Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 5th October, 1943.

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

QUESTION—GNOWANGERUP NATIVE MISSION.

As to Government Assistance.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary—

What financial assistance (if any) is given by the Government to the mission at Gnowangerup which is catering and caring for the welfare of aboriginal natives and half-castes?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied—

The State Government provides rations, blankets and clothing for the indigent natives.

ELECTORAL (WAR TIME) BILL SELECT COMMITTEE.

Report Presented.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch brought up the report of the Select Committee, together with a typewritten copy of the evidence.

Ordered: That the report be received and read.

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, resolved: That the consideration of the Bill in Committee be postponed to a later stage of the sitting.

BILL—FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—WOOD DISTILLATION AND CHARCOAL IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [4.44]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. G. W. MILES (North): I want to say a word or two in regard to this Bill. Only two or three members spoke on the second reading. I wish to enter an emphatic protest at the way the Parliament of this country is treated. It is time this House took a stand. I regard this as a post-war measure which should not have been introduced at this stage in the history of the country. Today the Prime Minister launched a campaign for a loan of £125,000,000, and he is appealing to everybody to put money into that loan, which is required to finance the war effort. I understand that by passing this Bill we authorise the Government to spend £150,000 on an experimental industry. That alone is sufficient to justify this House in opposing the third reading. That point was made by other speakers during the second reading debate, as was the point I am about to make, namely, that the country is crying out for labour for coalmines and for work on the land in order to preserve our assets and maintain production.

It has not been stated how many men are going to be employed in this industry, but I assume there will be at least 100 or 150. At the present stage of this country's history, those men could be more profitably employed in eradicating rabbits that are taking charge of the rural areas, or in work in the coal industry to produce the coal that is urgently required. The time is inopportune to bring forward such legislation. But the main objection I have is that Parliament has no say in the affairs of the country. I congratulate the Government on making all sorts of inquiries regarding post-war activities, but Parliament has not been consulted. We have been told that the establishment of this industry is practically an accomplished fact. Certain moneys have been spent on it, and we are asked to ratify something the Government has taken in hand without the consent of Parliament. This is not the only occasion that has happened. The alunite industry was embarked upon and then the House was asked to agree to the steps taken. The industry was started

before Parliament had an opportunity to consider it at all. It is time the Legislative Council took a stand and turned down some of these measures. I think the public would be with us.

The freezing works at Fremantle were purchased before Parliament had a say, and Parliament was asked to ratify what the Government had done and to provide twenty shillings in the pound for the shareholders in that company. Parliament had no say whatever; the business was accomplished before the matter was brought before the Legislature. The time has come for Parliament to take a stand and declare that it is going to have some say in the government of this country. We are governed by a bureaucratic crowd of boards, some of which, I understand, say they have no time for members of Parliament. It is for members to assert themselves, if they want to maintain this State Parliament. For those reasons I hope the House will reconsider the matter, and vote against the third reading. We should voice our protest. Let us put it on record that some of us, at any rate, do not approve of the methods adopted, and that we oppose this post-war measure being sanctioned at this stage. I oppose the third reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (in reply): I am somewhat surprised at the tenor of the remarks of Mr. Miles. He must be aware that for years past the Government has been endeavouring to foster the establishment of secondary industries in Western Australia. The whole object has been to make the position of the State far more secure than it has been hitherto. For a long time Western Australia has been altogether too dependent upon primary industries, and Mr. Miles has himself on numerous occasions spoken along those lines. I know that he has a strong objection to Governments entering upon trading concerns of any type, but that is no reason why he should have taken the stand he has on this Bill. The proposal to establish the industry concerned represents the culmination of a long period of hard work on the part of competent experts.

If there is one industry, the establishment of which is required in Western Australia, it is the heavy iron industry upon which practically all our secondary industries will be dependent for success. I know of no instance of more thorough inquiries being made before the Government embarked upon a venture of such a nature. I have already read to the House the report of the committee on the basis of which the Government acted. No member can say with reason that the Government did not take every precaution before commencing the establishment of this industry and in adopting that course the Government has been actuated by what it considers to be the best interests of the State.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But it is being established at the wrong time.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member may think so; I disagree with him. If the war continues for as long a period as some people think it will, we may be very glad of the existence of this industry. It will have a wartime value as well as a post-war value. In any case I hope the House will not agree with Mr. Miles in the attitude he has adopted. I am anxious that the industry shall be established at as early a date as possible in order that Western Australia may take its place, as it should have done years ago, among the other States of Australia from the standpoint of secondary industrial development.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	4
Majority for	15

Ayes	
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. V. Hamersley	(*Teller.*)

Noes	
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. F. R. Welsh
	(*Teller.*)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and *passed.*

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th September.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [4.47]: I am opposed to the Government assuming the functions of a landlord by building

houses to let. I have expressed those views on many occasions, and in common with others have protested against Government activities along those lines. Under the Act as it stands, the Workers' Homes Board has done wonderful work. My contention is that the individual should have some equity in his property. It may be as low as one may choose but, so long as there is the equity, the householder will take care of his property. Should the Government build houses for letting purposes, sooner or later it will be in the same position as the ordinary landlord. It will find that tenants will wreck the premises and ruin the State's assets. I oppose the second reading of the Bill.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West): Under normal conditions I, too, would oppose the Bill, but today conditions are not normal. Such a demand has been created, and will be created after the war, that the work of providing homes for the people must be undertaken on a tremendous scale. The legislation that has been passed by Governments during the last 10 or 15 years has been such as to frighten private enterprise to such an extent that those normally engaged in the work will not build houses for letting purposes. I do not regard it as the function of a Government to become a landlord; I do not think it will enforce the laws governing tenancies. Today the question we have to ask ourselves is: What is the alternative? Hundreds of thousands of houses will be required by the people, and private enterprise will not carry out the work. It is inevitable that Governments will be called upon to undertake the task. That will apply not only here but throughout Australia.

The same position has arisen in Great Britain where the Government intends to build between 6,000,000 and 7,000,000 houses over a period of 12 or 14 years. I think the building programme contemplates the erection of something like half a million houses per annum, which will be sold or leased to tenants. I agree that the rent-purchase basis is the most desirable, but it must be remembered that there are people whose jobs take them from place to place, and they are never in a position to buy a house. Someone has to cater for those individuals. I am satisfied, because of the restrictions that are imposed upon landlords, that private enterprise would not be willing to erect houses on that basis.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They would be very foolish if they did.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, because of the restrictions. It devolves upon somebody with money to erect these houses which are so necessary to the community. The only possible body to finance such business at the moment is the Government. I hope the Government will not take upon itself to make house-building a monopoly. It would be well-advised to make large advances to already-established building societies. The Perth Building Society and the Star Bowkett Society have been established for a long time, and if loans could be made to those organisations I think the Government would be doing the country a good service. These organisations have been built up over many years and have been most successful in their operations. It is necessary for someone to build houses to let to poor people. At present there is no one but the Government capable of doing such a job. In the circumstances, I reluctantly support the second reading of the Bill.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (in reply): I thank Mr. Craig for the support he has accorded this Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is a policy of despair in his case.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The only alternative to the scheme now proposed is flat life. There are thousands of young people, soldiers' wives and others, to whom ordinary homes are not available. Unless either the Commonwealth or State Governments take a hand and prepare a programme of house construction, the future for the wives of our soldiers and for the men who are coming back from the war will indeed be a forlorn one.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Commonwealth Government is in a better position to do this work than is the State.

The HONORARY MINISTER: After the war I think there will be a swing-back towards the utilisation of State resources rather than those of the Commonwealth. The history of war services homes after the last war may be repeated, and the State Government may be requested to administer the Federal scheme on behalf of the Commonwealth Government. That kind of thing is likely to happen in respect of many

activities. I was surprised at Mr. Tuckey's opposition to the measure. He is afraid the scheme for the erection of rented homes may conflict with the proposals that are now being investigated by the Commonwealth Housing Commission. It is inconceivable that the Commonwealth Government would prohibit the erection of rented houses. If, however, the Commonwealth Commission does not recommend such a procedure it may be the more desirable for the State to enter the field.

If the Commonwealth Housing Commission recommends the erection of houses to be rented and the scheme turns out to be more practicable than ours, the State Government will not proceed with this particular scheme. There will, therefore, be no clash between the two authorities. Mr. Tuckey's suggestion that the State should await the Commonwealth's pleasure sounds strange coming from him, because he has always been a champion of State rights. He may be more inspired by a desire to oppose the intentions of the Government than by a willingness to give consideration to the Bill on its merits. It is desirable that rented houses should be provided by the Government, and there is no reason why we should wait until the Commonwealth Government has made up its mind what to do. Mr. Tuckey appears to have confused the purpose of the Bill with the need for providing cheap homes for persons of low income. He thinks that the measure provides for the erection of homes for sub-economic tenants. That is not the case. I made it clear that an organisation already exists with funds to meet the urgent requirements of indigent and financially embarrassed people, namely, the McNess Housing Trust, whose activities have been most successful.

It was made clear that the intention of the Government is to provide houses, not only for people who desire to own them, but for another class of person who does not wish to own a house. Hundreds of soldiers may be returning from the war very soon and entering civil life, and these men may not have immediate plans for their future. They may feel that they cannot undertake the responsibility of buying a house because they may at any time be moved somewhere else. There will be great need to provide temporary accommodation for such people. If they desire eventually to settle in a district where they are now occupying one of these rented houses, provision is made in the Bill that they may by certain payments make these rented houses their own property. Railway workers, agricultural workers and others are frequently moved from place to place. They will not undertake the risk of buying a house because they feel that in the circumstances it is not a paying proposition to do so.

Landlords themselves frequently complain that it does not pay them to let dwelling-houses. The Government admits, as Mr. Craig indicates, that investors object to putting money into property that is used for letting purposes. That has been proved many times over. It is because of the reluctance of investors to put their money into houses that this Bill is brought forward. The scheme does not provide for houses of a poor type and it has been made clear that the project is in the nature of an experiment. If the cost of building is found not to be reduced to reasonable proportions by reason of the large number of homes being erected, the scheme will not be proceeded with.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Will these operations be confined to the city?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Not necessarily. Reference has been made to the South Australian scheme, which has been an outstanding success. I have not seen houses there but have met several people competent to express an opinion. One builder told me he was astounded at the success of the scheme and the difference in the cost of construction compared with the cost of houses in Western Australia. The Minister for Works, who sponsored this Bill, has been to Adelaide, and seen the scheme. He is very keen on it. I pointed out that the South Australian Government is an anti-Labour Government. We think that we can do justice to a similar undertaking here just as well as can an anti-Labour Government in South Australia. We desire to build good houses for working men at a comparatively low cost.

