

which the public mind has been occupied for many years. Every time the question has been raised previously it has been said that just before 1928 it would be possible to put matters right. Instead of approaching it at the beginning of a session when members are fresh, we have this important question brought before a tired House which is asked, at the end of a session to deal with a question of this description. I say that that is wrong, and that the public would not be a party to it if they understood the position. The Government having now launched its policy, I shall support the amendment and I think it should be supported by members, in order that Parliament may have an opportunity of dealing with this matter during next session.

Amendment (six months) put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	16

Majority against .. 4

AYES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Foley	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Green	Mr. Thomas
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Lambert	Mr. O'Loghlen

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Lefroy
Mr. Connolly	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Robinson
Mr. George	Mr. S. Stubbs
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. E. B. Johnston	Mr. Thomson

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 15th March, 1917.

	Page
Sitting day, additional	2428
Bills: Agricultural Bank Act Amendment, 3a.	2428
Industries Assistance Act Amendment, 3a.	2428
Racing Restriction, 2a., Com., 3a.	2428
Fire Brigades, 2a.	2438
State Trading Concerns (No. 2), 2a.	2451
Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment, Com.	2464
Treasury Bonds Deficiency, Com.	2465

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

SITTING DAY, ADDITIONAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.35]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session the Council do meet for the despatch of business at 3 o'clock in the afternoon on all sitting days, and that commencing with Friday, the 16th inst., the Council do sit on Fridays in addition to the days already ordered.

The purpose of this motion is that the Government desire if possible to complete the session to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—RACING RESTRICTION.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: This short Bill will commend itself to all sections of political opinion, and is I think in conformity with the desires of the general public. Apart

altogether from the present abnormal conditions and the undoubted necessity there is for economising by reducing the amount of money spent on non-essentials, I think it will be agreed that for many years past there has been a dangerous excess of horse-racing, both galloping and trotting in the State, and particularly in the metropolitan area. In 1905, some 12 years ago, the undue excess of horse-racing was recognised by Parliament, and a select committee was appointed to give consideration to the matter. That committee took evidence and found that there was a dangerous excess of horse-racing and they made a number of recommendations as to how the difficulty might be met. Those recommendations were not acted upon; no effect was given to the report of the Committee with the result that during the 12 years that have since elapsed new racing clubs have sprung up all over the place and the evil which was recognised in 1905 has become greater in 1917. Two years ago Parliament again recognised that it was necessary to have an inquiry and an investigation into this matter and another select committee representing both Houses of the legislature and all parties in Parliament was appointed, and spent a good deal of time and took a good deal of trouble in collecting evidence. The committee confirmed the decisions of the previous committee that there was a dangerous excess of horse-racing particularly in the metropolitan area and on the goldfields. A number of recommendations was submitted and early in the present session a Bill was presented to this House which would have had the effect of meeting certain of the recommendations made by that committee. One part of that Bill was intended to give the Government ample power to cope with street and shop betting and it also contemplated that when that power was bestowed upon the Government, the bookmaker would be completely suppressed. Had these things been done the privileges the Treasurer has in the matter of imposing conditions for the issue of totalisator licenses under the Totalisator Act would have been enforced so as to limit the number of race meetings to what might have been thought a reasonable thing. The Committee of this House, however, in its wisdom amended the provision relating

to street and shop betting in such a way as to slightly weaken it—I do not suggest to destroy it—but they made a much more important amendment, an amendment which contemplated legalising the bookmakers on racecourses where the totalisator was legally in operation. After due consideration the Government determined not to proceed with that Bill, for the reason that they were determined not to entrench the bookmaker behind statutory authority, not to give him legal right to carry on his calling. And so the question arose, what should the Government do in order to cope with the excess of racing in some other way? It was realised that merely to restrict the number of days on which the totalisator should be issued to any club enjoying the privilege of using the totalisator would not necessarily meet the case if the bookmaker was to be permitted to ply his calling, and if meetings might be carried on with only the bookmaker operating. The Government were also faced with another difficulty: The W.A.T.C. has certain powers under Act of Parliament in relation to the totalisator, and perhaps it may simplify the matter if I explain to hon. members the effects of the different totalisator Acts which appear on the statute-book. Act No. 47 of Victoria 26, passed in 1883, was an Act to legalise the use of the totalisator. It made it lawful for any *bona fide* club, established for the promotion of horse-racing, to use the totalisator. The Perth racecourse was granted to trustees for the W.A.T.C. in 1877, but it was not until 1892 that the club was incorporated by Act of Parliament. However, it was a *bona fide* club within the meaning of the Totalisator Act 1883, and its private Act of 1892 authorised the club to make by-laws for the use of the totalisator. In 1899 the Totalisator Act Amendment Act was passed, in which it was recited that it was expedient to define more clearly the meaning of "*bona fide* club" as mentioned in the Totalisator Act, and it was then enacted that it should be lawful for the Colonial Treasurer to authorise any club or company incorporated, or otherwise registered by the W.A.T.C. to use the totalisator, and that such authority should constitute it a *bona fide* club within

the meaning of the Totalisator Act. In 1902 the Criminal Code enacted the law relating to betting houses. Section 211 of the reprint of 1913 contains a declaratory clause stating that the W.A.T.C. and any other club incorporated or otherwise registered by the W.A.T.C., and authorised by the Colonial Treasurer, may lawfully use the totalisator. Such authority of the Colonial Treasurer would not be revocable. The registration by the W.A.T.C. under its rules must be annual, and such renewal is in the discretion of the W.A.T.C. Therefore, prior to the Totalisator Regulation Act of 1912 the betting laws prohibited the use of the totalisator except by the W.A.T.C., or some other club having the authority of the Colonial Treasurer and registered by the W.A.T.C. The Totalisator Regulation Act of 1912 enabled the Colonial Treasurer in his uncontrolled discretion to issue totalisator licenses to other clubs. Every such license expires on the 31st December and is revocable at any time by the Colonial Treasurer in his discretion, and no license can be granted unless the Colonial Treasurer is satisfied that no profits or gains of the club are divisible amongst members. The Totalisator Regulation Act applies to trotting races as well as to horse-racing. No license is required by the W.A.T.C. or any club registered by it and authorised by the Treasurer to use the totalisator, because the use of the totalisator by such clubs was already recognised by law. Such clubs, however, are required to pay the equivalent of the fee payable for a license. There were thus two positions set up in regard to the totalisator. The one that all clubs registered by the W.A.T.C. enjoyed the use of the totalisator as a right by law, whereas any other club enjoying the use of the totalisator enjoyed it only by license from the Treasurer, and at his uncontrolled discretion. Consequently, it was necessary to proceed in some other form except merely by attempting to limit the number of horse-races by placing restrictions on the use of the totalisator. After careful consideration, and a conference between the different racing bodies, the arrangement was arrived at which is embodied in the Bill before

the House. The number of race meetings and trotting meetings combined now held in the metropolitan area is 158 per annum, or three per week. Of these 50 are conducted under the authority of the W.A.T.C., 52 under the authority of the W.A. Racing Association, popularly known as the unregistered, and 56 trotting meetings under the authority of the W.A. Trotting Association. Under the Bill this number is reduced to 111, a reduction of 47, or approximately one-third of the total. I can quite imagine that many hon. members will regret that the reduction is not greater. I regret it myself. I think it should be greater. But I would suggest to hon. members that before moving for any further reduction they take into consideration a difficulty that may possibly arise in inducing another place to agree to such further reduction, and also that they shall recognise that the Bill, at all events, is a very important step in the right direction, even if it does not go so far as hon. members desire. Personally, I may say candidly that it does not go so far as I could desire if I had my own way. It is generally recognised that the over-racing in the metropolitan area recently has not been in regard to the clubs controlled by the W.A.T.C. Apparently these clubs operating under the other galloping institution, the W.A. Racing Association, or unregistered, recognise that they were the offenders in this particular; because the arrangement that has been arrived at between those two bodies does not contemplate a reduction of the meetings held under the authority of the W.A.T.C., but does contemplate a reduction of one-half in the meetings held by the W.A. Racing Association, or unregistered. The W.A.T.C. had, in all, 50 days, distributed as follows:—The W.A.T.C. 17; Belmont, Canning Park and Helena Vale, 10 each; Tattersall's, two; and the W.A. Hunt Club, one day. It was recognised that very little good would be accomplished by the limiting of the racing dates of existing clubs unless some steps were taken to prevent new clubs starting up, and thereby reproducing the old evil. As a matter of fact all the trouble has arisen through the springing up of new clubs during recent years. Happily an arrange-

ment has been arrived at by which, if the Bill is passed, any danger of the kind in future will be avoided. The Bill provides that, in order to prevent this trouble in future, no race-meeting in which horses are being raced for a stake or prize shall be held without a license in writing from the W.A.T.C. Had the Bill been passed merely in this form, without any agreement between the parties concerned, it would probably have met with a very great deal of opposition, because it would have meant destroying the unregistered clubs without notice, without consideration, and perhaps unfairly, in view of the amount of money they have probably invested in this undertaking with the authority of the State. The fact that they have been granted the use of the totalisator shows that they had the authority of the State behind them for proceeding in what they regard as a business. Happily the W.A.T.C. and the W.A. Racing Association were enabled to come to an arrangement. The arrangement is not embodied in the Bill, but it is such that the unregistered, although they are to be wiped out of existence, favour the passage of the Bill. The arrangement is that the W.A. Racing Association shall abandon two of their courses, and that the remaining course, Goodwood, shall be registered by the W.A.T.C. This is purely a matter between the W.A.T.C. and the unregistered, it being open to the W.A.T.C. to register all the courses if they desire; but the effect of it will be that if the Bill is passed two courses of the unregistered will be abandoned as racecourses, and the remaining course, Goodwood, will become a registered course. It will not be possible for any one in the future to conduct a race-meeting except under the authority in writing of the Commissioner of Taxation. Consequently, the Bill, so far as galloping is concerned, achieves two objects: it reduces the number of race-meetings and it does away entirely with unregistered racing.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Is Goodwood a proprietary course?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I really do not know. There are several other proprietary clubs registered by the W.A.T.C. The W.A. Racing Association obtained the use of the totalisator on the

certificate of the W.A.T.C. that it was a *bona fide* club.

Hon. J. Cornell: Goodwood is owned by the same proprietary as owns Belmont.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I expect it is so. The select committee appointed from both Houses gave a good deal of consideration to this question. I admit at once that the select committee found it difficult to reconcile the evidence it obtained on that occasion with the certificate that had been issued to the effect that the W.A. Racing Association was a purely amateur body and entitled to the use of the totalisator under the Act I have already quoted. However, I do not know that this has any particular application to the present position, because even if Goodwood was frankly admitted to be proprietary, it would merely stand on the same footing as the three other proprietary courses registered by the W.A.T.C. Subclause 2 of Clause 2 limits the number of race-meetings which may be held in the metropolitan area, and if hon. members will turn to Clause 5 they will there see that "metropolitan area" includes all land within a radius of 30 miles of the town hall, Perth. So it will not be possible for any club to evade that restriction by starting a new course somewhere else close to the City. The number of race meetings that may be held in a year is 76. That is to say, 50 meetings previously held by clubs affiliated with the W.A.T.C. will be continued, whilst instead of the 50 the unregistered previously held on one or another course controlled by the W.A. Racing Association, there will be 26 meetings conducted by the newly registered Goodwood Club. Provision is made under which the Treasurer may, at the request of the W.A.T.C., authorise race-meetings to be held in addition to those prescribed in the Bill to the number of five only, and only for public hospital, charitable or patriotic purposes. So, before any of those five meetings can be held, it must be shown that it is for public hospital purposes, for charities, or for patriotic purposes, and it must receive the sanction of the W.A.T.C. and the approval of the Treasurer. When the Bill was originally introduced no reference was made in it to trotting, except to exclude trotting from the

jurisdiction of the W.A.T.C. The reason for not mentioning the Trotting Association in the Bill was, as I have explained in dealing with the different totalisator Acts, that the Government felt they had ample power under the Totalisator Act to restrict the number of trotting meetings. Unlike the W.A.T.C., the Trotting Association has no right by law to the use of the totalisator. It enjoys it by license from the Treasurer, and that license is entirely in the discretion of the Treasurer to give or refuse, or, having given, to give under such conditions as he may see fit. It was the intention of the Government at the time that Parliament should deal with the matter of galloping races, because they came under the W.A.T.C., which has the use of the totalisator by law, and that the Government would restrict trotting races. In another place, however, it was decided—I think wisely, and the Government are glad to be relieved of the responsibility of dealing with the matter—that Parliament should also fix the number of dates of each race meeting conducted by the W.A. Trotting Association. It was also thought advisable that similar precautions to those taken in regard to galloping should be taken in regard to trotting, namely, to prevent the cropping up of new clubs and the over-indulgence in racing that we are endeavouring, by this measure, to prevent. The clauses in the Bill dealing with trotting give the W.A. Trotting Association the same exclusive powers over trotting that the W.A.T.C. have over racing. Subclause 2 of Clause 3 limits the number of trotting meetings to 35 in any one year, as against 56 as it is at the present time, a reduction of 21. Many hon. members may consider that this is not a sufficient reduction, but I would urge that before attempting to give effect to their views in that direction they should remember that it is an important reduction, and that it would be a pity if the passage of the Bill and the securing of that reduction were to be jeopardised by the refusal of another place to consent to any further reduction in the number of meetings. There is a provision under which the Colonial Treasurer, at the request of the W.A. Trotting Association, should grant five additional meetings, as is the case in regard

to galloping, for public hospital, charitable or patriotic purposes. There again each of those five meetings must be held for that purpose, and they must be applied for by the West Australian Trotting Association and approved of by the Colonial Treasurer. It will be noticed that no limitation is imposed so far as racing on the goldfields areas or in the country districts is concerned. The reason for that is that no legislative action is considered necessary in either of these cases. So far as the country clubs are concerned, racing is practically at a standstill. There is scarcely any country club holding more than one meeting in the year, and for the most part these are merely picnic affairs which it is not necessary to pass legislation to interfere with. In regard to the goldfields, it is quite true that the select committee of 1915 reported that there was an excess of racing there. Happily the conditions have very materially altered since then. When the Committee went to the goldfields they found two magnificent racecourses at Kalgoorlie and Boulder, which were not only racecourses but public parks of inestimable value to the people. It seemed to be generally admitted that if it had not been for the racing clubs having taken this matter up and established these fine courses similar privileges could not have been afforded to the people of Kalgoorlie and Boulder, except at great expense to the ratepayers of these two municipalities. But the trouble was that whereas a comparatively small number of race meetings was held on these two fine courses each year, there were two or three other courses—

