty and democracy, should refuse to accept liberal views regarding proposals in this Chamber, irrespective of the quarter from which they may originate. I do not wish to refer at length to the

speech of the Attorney General, which caused some heat in this House, because we understand that gentleman's ways and insinuations. We understand the insinuating manner in which he puts forward his proposals. I certainly do not desire to comment upon those proposals further than to say that when he stated he was facing one way and the Premier another way, he was playing with our intelligence. We understand the Premier just as well as the Attorney General understands him, and we know full well what the Premier has said on this subject, and we know full well the Premier's opinion and attitude. The Premier stated that in his opinion the bicameral system of government is the best; and I have no doubt that a great many in this country will agree with him in that view. But I think few will agree with him that a bicameral system with our present franchise is at any time the best. Personally, I have no time for the bicameral system. In my opinion a unicameral system is all that is necessary for this or any other country.

Hon. P. Collier: Especially for the States of the Commonwealth.

Mr. TROY: Yes. I shall give reasons in support of my view as I proceed. The Premier further said that the present franchise was the bulwark of our Constitution.

The Premier: No; that the Upper House was.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes; as at present constituted.

Mr. TROY: The Upper House is the bulwark for all the unprogressives and all the selfish reactionaries in this and every other country where an Upper House is elected on a restricted franchise. That is the only sense in which an Upper House is a bulwark. It never has been and never will be a bulwark of the people's rights. It will never be a bulwark for the defence of the people's rights. Here, and in every other country, the Upper House has proved a bulwark for the preservation of the rights of certain vested interests, and a bulwark that would serve to oppose to the last extreme every reform. The Upper House of Western Australia in that respect has been no different from any Upper House elsewhere. It is an insult to the intelligence of members of this Chamber who have been here for a number of years, to tell us that the Upper House as at present constituted is a bulwark or stands there in order to conserve the liberties and rights of the great majority of citizens. The experience of us who represent democratic sentiment is that the Upper House exists to block any legislation which means progress, any legislation which means advancement, any legislation which provides fuller and freer and more equal rights to the general body of the community. In my opinion it is the most notorious class House existing under any Constitution in a civilised country. The people who oppose this Bill must be blind to the progress of events. If they imagine for a moment that the general body of electors in this new era are prepared to sit down calmly under the present Constitution, they are going to be

sadly disappointed. They forget that all over the world a new era is dawning. They forget that all over the world the great mass of the people are demanding equal and full representation in government, and full opportunities in government. In the face of those facts, we find members of a Government, and supporters of a Government, imagining that if they concede half a step it is going to be sufficient, that the people will sit down and say, "Thank you; we take it as enough; that will do for the time being." I say again, the people who hold that view are blind to the progress of events; because, unquestionably, in this and in every country where the people are educated and reasonably intelligent, they are going to demand at last, and none too soon, the fullest rights and opportunities for self-government. The leader of the Opposition, therefore, has been most moderate in his Bill. I consider that from the standpoint of this party he has been too moderate, but I have no doubt that his desire has been to seize the first opportunity of testing the feeling in this House, and of making one step—in my opinion it will not be the last—towards the fullest representation of the people of Western Australia in both Houses of Parliament. To my mind, the present system of government is a fraud and a humbug. It gives power with one hand, and takes it away with the other. It sends to this House a majority representative of the people of Western Australia, elected on a certain platform and on certain principles; and then the Constitution places in the hands of members of another Chamber, representative of only a small section of the people, the power of vetoing all legislation, the power of opposing all legislation, the power of destroying all initiative.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. TROY: I have already said that the present franchise is a humbug and a fraud in that it gives power on the one hand and takes away power on the other. It gives responsibility to a Government in this Chamber, without power, because it allows a majority in another Chamber to veto any legislation which may be brought forward in this House by the representatives of the people of the whole State. A system which does that is a fraud. Members in this Chamber are sent here by the whole of the adult people of Western Australia with a mandate to do certain things, yet a body sitting in another place, representing only a faction of those people, are able to set their face against and successfully oppose any principle put forward by a majority in this House. That is not representative Government; it is not true Government, and the sooner such a system is abolished the better it will be for democracy in this country. At the present time in Western Australia the Upper House has more power than the House of Lords in England. We look upon the Old Country as being very conservative and very unprogressive, yet in our own State where democratic sentiment is supposed to

be predominant we find that the Upper Chamber has more power than has the House of Lords. Yet there are some members who consider, notably the Premier, that we are not living up to traditions of our race if we go one step further than we have already done in connection with the franchise of the Upper House. I hope this House will not be guided by the Premier because as the leader of progressive thought he is utterly hopeless. This Parliament must determine for itself whether the people shall be fully and adequately represented or whether they shall not. The present franchise is purely a property one. A person having property of the value of £50 is entitled to a vote. A person living in a house of the annual value of £17 is also entitled to a vote. I will not deny for a moment that property has some rights—the right of protection—but surely property has not the right to say what laws are good for the whole section of the community and what laws are not, because people who have no property are just as much entitled to say what legislation is good for them and what is not. I will not concede for one moment that because I possess a certain amount of property that gives me the right to dictate what legislation is in the best interests of the mass of the people. People who have no property are as good judges as those who have, and all that property can expect is the right of protection under the laws of the country. We are told again that this vote is the reward of thrift. If the owner of property worth £50 is entitled to a vote, why deny that vote to the person who possesses property to the value of £49? If a person who rents a house, the annual rental value of which is £17, is entitled to a vote, why deny it to the man who lives in a house, the rental value of which is £16? A distinction is also made between the great body of deserving settlers in the country. The City man who pays a rental of less than 10s. is entitled to a vote, but the man who goes out to the back country and lives in what the Attorney General contemptibly referred to as a shanty, a man who gives services to the country equal to those of the City man, is not entitled to a vote. The whole system is full of injustice and we in this House who claim to be democrats should not rest satisfied until there is provided in the Constitution a franchise which will give the fullest citizenship and justice to all the people in Western Australia. Take shearers, timber workers and all other men and women who create wealth in the country. They are denied a vote for the government of their own country. That sort of government which has obtained for so long should not obtain any longer. If it were a test of character or intellectuality, there might be something to commend it, but it is not. A person of the very worst character, provided he has certain property can command a vote, while the person of the very best character who has no property is denied a vote. A spieler, a person who lets houses for immoral purposes, a usurer, a criminal, so long as he escapes the clutches of the law, provided he has property, is en-

titled to a vote for the Upper House in the Parliament of Western Australia. Whereas the very best citizens, those on whom the welfare of the country depends are entirely denied that vote. Just by way of emphasising the argument of the leader of the Opposition, whereas 40,000 persons in Western Australia are entitled to special privileges because of a certain amount of property they possess, 60,000 people are denied those privileges. The present franchise is not actuated by any sense of justice, and the existing position of things should not obtain for one moment longer. I have heard the claim put forward that the Upper House is a check on hasty legislation. I have a very vivid recollection of Bills a few years ago providing for the expenditure of nearly three million pounds passing the Upper Chamber in about 20 minutes. After all, who has given anyone the right to say that the Upper House is competent to revise hasty legislation? Nobody is infallible, and if there is any necessity for one body to revise the work of another body of men it is just as possible that the legislation of the Upper House would be as fallible as the legislation of this House or any other House. I do not think that any hon. member with experience would for one moment put forward the statement that the Upper House exists because it is a check on hasty legislation. It is not and it never has been. It is no more competent to deal with legislation than this Chamber, and so far as hasty legislation is concerned, it will carry in that Chamber in one sitting five times the legislation which has ever been carried in this Chamber in as many sittings.

The Minister for Works: Not initiated legislation.

Mr. TROY: Yes. There might be some occasion for a special franchise for a section of the people if they were essentially the taxpayers. I have heard the argument put forward that the Upper House electors are the principal taxpayers. One member of that House has said to me that 30 per cent. of the people paid all the taxes of the State. I claim they do no such thing. Of the three million pounds revenue which we receive every year, only a very small proportion is paid by direct taxation. I am satisfied that a great mass of the community pay even more than a section and it is as well to know that a greater proportion of our revenue comes as a bonus from the Commonwealth, it being derived from customs, while the direct taxation is made up by payment from the whole community either by way of land and income tax, stamp duties, or in other ways. The great mass of the people pay that. For instance, the stamp duties are paid by the community. Hon. members will find that 70 or 80 per cent. of the revenue of Western Australia is derived from customs or by way of indirect taxation. On that score the claim that certain individuals are entitled to special representation because of the taxation they pay cannot be further considered. It may be stated that if we grant the adult franchise, which I propose

to move as an amendment to the Bill, there will be no necessity for the Upper House. I willingly concede that. I look forward to the time when there will be no Upper House. I am not afraid of what may happen as a result of this. I am not afraid, either, that some Government may come into power and will carry such extreme and unfair legislation that will be injurious to the people of the State. I have a heart-whole respect for the corrective influence of the people at general elections. A Government which comes back to-day with a majority will find that after a few years have passed over their heads that majority will have disappeared. The Government which passes legislation which is injurious to the great masses of the people, cannot for any length of time hold the people, as long as the people have the power that is necessary for their purposes. There is no utility or necessity for two Chambers. In the interests of economy, the Upper House ought to be abolished. I ask hon. members to follow the lead of Canada. In all the States of Canada, with the exception of two, Quebec and Nova Scotia, the Constitution provides for the government of the country by one House of Parliament, and these States have a population much in excess of any Australian State. The Province of Ontario has a population of two million people, and yet one House of Parliament has been sufficient for many years to provide all the legislation for the people of that country. There has been no unfairness or injustice done. Manitoba has a population of 455,000, and one House of Parliament is all that is necessary for the government of that country. British Columbia has a population of 392,000, and one House of Parliament. Saskatchewan has a population of 497,000, and New Brunswick a population of 351,000. All these States, with the exception of Alberta, have populations far in excess of Western Australia, and yet they can all manage to govern themselves by the aid of one House of Parliament.

Hon. J. Mitchell: How is that elected?