Hon. H. Tuckey: Does this Bill provide for a similar scheme?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is possible for a similar scheme to be inaugurated under this measure. The South Australian scheme has absorbed a great deal of money, and it is money that the Government of this State will have to

find somewhere. I understand that the South Australian Government borrowed savings bank money for the carrying out of this scheme, which has opened the eyes of many builders. I was speaking to a successful builder on Sunday regarding what has been done in South Australia. I said to him, "If you will get your head down to this business and study the South Australian scheme I am satisfied that you and other good builders here can carry out similar proposals as well as has been done in South Australia." No doubt there are many good builders in the metropolitan area who could do the job well under the direction of the Workers' Homes Board.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are the buildings to be erected after tenders have been called?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member can rest assured that the Workers' Home Board will adopt the most modern methods. That board has been successful in its operations in the past. I think it will adopt the method followed in South Australia where the scheme has been such a success. The practice of the board is to call for tenders and to have every house built by contract. In South Australia the scheme is carried out in groups and this, I understand, has led to the saving of a great deal of money in the purchase of timber and fabricated material generally. Thus it is that the individual home has cost less than would otherwise have been the case.

The scheme will not involve millions of pounds as Mr. Tuckey suggests, unless it is so success that the expenditure of such a large sum is justified. Mr. Cornell seems to be impressed with the idea that everyone should own a house and he will use all his endeavours to see that no-one lives in rented houses. The Workers' Homes Act at present gives the board all the power that it requires to erect houses for sale but it has no power to erect houses for letting. The Government feels that there is a demand for rented houses and it is because of its desire to meet this demand, at least in part, that the Bill has been prepared. Mr. Cornell labours under the delusion that the houses will be of a poor type. They will not be. They will be good houses, substantially built in conformity with the standards already adopted by the Workers' Homes Board. They may be of a uniform type, however, though not many of the one type will be erected in the same district.

Opposition to the Bill is offered by Sir Hal Colebatch because he feels that it is merely a proposal to enable the Government to embark on a new enterprise. That is admitted, but it is an enterprise for the product of which there is a demand. Sir Hal thinks that people should be encouraged to own their homes. That is also admitted, and the Workers' Homes Board has full power to enable that encouragement to be given. Why Sir Hal should think that to grant the board the power to become a landlord is a retrograde step is difficult to understand. There always will be a demand for rented houses and the Government feels that the requirements of those who wish to rent houses should be met.

The present shortage of house accommodation must be met by someone, and it is proposed to deal with it by means of this Bill. Already people are being encouraged under the existing legislation to build their own homes. The Workers' Homes Board has full power to afford the fullest encouragement to people in that direction. Mr. Parker enlarged upon the present-day disabilities suffered by landlords. We all admit that they exist. They are the natural outcome of the control that is necessarily exercised during wartime. In peace-time such restrictions do not apply with the result that tenants are frequently placed at a disadvantage. Unless a tenant has a long-term lease he has no security of tenure. If a tenant improves the property he never knows when the rent may be increased over his head, and if the landlord improves the property the excuse may be taken to charge more rent. That is the sort of thing that has been going on. The tendency today is for people to advance money to purchasers of homes on long terms and to encourage young people to purchase their own houses.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Under one Act a landlord can only charge 6 per cent interest on any building.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Under the law as it stood all kinds of restrictions were imposed upon tenants, but the proposed scheme is a guarantee that those things will not recur in the case of these particular homes when the restrictions are lifted. I confidently ask the House to pass the Bill. I know by actual experience what the position is today. We cannot say how

long the war will continue, and I think both the Commonwealth and the State Governments should lay down schemes in preparation for the time when building can be resumed. We should not wait till the war is over; plans must be made now.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment.

2, Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance).

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [5.20] in moving the second reading said: This measure is of great interest and importance to all wheatgrowers in Western Australia. It proposes to amend the Bulk Handling Act, 1935, which relates to the bulk handling of wheat by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., a company which was given statutory authority to operate after full inquiry by a Royal Commission had been made on all matters concerning handling of wheat in bulk. Prior to the passing of the parent Act there was in existence a deed of trust made between the company and the wheatgrowers specifically setting out certain provisions and contracts entered into between the parties. Its provisions were incorporated in the Act of 1935. Briefly, the deed provides—

(1) That all growers delivering wheat to the company shall pay a toll of ⅝d. per bushel of wheat delivered;

(2) That this toll shall be a debt owing by the company to the growers;

(3) That a register shall be kept of the tolls paid by growers;

(4) That the toll shall be considered to be advances by growers which the company may use to pay off the capital indebtedness and other obligations.

It further provides for the handing over of the management and control of the company to the growers when the programme of capital expenditure has been completed, but in any event not later than the 31st October, 1948. The essential clause in the deed of trust dealing with the handing over from the company to the growers is Clause 4. It reads—

The management and control of the business of the Company shall be handed over to the growers on or as soon as possible after the 30th day of September next following the date on which the Company, having completed its programme of capital expenditure, shall have paid off all liabilities including secured liabilities and contingent liabilities incurred or to be incurred by it in relation to its objects, but not the liabilities to growers in respect of tolls advanced by them as aforesaid: Provided always that such handing over shall take place not later than the 31st day of October, 1948: And provided further that the Company may at the discretion of its directors hand over the management and control of the Company at any time after the completion of its programme of capital expenditure even though the whole of the liabilities of the Company shall not then have been paid. The time of such handing over will be hereinafter referred to as "the termination of the original management."

The deed further sets out that the growers to whom the company is to be handed over are those who have delivered wheat during one at least of the two preceding seasons. These growers are to be issued with fully paid £1 shares, the rest of the toll indebtedness of all growers to be satisfied by the issue of debentures to be repaid at the expiration of 15 years. Recently representations were made to the Government that the programme of capital expenditure has been substantially completed, and that it was desired therefore to hand over the control of the company to the growers. This the Bill proposes to do. It is desired to achieve this handing over by the 31st October, 1943, which date is, I understand, the end of the financial year of the company. That the requirements as provided for in Clause 4 of the deed of trust have been complied with is evidenced by the fact that approximately 98 per cent. of the wheat now being harvested is being handled in bulk, and that there are 236 installations throughout the State.

Further, at the time the deed was entered into in 1933, the value of the equipment and installations was approximately £154,000. In 1935, when the Act was passed, that value was assessed at £159,000. As at the 31st October, 1942, the capital expenditure of the company in

connection with its installations was £666,000. The capital value of the installations is £468,000, as shown in the last balance sheet issued. Therefore in the event of the Bill being passed, the farmer shareholders will be taking over an asset which has increased in value from £154,000 in 1933 to £468,000 at the present time. The building up of toll credits is provided for in both the Bulk Handling Act and the deed of trust. Section 26 of the principal Act deals with tolls and charges that are to be made subject to the approval of the Governor. It provides that the amount of toll shall be considered as an advance and shall be repayable by the company at the time and in the manner provided in the deed of trust. That is a very important feature of the whole of the transactions prior to the introduction of the parent Act, and the incorporation in it of the provisions of the deed of trust. All the moneys that have been paid by the growers at the rate per bushel stand in the toll register as credits owing to those growers or their representatives. The growers have to be repaid by the issue of shares and debentures, firstly, at the time when the company is taken over by the growers, and later—if any later provision is to be made—within a period of 15 years.

The position now is, therefore, that the £468,000 which has been contributed and has gone to meet the liabilities of the company, is the amount of money that is owing to the growers or their representatives, who contributed it in small sums at the rate of ⅝d. per bushel delivered to the scheme. Only those growers who have delivered wheat to the company during the last two years are eligible to be shareholders. These number approximately 8,000. The remainder of the growers who have delivered wheat to the company, but who are not eligible to be shareholders, will be issued with debentures to the amount standing to their names in the toll register. There is a provision in the Bill perpetuating the deed of trust as a means of financing future operations and repaying the money owing. No doubt members have been supplied with copies of this deed of trust, and have noted therein that it has specially set out what is to be done in regard to the payment of tolls collected and also the manner in which the company shall finance its operations.

Amongst the clauses in the measure is one providing for the collection of the toll over the period of acquisition of wheat by the Commonwealth—members are aware that all the wheat at present is acquired by the Commonwealth Government—and in addition, for the collection of the toll over the period when such acquisition ceases. There is also a provision dealing with the necessity to keep a toll register, which has been taken word for word with the deed of trust and specifies that entries in the register shall continue in the manner as heretofore. Briefly put, its main purpose is to ensure the handing over of the affairs of the company to the growers and to ensure also that the terms and principles of the Act and of the deed of trust shall continue with legislative authority after handing over has taken place. A very clear explanation of the system operating will be found in the circular letter which the company sent to all growers under date the 10th August, 1943, so that all growers are fully aware of the necessity for, and contents of, this Bill. The company has carried out all its obligations in a most satisfactory manner, and by this Bill is handing over absolute control of future operations to those active growers of wheat who contribute to the bulk handling scheme. I trust the Bill will have the support of all members. It represents the culmination of an effort made by the wheatgrowers of this State to handle and control their wheat activities. There is no question but that the bulk handling system installed in Western Australia is more economical than those operating elsewhere. In view of the fact that we have reached the stage where it is unlikely that further improvements or additions to installations will be made, the company is now doing the right and fair thing in handing over to the growers the bulk handling concern which, I believe, compares very favourably with any similar scheme in any other part of the world. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East): I desire to support the Bill, as it is a very necessary measure. I will be brief in my remarks, but I would not like the occasion to pass without saying something in eulogy of those who were responsible for the introduction of bulk handling in this State. As many members know, much opposition was experienced in 1935 to the particular installa-

tions which were mooted at that stage. Time has proved those people to be absolutely right. The previous bulk handling legislation nominated 1948 as the year when these installations should be handed over to the growers. Due to the success of the bulk handling operations, we find, in 1943, that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., is in a position five years earlier, to hand over the whole of the installations to the growers. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th September.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.35]: I intend to be brief in my remarks as I understand the Government wants to close the session as early as possible and some members of this House desire to get into the country to attend to the elections. That attitude was made plain last week by the way some members endeavoured to refuse the adjournment of the debate. My views on this measure are the same as when the previous Bill was before the House. It seems to me that the Government thinks more of the Collie miners getting a pension than it does of the interests of the taxpayers. On the last occasion I protested against the way the Collie coal industry, generally, was handled, and suggested that another Royal Commission be appointed to inquire into its ramifications. The Government took no notice of that suggestion.

I still maintain that a Royal Commission should be appointed and that the arrangement that the Government now has with the companies should be altered, as there is no inducement for the companies to raise coal at a cheaper price because their profits are limited to £18,000 odd over their working expenses. If a Royal Commission were held, I feel sure that the taxpayers would be able to get coal at 2s. or 3s. a ton cheaper than today. The figures—which have been quoted—relating to what was done after the Royal Commission of 1933 show that £1,000,000 was saved to the taxpayers of the country. The Government continues with the position as it is today. I believe that arrangements could be made whereby coal could be produced at a lower cost to the taxpayer by the same number or more men being employed. I think the miners are entitled to a pensions Bill, or some pensions scheme, under conditions that are fair to the shareholders of the company. This measure proposes to interfere with the articles of association of Amalgamated Collieries, Ltd. Is not that so?

Members: Yes.

