

were 4,491 engagements, so that 485 positions could not be filled. These workers of both sexes are not protected by Arbitration Court awards. There is a big demand for their services and consequently no justification exists for a parasitical charge for obtaining work for them. Such a charge would be bad enough in times of peace, but should not be tolerated in a war period. If employers desire the privilege of obtaining labour from private labour exchanges, it is but reasonable that they should expect to pay for such a luxury. They are not compelled to do so, because the Government labour exchanges for youths, women and men give a free service immeasurably superior to that given by private enterprise. The passing of the Bill will afford relief to a large number of men, women and young people by reducing the fee, which is mainly a levy of their first week's wages.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But you send any kind of worker, including nit-wits.

The HONORARY MINISTER: No.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I know of several cases.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member knows he gets good workers.

Hon. G. W. Miles: No.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This is a war economy measure which it will be very difficult to combat if members give it fair consideration. I feel sure that, if it is considered from the viewpoint of labour difficulties—caused mainly by the absorption of country workers in the A.I.F. and other defence forces—it will be passed without amendment. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.9 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 23rd October, 1941.

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

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

Enlisting Clients, Power of Attorney.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Lands: 1, In the power of attorney form which the Agricultural Bank obtains from its settlers who enlist in the A.I.F., is the following clause included:—To mortgage all or any of the said lands, leases, or holdings, either as primary security or as a collateral security to secure any sum of money which my said attorney may borrow for his own purpose from the Agricultural Bank of Western Australia or any other institution or company? 2, Is it usual to include such a clause in a power of attorney form? 3, If not, why is it included in the form used by the Agricultural Bank?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes. 2, It is not unusual. 3, See answer to No. 2.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS.

As to Conversion to Standard Gauge.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that members of the present Federal Government have in the past advocated unification of railway gauges? 2, As this policy may now be implemented by the Federal Government, can our railway workshops handle the construction of modern standard gauge locomotives? 3, Can the workshops construct the latest type of passenger coaches equal to the best

in the Eastern States? 4, Alternatively, does he favour such work being done in Eastern States' workshops?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, Yes. 4, No.

QUESTION—PERTH TRAMWAYS, EXTENSION

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that the residents living beyond the tram terminus at Salisbury-street, Maylands, are anxiously awaiting advice in connection with the proposal submitted to him some time ago further to extend the tram service along Beaufort-street? 2, Has the proposal been examined and reported on? 3, If so, how far is it proposed to extend the service? 4, Will the line be duplicated from Normanby-street to the proposed terminus, thus obviating unnecessary annoyance and delay of the single-line track? 5, Are rails and equipment available for the work? 6, Will he favourably consider the fare for the increase in the section remaining as at present? 7, If it is not proposed to extend the tram line will he make available some of the electric cars now on order to act as feeders to the existing service?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, To Grand Promenade. 4, The proposals provide for duplication to Salisbury-street and single line thence to Grand Promenade. 5, Yes. 6, Fares are under consideration. 7, It is proposed to extend the tram line.

QUESTIONS (2)—MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT.

As to Straightening Guildford Road.

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Works: 1, Has the Main Roads Department completed its survey and estimate in connection with the proposal to straighten Guildford-road at a point near Whatley in Bayswater? 2, If the answer is in the affirmative, when is it proposed to proceed with the work? 3, What is the estimated cost of the work? 4, What contribution is the Bayswater Road Board making towards the cost? 5, Will it be necessary to resume the stone house near Whatley? 6, Will the Main Roads Board or the Bayswater Road

Board make the necessary resumptions? 7, Will ample notice for resumption be given?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, A survey only has been made. 2 and 3, See answer to 1. 4, An offer to bear the cost of resumption was made by the local authority, but for a different route. 5, Not on route surveyed by Commissioner of Main Roads. 6, Not decided. 7, If and when resumption decided, usual course will be adopted.

Receipts from the Commonwealth.

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works: What is the aggregate amount that the Main Roads Board has received from the Commonwealth during the last six years?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The amount to which the State is entitled and has received under the Federal Aid Roads Agreement for the period mentioned is £4,113,195.

QUESTION—DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION WORKS.

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works: 1, How much has the Government expended on drainage and irrigation works over the last six years? 2, How much of the above expenditure was spent in the Albany electorate?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: The information required necessitates the compilation of a return which will be laid on the Table of the House when available.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Factories and Shops Act Amendment.
- 2, Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Labour.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Money Lenders Act Amendment.
Transmitted to the Council.
- 2, Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment.