Mr. TROY: It does not matter how it is elected, one House of Parliament is sufficient. I do not care which House obtains in Western Australia. Let it be the Upper House on the adult franchise. The House which is most liberal and most democratic ought to be that which will exist. I have no objection to the Upper House existing and this House disappearing if the other House will adopt the adult franchise, and represent the whole of the interests of the people of Western Australia. When the Constitution of Western Australia, about which the Premier spoke the other night, was granted, Lord Knutsford was then Secretary of State for the Colonies, and he strongly advised the Legislative Council of that day to adopt the single Chamber Constitution. He drew their attention to the experience of Ontario, and the successful government of that State by one House of Parliament. The then Legislative Council replied that Ontario was not on all-fours with Western Australia, because Ontario had behind it the

Dominion Parliament of Canada. That was the only argument put forward by our Legislative Council. If that was their only argument then it must now be abandoned, because Western Australia has behind it the Commonwealth Parliament. We are to-day on all-fours with the great majority of the Canadian States, which are governed by one House of Parliament, and I think, at this day in the twentieth century, we ought to adopt legislation with that end in view. I have been long convinced that government by a Parliament with a proper mandate from the people is an impossibility in this country under the present Constitution. I have in this Chamber seen Governments come to this House with a two to one majority, hot and fresh from the elections, with a direct mandate from the people, and I have seen that Government so harassed and handicapped and embarrassed by another place as to make their work absolutely useless and valueless. I have always held the opinion that that sort of thing cannot go on for long. The Premier will concede nothing. We must leave him where he is, where public opinion was 100 years ago. Other members of the House, however, may concede something. I want them to understand this, that although the leader of the Opposition has only asked for a little he is not content with that. He is only testing the feeling of the House, and if the Attorney General is sincere in his complaint that the leader of the Opposition has not gone far enough, may I say, on behalf of the leader of the Opposition, that as far as the Attorney General will go beyond what is now proposed, the leader of the Opposition will be with him? We are all with him. We want to go the whole length. We do think there are members on the other side of the House who are fully alive to the sentiment of the times, and who believe that the time has come when the people should have an opportunity of deciding what legislation they want, and how far they want it. At present the will of the people is restricted by the despotic opposition of a place which represents only a fraction of the people of the country. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill, and I propose, in Committee, to move certain amendments which will provide for the better representation in another place of the people of Western Australia.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. Gardiner—Irwin) [7.52]: I propose to look at this question from rather a different standpoint than probably some hon. members. I am in a way half sorry that this Bill has been introduced at present, not from any opposition to it but because I realise that the readjustment of the political situation is going to be one of the greatest problems of peace, and the man who does not realise and recognise that is altogether out of step with the great events which have happened during the currency of this war. Holding that view, therefore, I should like the question to have been discussed, not in the closing hours of the session, with a House mentally tired—this is being said without offence—in the presence of unhealed political scars, and with members having

lurking suspicion that this may be for political purposes, but discussed with a House refreshed and renewed, having behind it, say, six months of peace, wherein we can see what the nations of the world are doing, and how they are going to face the rebirth of a new national life. America has said that this war was to keep the world free for democracy. I like better the words the Premier of France used when he said that we were fighting to keep the whole world habitable for free men. The thoughtful man sees as the issue of this war a new democracy. The squatter's son and the shearer's son have been holding each other's lives in their hands on occasion. The mine-owner's son, the mine manager's son, and the mine worker's son have been, what in Australia is the highest qualification of kinship, mates. Now, as a result of that, I am perfectly satisfied that when these men come back carrying with them the recollection of so many dangers that they have shared together, there is going to be a richer and a more lovable democracy than even some of us have dreamt of. I had just a slight instance of that brought under my notice recently. A letter was sent to me by a boy, highly educated, and what one would call well connected. In this letter he said, "Do not take any notice of this man's grammar or what he has been. He is just the whitest bit of manhood that God made, and do your best for him, because he deserves it." What man in the presence of such a testimony as that, hoping as we do as the result of this great struggle for something better in life, has not to renounce many of his pre-war political beliefs? I think we are going to be forced, whether we like it or not, but it is very much better, rather than be forced, to adopt that rule for which one has a natural inclination, and which justice and fearlessness make one take, and realise that whatever is best for the individual must of necessity be best for the State. We will be blind indeed if we do not go outside our own community and see how the nations of the world are viewing this project. Our vision has been washed clearer by the sacrifice of blood, and one can go almost where one will at present, even amongst the civilised nations which were our allies and amongst those which were partially uncivilised, who were our opponents, and find the strong trend that is growing up there. Let us take America, for instance. America is enfranchised to a very great extent indeed. In that country they are giving more power to women, and in the Senate of America we find Mrs. Janet Rankin. At the last elections there were many women candidates. If we read closer and see how the Government of America has taken every chance and has done most drastic things to protect the welfare of the people, not only as individuals but for the whole of the nation, and if we go on reading closely, as I have read, and study the matter with this particular object, we can come to no other conclusion than that America is to-day nearer to government by the people, for the people and for the good of the whole of the people than she has ever been. We find, in France, where sacrifices have been

made by the people of that nation, that make every nation of the world take off their hats in reverence, the great preaching for liberty, equality and fraternity has become a stronger bond than it ever was before. Go further; go to a neutral nation like Spain. We find in Spain there was a sort of smouldering revolution against tyranny, and against something almost equivalent to militarism. What happened? So strong was the public opinion that something had to be done to quell the revolutionary spirit, to give the people some outlet for their thought and action, that actually four men who were in prison for fighting for popular liberties were returned to the Cortes. Turn to England. Those people who know England to-day, say it has become revolutionised in the matter of representation. England is now doing what the leader of the Opposition is not doing by this Bill. She is giving greater power to the women of the nation. It is generally recognised that whilst the men have been the nation's spirit in this conflict, the women have been the nation's soul. Take Russia. There we see that in return for tyranny anarchy has resulted, simply because the Governments of Russia failed to realise what other nations of the world are to-day realising, that the people are a force and must be treated as a force. In Russia we get the evils resulting from not giving the people some strength and some voice in the government. Next, take Germany, and what do we find? That for years the great industrial training of Germany which would have made her a mighty nation, has been subservient to the drastic, autocratic power of militarism. There to-day the people are saying, "We want to be a free people, a people fitted to take our place in the world, and to use our powers for that development which shall be the development of the people as a whole." That is the position. To-day we find that the nations that have been fighting to keep the world free for democracy, although differing in speech and in race, are being bound together by the crimson thread of brotherhood, which is going to say "We want the whole world to be habitable for free men." I am only giving my personal views, formed on what I have read and have thought out. That is my reading of the position. Quite candidly I say that I consider my sons, who have fought for my property, have a greater claim to it than I who legally own it. Personally, I make that admission quite freely; and justice compels me to add that there are on the Eastern goldfields, homes that have sent sons and husbands to the Front, but that do not carry the qualification for the Upper House. And as stated by the member for Forrest (Mr. O'Loughlen) there are fine homes in the forest country that have sent their men to fight for our homes, but that do not carry the qualification for the Upper House. Surely it is going to be a very hard thing for any nation realising her obligations, to withhold from those who have fought for her any franchise that obtains in the national life. If this war has proved

anything, it has proved that false ideals cannot withstand any strain. No one can fail to admit that in many instances nations have built up false ideals and false idols. There is no disguising the fact that we as a nation have worshipped wealth, that in many cases we have considered property absolutely sacrosanct. We have worshipped position and power. In the hour of the nation's trials, when her back was right against the wall, what was her greatest asset? Men. If a nation recognises that her manhood is her greatest asset, then the life and the happiness of those men are going to prove one of the gravest problems we have to tackle in peace. To bring home an illustration that I sometimes used during the conscription campaign: If I were the wealthiest man in the whole community and I put the whole of that wealth into this scale, to assist the nation, and if in the other scale a widow put the thought of her only son who had made the supreme sacrifice—which scale would weigh heavier? Yet we find it very tempting to give power to wealth and to forget the widow. The aim of the whole world has been to crush militarism in Germany. We said that the world could not be freed until that had been done. The dread was one that we carried to bed with us every night. It was a dread constantly present to our minds during waking hours. But we must be careful that we do not re-build many of those idols which in the hour of need we found to be clay. I am giving these views as I tried during this war to assimilate information from the newspapers. I read the newspapers of almost every nation in order to try to keep in touch with thought throughout the world. Therefore, this is to me a far bigger question than the mere granting of the franchise at the present time. I believe the nations will have an ideal. I consider that every individual in the community ought to have an ideal of what should be the new national life. If we are going to re-build a nation, or if we are going to make a nation, we have to remember the conditions which brought about the late crisis. We have to fulfil our word to the men who have fought for us. This is our land, but they have a far greater claim to it than have some of us. We have to realise fully that this is a difficult question, and not a question which we should approach with any preconceived political ideas at all. It is something bigger than that. We should approach it unbound by any other thought than, "What is best, what is highest, for the nation?" I can conceive of no higher ideal than that expressed in the words of George Eliot—

I want to see the foundations of this new nation, the dawn of which we see in the sky, laid upon the white quartz of true justice, freedom, and national uprightness, bound together by the fine gold of brotherly love.

And that seems to be, in my view, the ideal of the nations who fought with us and for us, and also of the nations who now feel that they have been duped and misled. That is the ideal they are going to strive for. It is be-

cause I want to have behind me, in arriving at a decision, something stronger, something that shows more clearly the trend of opinion, that I would rather have this discussion adjourned till next session. Then when we come to this great question, let us discuss it at our best. We all know that nearly every man in this House is brain weary; and here is a question calling for the best wisdom of the Chamber. It is not a question of one House or two Houses, but a question of what the nation is going to do to see that the new super-structure will be such as will be for the benefit of the people. We have only to think of this: had but a tithe of the money spent in this war been devoted to the betterment of the people, how much finer a world would this have been! Go further, and say, had but a fraction of the human sympathy that has united all classes and creeds and sects during this war been shown before the war for the well-being and the betterment of the people, how much a brighter world would this have been! If we are going to learn any lesson from the war, let it be a lesson that says that the whole community are an asset to the State. The man who brings children into the world is an asset to this State, and one of the most valuable. Such a man may not be able to accumulate property, but outside of that, we have to consider whether we should not revise our views and march with the times, so that we may escape those dangers which have beset other nations. We pride ourselves on this being a free land with free institutions. Let us show to the world that in the making and in the keeping of those institutions, we, as legislators, bear in mind the great sacrifices which have been offered for their maintenance; and therefore, let us discuss this question untrammelled.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam) [8.13]: I listened with interest to the Colonial Treasurer's speech, but I do not quite know where he stands, and I do not suppose anyone else knows. But if the defeat of this Bill of the leader of the Opposition will mean the bringing down of a Bill of the same character by the Government early next session, then I advise the rejection of this Bill. For, the Bill does not recognise a single existing qualification. It does not pretend to do that. Still, what we have to consider is this Bill of the leader of the Opposition. It is as drastic a measure as well could be brought forward, short of entirely wiping out the franchise for the Upper House. The leader of the Opposition proposes to abolish every qualification that now exists. To-day the man who owns £50 worth of freehold land has the vote for the Legislative Council. That qualification is to be abolished. To-day the man occupying a house of the annual value of £17 has the vote for the Legislative Council. That right is to be abolished, under this Bill. Again, the man who pays £10 per annum in Crown rentals has the vote for the Legislative Council. That right is also to be abolished. Every one of these qualifications is to be abolished under this Bill.