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Two.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Entirely disgraceful in the matter of appointments, and where the races were held with great frequency. The committee, however, in reporting that there was an excess of racing on the goldfields, did not have in mind that it was desirable in any way to restrict the operations of the two clubs carrying on their races at the Kalgoorlie and Boulder race courses. They thought it desirable to restrict the other clubs, not only in the interests of the public generally but in order that these two racecourses, which we recognise the public were getting a good deal of

benefit from, should not be obliged to suffer unfair competition at the hands of these other racecourses. Happily the local people of Kalgoorlie and Boulder have solved this problem for themselves. I do not know the details of the arrangement, but some arrangement has been arrived at there by which a few more meetings are held on the good racecourses whilst the other racecourses I believe, have been practically wiped out. For these reasons it was considered that there was no need to pass special legislation in regard to other country districts or the goldfields areas, consequently this Bill aims merely at restricting the number of race meetings in the metropolitan area, and making provision which it is believed will prevent any new clubs cropping up and any abuse arising in the future. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [5.6]: If this Bill becomes law, it will be a permanent piece of legislation. Personally, I would rather have seen it a temporary piece of legislation, so that the Government controlling this matter would have to bring it down to Parliament and give Parliament an opportunity of dealing, each year, with the question of whether there is a surfeit of racing or otherwise. I recognise that there is need for the restriction of racing. The position as we know it to-day with regard to galloping, is that in the metropolitan area the W.A.T.C. controls itself. It controls the Belmont, Canning Park, and Helena Vale racecourses. The unregistered bodies control the Goodwood and Bicton racecourses, and they have a course also at South Perth, and though I believe they do not run it they pay the rent upon it so that no one else can race there. With regard to the case of unregistered and registered clubs, it is proposed to cut out Bicton and to give 26 days to Goodwood. I think it is a public scandal that a course like Goodwood is going to have this number of days in the year as against a course like the W.A.T.C. with only 17 a year, or an old established course like Canning Park or Helena Vale with ten racing days each. Some compromise, of course, had to be made. We find that there are just across the Swan River the Belmont racecourse and the Goodwood

racecourse. The Belmont racecourse has been a registered course, and Goodwood an unregistered course. These two courses are side by side, only being divided from each other by a fence. It is intended that the old established racecourse shall have ten days in the year, although it is an infinitely better course than the Goodwood course, and has better conveniences, whilst the other course, which is absolutely the worst of its kind in the metropolitan area, is to be given 26 days in the year. It has been the fault of previous Government that unregistered racing has sprung up, and I recognise, with the Colonial Secretary, that a compromise is necessary. In the interests of economy and in the interests of the people who attend Goodwood, it will be infinitely better for the proprietor—and it is the same proprietor for both racecourses—to close up Goodwood altogether and give Belmont the 36 days. It is an absolute absurdity to give Belmont only 10 days and Goodwood 26, when they are both under the same proprietor and are side by side. Both of these courses have to be maintained, and in the interests of economy one should be given up altogether. There is another point which appeals to me as to what will be the jurisdiction of the Bill with regard to the employees connected with unregistered racing. Men have been disqualified on the registered courses. I know of one case which is one of the grossest pieces of injustice ever done to one of the most decent lads that ever lived. That lad and others have been admitted into the fold of the unregistered clubs, and are earning a livelihood there. I take it that the passage of the Bill would mean that the whole of the horses and owners, trainers and jockeys operating on unregistered courses would be admitted into the fold of the W.A.T.C. and white-washed. If that is not going to be so, I say that we will land ourselves in this position, that we will give the exclusive power to the W.A.T.C. to do what they like in the matter. The W.A.T.C. are admitting the Goodwood course, but are to reserve to themselves the right to say whether or not they will admit certain persons or horses upon which they have placed a ban. If they decide not to admit them, and the Bill does not provide that they shall, this will mean that there are men

who will be thrown out of this particular means of getting a livelihood. The Bill should have been framed in the direction of affording a safeguard in this respect. I recognise that the proprietors of unregistered racecourses may be estimable men, but when it comes to the question of whether or not two or three of the owners, and trainers operating should go over to the W.A.T.C., or whether the majority of them should go over, I cannot help thinking that the minority will be sacrificed. I should like to deal with a disparity that appears in the Bill with regard to the number of dates given to the Trotting Association in comparison with the number of dates given to the Goodwood club. Here is a Trotting Association which is purely an amateur body, and has done something for the improvement of the standard of what is called the utility horse. I myself have never been to a trotting meeting in the metropolitan area or to an unregistered race meeting within the State, although I have been very often to registered meetings. The Trotting Association has done something for the improvement of this class of horse. I would like to know what the unregistered racing bodies have ever done in the direction of the improvement of the breed of horses. As a matter of fact these bodies draw 90 per cent. of their horses from the ranks of those which have been disqualified on the registered courses, or have been run off their legs there and are of very little further use. One can safely say that 90 per cent. of the horses racing on unregistered courses is made up of derelicts.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And you want them all brought back.

Hon. J. CORNELL: If they are to be brought back, they ought to be brought back without qualification. I am not so much concerned about the horses going back as I am about the men. I am drawing a comparison. It is proposed to give Goodwood twenty-six days as against the thirty-five days to be given to the Trotting Association. Goodwood is a purely proprietary club which races for profit and for nothing else. In the Trotting Association on the other hand, we have a body of men

who have put their money into trotting and in many cases have given their services gratuitously. Yet in their case the reduction is more drastic than in the case of the reduction proposed in the unregistered. I recognise with the Colonial Secretary that there may be difficulties in another place in the way of securing an alteration. But at the same time I recognise also that it was not only a question of getting an agreement between the Government and the racing bodies in determining the number of racing days, but it was also a question of getting another place to agree, and it is always a difficult matter to arrive at such arrangements in another place. I am satisfied that if this House had its own way Goodwood would not get so many racing days.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH (North-East) [5.17]: I desire to offer a few remarks in support of the Bill now before the House. I believe that this Bill if carried will have some effect on racing in the metropolitan area in the direction of controlling both racing and trotting. Personally, I am in favour of sport generally but considering the times in which we are now living, I do not think much harm would be done if the whole of the courses were shut up altogether until after the war; it would probably do good. I recognise at the same time that there are hundreds, probably thousands, engaged in trotting and racing and that it would be a hardship to wipe out the industry altogether if only for the time being. I think we have too much to think of now to have time for racing at all. To my way of thinking, the evils attendant on racing are having severe effects on Western Australia. As regards trotting, I am as great an admirer as the next man of a good horse, but I do think that under this Bill it is proposed that we shall have too much trotting. To reduce the number of racing dates to twenty-six, with five additional, making thirty-one, would be ample. The other racing bodies have reduced their number considerably, from one hundred and fifty eight to seventy-six, and in view of this in my opinion it is proposed that too many dates shall be given over to trotting. With Mr. Cornell, I hope in connection with the transfer of the unregistered clubs that if

whitewashing is to be applied it will be applied to all. There is not the slightest doubt that many of the lads riding on unregistered courses to-day would hold their own with any others in Australia. I know in particular of one boy who was picked out in a despicable manner by the authorities and debarred from riding for all time. I think that is unfair and I hope when the matter is being considered these boys will be given a chance of redeeming anything of which they have been guilty, or of which they are supposed to have been guilty, in the past. I do not wish to say anything further, but hope that when the Bill is in Committee one clause in particular will be amended in the direction of reducing the number of trotting meetings.

Hon. R. J. LYNN (West) [5.21]: This Bill restricting horse-racing practically hands over the control of all manner of racing within the area prescribed in the Bill, that is the metropolitan area, to the Western Australian Turf Club and the Trotting Association. With this I have no fault to find, because I consider that racing should be governed and managed by some responsible party. I hope the House will not take any exception to my parochial views if I refer to an amendment I should like to see placed in the Bill in order to give the Fremantle district one or two of those meetings included in the seventy-six referred to. I understand from the remarks of the Colonial Secretary that Bicton is to be wiped out. Members will realise that Bicton is a name to conjure with from a horse racing point of view. Under the Bill the Fremantle district will not have any race-meetings at all. I desire to support this measure, but when it gets into Committee I propose to move an amendment to clause 2, which reads, "Subject as herein-after provided, the number of race-meetings to be held in the metropolitan area, inclusive of the race-meetings of the Western Australian Turf Club, shall not exceed seventy-six in any year." I propose to move in the direction of adding after the word "year" the words "five of which, if applied for, shall be allocated to the Melville Park, Fremantle or Jandakot Roads Boards Districts." I shall do that for the reason that we have in the Fremantle dis-

trict a racecourse at Jandakot, another at Rockingham—perhaps not one of which any of our expert riders would care to ride at or our owners would send their horses to—and also one at Bicton. During the next week or two the racing fraternity at Fremantle has arranged for the holding of a big meeting the object of which is to help the Fremantle hospital, and it is hoped by that means that a large sum of money will be raised. My reason in moving in this direction will be in order to preserve for Fremantle at least five days during the year for what may be termed picnic meetings. We do not want to be in the position of having to apply to the Western Australian Turf Club for the five dates and possibly meeting with a refusal. If it is proposed to abolish the course in the Fremantle district which has been racing for some years—and we are not raising any objection to that abolition—it is not too much to ask for this amendment in order that those five meetings, if applied for, shall be allocated to that district. When the Bill reaches the Committee state I shall give notice of my intention to move the amendment I have indicated.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South) [5.16]: I take the same view as some of the hon. members who have spoken in regretting that there has not been a greater reduction of racing dates proposed in the Bill. I may say, too, that I recognise the necessity for the compromise that has arisen. As has been pointed out by Mr. Cornell, there seems to be an injustice worked on the other courses in comparison with the treatment of Goodwood, more especially when we realise that Bicton is to be wiped out. I must confess I do not know a great deal about the ethics of horse-racing, but I think I know enough of its general principles to know that we have far too much of it. I want to take this opportunity of saying a few words in reply to the assertions on both sides in the recent controversy we had on the question of the abolition of bookmakers. Most of the criticisms of members of Parliament in this connection were in a very narrow spirit. In connection with the previous proposals in regard to racing and the abolition of bookmakers, and the placing of an extra tax through the totalisator whereby it was ex-

pected that a certain amount of revenue would be derived, some of us were criticised very seriously for daring to vote for the legalising of the bookmaker. Members may be pardoned for doubting the sincerity of the Government in their first proposal. I want also to endorse the remarks made by the Colonial Secretary with regard to the racecourses on the goldfields. There cannot be the slightest doubt but that the courses there are excellent. They are more than racecourses, they are parks; and the success of racing under the registered system since it has operated on the goldfields has borne out the anticipations of its supporters. I realise that if by means of this Bill we can have some of the evils attendant on racing removed we shall be doing some good.

Hon J. A. GREIG (South-East) [5.28]: I wish only to say that I intend to support the Bill because I realise it is the best we are likely to get at the present time. With regard to the proposal to limit the number of racing dates to seventy-six, personally I would be prepared to move an amendment that the seventy be struck out and six allowed to stand, if I thought such an amendment would be carried. As a people and a nation, in the position we are in to-day, engaged in a great war, I think we are not doing the best we can towards winning the war when we pass a horse racing Bill which reduces horse racing to only the amount proposed in this Bill. Considering the evidence given before the Select committee some time ago, and considering the number of men engaged in this horse racing industry as it has been termed—it may be an industry but if so it is non-productive, if it produces anything in my opinion it produces only parasites—I think that from a national point of view at this time, when we are at death grips with an enemy in a great war, if we were to abolish horse racing altogether or to reduce it to half a dozen meetings in a year, we would be acting as statesmen, and doing something calculated to show the Home authorities in the old land that we here are regarding the position seriously and are genuinely trying to win the war.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Limitation of race meetings in the metropolitan area.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I move an amendment—

That after "year" in line 4 of Subclause 2, the words "five of which if applied for shall be allocated to the Fremantle, Melville Park and Jandakot roads boards districts" be inserted.

These dates may not be required, but if they are, the chances are that at least 50 per cent. of the proceeds will be devoted to charity. The district in question constitutes in the aggregate a large agricultural area, but comes within the zone prescribed in the Bill, and therefore requires protection.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I trust hon. member will not press the amendment. If it was to be carried a difficulty would arise in the condition "if applied for." Who is to apply for it?

Hon. R. J. Lynn: The respective districts.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The districts cannot make application. Who in the district shall do so, the road board or the council of churches for the district? There is no racing authority in the district to make the application. I would draw attention also to the distinction Clause 2 raises between race meetings and the holding of a horse race or a pony race. The hon. member suggested the possible holding of a charity picnic at which a horse race or a pony race might be held. That would not be a race meeting, and it would be competent to obtain the the license of the W.A. Turf Club for the holding of such a charity picnic race. If it is intended to allow so many race meetings to be held in that area great difficulty will arise, in consequence of which the Bill might be destroyed.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: What is meant exactly by the term "race meeting?" It is not necessarily confined to one day. I have known race meetings started early in the morning and continued into the moon-light. To my mind the interpretation of race meetings given in the Bill seems inadequate.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I have no wish to prejudice the passage of the Bill. If the leader of the House cannot see his way to accept my amendment I am prepared to withdraw it.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—No trotting racing to be held without the license of the W.A. Trotting Association:

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: I move an amendment—

That in line four of Subclause 2 the words "thirty-five be struck out and "twenty-six" inserted in lieu.

This will give the Trotting Association a total of 31 meetings as against the 40 prescribed in the Bill. If we are sincere in our expressed desire to reduce the gambling evil and minimise racing we have here an opportunity for doing so.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: My only reason for not readily accepting the amendment is that I do not consider the difference of nine meetings over the whole year of sufficient importance to warrant running the risk of losing the Bill. I might also point out that this is the maximum number, and even after the Bill is passed it will be competent for the Treasurer, through the Totalisator Act, to make further reductions.

Hon. J. E. DODD: Another place can only disagree and send it back.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I support the amendment. If it is carried it will still leave one trotting meeting in every fortnight. I think that will be more than sufficient. I would like to reduce it still further.

Hon. J. CORNELL: To ensure the passage of the Bill the galloping bodies have been specially conciliated. The proposal now is to further reduce a bona fide amateur club which has done something for the improvement of horse breeding. For the sake of the Bill I myself have purposely refrained from moving amendments, and I do not think this amendment ought to be pressed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am opposed to the amendment. The Scaddan Government, in the first place, reduced the number of trotting meetings; and the reduction now proposed is too heavy in view of

the fact that about 800 trotting horses are registered in Western Australia, a matter of about £250,000 in all being invested in the sport of trotting. Certainly, a reduction of 31 days cannot be termed a process of gradual reduction. Personally, I do not favour trotting, but I try to take a reasonable view of matters. The trotting association are a purely amateur body, and their membership numbers about 700. The sport of trotting is useful to agricultural societies, which are subsidised by the trotting association. That institution, moreover, has done as much as any other institution to support charitable and patriotic funds.