Hon. G. W. MILES: This is not the proper place to interfere with those articles of association. If a pensions scheme is desired, then the workers and owners should pay, and it should be part of the cost of production of the coal. It was for those reasons that I opposed the previous Bill, and I oppose this one for the same reasons.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central): The information given by Sir Hal Colebatch and Mr. Parker cannot be ignored. Mr. Parker quoted figures which I have since forgotten, but they were contained in the report of the Royal Commissioner, Dr. Herman, who inquired into this industry. No matter how sympathetically inclined one might be towards the very fine spirit which envisages a pensions scheme for the men engaged in unpleasant work, as the coalminers are, I still feel that we must do our duty to the people as a whole, and that, when we have the report of a man so well qualified as Dr. Herman, who went into the ramifications of the industry, this Parliament would not be justified in passing a measure such as this. The statements made by members last week when discussing this Bill, that pensions are granted to judges and civil servants are like the flowers that bloom in the spring—they have nothing to do with the case. It has been proved that our goldminers work under worse conditions.

I am not qualified to speak on this subject, but Dr. Hislop, who is not in the Chamber at the moment, said that the diseases suffered by goldminers were much more serious and prevalent than those suffered by coalminers. Let us compare the conditions under which these two sets of miners work! As a matter of fact, they are not to be compared. The

coalminer has conditions much preferable to those of the goldminer. I would like to say also that the Collie coalfield has been going for some years, and I think Mr. Miles is entitled to commendation for his statement, which the Royal Commissioner's findings substantiate, that there was an unholy alliance between the mineowners and the mine workers. For many years the people of Western Australia had to pay a much higher price for Collie coal than was actually necessary. True, we would rather pay a higher price for a local product than have to rely on imports from other States.

At a time like the present our railways and other services might be considerably curtailed if we did not have Collie coal. Dr. Herman's report impartially sets out the position. What is the use of the Government appointing a Royal Commissioner like Dr. Herman to advise on the industry if it does not endeavour to give effect to his recommendations? Dr. Herman strongly urged the Government to spend a fair amount of money in order to determine, once for all, whether the Irwin coalfields were worth prospecting. Has the Government made any attempt to act on that recommendation? I maintain that it has not. True, a small amount of money was made available and some investigations were carried out at Eradu, but nothing like the exhaustive examination that Dr. Herman suggested be made at Irwin.

The Collie coalfield has been operating for many years and the men have had a union for many years. What are the unions in this country doing that they have not inaugurated social welfare schemes for their members? Why do not they follow the policy of unions in the Old Country and brings in schemes of their own to ensure that when their members fall ill, become invalided or reach old age, they will have something to fall back on? We are in danger of sapping the initiative of our people. This aspect ought to receive careful consideration. I voted for a similar Bill last session but, in view of the times in which we are living and the fact that Dr. Herman's report has been given prominence on this occasion, I feel that my duty to the taxpayers is clear and that I must oppose the second reading.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South): I support the Bill as I did the measure of last session, and I hope the House will again pass the second reading. I regret that the Bill of last session did not become law. On this occasion there has been considerable opposition to the measure on the ground that it is sectional legislation. Have the members who advanced that argument in opposition to the Bill considered their attitude? If I oppose any measure, I am straight out and honest about it. I do not offer excuses; if I see no merit in it, I express that view. In fact I remember on one occasion waxing warm with righteous indignation. However, several members have opposed this Bill because they say it is sectional legislation. Let me remind them of some of the sectional legislation that this House has passed. The railway and tramway employees have a superannuation fund. Is that sectional or is it not? The Public Service has a superannuation fund. Is that sectional? The Police Union has a benefit or superannuation fund; we need not quibble about the name by which it is known. The employees of the Perth City Council have a superannuation scheme. All these schemes were approved by members of this House and all of them represented sectional legislation. Let us not forget that we passed the superannuation scheme for members of Parliament.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And they themselves pay for it.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: But who can say that we did not pass the requisite legislation? Of course we did, and the hon. member knows it. That was a sectional scheme of superannuation. True, some members objected to it, but we passed it for our own benefit. We were sectional enough to pass it—sectional or selfish—I do not care how it may be described.

Hon. L. Craig: But we ourselves pay for it.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: That is so. For me that measure has some very sad memories, but I shall not dwell upon them now. Large concerns like the Shell and Vacuum Oil Companies have superannuation schemes. I would not say that they are on all fours with the proposed scheme for pensions for coalminers, but the fact remains that they have schemes. Various other concerns also have their own schemes; I shall not waste time by enumerating them. Would it not be better to have legislation such as this when a scheme of superannuation is proposed for a body of workers? Some years ago I was a member of the

Boulder Municipal Council; so was Mr. Cornell. The Municipal Corporations Act contains a provision that I consider unjust, but it must have been passed by Parliament. It stipulates that when certain members of the staff retire, they may receive a month's pay for every year of service. We had a town clerk at Boulder who retired after 25 or 30 years' service, and we had to allow him a month's pay for every year of service. But he did not leave Boulder in order to retire; he left it to go to a better job—to become Town Clerk of Claremont. Mr. Craig interjected a little while ago that the funds for members' pensions were not contributed by the State.

Hon. L. Craig: I said that we ourselves paid them.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am merely expressing the hon. member's statement in other words. Another measure that can be described as sectional legislation was passed by Parliament and amended on more than one occasion. I refer to the Mine Workers' Relief Act. I would not say that that is on all fours with the proposal to provide pensions for coalminers, but in essence it is the same because there are three contributors—the mine owners, the mine workers and the State Government. Each party contributes 1s. 6d. a fortnight or 3s. a month. Is that sectional? Surely members who were here in 1932 and assisted to amend the Act then and again recently, so that instead of paying 26 amounts fortnightly each year, the contribution would be on a monthly basis of 3s., must admit that that was sectional legislation. I would not contend that the benefits payable to miners in the goldmining industry are similar to those proposed under this Bill, but they are far-reaching. Incidentally, they are a wonderful advance on what prevailed before 1913 when Parliament, at the behest of the then Honorary Minister, Hon. J. E. Dodd, who had Mr. Cornell's support, passed the measure. That was purely a matter of benefit to workers in the goldmines and the State contributed. If the State had a right to contribute 3s. per man per month to benefit goldminers, what arguments can there be against granting pensions to coalminers?

Practically the only purchaser of Collie coal is the State. I omit the few private industries that use Collie coal. It could be argued that the State does not buy the gold that is produced, and therefore why should the State be asked to contribute to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund the sum of 3s. per man per month? I was amazed to hear Mr. E. H. H. Hall's statement that, though he voted for a similar measure last session, he would oppose the Bill on this occasion. Had I preceded him in speaking to the second reading, probably he would have altered his mind. I repeat that in the last 18 months this House has passed sectional legislation—a Bill to amend the Mine Workers' Relief Act. If the State can contribute to the benefits paid to goldminers, notwithstanding the high price received for gold, there should be no objection to its contributing to pensions for coalminers. I hope that the Bill will have the support of all those members who voted for the measure of last session.

HON. T. MOORE (Central): I must be consistent by supporting the second reading of the Bill, just as I supported the measure of last session. One of the principal reasons why the coalminers of Collie are entitled to pensions is that similar workers in the Eastern States receive that consideration. The miners in the coal-producing States of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland have similar provision made for them.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Then why do they strike so much?

Hon. T. MOORE: I should like to present my views without interruption. The case I offer for the Collie miners has nothing to do with strikes.

Hon. V. Hamersley: It should have.

Hon. T. MOORE: Then I ask the hon. member to be consistent. The coalminers of Collie have not been guilty of striking; they are working hard and loyally every day. On that account, if that is the hon. member's argument, let him follow it to its logical conclusion. We hear a lot of bunkum talked on this as on many other occasions. However, the fact is that our miners are not treated like those of the Eastern States. Why should not they be?

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I make a special request that the hon. member be permitted to proceed without interruption.

Hon. T. MOORE: Our miners are only one remove from being Government employees, since the Government is the principal consumer of the coal they produce. Shall we not put these loyal miners on an equal

footing with Eastern States miners? I am ashamed to think that we should be urged not to do so. Regarding the rights of a section, we have to bear in mind that the Collie miners are a section which can be singled out. In the years gone by the coalfields of Western Australia were handed over to companies which are under certain obligations. The companies have never been called upon to contribute to the revenue of the State as they could have been, or as they should have been. They have been let down lightly. They have been singled out for an easy run so that they may be able to continue to conduct their business. They have taken over our coalfields and our young men.

Interjectors have asked, "Why not give pensions to the timber workers, for example?" But most of these Collie miners have been in the industry for a great number of years, whereas timber workers come and go. The coal companies have exploited both the mines and our young men. They have taken out much coal that was readily get-at-able. It is but fair that the coal companies should look after these men when they reach the age of 60 years. Why should the men be thrown back on the State after spending the best of their lives in the service of the coal companies? Let members take a fair view and divest their minds of what a Royal Commissioner said concerning the working of the mines years ago. That has nothing whatever to do with the case we are dealing with. We are hoping to improve things as we go along, instead of dwelling on the dead past. The Royal Commissioner of years ago was not dealing with pensions or the rights of the miners.

Each industry, and especially such an industry as this, should look after its employees upon their reaching the age of 60. Our coalminers are especially loyal, and should certainly receive the same benefits as have been granted to Eastern States coalminers. Members have talked about the expense this measure will entail on the taxpayers. Calculation of the amount would necessitate a sum in fractions. The resulting fraction would be so small that the taxpayers would hardly feel its imposition. These pensions, I repeat, are paid in the Eastern States. To sum up, I point out that the Collie coal companies have been allowed to take charge practically of all the coal in Western Australia, and to exploit our manpower as well to work the mines. For those reasons, if for no others, the companies should look after their men when they reach the age of 60 years. The amount required from the Government to put the pensions fund on a sound basis is so small as not to be worth consideration in so large a question as this.

HON. J. CORNELL (South): I support the Bill. An analogy, and a fairly apt one between this measure and the position as regards mine workers' relief, can be drawn. Three factors are to contribute under the present measure, namely, the employers, the Government and the employees. And that is the basis on which the Mine Workers' Relief Fund is operating. The difference, however, is that the latter fund operates in respect of inroads upon health made by the industry; and sufferers receive a measure of compensation. If this Bill is enacted, I do not want to see our coalminers fall into the position in which our goldminers find themselves. The position of the goldminer is that he contributes a third to his relief fund and is entitled by law to compensation as a contributor; but if he comes out of the industry under the category which brings him to the old-age pension stage, or to the invalid pension condition, the Mine Workers' Relief Fund Board tells him to apply for one or other of those pensions. Upon the Commonwealth authorities approving the grant of either the old-age or invalid pension, as the case may be, the amount of that pension is deducted from the amount payable to him by the fund.

Only during the present session was a regulation laid on the Table of the House bringing widows' pensions into the same category; that is to say, if the widow of a miner who received payments from the fund is in receipt of an old-age or invalid pension from the Commonwealth, the same process is applied to her. I claim that where there is a contributory fund, the contract should be sacrosanct. What the Commonwealth gives to impecunious people who have never in their lives tried to save a shilling should not count against a person who has done something to provide for invalidism or old-age. The State, I am aware, argues that if Western Australia does not deduct old-age or invalid pensions, the Commonwealth will make a corresponding reduction from the old-

age or the invalid pension, as the case may be. But that is no argument at all.