Hon. P. Collier: It establishes newer rights.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: But I think the House should leave the position as it is. True, the hon. member has asked us to be amazed at the moderation of the Bill. He said in effect, "I want more than this; I want to abolish every qualification for the Upper House." If he succeeds in abolishing the present qualification he proposes to substitute household suffrage. What does he mean by a house, and what is the change? At first sight it seems that it would not make very much difference in the metropolitan area, or at Northam, or in any of the coastal towns. It did seem that this proposal of his would extend the franchise largely on the timber areas and on the goldfields. But what do we find when we look into it? What are we to regard as a house; anything that is attached to the ground? Four posts put in under a roof would entitle a man to a vote. If we take Prince's Buildings we find the hon. member provides that the caretaker is the only man to have a vote. Take Emanuel's Buildings, with the many flats let to families; and again we find that the only man there with a vote would be the caretaker.

Mr. Munsie: Not at all.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That is the true reading of the measure. That is the proposal of the hon. member. Will the hon. member deny that he proposes that every man who occupies any detached building of any sort will have the right to vote under the Bill? Take the man who employs a gardener: if the gardener has a small room at the back of the garden he will be entitled to register.

Hon. W. C. Augwin: That is his house.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes. It does not matter whether he is married or single, he will have the right to vote while he continues to occupy the room.

Mr. Mullany: He will be paying rent for the room.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: He may be or he may not. If we apply the Bill to the North, we find that the resident station owner will have a vote, while if the owner be absent the manager will have a vote. Any man who occupies a structure about the station will have a vote.

Hon. P. Collier: Give us some reasons why he should not have a vote.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No; I am pointing out the changes proposed by the leader of the Opposition.

Hon. P. Collier: We all know what the changes are. Give us reasons why they should not be effected.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: We do not all know what the Bill means. It is competent for the leader of the Opposition, when replying, to give reasons in support of his proposals. The leader of the Opposition does not propose that married men should have the franchise.

The Attorney General: Nor married women.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: He says that a married man living in a flat should not be enrolled.

Hon. P. Collier: I will enrol all married men and all single men if you will come with me to that extent.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The hon. member did not trouble to point out what he really proposed. The Attorney General said he would make the position clear. Certainly he made his own position clear. He proposes to go farther than the leader of the Opposition. He proposes also to wipe out the right to enrol on the score of ownership of property.

The Attorney General: No, you did not hear my speech.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I did, and I saw a further explanation in the newspaper a day or two afterwards.

The Attorney General: Well, you did not understand.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The leader of the Opposition does not propose to recognise responsibility. The franchise to-day is expected to include married men, who certainly have more responsibility than single men. As a matter of fact, the other House is the House of married men and of the thrifty. The sum of £17 is not a very high rental, and it cannot be argued that the £50 qualification is very high. There is no young man of 21 in this State who could not, if he wished, find money to buy a £50 block of land.

Mr. Munsie: If every single man owned land and the married men did not, it would be the House of single men.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No. I would give a vote to every married man. I am prepared to support a proposal of that sort. As a matter of fact, that is really what we expected would happen when the annual value of the house was reduced to £17. How does the leader of the Opposition justify his proposal that only the occupier of the house shall be allowed to become enrolled? He does not attempt to justify it. It would be very difficult to justify a franchise of that sort.

Mr. Munsie: It is more difficult for you to put up a justification of the principle that the man who owns the house should have the vote, while the man who occupies it has none.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The man who occupies it has a vote.

Mr. Munsie: Thousands of them have not.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Attorney General said he would not take the vote from women. How do the women get their votes? They get them almost exclusively from property.

The Attorney General: I propose to leave them there.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: How would the hon. member leave them there while striking off the men?

The Attorney General: My suggestion was to replace the £17 franchise by a household franchise.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Well, that is clear at all events. I am afraid the Attorney General was previously misunderstood. Then we need not bother about the vote for women, for the woman as owner of the house gets a vote, while the man gets a vote as occupier. What has been urged by the leader of the Opposition in support of the deletion of all that we have and the substitution of this proposal? He has justified it this way: he says, "I want to abolish the qualification altogether. I know I cannot get that in one step, so I

will take this as a first instalment." I do not know whether he will get it or not, but I do know that he did not justify his statement in regard to the past actions of the Legislative Council. Everybody knows that the Council have nothing to do with administration. As a matter of fact, no one knows that better than the leader of the Opposition, who was a Minister for years. He knows that the Council did not prevent his Government administering the affairs of the country as they wished.

Mr. Munsie: Of course they did, and you know it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The Council cannot interfere with administration to any great extent. Because the Legislative Council prevented the passing of a taxation measure, which a great many members of this House did not agree with, is not to say that they interfered with administration.

Mr. Munsie: They threw out 33 Bills in two years.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This House will remember that, without a scrap of authority even from this Chamber, just a little before that time, the hon. member and his colleagues entered into many schemes, such as the purchase of some ships. They did practically as they pleased. Of course the other place has the right to reject any measure of taxation, and I suppose they questioned the Bills submitted by the Liberal Government to a greater extent than they questioned Bills submitted by the Labour Government.

Mr. Munsie: Because they used to move that our Bills be read that day six months.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, they certainly treated seriously every proposal sent to them. They did not treat any measure without consideration.

Mr. Lutey: What about the Loan Bills?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: On that point, how does the hon. member explain that Loan Bills totalling some 15 million pounds got through in a short five years?

Hon. P. Collier: They were mostly for building railways to which you had committed the country before we came into power.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Did the hon. member's Government honour every promise made by the Liberal Government?

Hon. P. Collier: Most of them.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, they did just as they pleased about them.

Hon. P. Collier: We were three years building your railways.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I hope the hon. member does not wish the country to believe that the whole of the money borrowed by the Labour Government was spent in building railways authorised before they came into power.

Mr. Munsie: About half of it.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Nonsense. However, be that as it may, I think nothing can be said against another place in regard to the method of treatment meted out by it to the Labour Government. The Bill embodies a question which is probably the strongest party question that could be submitted. No member who sits on my right is doing other than he promised before he was elected. They were all returned

to the House pledged to the reform, and eventually the abolition, of the Upper House.

Mr. Munsie: Which it should be.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That may be so. I am not questioning their right to give effect to their pre-war election pledges. Everyone understands where this party stands. We quite understand that the National Labour members on the Government side will express their own view. But still their attitude, as is the attitude of every other member is, well understood by the electors. There is no one who sits on this side who is not pledged to the retention of the Upper House and who is not pledged to the retention of the franchise based on to some extent property and also on the present system of giving votes to occupiers, married people.

Hon. P. Collier: That is not what you do.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: That is what we do and what we are pledged to. If members on this side wish to alter the franchise, there is no reason why they should not do so. But before they do so they should go back to their electors and consult them, and if returned they will be perfectly justified in supporting the Labour party.

Hon. P. Collier: What do you consider a fair measure of reform in this direction?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have already told the hon. member that every married man should have a vote for the Legislative Council, and a £50 property qualification is not much. The hon. member says that because it does not include every house occupied by a married man he wants us to vote for his proposal. His proposal goes further than giving a vote to a married man; it goes further and gives votes to a number of single men living in camps. This franchise is not a rich man's franchise. The man who has £100,000 worth of property in the city of Perth stands in the same position as the man who has a £50 block. Each has one vote. It is not a rich man's House; it is the House of the thrifty. Anyone who invests £50 in property has as much right to return someone to represent him in another place as the man who owns the biggest block of land in the city of Perth. I have been endeavouring to point out what we stand for and what the members who sit on this side are pledged to.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): Talk for yourself.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I am not talking for the hon. gentleman. I am talking for everyone who is returned opposed to the Labour party. If the leader of the Opposition will be honest about the matter he will admit that I am perfectly right. These views are held by the different parties. I do not understand quite what the attitude of the Government is towards the measure. The Premier said that he would oppose it, and I understand the Attorney General said he would go a little further than the leader of the Opposition. The duty of the Government is to be of one mind on the question: either adopt the proposal of the leader of the Opposition or oppose it, and if it is defeated that would surely mean the defeat of the Government. The Attorney

General tried to justify the statement of his leader when he really disagreed with his leader. He is quite right in saying he will oppose the measure.

Hon. P. Collier: This is not a party question though.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Yes, it is. I should like to know what the Government intend to do, whether they intend to vote with the leader of the Opposition or to oppose the measure.

Hon. P. Collier: Some of them do.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I want to know what the Colonial Treasurer intends to do. I hope the measure will be defeated. I admit some reform is needed. I think the Government should go into the matter and bring down the necessary Bill next session for some reform. Members ought to realise what is meant by the Bill now before the House. I believe one hon. gentleman who said he would support the proposal did not quite realise what the leader of the Opposition proposed to undo.

Hon. P. Collier: Who is that?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I do not think it is necessary to mention the name. So far as I am concerned, whilst I agree that we should extend the franchise to married people, I am not voting for a Bill to disfranchise all those who are on the electoral roll.