Hon. R. J. LYNN: I shall vote against the amendment. While favouring the reduction of racing in the metropolitan area, I do not wish to jeopardise the Bill, and therefore prefer to adhere to its terms.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I think hon. members would be well advised to pass the Bill as introduced. For months past there has been keen controversy on the subject of racing, with a good deal of feeling, and many differences of opinion. The racing bodies and the other people interested have arrived at a definite understanding, which is, in any case, far preferable to the existing state of affairs; and the measure has had full consideration in another place from men who thoroughly understand the subject. At the end of the session, time is the essence of the contract. More especially as various hon. members of this Chamber have said that they know nothing of racing, we might pass the Bill without amendment.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: As regards the amendment, I agree with the leader of the House and Mr. Lynn; but I should like to make a brief personal explanation and even an apology, to you, Mr. Chairman, and other members of the Committee. Last night, when the question of finance was being discussed, I spoke with reference to one hon. member, and said something about arithmetical influences being at work, for which expression you, Sir, reproved me. The expression arose merely from what I may term an elliptical use of language; and I wish specially to exempt Mr. Hamersley from my explanation and apology, for this reason, that I am quite certain he did not

take the words in the meaning which you, Sir, and other members very naturally put upon them. I wished to ask him what new considerations in connection with public finance had influenced him in altering his opinion; and elliptically I put it, what financial or arithmetical influences were at work? I wish to make this *amende honorable*. I shall vote against the amendment because I agree with the leader of the House that to jeopardise the Bill would be insane.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Interpretation:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The point has already been raised by Mr. Hamersley whether it is necessary to define "meeting" in this interpretation clause. A "race meeting" of the W.A.T.C. or of the Kalgoolie Club extends over three or four days.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: As I have previously said, I think a meeting of persons who met for two or three days would be two or three meetings.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: Would an agricultural show at which a trotting race was held be a trotting meeting?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No. There is a distinction between a race meeting and a race.

Hon. J. CORNELL: When will this measure come into operation by proclamation? We know that the racing year commences on the 1st August.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Clause 1 provides that the measure shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by proclamation. I do not know exactly what the date will be.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—FIRE BRIGADES.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 8th March.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [5.58]: I listened with considerable atten-

tion to the speech in which the leader of the House introduced this Bill. In my opinion, it is a matter for regret that so important a Bill should have been introduced at such a late stage of the session. The measure comprises more than 80 clauses, and therefore merits large consideration. I desire again to enter my protest against the bringing down, so late in the session, of a Bill of such enormous length and such great importance. I understood that this was to be a session of administration, and not of legislation. Yet we have been confronted with 46 Bills; and there is now on the Notice Paper, among other measures, a Bill to amend the Health Act, comprising 42 clauses. I appeal to the Colonial Secretary not to push these measures any further than he can help.

The Colonial Secretary: We will not trouble with the Health Act Amendment Bill.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: The two great works we have before us are, firstly, to win the war, and secondly, to produce as much as we possibly can from the soil. In the circumstances, how can our minds give proper attention to all these Bills? Many of us are left practically without help, and our minds are filled with the thought how we are to carry on our properties, our best assistants having gone to the Front. If the Fire Brigades Bill does not receive proper consideration, the Government must not blame the House. The fact will be due to the bringing down of the measure at such a stage. It may be admitted that the Bill is chiefly a consolidating measure. Had it been confined to that purpose, or had it been restricted to the scope of the measure as introduced in another place, it would have been all right. But we find that at the last moment the Government accepted one or two most important and drastic amendments to which there is very little time to give consideration. These might have been kept till some other period. There are three important amendments in the Bill as it comes before the House. One is that on the Fire Brigades Board, consisting of nine members, the Government have the right of appointing the chairman. Hitherto the usual course has been, as it is in most bodies of that kind for the board

to elect their own chairman. Now the Government have taken to themselves the right to nominate the chairman. The next amendment, and it is even more important than the last, reduced the number of representatives of the fire insurance companies from three to two, and has added another representative to the municipalities, roads boards and other bodies, thereby reducing the representation of the fire insurance companies, although they have to make the same large contributions as in the past.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: A very just alteration.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: That is a matter of opinion and one with which I do not agree. The other amendment is that the Minister has the right to decide any difference of opinion between the board and any local bodies which are generally composed of municipal councils, roads boards, etc. As far as I can see the underlying principle in the Bill is the change from a permanent body of men to volunteer brigades. That is, the permanently paid system versus the volunteer system. That is what is endeavoured to be aimed at in the Bill. In introducing the measure the leader of the House took no exception to the paid men; he took no exception to their fitness for their position. Indeed he went out of his way to say they are the very best men we can have and that they are experienced. He also paid a great compliment to the representatives of the fire insurance companies because he said that they knew their business so thoroughly and were so expert—they knew exactly what was wanted—that when they met together the three representatives representing the fire insurance companies dominated the other six. Could we have a finer compliment or a finer recognition of the merit of these representatives than that? The principal amendment is the reduction of the representatives on the board for the fire insurance companies from three to two. Previously the board has been made up of nine members of which the Government had two representatives, the insurance companies three, the local authorities had three and the volunteer fire brigades one. Now it has been altered to two for the Government, two for the insurance companies, four for local authorities and one for the volunteer brigades.

So that we see the representatives of the fire brigades have been reduced, this in the face of the fact that the Colonial Secretary said that they were most excellent and expert. The Government are taking away one of the three who dominate the other six and propose to substitute for that one what we may call an amateur. Those who represent the local authorities—roads boards and municipalities—are practically amateurs. It seems to me for the safety of the community it is better to have a board composed of experienced men than those who are practically amateurs.

Hon. H. Millington: Some amateurs know a bit about the game.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I do not say that they do not. The contributions are made up by the Government paying two-eighths, the insurance companies three-eighths and the local authorities three-eighths and although the representatives of the insurance companies have been reduced by one their contribution remains the same. So that it seems it is hardly fair; if they contribute so much, they should have a fair amount of representation. In moving the second reading of the Bill the Colonial Secretary stated that in Victoria the Government only had two representatives and in Adelaide the Government only had two.

The Colonial Secretary: There is a country board in Victoria and a metropolitan board. On the country board the Government have two.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I find now from information I have received that in Victoria the Government have three representatives.

The Colonial Secretary: That is on the metropolitan board.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: The Government have three, the municipalities three and the insurance companies have three. Here it is proposed to give the insurance companies only two representatives. In Adelaide the insurance companies have two representatives, but there the board only consists of five members so that they very nearly have one-half, which makes a large difference. It might be argued, and from the interjections I hear around me it is held, that the fire insurance companies should not have so much influence on the board. But

we want the most experienced people on the board we can get. We must have the most competent. There are three reasons why the fire insurance companies should have reasonable representation. They pay the highest contributions in comparison with the number of members. The next is they have thoroughly expert knowledge and surely this is the most important thing, and they have to pay whenever a fire occurs. The local authorities and Government never pay anything, but whenever there is a fire it is the insurance companies who have to pay. Therefore it is only fair that they should have a large say in how to arrange matters, and they are the custodians of the people who have insured. Therefore it is for them to take the greatest precautions to see that there are no fires. If a fire takes place, we will say at a place like Subiaco, and there are a lot of places burned down, the natural answer is, well it is all right, the insurance people will pay. But it does not pay the public to have property burned down. Take a place like Sandover's. Supposing it was burned down to-morrow, the insurance companies of course would have to pay and probably the contents of the building may be insured, probably not. But look at the time it will take to re-erect and re-stock such a place. It is to the interests of the business men that the best precautions should be taken. I consider that throughout all large cities the system of permanently paid men should be continued. We should have permanently paid men because it is essential that as soon as a fire breaks out it should be attended to before it gets a hold. Let us take the position of a volunteer brigade in the City, and a volunteer brigade on the goldfields. A fire breaks out, the bell rings, probably some of the members of the volunteer board are in business positions and their employers object to them going to the fire. At any rate, it takes time to get them all together. In a case on the goldfields probably the men would be down a mine and by the time the volunteer brigade is got together, let them be as expert as you like, the fire has got a great hold, and the result is that a huge mass of buildings are burned down. Take the permanent body in Perth. I am a little extravagant, perhaps,

when I say that inside 10 seconds from getting the signal the whole machinery is out of the place and at the fire. Everyone must agree that it is better to keep up to date machinery and paid men. Another thing is that in dealing with intricate machinery there must be employed tried and experienced men, and everybody will agree that those who have learned to use the machinery are better than amateurs would be. The Colonial Secretary in the course of his speech learnt all the time towards volunteer fire brigades and naturally so. I like volunteer fire brigades myself, but not in large cities. In town and villages it is a good thing. It keeps the young men out of mischief, it keeps them in good health and they can become efficient when they work together. But the volunteers are not available at the time they are required in a large city. The interpretation clause says that—

“Volunteer Fire Brigade” means any association of persons formed for the purpose of extinguishing fires if the carrying out of the purpose of such association is not the sole or principal calling or the means of livelihood of such persons or of a majority of them.

It shows that these volunteer fire brigades are composed of men whose time would not be always available. The inference is that these men are earning their living elsewhere and are liable to be called upon as they are required. In these circumstances it must be seen that they are not as valuable as paid men. The Colonial Secretary naturally from the point of view of the Government, is in favour of the volunteer fire brigades on account of their cheapness. It is admitted they are cheaper and do not cost the same amount of money in contributions as a permanent brigade would and also the municipal bodies would be naturally of the same opinion because they have to make a contribution. The leader of the House, therefore, is bemoaning the contributions the Government would have to make; his object is to save contributions.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: In continuing my address I wish hon. members to distinctly understand that I have no

desire whatever to disparage in any way volunteer brigades. On the contrary I have seen a good deal of them in country places and have the highest admiration for them and for their work, but I still contend that under the interpretation of volunteers, and from the very nature of their avocations it is impossible for them to attend promptly at the outbreak of a fire, and therefore I contend there should be paid permanent men in connection with brigades in large and closely populated cities. In looking through the constitution of the Fire Brigades Board it will be seen that it is made up of three different parties, the Government, the fire insurance companies and the local authorities, all of whom may contribute, and from the remarks of the leader of the House these contributions have been comparatively heavy, so much so that both the local authorities and the Government wish them to be very much reduced. It is all very well to reduce these contributions, but that may impair the efficiency of the board, and therefore we have to compare the question as to whether a reduction of the cost would be equivalent to the loss that might be occasioned from inefficient brigades. Supposing that in a closely populated suburb like Subiaco, a fire broke out, and we had there a volunteer brigade, and the fire got a firm hold and burnt down £10,000 or £20,000 worth of property? What is the saving of a couple of thousand pounds a year in comparison to the damage that might occur there? It is just a question of contribution, and a question of cheapness and the saving of contributions to the extent of two or three thousand pounds a year as against a loss to the public of £10,000 or £20,000. Surely the Government are the guardians of the interests of the public, and therefore in the legislation they draft they should take the best means of caring for those interests of the public to the fullest extent. It is not as if anything I am speaking of is new, or as if I were asking for further privileges. All I am suggesting is that the clause in the Bill relating to this matter shall be altered again to its original form, the form in which it was introduced in another place by the Government, with the exception of cutting out the power given to the Government to

nominate the chairman. In asking for this I am not asking for any special favour. The logical conclusion is that if we are to have an effective board it should be composed of the most experienced and capable men, and under those circumstances it is far better to have the most experienced men we can get. The board have to control the whole business of fire brigades and everything in connection with them, and in Clause 27 it is set out what the duties of the board are to be. They are very important indeed, and hon. members will agree with me that to carry out those duties we must have experienced people. The clause reads—

The duty of taking, superintending and enforcing all necessary steps for the extinguishment of fires and for the protection of life and property in case of fire

Who is better able to do that than the fire brigades?

and the general control of all stations and of all fire brigades shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, be vested in the board and subject to the board and the regulations, in the local committees as regards each district.

The local committees complain that they pay too much towards the upkeep of the board, but if we want an efficient brigade we must pay, and it is far better to have a little extra in contributions than to lose thousands of pounds worth of property by fire. It does not follow that there are to be no volunteer brigades. It is advantageous to encourage volunteer brigades outside the cities, because these brigades make good clubs for the young men and these young men become athletic and smart, and there is no better attraction for them than the fire competitions held annually in Perth, Fremantle and elsewhere. Therefore, so far as small towns are concerned I am in accordance with the leader of the House in championing the establishment of volunteer brigades. The worst feature of Clause 6 of the Bill is that in any full meeting of the board of nine members, four members representing local authorities and one representing the volunteer brigades can outvote the Government and the insurance companies. The insurance companies have two members and

the Government two, and these four could be outvoted by the others on any question which came before the board. That is hardly to be desired, especially when it is the wish of the Government that one of their members should be nominated as chairman. That I think impairs the efficiency of the board. When we reach Clause 6 in Committee, I shall move that the clause be struck out with a view of inserting another clause similar to that which was originally drafted and submitted by the Government, with the exception that power will not be given to the Government to nominate their representative as chairman. The next matter that I take exception to is that the Government should have the power of nominating their own chairman. In all bodies of this kind it is usual to elect the chairman. There is no reason why a representative of the Government should not be chosen, but it would only be fair to allow the board to elect their own chairman. I am on a good many boards in this City and all of them elect their chairman. Why should an exception be made in this case?