I know that on the miners' settlement, to which dozens of our miners went—they were advised to claim the invalid pension—they were granted the pension and thereupon the State Government deducted the amount. The doctor in charge at the time told me that the miner-settlers came to him, and that the first question he asked was, "Can you give anything at all?" The answer was, "We would go off our blocks if we did not do something." So the doctor said, "Well you are not invalid pensioners." Protests against this system have been made for years and years, but resultlessly. I warn the Collie miners to obtain some distinct understanding with the State and the Commonwealth Governments that what is given to them by this measure shall not be taken away from them. I support the second reading.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (in reply): I am afraid that some of the arguments used by members who have spoken against this measure can hardly be classed as valid. At any rate, in my opinion they have very little merit. I should like to spend a few minutes in answering some of the statements that have been made. For instance, we would imagine from the references that have been made to the report of Dr. Herman, the Royal Commissioner who inquired into the Collie coal industry in 1933, that nothing has been done as a result of his recommendations. As a matter of fact, quite a big change has taken place, arising from the fact that Dr. Herman did throw the light of day on to many of the transactions that had taken place in connection with the Collie coal mines.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That had nothing to do with the men.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Nothing at all. Still, extracts from Dr. Herman's report have been used as a basis for opposition to this Bill. It is well known that large profits were made for many years prior to Dr. Herman's report being issued, but I think it has to be admitted that since then there has been an entire change in the position. Since 1933 three arbitrators have dealt with the question of the price of Collie coal, particularly the price to be paid by the Government which, as is known, is the biggest user of Collie coal. From 90 to 95 per cent. of the output is used in one way or another by the State Government. As a result of the findings of those arbitrators, I think we can say that notwithstanding that the price of coal has increased from time to time till today it is many shillings higher per ton than was recommended by Dr. Herman at that time, the results have shown that the profits of the Collie coalmine owners have reached the amount which was considered to be fair by one of the Commissioners who inquired into the affairs of the company.

I think it was Mr. Justice Davidson who fixed the amount which he recommended as a fair return that the Collie mines should show as profit and took as the basis of his recommendation the fact that the preference shareholders were entitled in the first place to eight per cent. on their shares. He said that this was a contractual obligation on the coal mines which must be met. He agreed that eight per cent. was a high rate of dividend during wartime but it was not for him to interfere with that rate. On the other hand he thought that the Government might consider bringing down a measure which would have the effect of reducing from eight per cent. to some other figure the preferential dividends which were to be paid in future. Since the Herman report, quite a number of very important changes have taken place. There is not the same association today between the firms which are interested in the Collie mines and the Collie power house as there was at the time Dr. Herman inquired into the activities of the mines.

There is a system of supervision whereby our own Mines Department has quite a big say in regard to the way in which the mines should be worked. That in itself has been appreciated, I have no doubt, but we cannot get away from the fact that the financial records of the Collie mines of recent years have shown that they have not been able to make sufficient profit to pay the eight per cent. dividend to preference shareholders and at the same time pay the 3¼ per cent. on ordinary shares that was recommended, or suggested, by Mr. Justice Davidson as being a fair thing. Notwithstanding what the position might have been prior to 1933, if the financial position of Collie mine owners is to be the determining factor in regard to the question contained in this Bill—that is, pensions for coalminers—I think we can say without any hesitation that whatever abuses

took place before 1933 do not exist today. We provide in this Bill that all who are interested in the Collie mines shall make a contribution to the pensions fund. We provide, in the first place, that the Government shall be responsible, in the first few years, for one-quarter of the amount required or a fixed sum, whichever is the less, commencing at £2,500 in the first year and rising to £6,000, at which the State's contribution is stabilised.

We have provided in the Bill that of the balance of the money required, which is fixed by the tribunal, two-thirds shall be met by the coal owners and one-third by the mine workers. The net result of that provision is that the Government finds one-quarter, the mine owners a half and the workers one-quarter. But we have also provided in this Bill that the maximum amount that may be taken from the profits of preference or ordinary shareholders should be 2d. per ton. As pointed out by Sir Hal Colebatch, when he was speaking against the Bill, it is perfectly true that there is no provision in the measure for the return of this money to the shareholders who were asked to find it in the first place. That is fair comment and fair criticism. As a result of that criticism, there appears on the notice paper an amendment designed to alter that state of affairs and to provide that if there should be any return of contributions made by shareholders, that money should be returned to the shareholders and not to the company, which was the basis of the complaint of the hon. member.

Again, I have placed on the notice paper another amendment which I believe will clarify the position in regard to contributions. I have been rather anxious that we should be absolutely certain, if this Bill is agreed to, just where the liability for this fund should lie. After listening to Sir Hal Colebatch, I came to the conclusion that it should be possible to make the position much clearer than it appeared in the Bill as it reached this House, and consequently the amendments I have referred to appear on the notice paper. To my way of thinking, they meet the objections raised on that score. There is no necessity for me to deal with those amendments in detail at the moment and I have no doubt that if the Bill reaches the Committee stage we shall hear again from Sir Hal and others interested in that part of the Bill, whether the proposals I have submitted are fair and equitable in the circumstances. There has been some criticism of this Bill on the ground that coalminers work under better conditions than do goldminers, and Dr. Herman's report has been quoted even in that regard.

If there is one complaint I have to make in regard to Dr. Herman's report, it is that in his comparison of the two industries he overlooked one very essential fact, namely, that for many years employment in the coalmining industry in this State was intermittent. It was very seldom that coalminers secured a full year's work and there were long periods when they did not even work the full number of shifts in any one week. In the goldmining industry, when a man is employed on a mine, so long as his work is satisfactory he can look forward to as long a period of employment as that during which the mine operates. That is not so in the coalmining industry. It is unfortunate that Collie coal cannot be satisfactorily stored for any length of time. As a consequence it is necessary or desirable that there should also be a pool of labour available to meet those fluctuations in the demands for coal. During wartime, of course, it is a different story. We cannot produce as much coal as we require and consequently every miner and every mine worker can find continuous employment. But in normal times it is very different.

Methods are adopted in Collie to meet the requirements of the industry. For instance, one or two men are not selected to stand down. Instead, the number of shifts per week is reduced. In addition, I believe that when it is necessary to reduce the number of hands, the last men on are the first men to go off. That reminds me that Mr. Hamersley was most unfortunate in his interjections that although coalminers in the Eastern States have the benefit of legislation of this sort and are entitled to pensions, they still strike. I do not want to pass judgment on the coalminers in the Eastern States. In one or two instances recently we have, I think, noted that industrial trouble has been precipitated by the actions of those in control of the mines. Whether that be so or not, it cannot be claimed that there has been any major industrial trouble in the Collie coalfields for many years. In fact, I doubt if there has been any trouble of a major character in connection with the coalmining industry in Western Australia. Those asso-

ciated with that industry have a remarkable industrial record, and it is perhaps a matter for regret that the same cannot be claimed for some of the fields in other parts of the Commonwealth. In any event, I suggest the time has arrived when we should listen to the representations made on behalf of the Collie coalminers that they should be placed in a position similar to the coalminers in the other coal-producing States of the Commonwealth. All the Bill provides is to establish them in that position, and I do not think it too much to ask this House to agree to that proposal. As to the financial side of the scheme, the measure simply provides that all those interested in the production of coal at Collie shall bear their fair share of the cost.

The Bill places a limitation upon the amount to be provided by the companies and sets out the contribution to be made by the coalminers and by the Government. It also clarifies the position as to the extent to which the price of coal can be affected as a result of the passing of this legislation. I am pleased to note that this time there has been little opposition expressed in this Chamber to the inclusion of surface workers. On the previous occasion when similar legislation was lost, it was mainly on account of opposition to the inclusion of surface workers in the benefits of the proposed pensions scheme. I shall not reiterate what others have referred to or speak at any length about the particular individuals concerned. I do point out, however, that quite a fair percentage of those working on the surface at the Collie coal mines are very fine citizens, men who have given the best years of their lives in the production of coal under conditions that are certainly not of the best. I do not think it could be reasonably or logically argued that those men who have been so closely associated with the production at Collie should be excluded from the benefits of a scheme of this description. There are many aspects of the industry to which I would be justified in referring, but on the many occasions we have discussed this matter in this Chamber I have dealt exhaustively with various aspects, and I see no necessity for me to do so again. I hope that this time this House will take a more favourable view of the proposition, and will agree to the second reading of the Bill and accept the amendments I have placed on the notice paper with the object of clarifying the financial phases. I hope we shall succeed in approving a pensions scheme that will be satisfactory to all concerned.

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

Ayes	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	8
Majority for	..	..	8

AYES

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon J. M. Drew	Hon H L. Roche
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. T. Moore (*Teller.*)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. A. Dimmitt (*Teller.*)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. G. B. Wood	Hon. L. B. Bolton

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 20—agreed to.

Clause 21—Contributions:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause (4) after the word "section" the words "shall not exceed two pence on each ton of coal won and" be inserted.

As I read the clause, the intention is that the company shall not pay more than 2d. per ton, but I do not think that anywhere is that made clear and distinct. The amendment will overcome that difficulty. To my way of thinking, the method outlined of assessing the costs against the company is rather peculiar. I think the principle of allowing the incidence to fall on the dividends paid to shareholders is entirely wrong; rather should that debit be added to the cost of production. If the price of coal becomes too high, there is another way to deal with that matter.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have two amendments on the notice paper which clarify the position and I therefore hope that Mr. Baxter will not persevere with his

amendment. It is necessary to take my two amendments to Clause 21 together; one will amend Subclause (4), and the other Subclause (6). I hope I am in order in referring to my amendments at this juncture. I brought them forward because Sir Hal Colebatch drew my attention to what appeared to be a defect in the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Chief Secretary has made a suggestion that his amendments will meet the position.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: In a clumsy way. I am not yet altogether of the opinion that they will.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I was at first inclined to support Mr. Baxter's amendment, as I thought it clarified the position. Since then I have had the opportunity to consider the amendments placed on the notice paper by the Chief Secretary. These definitely answer one of the objections to the Bill that was emphasised on more than one occasion, namely, that any amount of excess could be refunded to the companies, the shareholders reaping no benefit. The Chief Secretary's amendment makes it mandatory for the excess to be distributed amongst the shareholders, and with that I agree.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I still do not appreciate the exact meaning of the clause.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is speaking to the clause generally.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Chair is Mr. Baxter's amendment.

Hon. L. CRAIG: What I have to say has a bearing on where the 2d. contribution is to come from. If I am not in order, I hope the Chairman will stop me.

The CHAIRMAN: Try to keep to the amendment.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If we allow this provision for the deduction of 2d. per ton to pass, it may wreck the Bill. Suppose there are 100,000 preference shares and the company produces 500,000 tons of coal per annum. Members will realise what that means.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: The present production is 480,000 tons per year.