Mr. MULLANY (Menzies) [8.37]: I intend to support the second reading of the Bill, the object which I take to be to broaden the franchise of the Legislative Council of the State, to remove an injustice which the most valuable class of citizen of the State have been labouring under during the past years. I want to say I entirely disagree with the attitude adopted by the Premier on this Bill. I want to say further, and this more particularly in reply to the member for Forrest—I am speaking now for myself only—that when I promised support to the Government it was on the distinct understanding that there was going to be no party following but that every member had an absolute right, and still remained a member of the party, to exercise his own judgment on any Bill that came before the House. The Premier stated that he desired to be very careful indeed in making an alteration in the Constitution which may have a tendency to do something which eventually might abolish the Legislative Council or the bi-cameral system of legislation, and he made the statement that the bi-cameral system was the bulwark of the British Constitution. Under the present method of legislation we have in Western Australia and in other parts of the British Empire, the very men who have been responsible for and who are in fact the bulwark not only of the British Constitution but of the British Empire, but who are smarting under a sense of injustice. I do not only refer to the men who so recently, and right back through the history of the British Empire have fought for the preservation of the Empire. While I desire to give appreciation to their efforts, there are also the pioneers and workers who have done a great deal to help to build up the Empire who are being treated unjustly and unfairly under the present system. Therefore I welcome the

present Bill as being a step in the direction of remedying some of the injustices they are suffering under to-day. The member for Northam made a statement that the Bill would not have much effect in the metropolitan area or even in Northam—quite characteristic of that hon. gentleman—who in the whole of his public career has utterly failed to extend his vision beyond the metropolitan area or Northam. Particularly on the goldfields and in the timber areas there are grave injustices being perpetrated to-day under the present system which this Bill will be a start towards removing. We know there are men on the goldfields and in the timber areas who take a keen interest in political matters, men who are in the aggregate much keener students of political affairs than men in the metropolitan area or probably in the farming areas, although I might say that in recent years the farmers have appeared to wake up considerably and are applying their own peculiar political methods to the affairs of to-day.

Mr. Pickering: Why peculiar?

Mr. MULLANY: The hon. member knows without it being necessary to explain to him. The men on the timber areas and on the goldfields areas are keen students of political affairs. They are the very men to feel so keenly their position to-day. To go back to the prosecutions which have taken place during the last few months at the time of the Legislative Council elections, I want members to place themselves in the position of some of the men who were prosecuted for breaking the electoral laws on that occasion. I am not here to endeavour to excuse them. I say that whilst the law is as it is, it should be respected, but the position of these men is that whilst on the goldfields and timber areas married men rear families, men who feel they are worthy of equal consideration with any citizens, are placed in a position because the valuation of the house in which they happen to be living is a few shillings or a few pounds per annum less than a set value, and are deprived from exercising the full rights of citizenship. I want to contrast the position of the tenant or the navy on the Transcontinental railway line and others, and ask are these men worthy of full citizen rights in Western Australia just as much as the man who rents an office in the Terrace in Perth and carries on his business there. I want to know which man is of most value to the State, and further I want to say, notwithstanding the remarks of the Premier and the member for Northam, that public thought has advanced much during recent happenings, that men who are going to stand up in the face of public opinion are likely to go out of public life altogether. Again, referring to the prosecutions on the goldfields, I know some of those people who were prosecuted, and I know that they voted not because it was their desire to break the law, but because they thought they were entitled to vote under the provisions of the Act. This Bill, if it is carried, will more clearly define the qualifications of electors, and they will not experience again the trouble which befell them recently. I want to refer

to the speech which was made by the leader of the Opposition on this subject a few weeks ago. During the course of his remarks, the hon. member showed to members of the House some photographs of what were called goldfields shanties, made of hessian, the owners of which, he stated, had not been prosecuted. He also showed the photographs of houses the owners of which had had proceedings taken against them. I am referring to the houses in Comet Vale, and the leader of the Opposition, in the course of his remarks, said that a certain individual, a mine manager, had busied himself taking these photographs to send to Perth. The leader of the Opposition also stated that the individual who took the photographs had in the past employed on his mine 75 per cent. Italians or aliens. I was not concerned about that, but what I take exception to is that the leader of the Opposition made the remark that if the member for Menzies had been in his place he would have stated that he knew the mine manager at Comet Vale would always sack a Britisher in order to employ a foreigner. I do not want to discuss that aspect of it, but I desire to say that I have never given the leader of the Opposition or any other member of this House—

Point of Order.

Mr. Troy: I rise to a point of order. What is all this discussion about? It has nothing whatever to do with the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. member is leading up to the prosecutions which took place in connection with hessian houses.

Mr. Troy: The hon. member is clearly referring to the remarks made by the leader of the Opposition this session.

Mr. Speaker: Order! The member for Menzies is referring to photographs of hessian houses in support of his arguments in favour of the Bill.

Mr. Troy: If you will refer to "Hansard" report you will find—

Mr. Speaker: Order! What is the hon. member's point of order?

Mr. Troy: I am stating it, and I ask you to listen to it. I ask that "Hansard" bear me out that the hon. member for Menzies is now referring to a statement made by the leader of the Opposition in this House earlier in the session. Any reference to a speech made by an hon. member this session is out of order. The Standing Orders provide that the debates of the current session must not be referred to. That is point of order No. 1. My second point of order is that the hon. member is discussing a statement made by the leader of the Opposition regarding the employment of aliens at Comet Vale, and the action of a mining manager in sacking Britishers in order to employ foreigners. Whether that mine manager did or did not is entirely foreign to the subject under discussion. That is the second point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Menzies referred to a speech made by the member for Boulder earlier in the session in connection with some prosecutions arising out of the exercise of the franchise for the Legislative

Council on the goldfields. The member for Boulder, according to the statement just made by the member for Menzies, produced some photographs showing the houses that the people who were prosecuted were living in, and he referred to certain remarks made by the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member did not quote from "Hansard." He merely referred to the debate, and stated that the leader of the Opposition put words into his mouth which he had no authority to do.

Mr. Troy: On a further point of order, I asked you now, Mr. Speaker, to get a statement from "Hansard," and if my point of order is incorrect that fact ought to be stated. If your statement is correct it will be in keeping with the remarks taken down by "Hansard." It is customary whenever a question is in dispute to refer to "Hansard" reports.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot uphold the hon. member's point of order, and I desire to state further that I object to discussions in this House being referred to "Hansard." If the hon. member cannot hear and cannot watch the discussions without referring to "Hansard," I cannot assist him. Reference to "Hansard" is a procedure which should only be resorted to when some serious question is in dispute.

Mr. Troy: If the Standing Orders provide that certain statements shall be taken down, hon. members have a right to ask for them.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member should have asked for those statements to be taken down at the time, and the Speaker would have directed the clerk to do so under the Standing Orders.

Mr. Troy: I ask—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member must disagree with my ruling, or he must resume his seat.

Dissent from the Speaker's ruling.

Mr. Troy: I move—

That the Speaker's ruling be disagreed with.

I would not have done so, but for the attitude you, Sir, have adopted. I do not now take exception to your ruling because you have ruled against me, but I take exception to the manner in which you did it. I cannot, as a member of this House with some knowledge of the Standing Orders, allow the Speaker or any other official to bluff me into acceptance.

Mr. Speaker: Order! I did not attempt to bluff the hon. member in one iota, and I will not allow the hon. member to address the Chair in that manner.

Mr. Troy: I do not propose to address the House other than in the manner in which the Standing Orders permit me. I am entitled, in moving that your ruling be disagreed with, to say that your manner in expressing your ruling was such as to lead me to believe that you wanted me to accept your ruling by forcing me to accept it.

Mr. Speaker: Nothing of the kind. I am sorry if the hon. member took that view.

Mr. Troy: I took that view, and I am not one to sit under that kind of thing. I am pre-

pared to accept your ruling, always provided that the ruling is given in accordance with the Standing Orders, but I will not accept anyone's ruling when it is given in a hostile manner, and in language which has a tendency to be overbearing. Having expressed my view and satisfied myself, I shall withdraw the motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

Debate resumed.

Mr. SPEAKER: The member for Menzies may proceed.

Mr. MULLANY: I regret the interruption of the member who rose to a frivolous point of order.

Mr. TROY: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member cannot discuss my point of order.

Mr. MULLANY: I am not discussing it; I am merely passing an opinion.

Mr. TROY: You cannot even do that.

Mr. MULLANY: I desire to say that I did not quote anything from "Hansard" during the few remarks that I made. As a matter of fact I have not used any notes, and I claim under the Standing Orders, that I have a perfect right to refer to any debate that took place in the House, so long as I do not quote it from "Hansard." I was discussing the employment of aliens on the goldfields, and saying that this Bill makes provision that only British subjects will be entitled to exercise the franchise. I am in order in pointing out to hon. members that there is no danger of aliens who happen to be on the goldfields areas becoming enfranchised if the Bill is passed. I hope the second reading of the Bill will be carried, so that the injustice which many people in this State are suffering from will be removed. I do not agree with members who take that view. Whilst I would vote for the abolition of the bi-cameral system, I would extend it not only to all the Legislative Councils in Australia, but also to the Federal Senate. We know that whilst we have a Federal Senate elected on an adult franchise, we have heard no agitation for the abolition of that Chamber. It appears to me that in passing this Bill we may possibly strengthen rather than weaken the position of the Legislative Council in this State, as there appears to be an inherent tendency, when any section of the people become possessed of something that another section has not, or when one person gets ahead of his fellow-man, for a jealousy to spring up, because of the privileges enjoyed by one which are not possessed by the other. We have in the Legislative Council of this State some members who were elected to that Chamber pledged to support its abolition. Those members are aware that to bring that about a resolution must be carried in the Legislative Council, but not one of those hon. members has moved in that direction. Of course had they done so they would not have had much chance of carrying it, but if they had brought forward such a proposal it would have placed us in the position of more intelligently discussing this Bill, as it would have forced those members of the Council who say that in their opinion it is not necessary to re-