Hon. J. E. DODD: Are those boards to which you refer subsidised by the Government?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: If they are I have not seen the subsidy. In Clause 30 we find that if there is any dispute between the local authorities and the board as to the establishment of any brigade or any fire appliances, that dispute can be referred to the Minister and the Minister will decide it. Probably the Minister would know nothing about fire matters, and what is the use of having a board if the Minister is to decide? It seems to me absolutely superfluous. Why not let the Minister do the lot and have no board? I intend to move in the direction of cutting that out. The board is composed of capable men, and I am certain the Government will nominate two good men, and if the board are not capable of knowing what is best in regard to fire matters I do not think any Minister will be able to teach them. Several amendments have been tabled by Mr. Cullen, and he has asked me to see that they are moved at the proper time. Mr. Cullen was obliged to leave Perth to attend a recruiting meeting and he is try-

ing to do his duty to his country, but unfortunately he is not able to do it in both places. It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. J. M. DREW (Central) [7.42]: It is a remarkable thing that nearly every ground of opposition to the Bill referred to by Sir Edward Wittenoom meets with my favour. With regard to the hon. member's opposition to the appointment of a Government representative as chairman, it seems to me that the Government, who represent the people, should have their representative as chairman of the board, and for more than one reason. In the first place the people, who are represented by the Government, contribute no less than five-eighths of the funds of the board. In the second place the Colonial Secretary is responsible for the approval of the estimates of the board. Those estimates are prepared and submitted to him for his approval, and it is desirable that he should have at his command all the information necessary. In the past the Government representative on the board has been the chief accountant in the Colonial Secretary's department, and since his appointment as Government representative he has been elected chairman, and I trust now the House has the opportunity it will see to it that this position of affairs will continue in the interests of the community. The hon. gentleman is also opposed to the idea that the Minister should decide all differences of opinion. This is most essential from the standpoint of the country districts. No doubt a dispute will arise between the board and the committees in the country districts and unless there was some provision such as this sort in the Bill, the Board could exercise a despotism which would be perfectly intolerable. But with the reference to the Minister we may rest assured that each side will get fair play. It is not a novel principle. It is in the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act and the Bunbury Harbour Trust Act also. Provision is made there that if there is any difference of opinion between any Government department and the board, the sole responsibility of settling that difference rests on one man and one man only, namely, the Colonial Secretary. In the past that provision has worked very well, so far as I

can glean, and there has been no objection to it whatsoever. With regard to the reduction of the representation of fire insurance companies on the board, to that also Sir Edward Wittenoom offers objections and they have my most cordial support. The representation which these insurance companies have had on the board in the past is in my opinion in opposition to the best interests of the taxpayers of Western Australia. The aim of these insurance companies is to secure as efficient a fire brigade service as possible. Some hon. members may think that it is a worthy aim which should be encouraged in every possible way. There are thousands of other worthy aims which we should desire to see accomplished, because money is not available to permit of this being done. It would be a worthy aim if we attempted to place doctors in every hamlet in Western Australia, and if we attempted to erect hospitals in every important, or every small town in Western Australia. We have, however, not the money with which to do this. We are limited in our efforts in that direction by our financial resources. It is a good thing to do all that is possible in connection with the preservation of human life, but even in that direction our efforts are limited by our resources. So must it be in connection with the protection of property from fire. There is only a certain amount of expenditure that we can reasonably agree to, and if more is required we must consider the question as to whether it is not desirable to reduce efficiency rather than involve ourselves in great financial expense. There is a natural desire on the part of these insurance companies to improve the fire extinguishing machinery to the greatest possible extent. As Sir Edward Wittenoom has suggested they desire to see permanent men appointed as far as possible. Previous to the introduction of the 1909 Act volunteer fire brigades were in existence in almost every portion of the State and gave great satisfaction. I listened attentively to Sir Edward Wittenoom's speculations as to which might occur if the voluntary system were brought into force in the near future, but we need not consider speculations at all and can go on our past experiences. From what I knew of these brigades—and I was closely in touch with some of them—I came

to the conclusion that they were efficient, and their cost to the municipalities exceedingly small in comparison with what the outlay is at the present time. In a city like Perth it would be impracticable in my opinion to have a voluntary system in connection with fire brigade matters, and in a place like this permanent men should be engaged. The fullest possible scope should be given to any movement in the direction of the formation of voluntary corps for the extinguishing of fires in the country districts. The representation on the board, such as it has been in the past, should in my opinion be cut down and it is cut down in this Bill. In the past there have been three representatives of the fire insurance companies on the board but these, by reason of the fact that they were very astute and knew the business in which they were engaged, and had great persuasive powers and influence over some other members of the board (some of whom came from the country districts, and had perhaps been elected because of their popularity and not because of their mental capacity) practically dominated the board and created a position which is not desirable in the interests of the taxpayers of the State. I support the second reading of the Bill, and although it is not exactly to my liking in some respects and could be improved upon, the fact that provision is made for the reference of all differences to the Colonial Secretary is sufficient to induce me to waive any objections I may have to some of the clauses in the Bill.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY (Central) [7.52]: In supporting this Bill I would like to express my appreciation of the action of the Government in introducing it. This Bill will be hailed with extreme satisfaction by every contributing body represented on the board with the exception of the insurance companies, who have already raised their protests through the circular sent to hon. members. From the very inception of this board agitations have been on foot from the local authorities and the volunteer fire brigades. It has been proved that the volunteer fire brigades play a very important part in connection with the work of the board. Unfortunately, however, up to the present they have been unable to get any alteration made to the present Act. Before this Act we had

a very efficient fire service in Western Australia, and included in the service were something like 38 or 40 volunteer fire brigades with a membership of about 400 or 500 men. To-day we have a volunteer service of something like 23 brigades, and I am sure no one could say that the efficiency of the service has improved. It is wrong to have at the disposal of the contributing bodies a service which is not availed of. That volunteer service is gradually drifting out of existence entirely on account of the unsympathetic administration of the fire brigade board, as now constituted. That unsympathetic administration arose out of the fact that the insurance companies dominated the board. That goes without saying, because the Colonial Secretary and others have pointed out that they were in a position to confer amongst themselves and arrive at a decision and to be unanimous when they reached the board room. That is not denied by the members of the insurance companies themselves. A deputation waited on the late Premier as far back as 1913 with the object of endeavouring to secure the introduction of a country fire brigades Act on the lines operating in Victoria. They were not, however, successful although the Premier expressed his sympathy, and the Bill was not introduced. At a later date a deputation waited upon the late Colonial Secretary (Hon. J. M. Drew), who was rather keen on the proposition, but without avail. To-day we have this Bill brought along on account of the overtures made throughout the State by the local bodies, and a deputation which waited on the Colonial Secretary some time ago representative of some 40 local bodies convened as a result of a meeting which was held at Subiaco at the instance of the local mayor (Mr. Guy). This Bill may not be up to the standard of the Country Act in Victoria, but it will meet with the appreciation of all contributing bodies with the exception of the insurance companies, and will meet with the approval of the volunteer fire brigades in Western Australia, which are a very important factor in connection with the matter. I think that the volunteers are entitled to some consideration, because it has to be remembered that they give the whole of their time to the work and get very little out of it, with the exception of criticism if

they do not do a fair and decent job. They took up the work in the first instance as citizens. Any public spirited person is anxious to do something in the direction of improving the conditions of or taking part in anything that is happening in the town in which he is living. This incentive is found in the younger generation, and they were doing what they could to assist in the protection of life and property. Later on they become interested in the work and stick to it. This requires enthusiasm, and that can only be brought about by interest being shown in the towns and by the local bodies in these organisations. To-day that interest has been entirely sapped in the voluntary organisation of the State by the unsympathetic administration of the fire brigades board. At a time like this we should economise in certain directions, and there is much room for economy in connection with the administration of the board. The insurance companies are not much concerned with regard to how much is spent in connection with the fire services. I have to admit that a permanent staff could be more efficient than a volunteer staff if the necessity arose for it. That will be all right and the insurance company's will not lose on that score. This efficiency will be paid for by the people all the time. A glance at the cost of the administration of this board as compared with that of the administration of the Country Fire Brigades Act in Victoria will convince hon. members that there is much room for improvement in connection with the administration of our Act. To show the interest that the fire brigades association had in this matter I would say that the secretary was instructed some time ago on the introduction of the Bill in another place to forward a circular giving certain reasons in connection with the Bill. I think that will go to show the position so far as they are concerned. The secretary of the W.A. Volunteer Fire Brigades Association writes as follows to his fellow members:—

Fremantle, 27/1/17.

To captain, secretary and members of the Fremantle Volunteer Fire Brigade, As secretary of the W.A. Volunteer Fire Brigades Association and as your repre-

representative on the Fire Brigades Board, I take this opportunity of submitting to you a report on fire brigades administration, as an interesting situation has developed and it now behoves every member of volunteer brigades to take an active interest to bring our aspirations to a consummation. I have been your representative on the board since the inception of the present Act—but until recently my voice has been as one crying in the wilderness. With a preponderating insurance representation on the board and with a chief officer who has consistently opposed the volunteer movement, it has been impossible to do anything material in your interest. The abolition of many of our volunteer brigades in favour of the permanent and more expensive system is now a matter of history. Even when Messrs. J. B. Holman, M.L.A., and J. R. Campbell were nominated to the board by the Government the situation was no better, as the insurance representatives and their influence still dominated the board. Last year we were able to depute the president, Mr. J. R. Campbell to visit Victoria with the idea of impressing the board with an unbiassed opinion as to the merits of the efficiency and economy of the volunteer system. His able support revealed beyond question that the West Australian system was much more expensive from a Government, municipal, and insurance standpoint than either the volunteer or permanent systems of Victoria, but despite these undisputed facts the insurance representatives exercised their usual influence, and no alteration in the administration was made. It was abundantly clear that nothing could or can be expected from the board as at present constituted—so at the instance of Mr. J. T. Guy, the representative of all local bodies, outside Perth and Kalgoorlie and Boulder district—a conference of local bodies was convened, which subsequently interviewed the Colonial Secretary, who promised a new Bill on the lines suggested by the conference. Thus the conference of local bodies gained what the board has consistently and successfully opposed. The opportunity for the full

development of our volunteer aspirations is now at hand if all brigades will co-operate. I attach a short resume of the main and essential principles of the new Bill, and would earnestly request you to approach the Parliamentary members of your district and urge their support to the full terms of the Bill. It will be necessary to do this immediately as the Bill is now in the Committee stage and may be brought on at any moment. Please therefore act immediately. Yours faithfully, B. R., secretary.

That is the opinion of the volunteer fire brigades, and it must be remembered that they are citizens of the country. It has to be recognised that the Fire Brigades Bill of Victoria should be sufficient for the requirements of Western Australia. While it costs in this State £30,000 odd a year for fire services, the country fire brigades of Victoria cost considerably less. There is a considerable difference, something like £9,000 or £10,000 more in this State. And in Victoria they have 100 fire brigades, whereas in Western Australia we have under 50. Therefore, with a service only half the size, it costs in Western Australia about £10,000 more a year. When we realise this it must be seen that there is necessity for some alteration, that the expenditure is out of proportion here to what it is in Victoria. There has been serious objection raised against the proposed reduction of the representation on the board of the insurance companies, but while it is true it is proposed to reduce the companies' representation, it has to be remembered that the insurance companies get all the protection afforded by the brigades, whether permanent or volunteer. The companies have nothing to lose and all to gain, and the people pay all the time. I recognise the companies are entitled to use their best endeavours in their own protection, but Parliament is supposed to safeguard the people's interests in such matters. While I agree to a certain extent with the principle of employing permanent firemen, I submit it is foolish in a place like Perth that we should have a staff of permanent men only. It is ridiculous. In Ballarat, Victoria, with a population of 42,000 people, they have eight permanent men, whereas in Perth, with a like population, approximately

there are 40 permanent men. In Ballarat the cost is, roughly, £3,500 per annum to run the brigade, whereas in Perth it is nearly three times the amount. This is a matter which requires some consideration, and should decide us that some alteration is absolutely necessary. In my opinion there should be some alteration in the administrative methods of the board. Let me compare Fremantle, with a population of 20,000, with Geelong, having a population of 24,000. In Fremantle the annual cost is £2,800, whereas in Geelong, with 4,000 more population, the cost is £1,154. Why should it cost several thousand pounds a year more for the upkeep of a brigade in Fremantle than in Victoria? Here again is food for reflection, sufficient to convince us that something is wrong somewhere. The superintendent of fire brigades in this State has never been favourable to the encouragement of volunteer fire brigades in the service; he has always liked to have permanent men. If he has the money to pay a permanent staff it is all right, but it is not right that there should be in a small country town half a dozen permanent men. It would be ridiculous to urge that the service, if a permanent brigade were maintained, would not be more efficient than if half a dozen men worked only occasionally. The experience of Victoria, where the volunteer system prevails, goes to show that efficient and up-to-date service can be rendered by volunteer brigades at a much lower figure than we get the same service done for here. I agree, however, that it is advisable to have both systems operating in our service. For instance, it would be foolish to have an entirely volunteer system in a place like Geraldton, and it would be foolish for a volunteer brigade to accept the responsibility of protecting property in Geraldton with a staff composed entirely of volunteer men. It is necessary in a place of the size of Geraldton that there should be at least one or two permanent men. But if Ballarat can be run, as it is, with not more than eight permanent men, there is surely no justification for the very large permanent staff in Perth. I admit that the staff is efficient. It would not be so bad if the high cost of administration in this State were reflected in the wages paid to employees. In this State in which the cost of living is the highest,

our firemen are the lowest paid in Australia. Some of the men are paid as low as £2 4s. per week, and when this is known, and having regard to the high cost of administration, it must be recognised that some alteration is necessary somewhere. When we are prepared to pay a high salary for the services of administrative officers, I think a little more could be spared to put the men in the service on decent wages. It would be better to cut down the number of men engaged if by doing so those remaining would still be an efficient staff and would be paid adequately. I have had a considerable experience with the fire brigades of Western Australia. I know the men, and I have worked with some of them. They are worth more money than they are getting. When we realise that the total cost of administration is £30,000 a year, and that some of the men are getting as low as £2 4s. per week for an efficient service, I think it shameful that we should have allowed those conditions to continue so long. I think that sufficient reason has been shown for the clause in the Bill which provides that the Government representative shall act as chairman of the board. One of the Government representatives has acted in that capacity since the resignation of Mr. Murray, and no objection has been raised. No objection was raised either to the chairmanship of Mr. Murray. It is necessary at all times that the chairman shall safeguard the interests of the State and in that connection the Government nominee is the man best calculated to do so. He has no personal interests to serve, no axe to grind, so to speak. It is well known that local bodies have always certain complaints, and the volunteer brigades and the insurance companies must be regarded as interested. The representative of the Government is in a position to hold the scales of justice evenly, as he has no personal connection with the matter, and he should therefore be in a position to control the board better—without offering any reflection on the other members of the board—than a representative of either the insurance companies, the volunteer brigades, or the municipalities. I sincerely trust this Bill will be carried, because as I have said, I have had a lengthy experience. I have been secretary of a volunteer fire brigade for many years, and I re-

signed the position of captain of the Geraldton brigade when I came to Parliament. My experience has been in both the permanent service and under the volunteer system. In my opinion our fire fighting service should be a mixture of both. As I have already said, I am satisfied that the cost of fire protection in this State is too high, and his must be admitted when I say that, with 100 brigades in Victoria, the cost of administration there is nearly £10,000 per annum less than in this State, where the brigades number only 50.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: How about their records at fires?