Passed

BILL—PERTH DENTAL HOSPITAL LAND.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gaseoyne) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: The necessity for this Bill arises from the disposition of certain land that has been under the authority of two separate entities. In October, 1932, Perth lot 654 with a frontage to Pier-street, between Murray-street and Wellington-street and an area of 12.9 perches, was set aside as a Crown grant and the reserve was issued to Perth Dental Hospital Incorporated as a site for a dental hospital. Later it was found that the block was unsuitable for the purpose and, as no other blocks were available in exchange, permission was sought to sell the land and use the money for the purchase of another site. By this time Perth Dental Hospital Incorporated had become merged into the Western Australian College of Dental Science and Perth Dental Hospital Incorporated. The Public Dental Hospital Land Act of 1934 gave authority to this composite body to sell that block and apply the proceeds of the sale to the purchase of another area and towards the construction of the necessary building thereon.

Under the authority of the 1934 Act the land in Pier-street was sold for £1,500, a fresh lot was bought in Wellington-street between Lord-street and Hill-street for £1,050, and the balance of the money applied towards the cost of the building. The new site is held under the name of the Western Australian College of Dental Science and Perth Dental Hospital Incorporated, but now the college and the hospital have been divided and are administered under separate constitutions. It is, therefore, necessary that the ownership of the land be transferred to the Perth Dental Hospital Incorporated. Some months ago when this matter was brought up and the necessity for the transfer was pointed out, an examination showed that an improper use of the word "incorporated" was being made in this connection.

The legal interpretation of the word "incorporated" is, I understand, quite different from what was intended in connection with the Perth Dental Hospital, and the word has been eliminated from the title of that institution which is now known as the Perth

Dental Hospital. Although the Act I have mentioned was passed in 1934 to provide the necessary authority for the purchase of the site, it did not include any powers respecting the disposal of the land. It is necessary, therefore, to transfer the existing site to the Perth Dental Hospital Board, which has been appointed under the Hospitals Act for the purpose of establishing and maintaining a public dental hospital. A perusal of the Bill will show that there is conferred on the board all the powers necessary under Section 17 of the Hospitals Act. The Bill is a simple measure rendered necessary because of the division of the authority of the interests which formed the conjoint ownership of the area in question. It will validate the transfer of the land to the Perth Dental Hospital Board. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Shearn, debate adjourned.

BILL—FRANCHISE.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 7th October. Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Definitions:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 4, to which the member for Nedlands had moved to insert at the end of the first paragraph the following words:—

"A.I.F." means the second Australian Imperial Force enlisted for service overseas and any female enlisted to serve with same in any capacity.

"R.A.A.F." means the Royal Australian Air Force enlisted for service overseas and any female enlisted to serve with same in any capacity.

"R.A.N." means the Royal Australian Navy and includes the Royal Australian Naval Reserve and the Royal Australian Naval Volunteer Reserve whilst serving on any warship of the Royal Australian Navy.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The amendment was absolutely necessary for the purpose of other alterations I had intended asking the Committee to accept. I am personally aware that the amendments I proposed to move are approved by a large majority of those who are authorised to speak on behalf of soldiers. It appears, however, from what the Minister said when the Bill was

previously in Committee—I have confirmed my impression by a perusal of “Hansard”—that his intention is not to accept any of my amendments. In the circumstances, no useful purpose can be served in pursuing the matter further. I am evidently not persona grata with the Minister to the extent that others may possibly be, and who might be able to get him to see matters in a more reasonable light. I do not propose proceeding further with the amendment before the Chair, and ask leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Members of the forces already enrolled to retain enrolment during period of service:

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That the following subclause, to stand as Subclause 2, be inserted:—“The wife or husband of any member of the forces, in cases where the name of such wife or husband was on the roll as a Legislative Assembly elector for any electoral district at any time immediately prior to the enlistment of such member of the forces, and notwithstanding absence from such electoral district, shall be deemed to continue to live in such electoral district, and to retain such enrolment and the right to vote at any election held with respect to such electoral district.”