tain the bi-cameral system, to establish some sort of case to justify the existence of the Council. I remember on one occasion some eight or nine years ago, when a member of the Legislative Council at that time, not a member of the Labour party, was approached by a certain individual and was asked by that individual to move for the abolition of the Council, he said he would consider the matter, but did not feel disposed to do it. It was impressed upon him that in the course of 20 years or so the Legislative Council would certainly be abolished. When that time came it would be a fine thing for him, and would be something for people to talk about, to have been the man to move for the abolition of the Council. This rather appealed to this member of the Legislative Council, and he said he would give the matter consideration. He gave it consideration for a few days and met his friend again and said, "I have decided not to go on with the matter we were speaking of. I will not attempt to have the Council abolished." His friend asked him why this was so and he said, "I am not going to do it because they might possibly carry it." I would not like to say that any of my friends of the Labour party are actuated by anything like such a motive as this, but I say that in the interests of Western Australia and the people, it would be a very good thing for those in the Council to move for the abolition of that House. For the men who have been elected to represent property in that Chamber, and who claim that it would be bad policy for Western Australia to do away with the bi-cameral system, it would give them an opportunity of justifying their existence as Legislative Councillors if they would do so. I do not think I can agree with this Bill in its entirety, but in committee some amendments may be made to it. I would welcome amendments to go further than is at present proposed, and would give the adult franchise fully if I could do so. I trust the House will carry the second reading of the measure, if for no other reason than that it will put into the minds of hon. members the injustice which under our present system is being done to the good and worthy citizens of Western Australia.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [9.2]: It was a forgone conclusion that this Bill would appeal to hon. members, but in its present form it is dangerous inasmuch as it repeals the very kernel of the Constitution Act. I wonder if hon. members have carefully read the section of that Act which it is proposed to repeal. The repeal of that clause does away with the rights and safeguards which are so essential to the Government of the State. I personally favour the widening of the franchise of the Upper House. I cannot see why a £10 householder should be disqualified and a £17 householder be qualified to vote. The majority will recognise that there are special concessions due in electoral matters to returned soldiers. It is a privilege which has been accorded to these men under the South Australian Constitution,

and I cannot see why we should not extend the same privilege to our own soldiers. I feel sure that these men, from the wonderful experience they have had, will return to these shores with wider ideals and wider political views, and that there is no fear that there will be any abuse of their privileges. I cannot agree, however, with the member for Menzies (Mr. Mullany) in his remarks regarding the abolition of the Upper House. I feel sure the time is not ripe for this.

Hon. P. Collier: It is rotten ripe.

Hon. R. H. Underwood (Honorary Minister): It will possibly be ripe next year.

Mr. PIESE: The time will not be ripe for a year or two. The Bill proposes to repeal Section 15 of the Constitution Act. The clause which proposes to do this is too limited in its character, and is too vague.

Hon. P. Collier: It is pretty definite.

Mr. PIESE: A £10 qualification, which is certainly a wide one, would mean less than 5s. a week to the voter.

Mr. Munsie: What about the man who owns his own house which is worth £10 to him?

Mr. PIESE: The 5s. a week should be sufficient to meet all just demands in the matter of elections for another place. I hope members will weigh well the seriousness of this proposal.

Mr. O'Loughlen: There is one pleasing feature about it; all parties are united.

Mr. PIESE: We are justified in holding convictions and in expressing them. Whilst I hold the opinion that it is reasonable to widen the franchise I do not think the present is the right time to carry out such a proposal. It is a serious matter to repeal the Constitution Act, and members would be justified in refraining from voting for the second reading of the Bill. I take it, from the utterances of the Attorney General, that it is the intention of the Government to introduce a measure having a wider scope than this.

Mr. Munsie: If the time is ripe.

Mr. PIESE: This measure limits the qualification of householders. There should also be the qualification for a leaseholder. Let us take the far North, for instance. If we remove that qualification we will find that possibly half a dozen electors will be returning members to another Chamber. I question if there would be sufficient electors in the great North to elect three members to a province. It is quite justifiable that we should still retain the property qualification, the leaseholder's qualification as well as the householder's qualification. The freehold qualification is also necessary. I am averse to plural voting. For the Senate, or the House of Representatives, one vote is sufficient. I hope that hon. members, before giving a vote on the Bill, will weigh it very carefully, and take the seriousness of its effect into consideration. The leader of the Opposition has scored a point in bringing this Bill before the House. It is a harmless looking sheet, but has most serious consequences embodied in it. I wonder the leader of the

Opposition did not embody in the Bill a qualification for women to sit as members of Parliament.

Hon. P. Collier: I will accept an amendment to that effect.

Mr. PIESE: It is a serious step, and one which will have to receive the most careful consideration. If women are qualified to sit in the House of Commons, they are, I venture to say, equally qualified to sit in a State Parliament. There are persons in this Chamber upon whom women members would have a toning influence. The Bill represents a bomb-shell so far as the Constitution is concerned. I again express my conviction that we shall have to widen the franchise for the other House, and give privileges to returned soldiers and go so far as to permit women to sit in Parliament.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister—Pilbara) [9.12]: Some remarks have been made concerning this Bill being a party question and as to the position of Ministers. So far as Ministers are individually concerned on this proposition, we are absolutely free to vote as we like. Any expression of opinion passed by the Premier is the Premier's own opinion, and not that of Ministers. When we get a Cabinet Bill we agree as a Cabinet to it, but when we get an outside Bill we use our own discretion. I disagree with the opinions expressed by the Premier that this House is the bulwark of the Constitution, and could not possibly be done away with. I still hold the view that this House can be done away with with considerable advantage to Western Australia. With all due respect to the leader of the Opposition, I think his proposals are somewhat crude. After looking at the Bill it seems to me it is just a matter of taking the vote from one section of the people and giving it to another section, not including the whole of the people at all. I have tried in my mind to amend the Bill and find out what could be done. When I have had the whole of the people in and have framed a Bill I have come to the conclusion in my own mind that it is not required at all, because if we get a duplication and another House elected on the same franchise as this House, it is not necessary.

Hon. P. Collier: That is the time to get rid of it.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): That is where the hon. member makes a mistake.

Hon. P. Collier: That is where I am right.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): There is no more grievous waste of good Australian money than that expended on the upkeep of the Senate and we cannot get rid of the Senate.

Hon. P. Collier: Because the people do not want to get rid of it.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Apparently they are prepared to pay for it.

Mr. O'Loughlen: The Senate has one feature, that each State has the same representation in it.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I will go so far as to say that it would be infinitely better to waste our money

on a chamber which is harmless than to waste it on a chamber which is dangerous to democracy. That is all one can say for the Federal Senate. To-night we have heard some suggestions that returned soldiers should have a vote for the Upper Chamber. I stand quite clear in speaking on this question, because I have so many friends and direct relatives who have been at the Front—some of them have stopped there. I can speak on this subject without the slightest risk of being regarded as unsympathetic to returned soldiers. The suggestion that returned soldiers should have a vote for the Legislative Council is absolutely and positively absurd and ridiculous. To begin with, is the boy who went to the war any more capable of governing the country than are the father and mother who bore him?

Mr. Pickering: Possibly.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): There is a possibility the other way too. We shall only get an even average. Again, take the man who was 45 years of age when war was declared, and the boy who was not 18 years old when peace was declared: are they both nonentities and unworthy of a vote? Let hon. members seriously consider that aspect of the question. As I say, I can speak for returned soldiers. I do not want members to try to get an odd vote from a returned soldier by giving him something that is of no value to him. The returned soldier is a citizen, and we hope to be able to provide him with a good country to live in. Having provided him with that, I do not know what much more we can do.

Hon. P. Collier: And let us give him the vote the same as to every other citizen.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Certainly. He becomes a citizen of Australia; and I say, let us make Australia a good country for him to live in. The member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) said that he would reduce the franchise to 5s. per week.

Hon. P. Collier: For the married men, cutting out the single men.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Yes; and it is the same with the hon. member's Bill. If the measure is passed as printed, it cuts out thousands of men and women who ought to have the vote.

Hon. P. Collier: Yes, and then it is said that the Bill goes too far and is too drastic.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I have thought over this question again and again, trying to work out some system which would operate evenly, and I have been unable to find one. The only even way I can discover is to abolish the other House. Then the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Trov) said, "Let us have adult franchise for the Council." But in that case duplication will result. Under our Constitution this is the House which takes responsibility and deals with finance. If we get another House that will say yes to us, it is useless, because we have already said yes. If we get another House that says no to us, that House is wrong utterly. This is absolute logic. Some remarks have been made about plural voting, and I think there might be a possibility under this

Bill of securing some small measure of reform in that direction.

Mr. Munsie: It would be a good big measure of reform to cut out plural voting.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Yes. The greatest anomaly I know of is the plural voting for the Council. Personally, I am struggling along financially on an overdraft; and I have three votes for the Council.

Hon. P. Collier: You should not have.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Yet there are men owning thousands and tens of thousands of pounds who have only one vote for the Council.

Hon. P. Collier: They might not have any vote for the Council.

Hon. H. R. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Yes; because they would be householders. The property qualification is an absolute anomaly. As regards the North Province, which the House will allow I know something about, at least one-third of the voters are permanent residents of Perth or the South-Western Division. They do not reside in the North at all. Many of those who have votes for the North have never resided in the North. A man who has never resided in the North should not have a vote to return legislators for the North.

Mr. Jones: Some of them could not point out their runs on the map.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): A little while ago there was an interjection as regards giving the vote to the manager instead of to the owner. The man who will go up north to manage a station is the man entitled to a vote. The man who stops down here and merely tells his banker to collect his dividends does not come into it at all. The member for West Perth (Mr. Draper) has a vote for the North Province, and all he ever does with regard to the North is to instruct his banker to collect his dividends. Possibly, if he strikes a bad time, he will have to instruct his banker to pay out for the deficit. Just one other proposition I desire to comment upon—that it might be a correct thing to give the vote to the taxpayer. But whenever one analyses these schemes one finds anomalies. Who are the taxpayers?

Mr. O'Loughlen: Everybody.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): As a fact, the man who spends his money in tobacco and beer and whisky and goes to the races pays more taxation than any grower in the country. There is no shadow of doubt about that. If we are going to give a vote to the taxpayer, then every drunk in this country is entitled to a vote; because the man who spends his money in alcohol is the most heavily taxed man in the country. It just comes to this, that wherever one tries to get the right person to give a vote to one finds anomalies.

Hon. P. Collier: That means, give it to all of them.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): Then we shall have an absolutely useless second Chamber.