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: It compares favourably. There are no complaints in that direction. The service all round has given satisfaction. I am convinced that some alteration is necessary, and I think this Bill will give satisfaction.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [8.12]: There is no need or me to reply to the arguments which have been raised in objection to the proposed reduction of the representation of the insurance companies, as that can be dealt with when the clauses are under consideration in Committee. It has been suggested by Sir Edward Wittenoom that perhaps there was not sufficient necessity for the introduction of this Bill. I shall endeavour to demonstrate that necessity. Take the city of Perth, with just about the same population as Ballarat and Ballarat South. Those two cities, Ballarat and Ballarat South, are called upon to contribute £1,000 for fire brigade purposes, as against the £5,000 paid by the City of Perth. The total expenditure on fire protection in those two localities, that is Ballarat and Ballarat South, is £2,400, whereas it is upwards of £9,000 in the case of Perth. Comparing Fremantle, with a population of 20,000, and an annual rateable value of £129,000, with Bendigo, which has a considerably larger population, 28,000, and an annual rateable value of £107,000, we find that Fremantle contributes twice as much as Bendigo towards fire protection, and that the total cost is twice as high in Fremantle as in Bendigo. The efficiency of the fire brigades

in this State has never been questioned, but there can be no doubt from the figures I have quoted that the burden is too great on the municipalities, and that the necessity for the Bill has become positively alarming. I hope the Committee will realise that in the interests of the State and in the interests of economy it is necessary that this Bill should be passed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. W. Kingmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Interpretation:

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: On behalf of Mr. Cullen I move an amendment—

That the interpretation of "district" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"Fire district" means a municipal or road district as mentioned in or may be added to the second schedule."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I see no necessity for the amendment. The present interpretation of "district" is that it means a fire district constituted by or under this measure. Clause 4 gives the constitution of a fire district. There is no necessity for further interpretation.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The definition of "local authority" seems somewhat ambiguous.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: "Local authority" means the local authority for the particular district, as defined in the schedule. In the first instance local authority is defined in the interpretation clause, and the Bill goes on to say that "local authority" means the local authority for the districts defined in the schedule.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4, 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Constitution of board:

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I propose to strike out the clause altogether and insert a new clause.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will vote against the clause, and defer the moving of his new clause until we reach the end of the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Drew and Mr. Hickey have both voiced the opinions I hold in this matter. I do not think it necessary to go farther than to point out that even when the alteration is made the insurance companies will still have as generous a representation in accordance with the constitution as it is considered wise to give them in other States. In New South Wales the Government, the municipalities and the insurance companies each contribute one-third of the cost. The Government appoint one member, who is the president, the municipalities appoint two and the insurance companies one, notwithstanding that the basis of contribution is exactly the same. The municipalities cover a very wide area, and their representatives are not by any means united in purpose. They have not a common interest, and they do not take the same view of matters, whereas the insurance company's representatives are always unanimous in their opinions on all matters arising at board meetings. In South Australia, it is true, the fire insurance companies have equal representation with the municipalities, but in that instance the insurance companies pay four-ninths of the cost as against the two-ninths contributed by the municipalities. In Victoria the metropolitan board consists of three representatives of the Government, three of the companies and three of the municipalities, but on the country board there are two government representatives, two representing the municipalities, two representing the insurance companies and two representing the volunteers. That is the only instance in which the insurance companies are treated more generously than they will be treated under the Bill. It has been contended on the part of the insurance companies that they represent the insured. I do not think that is the case. I think the insurance companies represent the insurance companies, and that the community is represented by the municipalities and the Government. I hope the Committee will pass the clause and agree to the Bill as it stands, because I am sure it will make for greater efficiency.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: It seems to me that those who pay a large proportion

of the cost should have a fair proportion of management. It is said that the management of this board has been disgraceful and the expenditure abnormal. Whose fault is that? The insurance companies have had only three representatives out of nine. It is admitted that the representatives of the local authorities are scarcely as skilful as those representing either the Government or the insurance companies. Those five indifferent men will have the control against the more able members of the board. What guarantee have we that the management will be any better in future if the controlling influence is to be in the hands of the less experienced members of the board?

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I support the clause as it stands. Having been for many years a member of a local governing body, I say without fear of contradiction that the reports of representatives of local governing bodies are always to the effect that they cannot secure reduced expenditure because the force of the board is against them. Such was the state of affairs when the insurance companies had three representatives on the board. Mr. Hickey has given valuable information on this subject, and I believe we shall be right in altering the constitution of the board as here proposed.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I cannot possibly support Sir Edward Wittenoom in regard to this clause, because its deletion would mean that the district I represent would have absolutely no representation on the board. I have frequently been approached with suggestions that the principal Act should be amended so as to secure an improvement in the constitution of the board. I support the clause as it stands.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I move an amendment—

That after the word "brigade," in line 16, the following be inserted: "and men permanently employed by the board."

The permanent employees are anxious to have direct representation on the board. The proportion of volunteers to permanent employees, I may mention, would be about four to one. The permanent employees consider that their having a representative on the board would have a good effect on the working of the board.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I regret I cannot accept Mr. Millington's amendment, which, I think, would operate very objectionably. There is no community of interest between the permanent employees and the volunteers. It seems to me that only trouble and disorganisation could result from the representation of the permanent employees on the board.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: From the figures which have been quoted here, it would seem that too much is being paid for the service; and therefore I desire efficiency at lesser cost. One would think that it would be to the interest of the insurance companies to keep down the cost, and, further, that they would make the best appointments. This cannot be said of all the municipal appointments to the board. Accordingly I support Sir Edward Wittenoom. Mr. Millington's amendment does not commend itself to me.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 18—agreed to.

Clause 19—Meetings of board:

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The notice provided for meetings of the board, two days, is hardly sufficient for members of the board who live in the country or on the goldfields. They would hardly be able to attend on such notice. I observe that of special meetings seven days' clear notice must be given. I suggest that the notice for ordinary meetings might be extended to four clear days.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There seems a good deal of force in Mr. Kirwan's argument, but the board have operated all along under the provision of two days' notice for ordinary meetings. The explanation is that the board fix their dates of meeting, and that members know months beforehand when an ordinary meeting is to take place. In the case of special meetings, longer notice is necessary because, apart from the notice, members of the board would not know that a special meeting was to be held.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: In the interests of country members of the board I may point out that the person responsible for sending out notices might act strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Now, Acts frequently contain provisions which are stupid. I move an amendment—

That in line 4 the word "two" be struck out and "seven" inserted in lieu.
Amendment put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 29—agreed to.

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

Hon. Sir. E. H. WITTENOOM: I move an amendment—

That in lines 6 and 7 the words "the local authority" be struck out and "contributing bodies" inserted in lieu.

The object of the amendment is to enable the contributing bodies, in the event of a dispute, to be represented, as well as a local authority. Suppose the local authority at Victoria Park had a dispute with the board and it was a matter affecting fire insurance, they would not be able to put their case before the Minister. It will not do any harm to substitute "contributing bodies" for "local authority."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. It would not be correct to say that the municipality of Victoria Park was represented on the board because that municipality would only have one voice in 28 or 30 in choosing a representative, and that representative may be entirely out of sympathy with the desires of that portion of the district which he represented. That is one of the weaknesses of the representation of the local authorities, and that is the reason why they should have more representation, and why they should have the right of appeal to the Minister.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: The contributing body does not prevent the local authority from going to the Minister. The local authority of Victoria Park would go just the same, but it would leave it open for any other body to go just as well. Here we pin it down to the Minister, the board and the local authority and no one else interested in this question can be represented.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I shall oppose the amendment. I ask Sir Edward Wittenoom to turn to the interpretation and he will find there the definition of "local authority"; but there is no definition of "contributing bodies." Therefore I am content to abide by the clause as it is printed.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: If the insurance companies have a grievance they are debarred from going to the Minister. The other contributing bodies can go to the Minister and that does not seem to be fair. For that reason I think the suggestion of Sir Edward Wittenoom is a fair one.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This clause relates to disputes between the board and the local authority as to the class of brigade to be established. Any dispute between the board and a local authority on such matters shall be referred to the Minister for his decision. To put in what Sir Edward Wittenoom suggests would not be applicable. The clause contemplates merely a dispute as to the class of brigade to be established and in the event of such dispute the Minister shall determine between the board and the local authority as to which is right.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: The insurance representatives may feel that they have a grievance; they may want some sort of brigade established. Surely they have a right to put their case before the Minister.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member is contemplating something entirely foreign to the clause. He is contemplating a dispute between different members of the board. The Minister does not interfere in such disputes. When they have a quarrel with an outside party that will be a proper matter for reference to the Minister.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It would be a very unwise procedure to bring the Minister into the matter at all. If we appoint a body of nine members, surely they ought to be able to control these matters.

The Colonial Secretary: Suppose they do not agree as to the particular class of brigade to be established?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Who is better qualified to judge, the nine qualified men, or the Minister who knows nothing at all about it? The board should be left to deal with all matters concerning the welfare of the brigades.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: From the point of view of a Minister's convenience this would doubtless be a wise provision. If

the provision is struck out it will destroy one of the most essential features of the Bill. This feature is going to lead to tremendous economies and we are going to give a voice as to the expenditure to the people who have to find the money. There are dozens of country municipalities and roads boards in the State which have been compelled to contribute large sums of money in excess of their requirements and have had no voice in the matter. If this provision is struck out we shall retain that state of things. There are bound to be disputes between the board and the local authorities as to the class of brigade to be established.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 31 to 41—agreed to.

Clause 42—Contributions of local authorities, how raised:

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I move an amendment—

That in the third line of the provision the words "rateable land" be struck out and "annual value of rateable property inserted in lieu.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not see the necessity for the amendment. Rates can only be raised in accordance with the Municipal or Road Act, as the case may be. This is a proviso that with the approval of the Governor they may be levied annually on the rateable land within some prescribed area. It is possible that a portion of the area may be exempt because it does not enjoy any protection from fire and should not contribute.

Hon. J. E. DODD: Vacant land is not excluded from the purposes of the Act.

The Colonial Secretary: No.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I would like to see it on the unimproved value basis.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 43 to 82—agreed to.

Schedules—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and a Message accordingly forwarded to the Legislative Assembly requesting them to make the amendments, leave being given to sit again on receipt of Message from the Assembly.

BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS.

(No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th March.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: (North-East) [9.14]: I thank hon. members for accor- ding me an opportunity of saying a few words on the Bill and expressing my opinion with regard to it. I am opposed to the Bill and agree with Mr. Drew when he points out that the present time is most inopportune in which to introduce a measure of this kind. I have had communications from people in my province who believe in State enter- prises. So far as I can learn and under- stand the position there are thousands of peo- ple in Western Australia who agree with the principle of State trading concerns. I think, seeing that we are certain to have a general election in October next, this Bill should be dropped until after that election. It has been pointed out in another place that the present Government has no mandate from the people of Western Australia with refer- ence to this question of State trading con- cerns; and I would like to bring under the notice of members that if this Bill is passed, it will mean that although the people of Western Australia may return at that elec- tion, by a fairly substantial majority in an- other place, a Government favourable to State trading, this House will have the power of blocking any State trad- ing proposals. Mr. Sanderson has al- ready pointed out that this House exists for the purpose of protecting vested inter- ests. As I understand the position, vested interests are opposed to socialism, and for that matter to State trading concerns gen- erally. I think, then, we see the position fairly and clearly; and it is that though the people of Western Australia may be quite in accord and agreeable with the policy of State enterprise, and may express that con- currence at a general election by support- ing a party, for instance the Labour party, which advocates State trading concerns, this House, which we are told exists for the pur- pose of protecting vested interests, has the power of blocking the will of the people. That is the view I take of this Bill, and I say that before a measure of this kind is passed or even taken up by any Govern-

ment, that Government should first obtain an expression of opinion from the electors. In this State they have not got that ex- pression of opinion. It is perhaps unneces- sary for me to say that I am thoroughly in accord with the principle of State trading concerns. It is one of the principles of the Labour party and one which I endorse.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON (North-East) [9.19]: The proposal now before this House is most controversial in character and has been a bone of contention for years between the Government and its followers and the Labour party. Yet when it comes before this House, where one would think it would be discussed in all its aspects, the Government is prepared to sit down and put the Bill through by means of what has been termed "brutal majority." I admit there are only seven direct Labour representatives in the Council; but we are entitled to be heard and entitled to a fair deal. I would like to re- mind those hon. members who think that we can be ignored in matters of this de- scription that we represent a large pro- portion of the electors of this State and that the party we represent is undoubtedly the strongest party in politics in Western Aus- tralia to-day. Although our party is not in possession of the Ministerial benches, the fact remains that Labour has the greatest majority in the Legislative Assembly of any party. Consequently, the doctrine that party has adopted for years is by no means discredited in this State, and so far as I can see, if a matter such as this was being de- cided at a general election, the probability is that a majority of the electors of this State would still favour the principles of the Labour party. I quite recognise that on this occasion the question is on its trial. Various methods to discredit the doctrine of the Labour party in connection with State trading have been adopted in the past, but that is a matter with which I shall deal later on. In connection with this Bill the principle involved is that of the State con- trolling means of production and distribu- tion. There are those who, when it suits their interests, support such a policy. As a matter of fact Mr. Sanderson has stated definitely that one of the princi- ples of the Liberal movement is to oppose State concerns. I do not know whether

that is a principle of the Liberal party in this State, but I do know that the Conservatives throughout the world oppose any reform—which, of course, means doing away with obsolete methods. At any rate, if we err in our views on State socialism, I would like to remind hon. members that we err in good company. Political economists have for years recognised there is necessity for change, that there is a possibility of securing a better form of government than we have at present. It is all very well to say that we must leave private enterprise wholly untrammelled, must not interfere with individuals and not kill individuality. The fact remains that throughout the world to-day private control is not the complete success we should like it to be. I am convinced, and I think members generally will admit, that so far as the private control of some of our industries is concerned, whether by private individuals or by companies, there is much to be desired. Volumes might be written on the waste which occurs. This and many other aspects might be gone into if time permitted. I protest against this Chamber dealing with an important subject such as this in a cavalier manner. Even though State enterprise may not be the best possible system to adopt in running the affairs of this State, everyone will, I think, admit that if a better system than the present can be devised, or if improvement can be effected, the question is worthy of consideration. Furthermore, any State which is not prepared to adopt the best proven system of government is bound to go to the wall. Any nation which is not prepared to move with the times, but prefers to let things slide, is not good enough for the times in which we live. So far as the rights of individuals is concerned—and the rights of the individual would appear to be the principal concern of many members of this Chamber—the Labour party admits that the individual has rights and that he is entitled to claim that those rights shall be protected. But not only individual rights should be protected; and when the rights of the individual clash with the rights of the community, everyone who has the interests of the community at heart must concede that the rights of the community must prevail. It may be

against the interests of the individual, but if the interests of the community demand a certain course of action such action is justified on that ground alone. Even commercialism takes that view. At one time it was permitted the small trader to conduct his business in his own way, but with the march of industrialism that has all gone by the board and no one troubles about conserving the rights of the individual. Industrialism is advancing, and to-day the affairs of the world are conducted by means of combines and class governments. On the question of State trading concerns, which is before the House at the moment, I wish to deal first with the exception taken by some members to the State Steamship Service. On this trading concern, the remarks of the Liberals—or Conservatives, whichever they choose to call themselves—show that they are not unanimous in their opinion. Mr. Sanderson and some others take the view that whether State steamers are successful or otherwise, they are opposed to their establishment on principle. But there are other Liberal members who, providing their own districts or their interests are touched, are in favour of State enterprises. Mr. Holmes, who is entitled to speak with authority on this subject—and I know no member more entitled than he to speak authoritatively—has on several occasions publicly approved of a State steamship service for the North-West coast. Speaking in this House, he said—

They (the Labour Government) were right in establishing a fleet of State steamers in order to shift the produce which no other company was prepared to do. They (the private shipping companies) have found a more profitable business in sending their ships abroad. They send them away where they can get the best return for their capital. If the Government want another ship, and they do want it, it would be unwise not to give it to them.