The purpose of the amendment is to extend the objective of Subclause 1, which deals with the right of soldiers to retain enrolment during the period of their service. Shortly, the amendment seeks to ensure that the wife who may have left the district for which she is enrolled as an elector in order to reside somewhere else so as to be near her husband during the time he is in camp, shall retain her enrolment. It will merely place wives on the same footing as their husbands.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have no objection to the amendment which will secure uniformity. It is reasonable that the enrolment of the wife shall be retained equally with that of the husband.

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

Clause 6—Enrolment and voting by certain members of the forces over the age of 18 years and enrolment and voting by other members of the forces:

Mr. McDONALD: This is an important clause. I offer no opposition to it but do

not regard it as complete. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 the words “not under 18 years of age” be struck out and the words “irrespective of his age” inserted in lieu.

Any soldier who serves oversea is entitled to the same privilege as is accorded to another soldier who does not go oversea.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not oppose the amendment. A man who has sufficient courage to fight for his country abroad is entitled to a voice in the government of his country.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 the word “voluntarily” be struck out.

In all of these cases the man who enlists for service oversea does so voluntarily, and the word “voluntarily” is unnecessary.

The Minister for Justice: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 after the word “forces” the words “or of the Royal Navy or of the Royal Air Force” be inserted.

The definition of “member of the forces” appears to cover members of the Royal Australian Navy. To the knowledge of members of this Committee many of our men have enlisted in the Royal Navy as well as in the Royal Air Force. The object of my amendment is to give to such men the same privilege as is given to members of the A.I.F.

The Premier: Would the Royal Navy cover the Australian Navy, for your purpose?

Mr. McDONALD: The Royal Australian Navy would be included in the definition.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am not in favour of the amendment. The Bill is designed to cover all Australians serving in any of the Forces within the British Empire. If they have enlisted in the Australian Forces but are now serving either with the Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force, they will still be covered by this Bill. They are more or less on loan, and the definition will cover them pretty fully. Those who have enlisted in the Forces in

Australia but are now serving with the Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force do not lose their identity, and they are paid from Australia. Members of the R.A.A.F. receive the same pay as do members of the R.A.F., the balance being held as deferred pay. I have it on good authority that members of the Australian Forces, on transfer, do not lose their identity. That might not be so in the case of an Australian who enlisted directly with the British Forces. Any person who has enlisted in the Australian Forces would be covered by the definition in this Bill. The amendment would probably do no harm, but I look upon it as superfluous. Very few Australians have enlisted with the British Forces.

Hon. N. Keenan: Many have done so.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And many have enlisted in the R.A.F.

The Minister for Mines: They have been transferred, but retain their identity as Australians.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Under the Empire training scheme no doubt many Australians have enlisted, but they are more or less on loan. Since the outbreak of war practically no Australians have enlisted with the British Forces direct.

Hon. N. Keenan: Have you heard of any who have joined the British Navy within the last six months?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Very few have done so.

Hon. N. Keenan: I know of dozens.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: According to information supplied by the military authorities, those of the Royal Australian Navy and those of the R.A.A.F., very few of our men have enlisted in that way.

Mr. Berry: How do you know?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is the information given to me. The amendment is unnecessary.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is very necessary.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It might be, but I am sceptical. No doubt Opposition members have their point of view and it will be interesting to hear it.

Hon. N. Keenan: So that the Minister may have some further assurances, I will inform him that two schools, one in Perth and the other in Claremont, have been established for about eight months past to

teach young men navigation, signalling and other subjects for the purpose of their proceeding to England to obtain commissions in the Royal Navy. To my certain knowledge, very lately a dozen of those young men have left my electorate.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I know of 12 who have left.

Hon. N. Keenan: Lecturers were appointed who attended at the Royal Perth Yacht Club and the Royal Freshwater Bay Yacht Club to teach young men anxious to join the Navy. After three months' teaching they were subjected to an examination, and if they passed and were physically fit they were sent to England.

The Minister for Justice: They did not enlist in the Australian forces?

Hon. N. Keenan: How could they? The schools were established at the request of the Royal Navy so that yachtsmen and fishermen with some knowledge of the sea could receive necessary training. That is one case of which the Minister apparently has never heard; yet everybody else knows about it. In addition, large numbers of young men went abroad and joined the Royal Air Force. They went through an Empire scheme of training.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Imperial authorities sent out here for them.

Hon. N. Keenan: These young men had some knowledge of flying and were at once accepted. The Minister's objection to the amendment is that it is surplusage. Suppose it is—although I do not admit that—the amendment will do no harm! It will enable some Australians to vote.