Hon. L. CRAIG: In ten years the production might be 1,000,000 tons, or even 2,000,000 tons. Suppose 2d. per ton were deducted the amount would be very considerable and there is nothing in the Bill, as I read it, to prevent that from being done. In the end, the preference shareholders may get nothing at all. I hope the Chief Secretary will be able to explain the matter to my satisfaction.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Nobody can say what will be the exact amount per ton to be deducted. In the first place that has to be fixed by the tribunal to be appointed under the measure. Should it happen that the contributions made by the companies under this two-thirds provision exceed 2d. per ton, then the Bill provides that the maximum which "may" —not "shall"—be taken from the preference or ordinary shareholders shall be 2d. per ton. It may be only ½d. per ton of coal sold.

Hon. L. Craig: It might exceed the amount of the preference dividend.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I would be sorry to think that that would be possible in the circumstances of the industry at the present time. I think the hon. member is under a misapprehension.

Hon. L. Craig: I hope so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is necessary to place some figure in the Bill to determine the maximum amount which may be deducted from the dividends of the preference shareholders and the measure provides that the amount shall not exceed 2d. per ton of coal sold. I have given a good deal of thought to this point and have endeavoured to use wording that would be understood by everyone. The phraseology on the notice paper appears to me to be as clear as it possibly can be. It makes it perfectly obvious that under no circumstances can the preference shareholders contribute out of the dividends paid to them more than 2d. per ton of coal sold.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do want this clear. It does not matter what the sum is; it is an increasing amount. If 500,000 tons is the production, then 2d. per ton represents a certain amount; if it is 1,000,000 tons it represents twice as much, and so on. Let me put it another way. The owners' contributions may start off at £10,000, which may be deducted from the dividends of shareholders and this company is controlled by the ordinary shareholders of whom there are only a few. The preference shareholders have no say in the government of the company.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Are they not the same people?

Hon. L. CRAIG: No. Over 200 members of the public hold preference shares, but only a select few, 18, are ordinary shareholders.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: The company is controlled by two of them.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Supposing the company's contribution is £10,000 for the first year, then as the coal output increases so will the owners' contribution increase.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Not necessarily. If the liability is there, yes; but if not, no.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: It will probably decrease.

Hon. C. B. Williams: It might go down to ¼d. a ton.

Hon. L. CRAIG: More production means more workers and a greater sum from the owners.

Hon. A. Thomson: The amount of 2d. per ton on 500,000 tons represents half the amount.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The point is that the contribution from the owners will be greater as production increases.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member's argument would apply more to Subclause (6).

Hon. L. CRAIG: I will bow to your ruling, Sir.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I do not wish to anticipate the arguments I shall advance on a subsequent amendment, but I do suggest that this matter is only important because of that subsequent amendment. The Chief Secretary suggested that this fund is to be contributed to by the owners and the miners, which is as it should be.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: And by the Government.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: The provision is not that it shall be contributed to by the owners and the miners. If the clause said that, then it would be right to assume that as the production of coal increased so would the profits of the company increase and its ability to pay 2d. per ton be increased. But as the Bill now stands, no matter to what extent the profits might be increased, the present practice would be followed of paying no dividends and issuing a balance sheet such as the one I quoted the other night where the whole of the expenditure, directors' fees and everything else, was lumped in one item. The cost would be paid, not by the owners, but by the preference shareholders. In that case the argument advanced by Mr. Craig is sound. I do not see that there is any necessity for the amendment now put forward.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The fund is to be contributed to by the Government, by the miners and by the owners. It seems that the contributions of the miners or shareholders will be determined by the amount required for the fund each year.

Hon. L. Craig: It will be an increasing amount.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I agree that it probably will. As the years go by there will be more men to be provided for under the fund. But this amendment sets out the basis on which the contributions by the owners will be made, and they cannot exceed 2d. per ton.

Hon. L. Craig: It is 2d. a ton on 100 tons or 1,000,000 tons. It comes out of one fixed amount.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I cannot see anything in the point raised by Mr. Craig.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amount required to constitute this fund in any one year is not based on so much a ton at all, but on what the tribunal considers will be the liability of the fund for that particular year. Having arrived at that amount it will be divided between the various parties in accordance with the proportions set out in the Bill. It is true that in the first year the probabilities are the contributions from all parties will be less than in, say, five or six years' time. We have provided for that position by saying that the Government's contributions shall be a certain fixed sum, or one-quarter of the amount required, whichever is the lesser. It can be assumed that there will be an increasing liability on the fund to a certain point that I have in mind, and possibly beyond it, but it will not be a sum that would jeopardise the whole of the profits.

Hon. L. Craig: Who can say?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I can, definitely. I think it will be found that the preference shareholders, about whom the hon. member is so much concerned—

Hon. L. Craig: No, but I want to give them a fair deal.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am by my amendment protecting their interests in the way desired by Sir Hal Colebatch. I have made it clear that under no circumstances will the coal owners contribute more than 2d. It is a pity that this 2d. enters into

the matter, because the hon. member is of opinion that this will be the contribution made by these individuals, but the Bill provides that the company may pay that proportion of their contribution to the fund out of the dividends which the ordinary or preference shareholders might be entitled to. It is possible that there will be no contributions made by the shareholders.

Hon. L. Craig: It is not likely.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In the Bill we make provision for the company to pay its proportion out of the cost of coal.

Hon. L. Craig: All over 2d., which is a fluctuating amount.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It might be that half of what is required is less than 2d. I hope this industry will develop and produce many more thousands of tons of coal than it does today. If it does that, it must be remembered that the contributions by all parties will be increased. If that quantity of coal is being produced the company will be in a far better position than at present to provide its portion of the fund.

Hon. L. Craig: The contribution per miner will not increase.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The amendment I placed on the notice paper some time back goes right to the point. My idea in moving this amendment was to have a discussion to see just where we stood. I ask leave to withdraw my amendment in favour of the one of which the Chief Secretary has given notice.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in lines 4 to 10 of Subclause (4) the words "the contribution made by any owner is found to exceed the amount which would have been payable if the contribution had been calculated on the basis of an impost of twopence on each ton of coal sold by such owner in that year the amount of such excess shall be refunded to such owner or credited to his next annual contribution as such owner may direct," be struck out, and the words "the proportion of the contribution deducted from dividends under the provisions of Subsection (6) of this section is found to exceed the amount which would result from an impost of twopence on each ton of coal sold by the company in that year the amount of such excess shall be refunded to such company to be distributed amongst the shareholders to whom the dividend would be otherwise payable," inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I understand that the maximum profit the company is allowed to make is £18,000. If that is so, the more men employed on the mines to increase production, the larger would be the amount the company would have to pay out of its profit.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (6) be struck out.

What right has this Chamber to break down agreements entered into between members of the company. It is competent for the company to deduct its contribution from the dividends payable to shareholders. No dividends are being paid to ordinary shareholders. A few shareholders controlling the company could use the profits by way of directors' fees, etc., and the whole of the contribution to the pensions fund could fall upon the preference shareholders. Further, this subclause will be a bar to any action that any shareholder might take. The articles of association provide that if the company does not pay preference shareholders their 8 per cent. dividend, they are entitled to a voice in the management of the company. Eight per cent. is not an unusual rate to pay preference shareholders, particularly when they have provided the whole of the capital and have no voice in the control of the company.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: How long ago is it since the company was formed?

Hon. T. Moore: Forty years.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: Ordinary shareholders number 18 and preference shareholders 219, and no shareholder or combination of shareholders holds anything approaching half the total number of shares. The largest shareholder has 81,750 out of 200,000 shares. The other 218 shareholders are practically all citizens of the State. If the subclause is struck out, the owners will have to find the money to pay the contribution. If they are unable to do so and to pay the preference shareholders, these shareholders will be entitled to a voice in the management of the company. I think it would be a good thing if more people had a say in the management of the company; in fact, the Royal Commissioner made a recommendation to that effect. Apart from this, however, we have no right to interfere with the company's articles of association.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir Hal Colebatch has put forward a strong case on behalf of the preference shareholders. For many years they have received 8 per cent. dividends and the ordinary shareholders on numerous occasions have received nothing.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: What were they receiving at the time the Royal Commissioner reported in 1933?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not concerned about that. Shareholders who are guaranteed 8 per cent. dividend from an industrial concern like a coal mine should pay their quota towards a pensions fund for the men who produce the commodity.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You would be interfering with the articles of association and depriving the preference shareholders of their right.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We would not. We are merely providing that, if the company thinks it necessary to provide its contribution in this way, it may do so. The preference shareholders have been gathering in 8 per cent. for many years and were quite content not to have any voice in the management of the company. So far as I know there was no complaint from them on that score until this proposal was made. Three very competent men have inquired into and reported on the Collie mines. Mr. Justice Davidson pointed out that 8 per cent. was too high a rate of dividend in wartime. The Government might have introduced legislation reducing that rate, but did not do so. If as a result of the contribution from the funds of the company not being allowed to be passed on in its entirety in the added cost of coal, the dividend is reduced below 8 per cent., that fact alone would give the preference shareholders the control of the coal mines. It seems to me that a battle for the control of the Collie coalfields is developing over the question of pensions for the miners. That is the only construction I can put on the arguments now advanced here.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: It is all very well for the Chief Secretary to say that the preference shareholders have been drawing their 8 per cent. dividend for a number of years. I might support a Bill reducing the interest payable to all preference shareholders. But what confidence will people have in agreements if Parliament can step in at any time and alter them? The clause provides that the whole of the contribution may be paid by the preference shareholders. I say again that the balance sheet is not an honest balance sheet. According to the report of the Royal Commissioner of ten years ago, the ordinary shareholders obtained something like £1,100,000 which they ought not to have received. I believe the second largest preference shareholder is the man who controls the ordinary shareholders.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The argument to which Sir Hal Colebatch pins his faith is, I fear, a misleading one. This beneficial piece of legislation has at last got a good chance of reaching the statute-book, but now it is to be jeopardised by some argument which dealt it its death-blow last year.

Members: Oh no!

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The argument to my mind is purely a domestic one, such as should not interest this Chamber at all. I do not know any of the parties, either ordinary shareholders or preference shareholders. I am not interested in the company that owns the mines. The preference shareholders some 30 or 40 years ago supplied the money to equip the mines. They entered into an agreement by which they would receive 8 per cent. and would not have anything to do with the domestic affairs of the company.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: That occurred twenty years ago.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: They have been receiving 8 per cent. for many years.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: What have other people been receiving?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Here, 20 years later, a measure which no-one ever contemplated at the time, which is something in the nature of an act of God——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think the hon. member is drawing on his imagination.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: It never entered into the minds of the owners of the mine or of the preference shareholders. It is something that neither party ever envisaged in any way whatsoever, and something quite outside the scope of the contract made 20 years ago. Sir Hal Colebatch also argues about the balance sheet. I agree that it is not very satisfactory. However, we are passing a comprehensive new Companies Bill which I presume will deal with such matters.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That has nothing to do with the argument. The measure is not even law yet.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: The argument as to sanctity of contracts is misleading in this instance.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am not concerned with either the ordinary or the preference shareholders; I do not think I know three of them. But this provision places, or may place, an unknown impost on the preference shareholders. The company's profits are limited to £18,000 annually. I do not think the ordinary shareholder can get more than five per cent. In those circumstances 8 per cent. may be too high a preference dividend, although many people paid 35s. per share. Those people do not get 8 per cent. on their investment. It will be better to withdraw the clause and substitute one restricting preference shareholders to two per cent., any amount above that rate being made up out of other resources. I do not think that the preference shareholders would be greatly concerned about the returns from their investments being reduced, but they have a right to know what their dividend is to be each year and not to be treated entirely as ordinary shareholders and dependent on the profits made by the company.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: May I ask if it is the intention, by this subclause, to override the memorandum and articles of association in that although the dividends may be reduced the preference shareholders will be deprived of their right to enter into the management of the company? I understand that the memorandum and articles of association provide that if the preference shareholders do not get their eight per cent. they are entitled to take part in the management.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is so.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: And I take it that under this subclause, if they do not get their eight per cent. they will be debarred from taking part in the management.