That was when the Labour Government had placed on the Estimates an amount of £55,000 for the purpose of obtaining another steamship for the North-West coast. This Chamber refused to give them the authority to order that ship, and since that time we know a mistake was then made in blocking

the policy of the Government. That policy, and that particular ship, were favoured by Mr. Holmes. He also said, and it shows his attitude from the point of view of State socialism—

Agricultural railways—

That is State socialism.

Agricultural railways which would never pay. He deprecated the wasting of enormous sums of money in bolstering up an industry which was growing wheat at a cost of 15s. a bag and selling it at 10s. a bag. He favoured a system of assistance to the pastoral industry, which was not paying.

It would scarcely be safe for Mr. Holmes to advocate those views in farming districts. When it is a case of something for his own particular district he is an out-and-out State socialist. Sir Edward Wittenoom also favours State socialism when it happens to suit him. He said he was in favour of the State freezing works at Wyndham.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: When? I do not think I ever did.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I think I could trace it in *Hansard*. One Liberal stated that he did not care whether it was socialism or any other "ism"; he wanted freezers and he was going to have them. I believe that at one time Sir Edward Wittenoom, when electioneering, favoured the establishment of a line of State steamers; at all events, reports of his speeches would lead one to believe that he is not violently opposed to them. However, he is a good anti-socialist when it comes to State sawmills. Despite the fact that members give it out that they are opposed to these things on principle, we find at times that they are very much in favour of them, also on principle. We on our side are consistent. Whenever it is necessary in the interests of the State that a State trading concern should be established we endeavour to establish it. I can quite understand a good Liberal being opposed to State brickworks, because, of course, such works are opposed to certain vested interests. I have here an excerpt from evidence given in an arbitration case in 1915, a case heard in connection with the brick-making industry in this State. In his evidence before the court, Henry James Colzart said that in 1911, at the time the in-

dustrial agreement was entered into, the price of steam-pressed bricks was probably lower than 42s. per thousand, but that the increased wages paid under the agreement had caused the price to be raised to 52s. The price at the time of the hearing was 45s., the operations of the State brickworks having caused the drop. The price charged by the State brickworks was from 36s. to 38s. He said that the increase by the 1911 agreement over the old agreement meant to him a difference of between 3s. and 4s. per thousand in the cost of production. Having regard to this one can quite understand why a good Liberal should be opposed to State brickworks. Where there was no competition private enterprise had been able to raise the price of bricks by 8s. per thousand. Certainly State brickworks do not suit those interested in private brickworks. However, the position is so misrepresented to the general community that they imagine their interests are the interests of the manufacturer. The policy of the Labour Government has been to look after the interests of the consumer. When the interests of the individual clash with those of the community any Government who consider the interests of the people as a whole must consider the interests of the majority, and not of particular individuals. The State battery system has been adversely criticised, and it is said that money has been lost by that system. Before criticising the batteries, it is necessary to understand the work they have done. Since their inception until January of 1916 the State batteries have treated 1,068,000 tons, of a value of £4,491,000. This is not including the base metals treated under State assistance. The State batteries have operated where private enterprise was not prepared to go, and had it not been for the State system the wealth realised, amounting to 4½ millions of money, would have remained undisclosed. The installation of batteries in good districts has given an impetus to prospecting, with most satisfactory results. Yet those opposed to State trading concerns must, to be consistent, be opposed to State batteries. Again, practically the whole of the water supplies in the State represents a State trading concern, with a capital of over seven millions. It is under State ownership

and control. Some people evidently forget that the railways are State trading concerns. In most countries railways are under private control. In Western Australia not only are the railways regarded as a public convenience, but no great exception is taken to the losses made by this trading concern; because those living in country districts, those opposed to Labour, are quite indifferent as to whether the railways pay, so long as they get a railway line in their own district. During the time the previous Government were in office the losses on the railways were as follows:—£36,000 in 1912, £61,000 in 1913, £46,000 in 1914, and £52,000 in 1915, or a total of £197,000 in four years. The very people opposed to our policy are crying out for cheaper freights and increased railway facilities. Where is the consistency of those people? It seems that State trading concerns are all very well when it suits their districts, but not at any other time. All the anti-socialists are strong socialists when it comes to increasing the value of their properties by a railway. The Labour Government adopted the policy of constructing their own railway rolling stock and machinery within the State. This, of course, has not met with the approval of those who depend for their living on commissions, who under ordinary circumstances would be getting something out of the importation or private manufacture of rolling stock and machinery for the Railway Department. Still, it is in the best interests of the State that the State should do everything possible for itself in this regard. To revert to the State steamers, the present Premier at one time declared that if necessary he would establish a service of State-owned vessels. Yet, ever since its inception, the State Steamship Service has been used as something to flog the Labour Government with. One could not see a speech by a representative Liberal but the question of State steamers was dragged in. Now, however, the State Steamship Service has become a reputable undertaking, and a source of revenue to the Colonial Secretary's department. The "Kangaroo" pup is now one of the finest institutions of that department. Probably the Colonial Secretary takes the view that under his management the service

could not be otherwise than successful. His view, no doubt, is that the idea was good, but that it wanted a superman to run the show. Those who object so strongly to the State Steamship Service ought to have a little taste of what the other crowd would do if they got hold of this State. The finances of the State Steamship Service can, of course, be fixed up so as to show a loss to the community; but that loss nothing like approaches what the cost would be if the service were left to private enterprise. Let me refer to the profits of the various steamship companies; and I think it will be admitted that somebody must pay those profits which are made, and that the somebody is the community. A great deal has been made out of the few pounds loss incurred at one time on the State Steamship Service. Now let us see what profits were made by the pets of the Liberals of this State. The Howard Smith Company last year declared dividends of 12 per cent. on preference and 16 per cent. on ordinary shares. The A.U.S.N. Company showed £50,000 net profit, representing an increase over last year. The Melbourne Steamship Company for the six months ended last December showed a profit of £32,000, and increased their ordinary capital by £51,000 out of accumulated profits. The Cairns Line paid a dividend of 30 per cent. as compared with 10 per cent. for 1914. The Moore Line paid a dividend of 25 per cent. as against 12½ per cent. for 1914. The profits, which amounted to £374,000, exceeded the company's paid up capital.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: That is private management.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: Yes; but at the same time the steamship companies are quite prepared to take advantage of the crisis through which the Empire is passing in order to increase their profits. The State Steamship Service, however, merely tries to pay working expenses. I ask hon. members to consider whether such an octopus as the shipping companies is preferable to a State trading concern which during the stressful times of 1911 made a small loss. I can assure hon. members that if they want to defend the shipping companies as against the State Steamship Service they will spend

the rest of their lives trying to justify their pets. William Fenwick & Co. had an excellent year in 1915, their profits increasing from £95,000, for the previous year, to £221,000, and the net profit from £64,000 to £197,000. The Clan Line paid a dividend of 25 per cent., and their profits for the year were £374,000, again exceeding the paid-up capital. I could continue similarly with the whole list of the companies which hon. members of this House defend. Hon. members apparently wish to encourage this particular kind of business. According to their arguments, it is far better to have these shipping companies battening on the community than to run our own State trading concerns. Let me point out, too, that every State trading concern established in Western Australia was established as a protection for the community. The State Steamship Service, as hon. members are perfectly well aware, was established as a check upon the service then obtaining on the North-West coast. The State brickworks were established with a similar object, and achieved that object. There was necessity also for the establishment of the State saw-mills, and the State saw mills have justified their assistance.

Member: By joining the pool.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: A great deal has been said about the State saw mills. In this respect the leader of the House, I regret to say, was one of the worst offenders. I do not believe the hon. member would act in the same way now, with the weight of responsibility on his shoulders. But one cannot help referring to the time when an election was on, and he was endeavouring to discredit the enterprise. He then asserted, quoting Treasury figures as a balance sheet instead of merely as Treasury figures—

The Colonial Secretary: I did not.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: By that means the hon. gentleman published to the world that the State saw mills had made a loss of £103,000. The statement appeared in print on several occasions. On one remarkable occasion, however, the statement did not appear in print; and that was when Mr. Wilson, the leader of the Government, was speaking at Busselton. As head of the

Government, Mr. Wilson had to be accurate, and he then stated that the particular trading concern which according to Mr. Colebatch had lost £103,000—

The Colonial Secretary: I never made any such statement.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: Was responsible for a profit of £1,700. Bearing in mind the manner in which the State trading concerns have been misrepresented, one can readily understand how it is that many people are misled as to the real position. In regard to the Colonial Secretary's statement that he did not make the statement which I have quoted, I can only wish that his refutation had been earlier, in which case it would have been kinder. In any case, the fact remains that the statement was allowed to go uncontradicted. I can now show a printed statement in which Dr. Saw says that in eleven months the State trading concerns had lost £200,000. At the time I asked, from the body of the hall, where Dr. Saw had obtained that information. His reply was, "I don't know exactly, but I got it from Mr. Colebatch; he told me." Thus the Colonial Secretary misleads young liberals and others who hang on all his utterances. By the young liberals and other people as well the Colonial Secretary is quoted as a statistical authority in the same way as Mr. Knibbs. The young liberals are found saying, "So and so is correct; we got it from Mr. Colebatch." I hope, therefore, that in future the hon. gentleman will be accurate as well as critical. Of course, when the Labour party were in power, we did not like his "kangaroo" tale. Now that he is a Minister of the Crown and a man of responsibility, we expect him in his criticisms of State trading concerns to be accurate at least with regard to figures. An attempt was made to put this Bill through in a desperate hurry last night, but I came to the conclusion that when an important matter is before the House there should be no hurry at all. We have spent much time discussing trifles and mere quibbles. On a matter of vital importance we have a perfect right to detain the House, even towards the close of the session. It is not the fault of members of this House that the Bill has been brought down at so late a stage. We should be in

fault if we allowed the measure to go through without seeing that the whole position is ventilated as thoroughly as possible. I wish to point out specially that under this Bill the Legislative Council will control the policy of any Government which may be elected in this State. In 1911 a Labour Government were returned to power by a very large majority. There can be no doubt that a very large proportion of the people elected the Labour Government with a very definite policy. If there is one thing on which the Labour party can pride themselves, it is that when they go before the people they do so with a definite policy. That course was pursued in 1911, with the result that the Labour party were returned with a large majority. They were returned to establish, amongst other things, State trading concerns where necessary for the protection of the people's interests. This Chamber, however, took the view that irrespective of the verdict of the people the Council had the right—I admit they had the power; the Council have shown on many occasions that they have the power—to block any legislation whatever introduced by the Labour Government. The Labour party maintain that, when any party are elected as the Labour party were in another place, they have an absolute right to put their policy into operation, in view of the mandate from the people. The position of the Labour Government then was that the only possible way in which they could establish State trading concerns was in the way that they adopted. If the members of the Council say that the method adopted was not as scrupulous as it should have been, the reply is that the members of the Council have never shown any scruple whatever in flouting the direct mandate of the people. I contend the late Government were justified in adopting the attitude they did in order to put their policy into effect. Under this Bill, however, the position of the Labour party will be hopeless. As the result of political trickery to which I need not further refer, the present Government hold office by a very narrow majority. They have never been to the people with any given policy, and they have never had their policy ratified by the people so as to be able to come to Parliament and say: "We have

been elected to put this particular policy into operation." The present Government take the ground that, being in office, they have the right not only to enact such legislation as they may deem necessary for putting their policy into effect, but also the right on occasions such as these—not too far from a general election—to submit a measure like the present, which, if passed by the Council, as it will of course be, in the manner the Government desire it to be passed, will for all time block the Labour Party, no matter what their majority may be, from putting their policy into operation. That is what the Labour Party object to. There is no doubt as to the manner in which members of this House view the State trading concerns. Those concerns are absolutely opposed to the personal and private interests of hon. members, and to the interest of the section they represent. Therefore, hon. members say, they have a right, no matter what the majority of the electors may decide, to refuse to allow the Labour policy of State enterprises to be put into effect. Undoubtedly that would be the position created by this Bill. The Labour party can go before the country at the next general election and be returned, for the sake of argument, with forty members out of fifty in another place, and still this Council would have the power, under this measure, to prevent the Labour party from carrying out their policy. We can see why this Bill is being introduced. This is another and a final attempt to discredit the State trading concerns. There is no doubt about it, it has been carefully drawn up and with a Minister who is unsympathetic towards the State trading concerns they will be discredited in the future. As Mr. Drew pointed out interest and sinking fund has to be charged on any trading concern. In addition to this which presumably is fair, we find that depreciation is provided for in Clause 15. Why depreciation? It appears to me that with the powers given under that clause the Government will be able to ensure that the State trading concerns will pay. As regards the depreciation, I fail to see where the fairness comes in because the machinery must be kept in going order, and if interest and sinking fund have to be provided to pay for a going concern