Mr. Berry: The Minister's main objection to the amendment is that it is redundant, but I have not yet perused a Bill introduced into this Parliament which is not redundant. It seems that there are some Australians serving in the Royal Air Force, the Royal Navy and perhaps other Imperial units, who may not be granted the privilege of voting.

The Minister for Justice: We know there is a number of them.

Mr. Berry: Why should not they be granted the franchise?

The Minister for Justice: If they enlisted in Australia they would come under the Bill.

Mr. Berry: Why preclude from voting any Australian who wishes to take an interest in the government of his country? Some little time ago the Royal

Air Force asked the R.A.A.F. for volunteers to serve in the Old Country in an administrative capacity.

The Minister for Justice: If they enlisted in Australia they would be covered by the definition.

Mr. BERRY: But they did not enlist in Australia. For the Minister deliberately to say that his objection to the amendment is that it is redundant is, in vulgar terms, "hooy"! I hope the amendment will be agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have no real objection to the amendment. The member for Irwin-Moore has mentioned redundancy, but his speech was redundant. As more light has been thrown on the amendment I am willing to accept it, because it does not affect the principle of the Bill.

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

Clause 7—Act not to prevent change of enrolment:

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That after the word "forces" in line 2 the words "or the wife or husband of any such member" be inserted.

This amendment is consequential on the amendment of Clause 5. The husband or the wife of a member of the Forces shall be entitled bona fide to change his or her enrolment upon the member returning to Western Australia.

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

Clause 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Claims for enrolment may be signed on behalf of members of the forces absent from the State:

Mr. McDONALD: By the preceding clause, any member of the Forces who becomes entitled to be enrolled—including those under 18 years of age—may while in the State apply to be enrolled for his district in the usual way. Clause 8 deals with the enrolment of members of the Forces who have not yet left the State. This clause deals with the enrolment of members of the Forces who have left the State, and whose names do not appear on the electoral roll for the district in which they may have resided immediately prior to enlistment. The

clause then goes on to provide that a member of the Forces may sign an authority by which he nominates some person in Australia to apply for enrolment on his behalf. I am proposing to eliminate the whole nominee system, so as to give all soldiers, whether they are in the State or abroad, a direct vote for the district in which the election is occurring. I propose to strike out Clause 9 and substitute another clause in its place.

The clause to be substituted involves a new principle. When introducing the Bill, the Minister said that the nominee system was designed to avoid the expense and the organisation that would be required in sending electoral rolls to the various theatres of war in order to determine whether the soldier was entitled to vote for an electoral district. The new clause I propose will overcome the difficulty. By later amendments appearing on the notice paper, it is provided that the soldier in the theatre of war shall vote in this way: He first signs a declaration which is on an envelope and which establishes his right to be a voter for the particular district for which he intends to vote. He then, when he completes his ballot paper, puts it in a separate envelope and places the envelope containing his ballot paper in the envelope on which the declaration has been printed and completed.

The CHAIRMAN: I draw the attention of the member for West Perth to the fact that he cannot move to delete a clause, but can only vote against it. The proposal is to move a new clause, and that cannot be done until the end of the Bill. I suggest that he amends his amendment (appearing on the notice paper) by deleting all words after the word "forces" in the first line and inserting in lieu the words contained in his amendment. The subject matter of the amendment may then be debated; but I cannot allow him to debate what is practically a new clause until it comes before the Committee in proper form.

Mr. McDONALD: I appreciate the point, and with your permission will adopt your suggestion. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 all the words after the word "forces" be struck out and the words "or of the Royal Navy or of the Royal Air Force whose name does not appear on any electoral roll but who is or becomes eligible to be enrolled by virtue of the provisions of this Act and who if he had been in the State would have been entitled to have his name placed on an electoral roll under section eight of this Act shall, if he is outside the State on polling day,

and notwithstanding that his name does not appear on any electoral roll, be entitled to vote in the manner provided in section eleven of this Act in the same way in all respects as if his name had been enrolled for the electoral district mentioned in the declaration made by him in accordance with such section" inserted in lieu.