Hon. P. Collier: Of which we can get rid.

Hon. R. H. UNDERWOOD (Honorary Minister): I am going to vote for the second reading of the Bill. If it is possible in Committee so to amend the measure as to wipe out plural voting, I shall support that. If anyone can show me how to get rid of big anomalies, I will vote for the whole lot. But I will not vote just to give one section of the community the franchise for the Upper House.

[The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Stubbs) took the Chair.]

Mr. ROCKE (South Fremantle) [9.26]: The desire to do justice permeates every phase of life, perhaps more particularly the industrial and the political phases. It therefore behoves representatives of the people to make the path of transition from the old order to the new as smooth as possible. It will be safer because the demand for reform is not going to end in mere demand, but will continue until accomplished. This Bill is not only the result of a desire on the part of the leader of the Opposition who introduced it, nor is it only the result of a desire on the part of a group of members of this Chamber to introduce a reform. It is the inevitable result of the immutable process of evolution which is operating now, and which has operated since the time when this old world was without form and void. In due time man was evolved. Probably he came from the lower orders of Nature. However, he had within him this superiority, that he was endowed with an intelligence. From the time he was able to record his thoughts, it is easy for us to trace him. We trace him from tribe to nation, from serf to vassal, and then upwards to the signing of the Magna Charta. In each stage through which he has passed he has groped for the light; and in each stage of his evolutionary career he has had thrust upon him greater responsibilities. As a result of those responsibilities he has made certain demands. He has had to take upon himself the maintenance and the defence of his country; and in return for that he demands, and rightly so, a full voice in its government. To say that he possesses that full voice now, under the State Constitution, is to say something which is not right, for the simple reason, as pointed out so often, that the minority overrule the majority in Western Australia. There was a movement in the direction which we are now discussing even before the war. I remember in 1913 Mr. Lloyd George, speaking in England, said, "Already we see the gleam of the dawn of a better day." Shortly after that statement had been made, the calamity of war broke upon the world; and for a time, no doubt, that calamity has obscured the dawn of which Mr. Lloyd George spoke. But has it obliterated that dawn? I think, not. For, if the war has done one thing more than another, it has brought to those who have taken part in it a broader conception of life, and probably a nobler ideal, an ideal to strive for, so that we shall not be again overwhelmed with the cataclysm of war. When I speak of "those who have taken part in the war,"

I mean the mothers and fathers who have made sacrifices, as well as the sons. This can only be brought about by a democracy having taken its true place in shaping the destinies of

the world. Whenever there is a bi-cameral system of Government—the one exception being perhaps our Australian Commonwealth—we have the same forces operating, one force representing privilege and monopoly and the other more popular one representing democratic ideals. But those ideals are overruled by the will of the minority. Only last week we found that in the New Zealand Parliament the lower House passed by a good majority a measure of political reform, which on finding its way to the Upper Chamber was ignominiously defeated. During the war the cry was heard on every hand that the future could never be in any sense representative of the past, that existing political and industrial conditions would have to be relegated to the melting pot. But how many people now are prepared to stand by that which they advocated? Of course, there was a purpose behind their advocacy. I am thankful that some at least are true to the statements they made. I was pleased with the speech of the Attorney General in this House one evening last week. If he can convert the Premier, I think he will do a splendid work.

Hon. P. Collier: You recognise the magnitude of the task?

Mr. ROCKE: Our present Constitution provides that bricks and mortar must overrule humanity. That, of course, is in direct opposition to the interests of democracy. If the adult franchise is good for the Senate, then it should be good for our State Legislature. The people cannot have self-government under existing conditions, though we often hear some of our people boasting of the democracy under which we live. Whilst existing conditions prevail we do not know what democracy means. To broaden the franchise for the Upper House, or to abolish it altogether, whatever the people decide upon, would give the people something more tangible than they have at present in the way of legislation without reducing in any way its efficiency. Under existing conditions this House, elected by the people, will pass legislation. That legislation goes farther on, and for some time nobody knows what will happen to it. If it were possible to reform the other House—and I realise this is as hard a task as converting the Premier—we should not in any way lessen our political efficiency. Rather would we strengthen it, because when the voice of the people speaks and the people's will is given effect to, it is found that the people are not very far out. The Colonial Treasurer spoke feelingly of the relation of the Government to the governed, and he said it was going to be the biggest problem of peace. Every student must realise the truth of that. Men who have fought and suffered, and also those who have made sacrifices at home, are not going to be satisfied with what they have had in the past, but are going to demand a full measure of the right of self-government—

and they are going to have it. Is it not wiser to give to the people the rights which they demand than to force them to take those rights?

Mr. Brown: Is that a threat?

Mr. ROCKE: No, it is not.

Hon. P. Collier: Even the mildest men are beginning to threaten.

Mr. ROCKE: No sane person would shut his eyes to the fact that a storm is coming unless the path is made smooth.

Mr. PICKERING: Why anticipate it?

Mr. ROCKE: To play the ostrich and put one's head in the sand may be good enough for the member for Sussex, but not for wise men. I should like to see the abolition of the bicameral system. The duplication of the work means duplication of costs. The member for Toodyay spoke of granting privileges to the soldiers. I object to the word "privilege." Whatever belongs to the people is a right, and a right is by no means a privilege. I should like to see the Constitution amended in such a way that women would be able to take their seats in Parliament, if elected. The women have made greater sacrifices during the last four years than have the men, yet they have not the full rights of citizenship, and I look forward to the day when those rights will be conferred upon them. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [9.37]: I listened with interest to the speech of the leader of the Opposition when moving the second reading, and I have since read that speech. In addition, I have paid attention to the interjections made by the hon. member. It seems to me this Bill was introduced by the leader of the Opposition, not with any desire to get it through, but merely with a view to seeing how far it was possible to take it. I deprecate the readiness with which the leader of the Opposition has welcomed any proposed amendment. This measure is of vital importance, and the hon. member should have fully considered it, and so shaped it that he could honestly oppose any amendment to it whatever. He should not be ready to amend it at every suggestion. If one reads the speech made by the hon. member, it will be seen that the Bill by no means meets his desires. In that speech he pointed out that this is only a beginning, that he is after more. He has not had the courage to bring before the House a measure that would secure the hearty support of a majority of members. I will not support the Bill, not because the time is not ripe, but because I agree with the leader of the Opposition that it is not an adequate measure. If he had had the courage to bring in a full measure, a Bill for the abolition of the Upper House, I should have been much more ready to support it.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Why not be honest? You would not support anything of the sort.

Mr. PICKERING: The hon. member has no knowledge of my opinions of the Legislature. No man has any right to interpret my views on this matter. We have listened to an outburst of rhetoric from the member

for South Fremantle, which has conveyed but little knowledge to the Chamber. I gave him a careful hearing and I have the right to expect the same.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Will you vote for the abolition of the Upper House?

Mr. PICKERING: I am prepared to vote for its abolition, rather than to vote for a compromise such as is suggested in the Bill. What about the other States? The leader of the Opposition has said that the franchise in other States is, in the main, identical with that in Western Australia. That is true; but what evidence have we that the other States are working in the direction indicated by the leader of the Opposition?

Mr. Jones: You will see at the next election.

Mr. PICKERING: We do not see it to-day. No evidence can be given of any such movement except in one direction which nearly every member has condemned namely the extension of the franchise to those men who have made every sacrifice for the country. Those are the very people that, members say, deserve no consideration from the State other than that extended to any other citizen. As a threat to induce the carrying of the Bill it has been suggested that there is a social upheaval. It has been made a threat, not only by the member for South Fremantle, whom I am not considering at this stage, but also by the leader of the Opposition, who is responsible for the Bill. Of course, there is a social upheaval all over the world. I am prepared to give every consideration to a measure that has behind it the faith and confidence of its sponsor. I am in accord with the Colonial Treasurer when he says that this is much too important a measure for us to seriously consider in the last hours of the session.

Hon. P. Collier: That is a miserable subterfuge; and you have been talking about courage!

Mr. PICKERING: We have heard about an agitation for the change. There is no such agitation in Western Australia to-day, no agitation for an alteration of the franchise of the Legislative Council.

Mr. Jones: Have you your finger on the pulse of Western Australia?

Mr. PICKERING: I daresay my finger is just as intelligent as yours.

Mr. Jones: I do not carry my intelligence in my finger.

Mr. PICKERING: I do not know where else you carry it. At the last elections the question embodied in the Bill was not submitted to the electors. I have not yet any mandate from my electors, and I do not know what that mandate will be when it comes. I have no knowledge of the opinion of my electors on this subject, but I will have an opportunity of judging it in the interim between this and the next session.

Mr. O'Loghlen: And you will find out all about it.

Mr. PICKERING: I am prepared to accept the responsibility for any of my actions in this House. We have heard a lot about the rights of property. What is meant by that?

The interpretation I put upon it is, not the rights of property, but the permanence of interests as against passing interests.

Mr. O'Loughlen: Yet it was those passing interests, those nomads, the timber workers, who sent you here.

Mr. PICKERING: I am prepared to stand by anything I say in this House. The question, to my mind, is this: the permanence of interests as against the transient interests of this State. The permanent interests are those which have to bear the burden of taxation, or what may result from hasty or ill-considered taxation and legislation. The permanent people have all their interests tied up in the State, and yet these people are twitted because they have property. It is not property at all; it is the different interests, transient interests as against permanent interests. Members have talked about hasty legislation and the necessity for the Upper House. I would remind members of an important measure which was returned by another place only the other day with a large number of amendments, all of which were adopted by this House.

Mr. O'Loughlen: They were admitted by your Minister to be finicky amendments.

Mr. PICKERING: There has been a great deal said by the member for Mt. Magnet about those who pay taxation having the vote. I contend that under the measure introduced by the leader of the Opposition there was very little difference in the incidence of taxation.

Mr. O'Loughlen: What would you suggest?

Mr. PICKERING: I suggest the abolition of the Upper House if the hon. member is going to do anything.

Hon. P. Collier: And failing that?

Mr. PICKERING: I am not here to suggest. We will be prepared to bring forward a measure next session. Then the time will be ripe.

Mr. O'Loughlen: That is the point that hurts; you do not like the idea of the leader of the Opposition getting in first.