in 20 years, at the end of that time the plant would have to be in good working order. Then I suppose providing the books have been carefully kept, we would be able to show a substantial loss on the concerns and so justify the sale to some political friends in the business. Let us consider the matter in which State control has acted Federally. To-day the Commonwealth bank is quite a respectable institution. At one time it was a socialistic fad and did not meet with the approval of the banking authorities, but to-day they have forgotten all about that. So again with the note issue and with the various other matters which the Commonwealth Government are interested in and have taken in hand. The Federal Government found it was impossible to put the whole of their policy into operation and they appealed to the people for an amendment of the constitution so that they might have the additional power. The vote in Western Australia was in favour of giving them that power in order to enable them to exercise control over industries in particular. Therefore, in Western Australia on every occasion when the people have had a chance of expressing their views on the question, they have shown that they are in favour of the policy of the Labour Government in this respect. I only hope, although the present Government are determined to put a strangle hold on the Labour policy, that at the same time the trading concerns will be given a better deal, and that anything that can be shown is for the benefit of the people will be given a fair go irrespective of the fact that it may be demonstrated that that particular concern is interfering with private interests. But if it is for the benefit of the people as a whole, irrespective of the prejudices against trading concerns, I hope every effort will be made to carry out the policy which has been inaugurated. I am not going to oppose the second reading of the Bill because there are many clauses in it which I consider are necessary, and many provisions which will be for the benefit of the proper conduct of the State trading concerns. When the measure is in Committee, I will indicate the particular clauses to which I take exception.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [10.7]: I desire to make a few general observations on the Bill. The passage of the Bill through this House as it now stands is certain. Long and anxiously have many members of this Chamber waited for this opportunity. The question of the establishment of State trading concerns has been one that has agitated the minds of many reform workers for many years past. The party with which I am identified believe that what can be done by private enterprise can be done equally well or better by the State. In 1911 this was one of the main planks upon which the Labour Party were returned. Despite the fact that the Liberal Party were strongly opposed to it, the Labour Party were returned to the other House 34 strong as against 16. The Labour Party established most of the concerns as set out in the schedule of the Bill and for many weeks almost every subject which was discussed in this House contained some reference to meat, fish or bricks; at any rate, it was all trading concerns. The general elections came on again. What do we discover? We find that the Liberal Party again go to the country on the same platform as in 1911, but another Richmond appears in the field in the form of the Country Party. The result was that the electors endorsed the policy of the Scaddan Government inasmuch as that Government came back with 26 followers in another place, and with the exception of the Avon seat which the Country party members won, that party secured all their seats from the Liberal party. The Scaddan Government carried on and received the support of the Country party for many months. Eventually, however, when the Country party found they could get better conditions from the Liberals, they joined forces with them. That brings me to the fact that on the occasion of two general elections the people of the State decided in the direction of establishing State trading concerns. This question of curtailing or stopping trading concerns is a Liberal policy and a plank of their platform. So far as the electors in the country are concerned, they have no mandate from them to do this. Immediately they got a majority, varied though it may be, in another place, and consisting as it does of

three parties of 16 members, eight members and one members, at the first opportunity that presented itself out went the strong arm to try and stop these trading concerns, despite the fact that the electors have not said that they may do so. It almost seems futile to discuss the Bill here in the face of that fact. I have said some hard things in the place where they ought to be said—at the congress of Labour—and given my opinions freely and without fear, but to say that the Government cannot establish a concern and run it on good and sound lines, as a private individual might do is to my mind tantamount to saying that we cannot run this Parliament. After all, Parliament is elected by the people. Its Ministry is elected in accordance with the majority of the party. That Ministry directs the affairs of the country. If State trading concerns cannot be run on a fair and reasonable basis, in comparison with other concerns, by this State, it is time the electors put in a new set of Parliamentarians. The fault, to a large extent, lies with the Parliamentarian because he is the director. The financial institution which Sir Edward Wittenoom is associated with would very quickly put out those who were responsible for running the concern if they did not show a reasonable profit. This Bill proposes that no further State trading concerns, other than those set out in the schedule, shall be established without the consent of Parliament. What does that mean? If I were a member of the Federal Parliament and such a Bill became before it, I would offer no opposition at all because the Federal Parliament is a reflex of the people and of the general taxpayer. This Parliament is not and never was a reflex of the people. The position to-day is that the taxpayer elects members to another place on the broadest possible franchise. In that place the whole 50 members can be put out at one go. In this place the Constitution was so cunningly worded and connived at, possibly with the best intentions on the part of the framers, that it is not possible to get out more than 10 members at a time.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: It is a wonder you stop here.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Perhaps I may not be here much longer. And when these 10 members go out only some 40,000 odd electors have the right to vote in regard to filling the vacant seats. As a matter of fact, there are not as many as 40,000 electors, as some of them have 10 votes each. It cannot be said that Parliament, so constituted, is a reflex of the people. Were this Parliament a true reflex of the people I should have no opposition to the Bill; but the Bill will be passed, I have no doubt. The institution, no matter how hide-bound it may be, or how inadequate in its operations, may for a time stop the onward march of the public clamour for reform, but will not stop it for all time. If the people of the State, as they will be before many years, are so educated in the direction of a further extension of the functions of the State, and in the direction of public utilities and concerns, whether this Constitution be made more hide-bound, still, I say they will not put up with it for all time. If a concern is wanted by the people this House will not dare to refuse to give it to them. It has been said that in the administration of these concerns that are now in the hands of the Liberal Administration, the Government will so administer them as to cause the people to have greater distrust in them. I do not say that the Liberal Government will do that. I say that where concerns are established, constitutionally or not constitutionally, and when they are established by a majority of the people sitting behind the Government which established them, the Liberal Government should give them a fair crack of the whip and a fair and reasonable chance of paying their way. If there is any indication of this sort in connection with hampering these trading concerns it would amount to a criminal action on the part of the Government and nothing else. Any Government which would deliberately endeavour to mal-administer these concerns should be impeached in the criminal dock. There is one point that has always appealed to me in the establishment of these concerns. We know that this war has already and conclusively demonstrated that, even in Conservative England, public or private enterprises connected with the great public utilities of

State, namely railways, munitions and undertakings in many other directions, are in a fair way to becoming nationalised. In our own State we have State railways and State tramways. I say advisedly that if there is one branch of public utility that could be and should be to the greatest possible extent run by the State, it is that connected with the food of the people. We have the State building railways, docks, harbours, bridges and roads, and it may be almost bordering on insanity to suggest that the State should provide the people's bread. That is one of the first things they should provide, and by that provision we should absolutely assure a good and a pure supply. I will not lose heart if this Bill is passed. If the Labour Government are returned at the next election, as they will be, and go in for a further extension of State trading concerns, and apply to this House for such extension, I shall not be disappointed if it is thrown out. I should have said that this war has wrought wonderful changes in our social and industrial organisation. I have this inspiration, that one of the factors that will be brought about by this war will be that these men who are gone to the Front will, on their return, be the medium and means whereby the Constitution of the Legislative Council will be liberalised. I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH (North-East)
[10.30]: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	16
<hr/>				
Majority against	..	..	..	10
<hr/>				

AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. J. E. Dodd
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. J. W. Hickey
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. H. Carson	Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. E. Rosa
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. J. P. Allen
	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES (North)
[10.30]: I desire to say only a very few words on this Bill. I am opposed to State trading concerns except they be run on business lines. Until that can be assured in connection with our trading concerns they will always have my opposition. When the State steamship service was established the Government called for application for the position of manager at a salary of £450 per annum. That was an absurd salary to offer for such a position. If the Government require a man to manage any of its concerns they must adopt the same principles as would be adopted by business men, and must be prepared to pay capable men an adequate salary. I want to refer to only two clauses of the Bill—Clauses 8 and 15, which have been referred to by Mr. Drew and Mr. Millington. The object of the Government in bringing down this measure, and particularly the clause in question, is in order that it may be ensured that these concerns shall be run on business lines. Clause 8 is perfectly in order. It reads as follows—

Such amounts as shall be fixed by the Colonial Treasurer as the interest and sinking fund contributions payable for the year in respect of such portion of the General Loan Fund as shall have been applied to the purposes of the undertaking.

Then it goes on to say—

Such further contributions to a sinking fund as may be approved by the Colonial Treasurer to be necessary to produce the principal of the aforesaid portion of the General Loan Fund or any other capital expenditure at such earlier date (if any) as may be prescribed by the Governor.

That is a quite legitimate charge. The money may have been charged as it was in days past at 3 per cent., or it may be even at 4 or 5 per cent. and interest has to be paid on the borrowed capital. The sinking fund contribution is $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. which does not cover depreciation at all. Any man running his business on business lines must set apart a certain sum as a depreciation fund. That depreciation allotment would probably take 30 years in order to wipe out the amount of the capital invested.

Hon. J. M. Drew: The sinking fund is more than 1 per cent.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: It is $1\frac{1}{2}$ or it may be 2 per cent., but the depreciation fund should be sufficient to cover the capital involved. The clause says—

The Treasurer shall determine the amount of the depreciation of the assets of any trading concern.

Some concerns may last only 10 to 15 years, and the depreciation fund should be sufficient to cover the amount of the capital during the life of the concern. Those are the only two points which I wish to discuss. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [10.34]: I wish to say a few words particularly in regard to the action of myself and other members last night in opposing the adjournment. When I opposed the adjournment last night after only one or two members had spoken, I did so because I thought others were willing to go on. Directly I saw that my action had been misunderstood, I agreed to adjourn; but I thought members would be willing to continue the debate this evening. I wish also to say a few words on the point called attention to by Mr. Millington. He accused me of saying that the State sawmills had lost £100,000 in a certain period. I never made such a statement, although I know the statement has been frequently attributed to me. I was contrasting the revenue and expenditure on the Estimates as submitted to Parliament with the actual expenditure as shown by the Treasury figures. I am aware that I have been misunderstood, but that is not my fault. Reference has also been made to the "Kangaroo." Members will remember that the ship came into collision with another vessel off the Welsh coast, with the result that serious damage was sustained, and the vessel has been in dock for some weeks. The Government has just been informed that the consequent court case has decided that the master of the "Kangaroo" was in no way responsible for the collision and that the owners of the other vessel will have to pay the whole of the costs and damages.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Application of Act:

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That the word "Parliament" in Sub-clause 1, paragraph (b), be struck out, and the words "Governor-in-Council" inserted in lieu.

The question is whether we shall adopt as a principle that Parliament shall authorise the establishment of future trading concerns or whether that shall be the function of the Governor's advisers.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am in some doubt whether the amendment is in order and in accordance with the Constitution Act.

The CHAIRMAN: It is quite in order. This is not a constitutional question at all, but one of Parliamentary procedure.

Hon. R. G. ARDAGH: The object of the clause as printed is to prevent any future Government establishing State trading concerns. I support the amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	..	15
Majority against..					8

AYES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. R. G. Ardagh
Hon. J. M. Drew	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. P. Allen	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. E. Rosa
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Balance to be carried forward:

Hon. J. M. DREW: Under Clause 9 the trading concern has to pay interest to Consolidated Revenue on the basis of its daily balance. Under the clause before the Committee the balance standing to the credit of the trading concern at the bank shall be applied as the Government may direct. No provision has been made for crediting the trading concern with the amount of interest which should accrue from the credit balance at the Treasury, which might be £100,000. The Treasurer seizes the credit balance, pays it into Consolidated Revenue, and before the end of July the account is debited, say, £20,000, on which the trading concern will have to pay interest. I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to the clause:—"Provided that if such balance be applied otherwise than for the purposes of trading concerns, interest at such rate as is charged such trading concerns under Section 9 of the Act shall be credited to its account with the Colonial Treasurer."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not think the amendment is applicable or would be found practicable in actual working. If the balance standing to the credit of the trading concern was not required, the Treasurer would appropriate the amount to some other work, and an entry would be passed in the books of the trading concern, reducing its capital to that amount. No further interest would be payable on that amount by the trading concern. Again, it is to be remembered that a good many of these trading concerns have in the past made considerable losses. The losses have been made good out of Consolidated Revenue, and until they have been wiped out by surplus moneys appropriated from the trading concerns there should be no crediting of interest on money appropriated for such purposes.

Hon. J. M. Drew: That is all right, but there is no provision in the Bill that all this shall be done; hence my amendment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Under Clause 9 it is provided that interest shall be charged only on the daily balance. The only injustice which could happen would be if the Minister controlling the trading concerns was foolish enough to leave a large

balance lying idle, which is not contemplated by the measure. It is necessary to consider Clause 18 in conjunction with the clause before the Committee. Under Clause 15 the trading concern is relieved of interest in respect of any moneys taken to Consolidated Revenue.

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

Ayes	8
Noes	14

Majority against ..	6
---------------------	---

AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. A. Greig
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. J. W. Hickey
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)
Hon. J. J. Holmes	

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Depreciation:

Hon. J. M. DREW: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as Subclause 2:—"Whenever the total amount of the depreciation so determined shall exceed the amount provided for the repayment of loan moneys raised or used for purposes of capital expenditure on a trading concern, the amount of such excess shall be charged against the profits of the trading concern, and may be appropriated by the Colonial Treasurer to the sinking fund."

My object is to prevent a position arising in which the trading concerns will be charged not only with sinking fund, but also with depreciation. Private companies and business concerns generally do not charge sinking fund. Most of the Governments of the British Empire, including those of the Eastern States, make no provision for sinking fund even on their loans. This Bill, however, proposes to require from the State trading concerns depreciation as

well as sinking fund. As Mr. Miles has said, a steamer operated by the State Steamship Service may have a life of only 14 years. Then the Government will base the sinking fund on that expectation of life, and the accountants will charge depreciation on the same basis. Thus the profit and loss account will be so heavily charged as to render any return to the Consolidated Revenue absolutely impossible. My amendment is designed to put the State trading concerns on business lines. Section 13 of the Act of 1912 already provides that whichever is greater, interest or depreciation, shall be charged.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Mr. Drew's remarks make me feel inclined to vote for the amendment. However, there is the fact that the State trading concerns, unlike private businesses, pay no income tax. The sinking fund would therefore represent a set-off against income tax.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Drew says that the proviso he has moved is in accordance with existing legislation. That is a fact, and the proviso was omitted from this Bill because it was found to be unworkable, and because it did not serve its purpose. Depreciation is a working expense, and must be charged against the profits of every trading concern. Sinking fund must also be provided in order to repay the bondholders. Mr. Drew says that sinking funds do not obtain in private concerns; but many companies finance in the form of debentures, and they have to make provision for paying off those debentures gradually. In connection with the State trading concerns, we have practically the same position.