Hon. L. Craig: That is what it is intended to mean.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If so, would it not be better to make it clearer?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Sir Hal Colebatch says that all the contributions of the company may be taken from the preference shareholders. That is not correct. The Bill sets out very clearly that not more than half of the contributions of the company shall be a charge against the dividends of the preference shareholders. In regard to the question asked by Mr. Parker, the subclause does not mean anything more than it actually says. We are not going to interfere with the domestic relations of the preference and ordinary shareholders. We simply say that if the company finds it necessary to take portion of the preference or ordinary dividends for the purpose of contributing to this fund, that shall be a bar against any of those shareholders taking action against the company because they have not received the eight per cent. dividend. It goes further and prohibits the shareholder from making a claim next year for the deduction which took place this year to be added to his preference dividend next year. It prevents the preference dividends being accumulated to the extent of the deduction made towards the contribution. The point raised by Sir Hal is referred to in the amendment in which it is pointed out that half of the contributions shall be debited against the preference shareholders and half against the ordinary shareholders, but not more than half.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: But that half comes out of the extra price of coal.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No; half the contributions of the company may be debited against the preference or ordinary shareholders.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: And the other half comes out of the increased price of coal.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member reads the provision he will find that the preference shareholders cannot be debited with more than half of the contributions made by the company, nor can the ordinary shareholders. If he analyses the position he will find his viewpoint is wrong. We are making provision for the company to debit those persons who are preference shareholders with some share of the contributions of the company to the pensions fund. We are also making provision that it shall be lawful for the company to do that notwithstanding that its articles of association provide for eight per cent. cumulative dividends. We also provide that where there is a deduction from dividends for this purpose that amount shall not be added to the dividends which they should receive during the

next year. By that means we ensure that all the parties who are receiving any benefit from the operations of the Collie coalfields shall pay their share of the costs.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: This Bill takes away a right specifically given to the shareholders under the articles of association. Mr. Craig says eight per cent. is too much. Is he prepared to come forward with a suggestion that the dividends for all preference shareholders in all companies, no matter what their articles of association are, should be reduced from eight per cent. to six per cent.? The Committee should seriously contemplate the effect this is going to have in providing capital by means of preferential shares, if subscribers are to be told that at any time Parliament may interfere with their agreement and articles of association.

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

Ayes	.. .. ..	9
Noes	.. .. ..	14
Majority against	..	5

AYES.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	*(Teller.)*

NOES.

Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. F. Baxter
	(Teller.)

PAIR.

Aye	No
Hon. A. Thomson	Hon. W. R. Hall

Amendment thus negatived.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line 13 of Subclause (6) after the word "payable" the words "Provided that a company shall not, in any year, make a deduction from dividends under the provisions of this subsection which shall exceed the amount which would result from an impost of two pence on each ton of coal sold by such company in that year" be inserted.

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

Clauses 22 to 36—agreed to.

New clause:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

Restriction upon Increase of Price of Coal.

22. (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of any Act, award or agreement to the contrary no payment to the fund by any owner may be or be deemed to be included in the cost of production of coal and no owner shall in consequence of any payment to the fund increase the price of any coal supplied to any consumer (including the Government or any State instrumentality) except as hereinafter provided.

(2) (a) Where the payment by any owner in any year does not exceed four pence per ton of coal sold by such owner in that year, such owner may include one half of such payment in the cost of production of the coal and may increase the price of coal accordingly;

(b) Where the payment by any owner in any year exceeds four pence per ton of coal sold by such owner in that year such owner may include the amount of such payment which exceeds two pence per ton of coal sold in the cost of production of the coal and may increase the price of coal accordingly.

The amendment will clarify the position and make it perfectly certain that not more than 2d. per ton may be added to the cost of coal to the consumer. In its original form the Bill was not distinct on that point, but with the amendments we are inserting, the position should be quite satisfactory. The amendment will vindicate the statement I made when I moved the second reading of the Bill that the intention was that not more than 2d. per ton could be passed on by the company in the price charged to the consumer for coal.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

RESOLUTION—MEAT, SUPPLIES AND RATIONING OF MUTTON.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Council's resolution, subject to an amendment in which it desired the concurrence of the Council.

The PRESIDENT: Order! There is too much talking while I am reading the Assembly's message. I shall proceed with the reading of the message.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Look, Mr. President! Look at the Chief Secretary!

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will Mr. Williams sit down and keep order? Otherwise it will be necessary for me to take an extreme course. I will not allow the hon. member to convert the House into a beargarden in this way. This is the last warning I shall give the hon. member.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That is my idea, too, Sir.

BILL—ALBANY CEMETERIES.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [9.26] in moving the second reading said: This small Bill relates to the Albany cemetery site, and arises out of the desire of the Albany Municipal Council, the Albany Road Board and various church authorities for the formation of a public cemetery board under the Cemeteries Act, 1897. The land in the cemetery site has a frontage to Middleton-road, Albany, and comprises Lots S. 51, 327, 328, 329, 503 and 504 held in separate titles by the Methodist, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian Churches. As the control of the cemetery by a board would be in the best interests of all concerned, it has been decided to agree to the request, but before this can be given effect to it is necessary for the churches concerned to surrender their rights to the land and for the land to be revested in His Majesty. The church authorities have agreed to the surrender, and this Bill is therefore submitted in order to effect the surrender and revesting under the authority of Parliament.

In the event of the Bill being passed, action will then be taken for the declaration of the land as a public cemetery and for the appointment of a cemeteries board. Provision has been made in the Bill preserving the burial rights of any person in the land to be surrendered. I may mention that at a meeting of representatives of the local authorities and the churches it was unanimously agreed that the proposed board should consist of the Mayor of Albany as chairman, two representatives each of the Albany Municipal Council and the Albany Road Board, and one representative from each of the Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian denominations. There is no reference to the constitution of the board in the Bill, as the appointment of the necessary trustees to control the cemetery is a matter for the Governor under the Cemeteries Act. As all the parties concerned in this matter are agreed that the control of the cemetery by a board is in the best interests of the district, I trust that no objection will be raised to the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [9.32] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to amend Section 2 of the State Government Insurance Office Act, 1938, to enable that office to transact all classes of insurance associated with the ownership of motor vehicles, the right to transact such business to apply only so long as third party motor car insurance is compulsory by the law of this State. By that members will understand that legislation will be introduced with the object of making third party motor car insurance compulsory. A full explanation of the proposals in that matter will be given to members shortly. With these proposals in view, it is desired that the State Government Insurance Office shall have the right to transact not only third party motor car insurance, but all classes of insurance associated with motor cars, and thus share in all motor car business with private insurance companies.

Attempts to establish in this State compulsory third party insurance have so far proved unsuccessful. Members will no doubt recall the debates which took place on legislation introduced in past sessions for this purpose. They will also recall that in introducing such legislation, complementary Bills were introduced for the purpose of enabling insurance to be undertaken for motorists by the State Insurance Office. A previous Bill was introduced on the basis that the insurance would be provided out of a fund to be administered entirely by that office. That proposal was not acceptable, it then being considered that the State Insurance Office should not have a monopoly of third party insurance business. This Bill does not propose any such monopoly. It simply seeks the authority of Parliament for the State Insurance Office to have the right to compete for all motor car insurance business.

The extension of the authority proposed by this Bill will operate only if third party insurance is made compulsory by law. If the complementary measure providing for compulsory insurance fails to pass, but this Bill

does, then it will have no effect. Again, if both Bills pass and at some future date compulsory third party insurance is repealed, the extension of the power of the State Insurance Office would automatically cease to exist. I do not think any valid argument can be advanced against allowing the State Insurance Office to compete with private insurance companies in the field of motor car insurance business and I trust therefore that Parliament will grant the necessary authority sought by this Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: Is there not another Bill complementary to this measure?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why should not this Chamber deal with the other Bill first?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Each measure is complementary to the other. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East): In order to expedite business I am prepared to speak on the Bill now.

Hon. J. Cornell: This Bill will be unnecessary if the complementary measure is not passed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I shall not detain the House long. There are two features about the Bill which I do not like. It provides—

Subject as hereinafter provided, in relation to all classes of insurable risks—

The Bill is brought down before the other Bill, which I think should be considered first. This is putting the cart before the horse. This Chamber is quite prepared to pass a Bill providing for third-party insurance at any time; as a matter of fact, such a measure is many years overdue. We have had many experiences of persons driving motor cars and causing serious injury only to find that they had no financial backing whatever. They were not insured and therefore those who were injured were deprived of redress against them. Will the introduction of third party insurance affect comprehensive policies which have been taken out by motor car owners?

Hon. J. Cornell: Not according to Press reports.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We have no information on that point. I suggest that consideration of this Bill be held over until the complementary measure is brought down. We shall then know exactly what we are doing. Before I vote for the second reading I certainly want to know the meaning of the words I quoted.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan): This Bill will be inoperative unless and until the complementary measure is passed. I therefore suggest that this Bill is meaningless until we have the other measure before us. I shall not speak to or express an opinion on this Bill now and I suggest to the Minister that the debate be adjourned until such time as the other measure is before the Chamber.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

BILL—ELECTORAL (WAR TIME).

In Committee.

Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Members of the Forces entitled to vote:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in lines 3 and 4 of Subclause (1) the words "during the present war and for a period of twelve months thereafter" be struck out.

This is an experimental measure and one which I feel should not remain in force for a long period of years. It is exceedingly difficult to say when the war will end. It may not end in our lifetime. I am proposing that the Bill shall remain in operation until the 31st December, 1944. We shall then have had the experience of one election and will be able to determine whether we ought to prolong or amend the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not raise any objection to the amendment. Should occasion arise for the continuance of the measure, this House would not be averse to giving its approval to such a course.

Hon. J. CORNELL: A similar provision is contained in the Commonwealth Act, but the period after the war is six months.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Does the Commonwealth Act give a definition of "the present war"?

The Chief Secretary: It is the same as in our Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Baxter proposes to limit the duration of the measure until the end of 1944. That will mean that at the

end of next year this Bill will have to be re-submitted.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (a) of Subclause (2), after the word "Forces" the words "who is not" be inserted.

A principle is involved in this and in the subsequent amendments.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You make your political fight on that?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. C. B. Williams: He makes his political fight!

The CHAIRMAN: Mr. Baxter has the floor.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: This has nothing to do with the Select Committee. It is a matter of policy, like other clauses of the Bill. These words are the commencement of a series of amendments which will have the effect of striking out of the Bill the extension of the franchise to those under 21 years of age. The argument will be raised against this amendment that those who serve should have some recognition. That would be all right if the recognition would be of any value, but a very small percentage of those between the ages of 18 and 21 have any idea of recording a vote.