Mr. PICKERING: The principle underlying the object of the Bill is the amendment suggested by the member for Mt. Magnet, to bring the franchise down to equal lines. That, to my mind, is the height of absurdity. Anyone who advocates the bringing of the Upper House to the same franchise as this House is advocating lunacy, and will not get my support. Until a measure is brought before the House which is worthy of members' consideration, I will not support it.

Mr. NAIRN (Swan [9.50]): I intend to support the measure, because I realise that the desire of the leader of the Opposition is to remove anomalies, and to do it in a way which will be a sense of justice, rather than open up the larger issue which has been talked this evening. We have to face this question, and I intend to support the measure, because by doing so we shall remove anomalies which have no right to exist in our electoral laws. I have no intention at this moment to enter into a discussion as to the merits or demerits of the bicameral system; that is quite apart from the question before the House. As far as I am concerned, I be-

lieve in the bicameral system, but that has little bearing on the question which is now before the House. I want to say this, if it was clear that this was only a move to destroy the Legislative Council I should approach the question from a different point of view. Whether it may be from the point of view of certain members, I believe that certain members have admitted it is a move in the direction of the abolition of the Legislative Council. But it does not appeal to me in that sense, and because of that it is no reason why I should not follow it as far as I can. If other members desire to use the Bill as a means to an end, still I do not think it can be done by this measure. They will have to receive the endorsement of the people of the State before they can go to that limit. This is a question of doing something now, and I say there are anomalies in the Electoral Act which require removing. I have seen evidence of them too frequently, where even the officers and those in the highest position in the Electoral Department cannot correctly interpret the meaning of the £17 franchise. I believe that we would be wise to go to the extent of a full and free household suffrage—residential suffrage for householders. I believe in doing that, and we should be able to give some sense of security to the person who is thought to have some stake in the country. I am firmly convinced that there is no greater stake or responsibility than his home, his wife and his children. We may take all others great or small, but that one predominates, and it should qualify a man in all respects and give him the full exercise of his manhood and also his full responsibility. In consequence of that I shall support the measure. I want to do fair and square justice to those who have a home and a family. They have responsibilities and have a duty to the country. Such a man would not fail to appreciate and exercise the franchise.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fre-mantle) [9.55]: I was rather amused at hearing the member for Sussex state his views on courage. We have already had an example of the hon. member's courage in this Chamber, and I want to say his courage was very small indeed. He could not put his courage into effect. He wanted to try and point out that the leader of the Opposition in introducing the measure had not the courage to carry it to the extent that he would like it to go. I want to say, and I do not care whether it is an alteration of the Constitution Act or any other Act that is dealt with in this Chamber, it is never carried in the first instance to the extent that members desire that it should go. We try, if possible, to go bit by bit. We endeavour to educate the people gradually to what eventually they must go. After the disturbance which has taken place during the past twelve months in regard to the franchise for the Legislative Council, the leader of the Opposition has seen fit to try, if possible, in introducing this measure, to make the question of the qualification one that can be dealt with. We have never been able to obtain the meaning of the £17 clear annual value. As the

member for Swan (Mr. Nairn) pointed out, we cannot get any authority whatever to say what the clear annual value of £17 means. Even the legal adviser of the Government said that the annual value was the annual value; that is the advice which he has given us. When we find one who holds the high position as the principal legal adviser for the Government, the Attorney General, giving such a decision as that, the time must have arrived when we must make it clear to everyone in the State what the clear annual value is. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) wanted to know what evidence we have that other States were moving in this direction. Have we to wait until the other States move in every instance? Have we to follow them? Members get up from time to time and point out that other States are following Western Australia, that we are taking the lead.

Mr. Brown: What about Queensland?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Queensland is taking the other action altogether, which this Bill does not provide for. As far as we are concerned we think the Legislative Council can go altogether. That is not in the Bill, but we have advocated before now that it should be done, and we believe that the voice of the people should be taken on that question as a whole. As we stand to-day, I maintain the people of the State require a Bill for the purpose of the alteration of the franchise in the manner introduced in this Bill by the leader of the Opposition, who stated that it does not go as far as he requires. It does not go as far as I require. I would give every soldier a vote. The leader of the Opposition is of the same opinion, and is willing to accept an amendment in that direction. We would go further and give every adult a vote. We realise that the prosperity of a country depends entirely on its population. It is a bad look-out for Western Australia if our population is to remain what it is to-day. Our only hope for the future is in increase of population. Property is not worth a hang without population, and yet property controls the legislative powers of Parliament. Manhood and womanhood are not taken into consideration at all in the matter of the Council franchise. I am reminded of the story of a man in America who possessed certain property qualifying him for a local government franchise. The property included in a donkey, and during the year the donkey died. Thereupon the man was struck off the roll, on the ground that he no longer possessed the amount of property necessary to qualify him. Thus it was really the donkey that had the vote, and not the man. If I had £50 worth of property in each province of this State, I would have ten votes for the Council. But if I had £500 worth of property in one province, and that only, I would have only one vote. Thus the property qualification is gone. A man owning the whole of the city of Perth could claim only one vote in respect of that property. Like the Colonial Treasurer, I feel that the time is not far distant when there will be a revulsion of feeling in Australia, as there has

been in other parts of the world, unless the people obtain that freedom and that political liberty for which Australia has fought on the battlefields of the Old World. This Bill represents one step in the forward direction. We on this side feel that it would have been impossible to obtain consideration for a measure going to the full extent we desire to go. We ask hon. members to deal fairly with this Bill, realising that its object is to give one vote for the Council to each householder, and to abolish the present anomalies. I trust the Bill will pass.

Mr. MUNSIE (Hannans) [10.4]: I desire to say a few words in support of the second reading, and in reply to various arguments which have been advanced against the Bill. First of all, let me deal with the Honorary Minister for the North-West. No method of reform of the other House known to me but has been mentioned by the Honorary Minister. But in every one of them he has found some anomaly or other objectionable feature. Outside of simple adult franchise I, too, can find anomalies in every system. But, as a democrat, I am prepared to amend the Council franchise as proposed by this Bill, because I believe the effect will be to render the franchise clear and plain for every man and every woman in Western Australia to understand. The present franchise, I am absolutely sure, is not understood. The Attorney General himself, speaking on this Bill, has said that many electors do not understand the meaning of "£17 clear annual value" and that those who understand the meaning of the words say they do not. The Attorney General added, "But to me it is as clear as day." I heard the Attorney General address himself to that very same subject in this Chamber for at least 20 minutes, and when he was definitely asked, "What does £17 clear annual value mean?" he replied, "It means £17 clear annual value." That is all we were able to get from the Attorney General. Probably one of the hon. gentleman's statements is correct—that those who know say they do not know. Certainly, if there is in this State one man or one woman who does understand the phrase, I have yet to meet him or her. The Chief Electoral Officer and his staff absolutely do not know. Or, if Mr. Stenberg does know, he takes the attitude described by the Attorney General, and says he does not know. One cannot get from the Chief Electoral Officer a declaration of the meaning of "£17 clear annual value." Nor can one get such a declaration from his assistant, or from the Crown Solicitor, or from any other man. Next, as to the argument for the retention of the present franchise for the Upper House. We hear it contended that people permitted to vote for the Council should be people with some stake in this country, or with some responsibility in it. Then it is urged that at all events the people who elect the Upper House are the people who pay the taxes. But our taxation returns do not support that assertion. I admit the Federal Government collect from the individual more than the State Government do; but the bulk of the

Customs revenue is paid by the working man with a family—he pays to the same extent as the rich man. In the direction of State taxation, our Taxation Commissioner's latest returns show that the people earning from £201 to £299 per annum pay the most in the way of income tax, and have done so every year right through. And it is to be noted that these returns are subject to the £200 exemption. The taxable amount of incomes between £201 and £299 is given as £2,266,487. Next comes the taxable amount in respect of incomes ranging between £300 and £499. So that it is the smaller men who pay the bulk of income taxation—because of their numbers, I acknowledge. According to the Commissioner's latest returns, there are in Western Australia 9,386 persons with incomes of less than £300 per annum. Of these 9,000 odd, fully 3,000 residing on the goldfields are disqualified from voting for an Upper House member. And then we are told that the present position is just. I entirely concur in the statement of the member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) and the member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) that there is absolutely no necessity for an Upper House in Western Australia, or, for that matter, in any State of the Commonwealth, since Federation.

Mr. Brown: The Queensland people said the opposite at their referendum.

Mr. MUNSIE: Another referendum is going to be taken in the near future, and that decision will be reversed.

Mr. Brown: Perhaps.

Mr. MUNSIE: There is no perhaps about it.

Mr. Brown: It remains to be seen.

Mr. MUNSIE: It remains to be seen only in this respect, that at the referendum in question only a little over one-third of the electors on the roll voted.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That was owing to the law case.

Mr. MUNSIE: That Queensland referendum calls to mind the liquor referendum taken in this State. In Queensland at the Upper House referendum, as here at the liquor referendum, only about one-third of those who entered the polling booths recorded their votes. The others got ballot papers, which had to be issued to them, but simply threw the ballot papers on the floor. I was scrutineer in one booth, and the floor of that booth was simply carpeted with unused ballot papers. Only 17 or 18 votes were recorded on the liquor question in the booth where I was scrutineer. But over 900 votes were polled in that booth on the main question of the election. In the case of Queensland, there was at the same time a referendum taken on a question that meant more to the people than did the retention or the abolition of the Legislative Council—a life-and-death question, and the people voted on that. They did not bother about voting for or against the continued existence of the Upper House.

Mr. Davies: I think that Queensland referendum was taken in conjunction with the Federal election.