Hon. J. M. DREW: The Colonial Secretary has said that this Bill was prepared by a board of accountants. I have come to the conclusion that it was prepared by a board whose object was to strangle the State trading concerns. Who has ever heard of a sinking fund in connection with private business undertakings? Companies pay no interest on their capital. The only payment they make which could possibly be regarded as interest is the payment of dividends. Under this Bill no State trading concern can possibly succeed except under the most extremely favourable conditions. If the clause passes as it stands, the public will have to be

notified what has been done by the Government in the way of placing every possible burden on the trading concerns. However, I feel that anything I may say on this subject will carry little weight with certain hon. members.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	..	13

Majority against .. 6

AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. J. A. Greig
Hon. J. M. Drew	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. J. Holmes	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed

Clauses 16, 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Profit and loss account:

Hon. J. M. DREW: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 all the words after "be" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—(a.) paid to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue Fund; or (b) applied in reduction of the capital of such trading concern: Provided that the Colonial Treasurer shall credit the account of the trading concern with interest on all such profit paid the Consolidated Revenue Fund at the same rate as is charged on moneys expended in connection with the operations of the concern."

This amendment I consider necessary by reason of the fact that under this clause the Treasurer can take any profits from the trading concerns that may be available and pay no interest nor reduce the capital by the amount he has taken. The alternative is given to the Treasurer to apply the profit available in cash at the end of each financial year, or in one of two ways. He can pay it to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue Fund or he can apply it to the reduction of the capital of the trading

concerns. If he pays it to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue he is required to pay interest to the trading concerns on the basis of the sum he has taken, but if he applies it to the reduction of the capital the interest will be reduced automatically by that means, so that hon. members should certainly support the amendment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am sorry the hon. member should regard this clause with so much suspicion. There is no intention to do anything unfair, and if the Government did do anything unfair they would very quickly be exposed. This is not a matter of policy, it is a matter of business methods, and the clause has been drafted by business experts and the amendment which has been moved is quite unnecessary.

Hon. J. M. DREW: There is a statutory provision here that interest must be paid on the daily balance, and if the Government intend to reduce the capitalisation by the amount of profits they take from the concern at the end of the year, it should be stated in the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is only proper that the profits, when duly ascertained, should go into Consolidated Revenue. The concern itself has made arrangements for the payment of interest and sinking fund and it has to make arrangements for depreciation and then, if there is a profit, that profit goes into Consolidated Revenue and it will be needed to meet the losses on other concerns.

Hon. J. M. DREW: It certainly should go into the Consolidated Revenue Fund and the capital account must be credited with it, and there is no provision here for that.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: What would either hon. members say if it was suggested that any profit from those concerns should be paid into the National Debt sinking fund? All these losses are not going to be paid out of Consolidated Revenue; as a matter of fact they are going to be paid out of loan moneys.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: The Colonial Secretary states it is intended the profit shall be paid into Consolidated Revenue. Why are we not prepared to have it put into

plain language in the Bill, as provided in the amendment?

The Colonial Secretary: I object to putting anything in the Bill that is not necessary.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I understand there is to be a separate account for these trading concerns. If there is a profit on any one of them, that will be taken to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue. If there is a loss on one of the others I presume that loss will be paid out of Consolidated Revenue. Surely that is legitimate.

Hon. J. M. DREW: That would be well if it was the intention on the part of the Government to carry on these concerns. These concerns are on their trial and if there is to be continual losses those which are losing must be closed down, but those which are making profits should be credited with the profits. Each should stand on its own. If the State Steamship Service is making a profit it should not be taken from it and given to the sawmills if they are losing. I agree that profits should go against losses if there are losses in connection with these State trading concerns and that if a trading concern is really a losing proposition it would possibly be desirable to close it down.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The closing down of a trading concern does not stop the loss. I am glad the hon. member says that trading concerns should be closed down if they are losing because it will disarm him from criticism in the future if losing propositions are closed down.

Hon. J. M. DREW: There will be losses under this Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member suggests that the need for setting off the loss against the profit does not arise because it will be the duty of the Government to close down losing concerns. We still have to provide out of revenue the interest and sinking fund on the capital which will have entirely disappeared in connection with such losing proposition.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	..	16
Majority against					10

AYES.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh
Hon. J. Cunningham
Hon. J. E. Dodd

Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. W. Hickey
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. F. Allen
Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. H. Carson
Hon. H. P. Colebatch
Hon. J. Duffell
Hon. J. Ewing
Hon. J. A. Grelg
Hon. V. Hamersley

Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. G. W. Miller
Hon. E. Rose
Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 19—agreed to.

Clause 20—Accounts to be balanced :

Hon. A. SANDERSON : I would suggest that it is more sensible to have a half-yearly report in this matter.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I am afraid that to make out a half-yearly report would involve a terrible loss of time in taking stock in an institution like the State Implement Works. Once a year is as frequent a time as can be managed.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 21—Accounts to be audited :

Hon. A. SANDERSON : Would it not be advisable to have a report in addition to full and true balance sheets ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : The provision is in exact accordance with the Companies Act and the clause following provides for a report thereto to be laid before both houses of Parliament.

Hon. A. Sanderson : Is that not a report on the accounts and not on the business ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : It is the Auditor General's report on the accounts.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 22 to 28—agreed to.

Schedule, Title—agreed to.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee :

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair ; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 2.

The CHAIRMAN : Progress was reported on this clause wherein Mr. Duffell had moved an amendment to strike out the word "eleventh" in line 3 and insert the word "tenth."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I reported progress on the clause at the request of Mr. Drew who pointed out that we had previously reported progress on the understanding that I would ascertain whether a certain amendment was acceptable or not I do not propose to re-open the discussion on the matter. If an amendment is moved in the direction suggested by Mr. Cullen I am prepared to go to a division, and if the House agrees to the amendment to send the Bill back to another place and see if it is acceptable.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM : I propose to move the amendment standing in the name of Mr. Cullen on the Notice paper, and if it is carried other clauses of the Bill will have to be amended.

Hon. J. DUFFELL : Whilst I realise that my arguments are logical and it is absolutely necessary that we should come into line on the 1st July, 1917, instead of the 1st July, 1918, I am prepared to let the matter go. Arrangements have already been made in this direction in the Eastern States. I am not content to allow the Taxation Department to proceed in the future as they have done in the past. If the leader of the House will give an assurance that he is prepared to accept an amendment to bring our Bill into line as from the 1st July that will settle the whole matter. The work in the Taxation Department is in arrears, in fact the work is driving the office instead of the office driving the work.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : So far as I know that aspect of the case has nothing to do with the question before the House. It is the intention of the Bill that we should come into line as from the 1st July, 1918. The question is how the change over is to take place. If the amend-

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and passed.

ment is put to the vote and accepted here it still remains to be seen if it will be accepted in another place.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 7—agreed to.

New clause :

Hon Sir E. H. WITTENOOM : I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 8 :—“ Provided that the first assessment under this Act shall be based on the income for the half year ending the 30th June, 1917, and shall be for six months only, and one half the exemptions and reductions provided under the Principal Act will be allowed.”

By this means we shall get into line with the Commonwealth and the other States.

New clause put and a division taken, with the following result :—

Ayes	..	..	..	10
Noes	..	..	..	5
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	5
				—

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	(Teller.)
Hon. C. McKenzie	

NOES.

Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. J. Cunningham
Hon. R. J. Lynn	(Teller.)

New clause thus passed.

Title—agreed to.

[The President resumed the Chair].

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—TREASURY BONDS DEFICIENCY.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair, the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 5—Application of General Loan and Inscribed Stock Act :

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : My only reason for bringing this Bill forward at a late hour is that in consequence of an amendment carried last evening a number of consequential amendments are necessitated, and I would like to carry them now. Clause 4 will have to be recommitted, not with any intention of trying to reverse the decision of the previous evening but to restore one portion of the clause which does not deal with the funding of future deficits.

12 o'clock midnight.

Hon. A. Sanderson : Are they all consequential amendments ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Yes. I move an amendment—

That the words “or under the authority of any Act passed pursuant to the provisions of Part II. of this Act” be struck out.

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

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Date of issue, currency, etc.—

On motions by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, amendments were made as follow :—The words “or of any Act passed pursuant to the provisions of Part II. of this Act,” in lines 2 and 3, were struck out; also, in paragraph (b), the words “in respect of the issues under Part I. of this Act, and from the 1st day of July next following the issue thereof in respect of issues under Part II. of this Act” were struck out.

Clause 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Power to trustees and others to invest in bonds :

Hon. A. SANDERSON : Is there any special meaning in this particular clause apart from what appears on the surface ? It seems somewhat unusual.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : The only reason for the clause is to make the investment a legal one for trustees.

Hon. A. SANDERSON : I am not prepared to give, at a moment's notice, the exact reference I should like to give ; but I think the hon. gentlemen will find that under Imperial legislation Western

Australian securities are trustees' securities in Great Britain. Perhaps the securities under this clause could be put on the same lines as inscribed stock.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There is perhaps some doubt as to whether the clause is absolutely necessary, but I fail to see that it is in any way harmful. It is an exact copy of the corresponding section of the Acts of the Eastern States.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I do not wish to press the point, though it may be of considerable importance. If the Colonial Secretary is satisfied, I do not wish to press the matter.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 9—Power to pay off or redeem:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The proviso of which I have given notice applies to this clause. I hope there will be frequent occasion for the Colonial Treasurer to avail himself of the proviso. I move—

That the following be added to the clause:—"Provided that the surplus revenue of any financial year in excess of Fifty thousand pounds shall be applied to the purchase or redemption of such bonds or stocks."

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

Schedule—agreed to.

Title:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the words "to make provision for deficiencies in succeeding financial years" be struck out.

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

Bill reported with amendments, also an amendment to the Title.

Recommittal.

On motion by the COLONIAL SECRETARY, Bill recommitted for the purpose of considering a new clause to stand as Clause 4.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yesterday a division was taken on Clause 4 of the Bill, and the Government unhesitatingly accept the verdict. The intention of the Committee as expressed by that division was, I understand, to strike out all reference to the funding of future deficits.

But Subclauses 1 and 2 of the clause are still necessary. I move an amendment:—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 4:—"It shall be lawful for the Colonial Treasurer during the financial year ending the 30th day of June, 1917, and any subsequent financial year, to apply any moneys standing to the credit of the Public Account to meet expenditure authorised by the Supply Acts and the Appropriation Act in force for the time being. If at the expiration of any financial year it shall appear that the expenditure as authorised to be made from the consolidated revenue fund has exceeded the revenue for the year, the matter shall be forthwith reported to Parliament, if then in session, or, if not, as soon as practicable after the next meeting of Parliament."

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I of course accept all these amendments as merely consequential, but I dislike very much their being passed offhand at this late hour. Frankly, I cannot at the moment understand why Subclause 2 as moved by the Colonial Secretary should be inserted. If the Colonial Secretary assures me that it is purely consequential, I shall accept the assurance; but I ask him to weigh that assurance. Is the hon. gentleman perfectly satisfied, and are his officials perfectly satisfied, that the amendment really does not affect the division taken last night?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Last night's division was on the question of funding future deficits, and that division is respected. My only object in requesting the Committee to deal with these amendments now, is that we may have a fair print of the new Bill available to-morrow. I do not intend to proceed further than that to-night. If the Bill then is not acceptable to hon members, they will take their course.

New clause put and passed.

Bill again reported with an amendment.

House adjourned at 12.15 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 15th March, 1917.

	PAGE.
Questions: State Brickworks, labour ...	2467
Wheat Pool, 1917-18	2467
Fruit, Railages to Great Southern district	2467
Fruit Marketing	2467
Railway Construction, Narrogin-Dwarda	2468
Railways Authorised, order of construction	2468
State Brickworks, shunting charges	2468
Bills: Land Act Amendment, Com.	2468
Racing Restriction, returned	2469
State Trading Concerns (No. 2) returned	2490
Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amend- men, Council's amendment	2490
Industries Assistance Act Amendment, Council's Amendments	2491
Agricultural Bank Act Amendment, Council's message	2498
Fire Brigades, Council's amendment	2493
Bunbury Town Lot, 318, all stages	2494
Adjournment, special	2494

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 5-0 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—STATE BRICKWORKS, LABOUR.

Mr. GREEN (without notice) asked the Minister for Works: Is it true that the State brickworks are not working at full capacity at the present time? If so, is this due to shortage of labour, and what is the class of labour required and what are the wages offered in each grade?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: It is true that the State brickworks are not working at full capacity at the present time. This is due to the fact that a sufficiency of labour is not available to carry on the work. The classes of labour required at present are, one trucker at 10s. per day, two clay hole men at 10s. per day, and two drawers, to work on piece work. The drawers at present employed are earning about £4 10s. per week. I may add that I have communicated with the secretary of the Brickmakers' Union, who has promised to do what he can to supply the labour required. The member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) and the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Green) are, I understand, also interesting themselves in the matter. There seems to be difficulty in finding the labour required owing to the great number of men who have gone on active service. I have an appointment for Monday next with the secretary of the Brickmaker's Union and also with the manager of the

State brickworks. If men suitable for the work are out of employment, I shall be glad if they will attend at the office of the Public Works Department at half-past ten on Monday morning.

QUESTION—WHEAT POOL 1917-18.

Increase of price.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM (without notice) asked the Premier: In view of the recommendation of the Central Wheat Board that the guarantee offered by the Government to farmers for wheat be increased, will he consider the advisability of raising the guarantee to farmers from 3s. to 4s. per bushel for 1917-18 season wheat?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What is the use of guaranteeing an increase now? The farmers will not crop any more because of an increase. A guarantee is valuable only for the purpose of increasing the area to be cropped.

The PREMIER: I understand that 4s. per bushel as guaranteed represents a minimum price f.o.b. The cash advance against the harvest is 3s. per bushel. The Commonwealth Government, I understand, have endorsed that decision of the pool.

QUESTION—FRUIT, RAILAGE TO GREAT SOUTHERN DISTRICT.

Mr. FOLEY asked the Minister for Railways:—May fruit of apple, pear, peach, and plum varieties, if purchased at the markets in Perth, after inspection be consigned by rail to the Great Southern areas without cool storage? If not, will he amend the regulations so as to allow any fruit to be railed, provided it is certified as clean by an officer of the Agricultural Department?

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: (a) No. (b) The regulations are under the control of the Minister for Agriculture. He informs me that this matter is receiving consideration but that the experts advise that in order to protect the industry no undue risk must be taken in dealing with the distribution of fruit.

QUESTION—FRUIT MARKETING.

Mr. FOLEY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Is it a fact that only one market has been consulted in regard to the