Hon. L. Craig: They do not want it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is so. The conduct of the Federal election was enough to warn anybody about extending the franchise.

Hon. C. B. Williams: That caused all the trouble; these people voted against your crowd.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There is a precedent for this in the case of pocket seats. In those instances a Labour candidate is returned on the vote of many people under 21 years of age who are eligible for and do vote at the selection ballot. When, however, it comes to the matter of the vote which establishes the Government of the country, it is a different proposition. It is inadvisable to lower the age for voting. These young people are not well enough informed to vote.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I oppose the amendment on the grounds I raised when introducing the Bill. The Government's idea in framing the Bill was to give to all members of the Forces, irrespective of age, the right to vote. If we do that, we shall not be the only country to take that stand. Quite recently the New Zealand Government gave all the members of its Forces, irrespective of their age, the right to vote, wherever they might be. The Commonwealth Parliament, at its last elections, also extended the franchise to those members of the Forces under 21 years who had been outside the Commonwealth.

Hon. J. Cornell: I propose to test the Committee on that question.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have just seen a copy of the amendment of the hon. member which appears to provide for the same conditions as applied in the last Commonwealth elections. I would be rather disposed to support that amendment. For the time being, I oppose the present amendment.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Baxter's amendment proposes to limit the vote to members of the Forces serving in Australia or the South-West Pacific zone and to all persons in uniform over 21 years of age, and to all discharged members of the Forces over 21 years of age. The Select Committee did not take into consideration a question of policy. The policy of extending the franchise to persons under 21 years of age was determined by the Government and not by the Chief Electoral Officer who drafted the Bill to conform with the Commonwealth law. I said on the second reading that I would go as far as to square this law with the Commonwealth legislation; that is to say, that any person under the age of 21 years who served outside Australia, or is serving outside Australia, or is a discharged member of the Forces who had similar service, could have the vote. I think the Select Committee is in agreement on that point and I hope it will continue to agree with it, leaving aside altogether what has been done in New Zealand. If we do not extend the franchise to those members of the Forces, we lay ourselves open to the charge that we, as a Legislative Council, amended a Bill affecting the Legislative Assembly franchise to such an extent that it will give less facilities to members of the Forces than does the Commonwealth law. We should accept Mr. Baxter's amendment so far as paragraph (a) is concerned. My amendment will begin by inserting a new paragraph, as follows:—

Who is under the age of 21 years and who has served outside Australia and is serving with any unit within Australia or the area referred to in the preceding paragraph.

That is the South-West Pacific zone.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What is the South-West Pacific zone?

Hon. J. CORNELL: It ends north of the equator.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Where is the other end of it?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not here to answer the hon. member's questions. The same provision will apply to discharged soldiers, if they are not enrolled as electors. A soldier to be discharged would have to return to Australia, so that we would not have to bother about the South-West Pacific zone so far as he is concerned. I am not prepared to go as far as to say that the men who had a vote at the Federal elections should not have a vote at State elections.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I support the amendment. I do not see why we should give votes to people under 21 years of age merely because they are in the Forces and on active service. That does not qualify them to take a keen and intelligent interest in the political welfare of their country. The Commonwealth is cited as an example, but the Commonwealth is far more democratic than Western Australia. In this State the present regime has decided to maintain what has existed for some years, namely, that three votes in the metropolitan area is equal to only one in the goldfields.

Hon. L. Craig: That is an intelligence test.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Let us keep the intelligence test, and not make the franchise available to those under 21 years of age. We should not draw comparisons between Western Australia and the Commonwealth. I saw a good deal of service in the 1914-18 war and I know that the soldiers did not take the slightest interest in politics. They had more important things to think of.

Hon. J. Cornell: Then why give any of them the vote?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Nobody wishes to take the vote from those entitled to it.

Hon. J. Cornell: If they are not on the roll, they are not entitled to it.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I have every desire that the man entitled to vote shall be able to exercise his franchise. I understand that soldiers have written home saying that the Federal vote was entirely lost on them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The object is to limit the vote to soldiers of 21 or over. This being so, I must oppose the amendment.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	7
Majority for	8

Ayes	
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. J. Cornell (*Teller.*)
Hon. G. W. Miles	

Noes	
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. E. M. Heenan (*Teller.*)
Hon. W. H. Kitson	

Pair.	
Aye.	No.
Hon. A. Thomson	Hon. W. R. Hall

Amendment thus passed.

On motions by Hon. C. F. Baxter, paragraph (a) further amended by striking out of line 1 the words "whether" and "or over," and by inserting before the word "who" in line 2 the word "and."

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be inserted:—"(b) who is under the age of 21 years and who has served outside Australia and is serving with any unit within Australia or the area referred to in the preceding paragraph."

That area is the South-West Pacific zone. Later I shall move an amendment to deal with a discharged member of the Forces. We may be told that there will be difficulty over the declaration, but the reply is that every soldier who is not enrolled must make a declaration.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Does not the South-West Pacific zone include the whole of Australia? I ask for a ruling whether the amendment is not a contradiction of the previous paragraph.

Hon. J. CORNELL: My proposal deals with a soldier who is under the age of 21 years. I would separate the discharged soldier from the serving soldier.

The Chief Secretary: But do you want the other words in?

Hon. J. CORNELL: They are necessary because the Federal paragraph was cut short so that the serving of Australian soldiers was not confined to the South-West Pacific zone.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The qualification, first of all, is that the soldier must have served outside Australia, and, secondly, that if he has served outside Australia and is under 21 years of age, he is to be given a vote. We have no provision for dealing with discharged soldiers. I support the amendment.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: We have decided that in the previous clause. The words "if he is now serving with a unit" would be sufficient.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Australian soldier might have served outside Australia and be at the present time in England or in some other theatre of war.

Hon. J. Cornell: He would be included.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: There seems to be some confusion in the wording of the amendment. The word "now" seems necessary. It is difficult for a layman to express opinions on matters of this kind.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the word "now" were inserted in the Bill, there might be undesired consequences. "Now" means at the present moment, and therefore would not be applicable to an election 12 months hence.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Private Brown and Private Jones join the A.I.F. and embark in Western Australian waters. I will not say where they land. They return to Australia. Brown is posted to a unit in Australia. Jones is posted to a unit in New Guinea. That is the position with which my amendment deals.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That after the word "Forces" in line 1 of paragraph (b) the words "(whether under or over the age of twenty-one years) who is not enrolled as an elector and who is within Australia or the area referred to in the preceding paragraph" be struck out and the words "(1) who is not enrolled as an elector and is not under the age of twenty-one years, or (2) is under the age of twenty-one years and has served outside Australia" inserted in lieu.

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

Clauses 6 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Action by commanding officer:

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (a) after the word "commissioned" the words "or non-commissioned" be struck out.

This will bring the clause into conformity with the Commonwealth Act, the intention of which was that responsibility should be on a commissioned officer.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We are providing that the commanding officer shall take the responsibility and I think we should be prepared to trust him to delegate his responsibility, if he so desires, to somebody else quite equal to carrying that responsibility. I do not like the idea of saying that non-commissioned officers as a body are not capable of doing or should not be trusted to do a job of this kind in the way it is ordinarily done. The circumstances under which votes will be taken during the election may be such that the commanding officer may be able to rely on a non-commissioned officer and will not have a commissioned officer available to do the work. We should not limit the opportunity of a commanding officer to delegate his responsibility. This is not like the Commonwealth election in which every man in a unit had the right to vote.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There will probably be found even in the ranks men more competent to deal with such a matter than would be the commissioned officer or any non-commissioned officer. I think the clause had better be left as it is.

Hon. T. MOORE: Scattered throughout Australia are quite a lot of guards in charge of large dumps and they are well away from officers. The non-commissioned officers in charge of those dumps are just as competent to look after the units as commissioned officers would be. I do not see why we should say that a non-commissioned officer is not a fit person to take a vote. Speaking as a former non-commissioned officer myself I feel it is an affront.

Hon. G. FRASER: What Mr. Moore says is correct so far as the Air Force is concerned. There are many small parties scattered in various portions of the Commonwealth and oversea with only an N.C.O. in charge.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I did not have the slightest intention of putting any affront on non-commissioned officers. The non-commissioned officer today may be the commissioned officer of tomorrow and the commanding officer next month. But we wish to follow Commonwealth practice, which the Chief Electoral Officer said had proved satisfactory and the responsibility should rest with the commissioned officer.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The taking of a vote is a very serious matter.

Hon. L. Craig: Not in the camps.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: It should be.

Hon. T. Moore: It is to a great number of men.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: An officer has greater control and greater command over men than a lance-corporal has. I can visualise a commanding officer of a small unit who is very busy being extremely annoyed when he gets all these voting papers and finds there are only two or three Western Australians in his unit. He would hand the papers to the sergeant-major and ask him to instruct the sergeant to get to work quickly. If the commanding officer cannot do the work himself we want him to select an officer to do it. Mr. Moore said there were many men all over Australia at dumps with no officer anywhere near.

Hon. T. Moore: Quite right!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I would like to ask him who is going to supervise those men and see they do their jobs if there is no officer.

Hon. G. Fraser: The N.C.O. in charge.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: How long would he remain in charge of a lot of men? I am sorry that, judging from the experience of my friend in the Air Force, N.C.Os. apparently take positions of responsibility all over the place and are never visited by an officer.

Hon. G. Fraser: I did not say that.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The hon. member inferred it.

Hon. G. Fraser: I did not.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: There is always an officer near the men.

Hon. T. Moore: Every day? That is bunkum!

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: A commissioned officer should look after this business. These out of the way places must be visited by officers. The men must get their rations.

Hon. G. Fraser: The officers do not take out rations.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: According to the hon. member the officers in the Air Force do not do their job. If there is something important to be attended to, the officer will go out. I cannot see what objection there is to an officer, who has to shoulder far greater responsibility than a non-commissioned officer and can maintain order at the polling.

Hon. G. Fraser: We are not objecting to a commissioned officer.

Hon. T. MOORE: Mr. Parker may browbeat a member of the Air Force but not me.

Hon. G. Fraser: Nor me either!

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: We only smile at Mr. Moore!

Hon. T. MOORE: I know that what I say is correct and I know that what we require the commissioned officer to do cannot always be done. I do not want small units to be missed, as would happen if the amendment were carried. Food is not taken up to men every day, but to hear Mr. Parker, one would imagine that was done.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I did not say that.

Hon. T. MOORE: The hon. member said the officer visited the troops, but that is not done daily or even once a week. The commanding officer should be able to delegate this job to a non-commissioned officer possessing the ability to do it. Very often in the last war it was the sergeant who carried the responsibility. I think it will be quite satisfactory if the sergeants do the work, because they will be able to do it just as well as any other man in the Army.

Hon. J. CORNELL: All this talk about officers and non-commissioned officers is out of place. The fact that should be recognised is that the Bill was originally drafted on the basis of Commonwealth legislation and provision for non-commissioned officers does not appear therein. The Chief Electoral Officer said that the Commonwealth voting was taken with every degree of satisfaction, and that is why the Select Committee agreed to stand by the Commonwealth law. The argument about little dumps here and there would apply with equal force to the recent Commonwealth elections.