Mr. MUNSIE: Either that, or in conjunction with the conscription referendum. The Colonial Treasurer, to my way of thinking, throughout his speech put up a really fine case in favour of the Bill. He certainly said that he thought we ought to be careful, that this was too big a question to rush through at the end of a session. But there are other subjects now before the House, not discussed or only partly discussed, which in my opinion are far more intricate than is this subject of the Legislative Council franchise. The Treasurer said that he thought the proper thing was to give the people of Western Australia a chance to see what other countries were doing or would do in this respect. The people have elected men to the Parliament of Western Australia who are quite capable of judging and forming opinions. I have never yet contested an election or spoken from a platform without having heard the question of the abolition of the Legislative Council referred to. Even on the conscription issue there was hardly a meeting I spoke at without some reference being made to the Legislative Council of this State. Public bodies have gone so far as to appeal to the Federal Government to initiate a referendum for the purpose of the abolition of the Legislative Council. On two occasions Bills have been introduced and passed by this House and sent to another place having in view the abolition of the Upper House, and instituting the initiative and referendum. Then hon. members say there is no justification for the abolition of the Upper House. There has also been an agitation to make the qualification for the franchise in another place more liberal than it is at present. People talk about what constitutes the property qualification. As a matter of fact Billy the blackfellow, if he owns £50 worth of property is entitled to a vote in the Upper House. Any enemy subject, provided he is naturalised and owns property of the value of £50 in each province, may record ten votes, but if a citizen is merely producing wealth in this State and there are many thousands of them, not one is entitled to a vote for the Legislative Council. Why? Because a roads board or municipality may value their property at £16 clear annual value. The property may to the individual be worth £20, but he has no chance of getting a vote. He is fined even if he attempts to get his name on the roll. I have heard no argument put up in opposition to the Bill. Some hon. members have said that the time is not ripe for the introduction of such a bill. But so far as they are concerned, the time will never be ripe. The greatest compliment that could have been paid to the leader of the Opposition has been paid to him because those who profess to be most strongly opposed to him declare that the Bill goes too far and those who are trying to side track it say it does not go far enough. The principal objection which has come from the Ministerial side of the House, particularly from the member for Northam, is that the Bill is wiping out plural voting. The member for Northam was also careful in laying stress on the number of people that the Bill would disfranchise. I admit

it will disfranchise the man who to-day has a vote where his wife is the owner of the property, but I do not believe that will happen in more than 300 instances throughout the State. The people it will disfranchise are those who vote as frequently as eight times?

Mr. Teesdale: Would you give them one vote?

Mr. MUNSIE: Yes, and for the province in which they reside. There is a provision in the Electoral Act which allows me the privilege of permitting my name and the name of my wife to remain on the roll in the constituency that I represent, although I do not reside there. I have never taken advantage of the opportunity to vote there because I do not believe in the principle.

Mr. Broun: There is no necessity for you to do so.

Mr. MUNSIE: If I could not get into Parliament without recording my own vote I would remain out. If I resided in Perth I would certainly record my vote there and nowhere else. There are dozens of people living in the city and suburbs of Perth who record a vote every two years for the return of a member for the North province, although they have never been in the North-West.

Mr. Teesdale: Those few pay £33,000 a year.

Mr. Teesdale: Very few now.

Mr. MUNSIE: There are still a number, in rent.

Mr. MUNSIE: To the men who have pioneered the North-West and made money out of the North-West, I say more power to them. But I do not want that to be misinterpreted, because I claim that to-day they are holding more than they have a right to hold.

Mr. Teesdale: They have a legal right to it.

Mr. MUNSIE: But not a moral right.

Mr. Teesdale: Nobody wanted it when they took it up.

Mr. MUNSIE: Many wanted it later on. I hope the second reading of the Bill will be carried and I hope those hon. members who believe that the Bill does not go far enough will come along with amendments when the Bill is in Committee.

Mr. DAVIES (Guildford) [10.25]: I am somewhat at a disadvantage by having been unavoidably absent from the House during the greater part of the debate on this Bill, but that notwithstanding and at the risk of perhaps repeating what has already been said I intend to offer a few remarks in support of the second reading of the Bill. The only objection I have to the measure is as described by the member for Hannans, that it does not go quite far enough. I think however that difficulty can be overcome when we get into Committee. I am against any man or any person having the right to cast more than one vote for the Legislative Council. I am one of those who have subscribed for a number of years to the plank in favour of a referendum in connection with the abolition of the Upper House. If such a referendum were taken I would be prepared to abide by the result, and at some future time if that result was not satisfactory to myself or the party to which I belonged, I would again advocate a referendum, as they are doing to-day in Queensland.

But I think it would be well for the House to remember that when the referendum was taken in Queensland, it was taken during the last Federal election, and when the result of the Federal elections was known in most of the States, people in Western Australia were very much concerned as to whether an affirmative vote had been cast throughout Australia. The only State we were in doubt about was Queensland, but to all intents and purposes the result of the referendum in connection with the abolition of the Upper House in that State was known two or three days before the result of the Federal elections. Queensland was looked upon, and I believe it is still looked upon, as the most ultra-labour State in the Commonwealth, but that notwithstanding a majority of 60,000 people recorded their votes against the abolition of the Legislative Council. That vote was not taken on a restricted franchise either. It was taken on a franchise similar to that of the Federal Parliament, the adult franchise.

Mr. Munsie: How many people recorded their votes for the Senate candidates?

Mr. DAVIES: It is a remarkable fact that if the people of Queensland did not record their votes for the abolition of the Council there, they have to take the responsibility, and it is useless for any hon. member of this Chamber to say that they threw the ballot papers on the floor. They had the opportunity there of declaring whether they would abolish the Council or not. I am going to appeal to hon. members to alter this measure in respect to the people who are now disfranchised. Take the number of women referred to by the member for Hannans. Hundreds will be disfranchised owing to the fact that they are property owners and under this Bill they must be householders before they can record a vote. Then, again, there are hundreds of men who have been away fighting and who are owners of property. Those men, unless they are married and are householders, will be disfranchised owing to the fact that they are not householders. I am sure it is not necessary to appeal to hon. members to see that those men are not disfranchised. I am one of those who will be prepared to support the household franchise or universal suffrage for the Legislative Council. Some will say, if you support it in that direction there is no necessity for the second Chamber. I agree that the sooner the people realise there is no necessity for the second Chamber, the better will it be for this country. I am with the member for Hannans (Mr. Munsie) in saying that since we have Federation the Legislative Council is not required. I have heard members declaring that the Council had done nothing whatever in the direction of passing democratic legislation. Let me remind them of one thing at least which the Council did during last session, when in the income tax measure they increased the exemption for children from £20, as passed in this Chamber, to £26. That must stand to their credit.

Mr. Munsie: It does.

Mr. DAVIES: And I think it is an indication of the readiness of several members in that Chamber to broaden the franchise and extend the benefits of democracy. I cannot

understand why the measure has been brought down so late in the session. I could understand it perhaps if there were an election for the Upper House next year.

Mr. MUNNIE: How long has it been on the Notice Paper?

Mr. DAVIES: I cannot say. However, that is not a very great objection to the measure. If there is time, I think everybody should have an opportunity of discussing it. I am prepared to give consideration to the views of all hon. members, and to vote according to my judgment. I do not know that there is any serious objection to the Bill other than the fact that it is going to disfranchise some who to-day have the franchise. However, I think there is sufficient common sense in the Chamber to recognise that fault in the Bill and to see that justice shall be done and the franchise extended to every adult. Then, if the objection is raised that we are simply duplicating this Chamber, so much the better for those prepared to advocate the abolition of the Legislative Council. I intend to support the second reading.

Mr. PILKINGTON (Perth) [10.33]: I was not present when the Premier addressed the House on the second reading, but I understand his attitude was one of uncompromising opposition to the Bill. If so, I desire to say that he has my undivided and most warm-hearted support. It is useless to suggest that this is not a party question. It has been a party question for so long as the Labour party has been in existence. The Labour party has always been in favour of the abolition of the Upper House, while those opposed to the Labour party have always been in favour of the retention of the Upper House. The Bill brought forward by the leader of the Opposition, although it does not profess to abolish the Upper House, has been brought forward quite candidly as part of the policy of the Labour party, with a view to reducing the franchise of the Upper House, and with the ultimate view of its abolition. There can be no question as to what is intended, no question as to the ultimate result which will follow if hon. members opposite succeed in their object, which is, I think, candidly the abolition of the Upper House. I have a strong belief in the bicameral system. I believe it is very desirable that that system should be maintained, and most desirable that it should be maintained by some sort of qualification which will ensure that those persons who have indicated and definitely shown that they intend to make their home in this country shall have a vote for the Legislative Council. True, that is done by a property qualification. But, after all, we must have some qualification of the sort in order to ensure that those who have definitely decided to make Western Australia their home shall have a vote. It is perfectly true that anomalies exist. Anomalies will always exist in any sort of qualification that can be suggested; but so long as we have a system such as we have at present, at least we shall avoid the overwhelming anomaly that a man who has definitely made his home in Western Australia shall have no more say in the management of the

affairs of the State than a person who may be a mere sojourner here for a year or a couple of years. I have pleasure in supporting the attitude of the Premier, and I will vote against the second reading.

Mr. BROWN (Beverly) [10.36]: I intend to vote against the second reading. I am of opinion that this is a move in the direction of the abolition of the Upper House. Some years ago we had a franchise of £25. That has been reduced to £17, which in my opinion is sufficiently low. I do not think we should still further reduce it. To one owning property in this State the franchise is a link binding one to the State in which he lives. In having property we have something to keep us here. Without it we might be shifting from State to State, wherever we thought we could earn the best livelihood. That is not in the best interests of any country. If those of us who own property have something to protect us, it means that we stay here, and the State will progress and improve and become a place fit to live in; whereas, on the other hand, very little encouragement would be given, and the country probably would remain stationary, and we should be living practically on one another.

Mr. SMITH: Do you think all the intelligence is centred in property owners?

Mr. BROWN: No, I do not say that, but I must say that property-owners should have some protection, should be protected from any drastic legislation. In the Upper House we have that protection. We are safeguarded by those in another place. It is only by having the members of another place elected on a different franchise that we can get full protection for property-owners. I admit that we do not require two Houses on the one franchise. In my view the Australian Senate is an absolute farce, and of no use whatever. I am not going to vote for any measure which has for its object the abolition of the Upper House, but intend to vote for the franchise being retained as it is at present. I hope hon. members will endeavour to protect the other Chamber, so that property owners may have it to look to as a safeguard against hasty legislation in this Chamber. We have had experience of hasty legislation being passed in this House, and had it also passed through another place and become law it would have been most detrimental to the best interests of the State. As a property owner it is my intention to vote against the measure.

On motion by Mr. Teesdale debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.42 p.m.