The Chief Secretary: That may account for certain complaints about some units not having had an opportunity to vote.

Hon. J. CORNELL: We had to go on the advice of the Chief Electoral Officer. In any case, it is almost certain that some men in remote parts of New Guinea, for instance, will not have an opportunity to vote because the period between nomination day and polling day will not be sufficient to enable the ballot papers to reach those far-distant parts.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Why do you not move that they should not be given a vote

and then we shall know where we stand? You don't want them to get the vote!

Hon. J. CORNELL: If members stand by the views expressed by the Select Committee, they will find it will work out all right.

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

Ayes	13
Noes	8
Majority for	5

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. G. W. Miles	*(Teller.)*

NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. F. E. Gibson
	(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.	NO.
Hon. A. Thomson	Hon. W. R. Hall

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Manner of voting:

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, Subclause (2) consequentially amended by striking out the words "or non-commissioned."

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 12 to 15—agreed to.

Clause 16—Voting for members of Forces within Australia:

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, paragraph (b) consequentially amended by striking out the words "or non-commissioned."

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Action by Chief Electoral Officer:

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: The Chief Electoral Officer suggested an amendment to this clause in order to bring it into conformity with Clauses 13 and 14. I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (c) the words "returning officer for that district" be struck out and the words "Chief Electoral Officer" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 19—Voting by unenrolled discharged soldiers within Western Australia:

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, paragraph (c) consequentially amended by striking out the words "returning officer for that district" and inserting the words "Chief Electoral Officer" in lieu.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 20 and 21—agreed to.

Clause 22—One vote only to be recorded:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be inserted as follows:—"(4) Any candidate or any electoral agent or canvasser of his who in any Military or any Air Force establishment or camp addresses any meeting or canvasses any member of the Forces with a view of influencing his vote as an elector shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to imprisonment for not less than six months without the option of a fine."

Touting among the soldiers while on duty should not be permitted. Let the election be run on clean lines.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not like the amendment at all. Camps are open to the general public as a rule. The amendment could only apply to members of the Services who are in the camp. The penalty is six months imprisonment without the option of a fine. The recent Commonwealth election did not disclose any objectionable practices to which the amendment would apply. It will never be possible to stop soldiers from talking politics among themselves, and one of them may know a candidate very well and talk about him to his pals. That might be described as canvassing.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Seeing that there are numerous naval shore bases along the Australian coast, the words "any Naval" should be included in the expression "any Military or any Air Force."

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I cannot support the amendment as it stands. If it is desirable to prevent candidates and their agents from being in the camps, the words "on conviction" should be inserted after "six months imprisonment," and the minimum penalty should be deleted. The imposition of a minimum penalty is exceptional and tends to defeat its own object.

Hon. J. CORNELL. I hope the amendment will not be accepted. The Electoral Act contains nothing comparable to this amendment, which endeavours to provide for a matter that is entirely within the province

of the Naval, Military and Air Forces. We are asked to super-impose the amendment on the responsibilities of the Naval, Military and Air authorities.

Hon. G. FRASER: How is a prosecution to be launched if the offence takes place on board a ship? If the amendment were carried, its enforcement would be impossible.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I oppose the amendment. I know there are communists in the Army who will do what Mr. Baxter does not want done. They will do it wilfully.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Military authorities would put them in the clink.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: If I were in the Army and desired to get out of it, I would do what Mr. Baxter suggests.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 23—Voting by members of Civil Constructional Corps:

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of the first proviso to the clause the words "or non-commissioned" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in lines 6 and 7 of the first proviso to the clause the words "and by any person designated by him" be struck out.

This means that the commanding officer or a commissioned officer could appoint any person he liked. It would be a worse case than the non-commissioned officer designating some person.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I objected at all times during the proceedings of the Select Committee to the words "non-commissioned"' being struck out. Mr. Baxter is aware of that fact.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: Quite right.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I asked the Chief Electoral Officer whether some of the officers of his department might not be in the Fighting Forces in the capacity of lance corporals or privates. If so, they might be better able to understand this measure than would be the general or a commissioned officer. I must not be let down. I stated my opposition to the striking out of the words "non-commissioned". Sir Hal Colebatch and Mr. Cornell can put me right.

Hon. J. Cornell: We did not recommend that the words, which it is now suggested should be struck out, should be deleted.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: No.

Hon. J. Cornell: To be consistent, we must follow the Federal Act, which contains those words.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: I quite agree with that attitude. It is in accordance with the Commonwealth law.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, agreed to.

Clause 24—agreed to.

Clause 25—Objections to claims for enrolment:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of Subclause (2) the words "forty-six or" be struck out.

A mistake has been made. The principal Act has been consolidated and the numbering of the sections altered.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That after the words "forty-seven" in line 1 of Subclause (2) the words "or forty-eight" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: For some time the Select Committee thought there was no necessity for this clause at all. I am still of that opinion. However, it will do no harm, but it duplicates what is contained in the principal Act.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 26—Enrolment or reinstatement on roll of elector so entitled:

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: The Chief Electoral Officer could see no good purpose in this clause, which seemed to him to contemplate that he could override the decision of the court. The Select Committee therefore recommends its deletion.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I raise no objection to the deletion of the clause, which was not in the Bill as originally drafted, but was inserted in another place.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I listened to the Chief Electoral Officer and was guided by him, but I find that this clause works in with Clause 25. Under the previous clause, the magistrate may strike a person off the roll for a certain district, and he would have no hope of getting on the roll again for that election. Under this clause, he could apply

to the Chief Electoral Officer and be enrolled for his proper district, so I can see value in the clause.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Both Clauses 25 and 26 are unnecessary, but we agreed to retain Clause 25 because it is more or less a replica of a section in the parent Act. If an elector is struck off the roll by a magistrate, he cannot vote. The idea is that despite what the magistrate may do he can go to the electoral officer, after nominations have closed, and say, "I am living at so-and-so; put me on another roll." If members read the Bill through, they will find that it is 90 per cent. drafted to give a vote to people not on the roll. A man could make a declaration and vote, if he came under any of the categories mentioned in the Bill.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I was elected to the Select Committee against my wish but I abided by the report submitted by Sir Hal Colebatch. We agreed to certain things, sometimes against my wish, but we considered they were in the best interests in view of the fact that the job was a hurried one. Therefore I cannot understand Mr. Baxter's attitude. The Chief Electoral Officer told us why this was not desirable. He said he did not set himself up against the magistrate. The Chief Electoral Officer and the magistrate are supposed to be ex parte, but Mr. Baxter wants to put the Chief Electoral Officer, who should be above politics, above the magistrate.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: It would have been competent for the Select Committee to call a great number of witnesses and to go exhaustively into this matter. The members were influenced against taking that course by the evidence of the Chief Electoral Officer, who explained that his great difficulty was one of time. If we took several days or a week over the Select Committee, we would cut down his time, because he could not proceed with the printing until the Bill was passed. So the Select Committee confined itself to what it considered was absolutely necessary.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 27 to 29—agreed to.

Clause 30—Candidates may appoint scrutineers:

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 the word "returning" be struck out and the words "Chief Electoral" inserted in lieu.

This is consequential.

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

Clause 31—Authorised witnesses:

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 after the word "officers" the words "and non-commissioned officers" be struck out.

The Chief Secretary: Is this necessary; they are only to act as witnesses?

Hon. J. Cornell: The Commonwealth Act uses these words, "in addition to the authorised witnesses provided by Section 91 of the Commonwealth Act."

The Chief Secretary: Clause 21 deals with that point.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I merely move this amendment to keep the measure in conformity with the Commonwealth Act. It is not so important as the others.

Hon. J. Cornell: There will be no shortage of witnesses if the parent Act is invoked.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 32 to 34—agreed to.

Clause 35—Duration:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in lines 1 and 2 the words "during the present war and twelve months thereafter" be struck out, and the words "until the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and forty-four and no longer" inserted in lieu.

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

Schedule No. 1:

Hon. J. CORNELL: These schedules, I assume, were not in the original Bill, but were inserted by another place. They have been drafted to conform to the Bill providing for all members of the Forces, if over the age of 18 years, to have a vote. This House has amended the Bill to provide for two categories, namely, those over 21 and those under 21. I drafted the amendment that has been agreed to at 5.30 p.m. while sitting in my seat, and can hardly be expected to go into the question now of amending the schedule, if it is necessary to amend it. The easiest way out of the difficulty, in order to obtain expedition, is—if my amendment to Clause 5 is acceptable to another place—for it to agree to the Bill

as amended conditionally upon alterations being made to the schedule.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We can meet the position in another way. Mr. Baxter has amendments on the notice paper to amend three of the schedules by inserting the words "I am over the age of twenty-one years."

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I do not intend to move them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In the schedule to the Commonwealth Act the following words appear:—"I am not under the age of twenty-one years" or "I am under the age of twenty-one years and have served outside Australia." The applicant crossed out whichever did not apply. We could adopt that form and, if there is any need for further amendment, it can be made. I move an amendment—

That the schedule be amended by inserting a paragraph as follows:—"(4) I am not under the age of twenty-one years or I am under the age of twenty-one years and I have served outside Australia."

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

Schedules No. 2 and No. 3:

On motions by the Chief Secretary, schedules consequentially amended by inserting a similar paragraph to stand as paragraph (5).

Schedules, as amended, agreed to.

Schedule No. 4—agreed to.

New clause:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—"6. Notwithstanding the provision of this Act or the provisions of any other Act, no member of the Forces who was not ordinarily resident within Western Australia immediately prior to his appointment or enlistment as a member of the Forces or, in the case of a member of the Forces appointed or enlisted prior to the third day of September, one thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine, who was not ordinarily resident within Western Australia immediately prior to that date, shall be entitled to vote at any election."

There are many Eastern States soldiers here and quite likely they voted at the recent Federal election. The object of the new clause is not to leave the door open for them to vote in this State when they have no interest in it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It does not matter much whether the proposed clause is inserted or not. The Government never intended to give to Eastern States soldiers any opportunity to vote here. The declaration to be made is to the effect that the soldier was resident in Western Australia before he applied for the vote. If Mr. Baxter desires to make doubly sure, I have no objection.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I hope Mr. Baxter will not proceed with this new clause. The question was thrashed out by the Select Committee. The proposed clause could only apply to an Eastern States soldier enrolled here. That is a matter for the Chief Electoral Officer, who told me that it would be possible for an Eastern States soldier to become enrolled here after six months' residence in Western Australia. The Chief Electoral Officer added that he had refused to accept such enrolments. But why set out to chase merely hypothetical cases? Moreover, in my opinion the clause over-rides the parent Act.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: For a very small number of cases, it is perhaps not worth while to persevere with the proposed clause. In any case, it is too late for such a provision to take effect. I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

New clause, by leave, withdrawn.

Title:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the words "to make provision, for the duration of the present war and twelve months thereafter" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed; Title, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and an amendment to the Title.

House adjourned at 12.6 a.m. (Wednesday).