The idea is to initiate a new system of voting for the Legislative Assembly in the case of soldiers in theatres of war outside the State. The soldier signs on the envelope a declaration that he was residing, prior to his enlistment, in a certain electoral district and had resided there for one month. In other words, he makes a declaration as to his qualification to be on the roll for the district in which he lived prior to his enlistment. The declaration is thereupon taken as equivalent to enrolment, and the member of the Forces is allowed to vote in respect of the district mentioned in his declaration. That saves all the trouble about electoral rolls and organisation. It might be said that it will be open to some abuse, but I do not think so. The man's word is taken when he states in the declaration the district in which he resided. Soldiers in any of the military forces well know that if one thing is known about a man more than another it is the place from which he came—the State and generally the town. The opportunities for abuse are very slight.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I cannot agree to this amendment. It will alter the whole principle of the Bill.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is what it seeks to do.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I cannot agree to it. We have gone into it very thoroughly and given it every consideration.

Mr. Abbott: I thought this was a non-party measure.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is, too!

Hon. C. G. Latham: You said you would not agree to an amendment when speaking in reply.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I said I would not agree to amendments interfering with the Bill. The hon. member's imagination is leading him astray.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I will read your statement.

The Minister for Mines: You are not allowed to read from "Hansard."

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This alters the whole scheme and is objectionable from our point of view. No other State in the Commonwealth but Queensland has attempted to give its oversea forces a vote. Why?

Mr. Mann: They do not want it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Any other system is too cumbersome. Queensland devised a system and it has been successful on two occasions.

Hon. C. G. Latham: For whom? Not for the soldier!

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: For the soldier!

Mr. Abbott: It leads to a lot of personal canvassers. That is what happened in Queensland!

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The hon. member wants to give all soldiers a vote whether enrolled or not. That will be open to a lot of abuse. The men are all over the place. Who will judge a soldier's right to vote without investigation? A person from New South Wales or Queensland could make the declaration and the returning officer has no means by which to check it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What about his identity papers?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Under the nomination system they vote in Western Australia and are enrolled in Western Australia. The Chief Electoral Officer is in charge and has the means to make proper investigations, and so call a halt to any abuses that might be committed. If we adopt the system suggested in this amendment very few would get a vote.

Hon. C. G. Latham: How many do you think voted in Queensland last time?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: One-third.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Members must cease interjeeting.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Under the system proposed in the amendment only a few in the hospitals and headquarters would vote, but under the nomination system there is nothing to stop everyone voting if they so desire because the appointee does it for them in Australia. Surely they can appoint somebody whom they can trust to carry out their wishes from the franchise point of view, in the same way as they trust attorneys and executors to carry out their wishes if anything happens to them. The amendment does not give the right to an

Australian who enlists with the militia and goes outside of Australia to vote, or an opportunity to be enrolled. Under the nomination system the soldier can appoint a proxy who can enrol him and he will afterwards be entitled to a vote.

Hon. N. Keenan: Who will be?

Mr. Abbott: The proxy!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The soldier will be entitled to vote by proxy, or by the appointee. I cannot see why members oppose—

Mr. Abbott: You do not look very far.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not know whether the member for North Perth looks very far. He thinks only of old systems. When something new is introduced we have a lot of opposition. Although this is not very new, it seems to a lot of members to be so.

The Premier: Agents can be appointed to sell a man's property or attend to his other affairs. Surely someone could be trusted to vote for him.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am honestly and sincerely trying to help those fighting for us. There is no other means by which these people can be given a voice in the government of their country. The soldiers have their mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters whom they can surely trust.

Mr. Abbott: That is not made compulsory.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Why should it be? They should be given freedom. They have intelligence. If a soldier having Labour views appointed a member from the other side of the House and said, "I want you to vote on my behalf in the interests of Labour," that member would do so although his political views would be quite opposite.

Mr. Seward: You could cut me out, anyway.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If I were appointed I would vote in accordance with the man's wishes.

Hon. N. Keenan: And this is sent you from Syria—"I am not Labour; I do not like Mr. Wilson, but I am going to appoint him"!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. Although we disagree politically, and the member for Nedlands gets very annoyed, I do not dislike him. If I were appointed to

vote for a soldier, I would not be worthy of being a citizen of this State if I did not carry out his wishes.

Mr. ABBOTT: Like all members of this Chamber I want to give the soldier every privilege. On the other hand, I do not want him to be pestered by canvassers for proxies, as he will be if this Bill goes through.

The Premier: You cannot have proxies for a canvasser.

Mr. ABBOTT: That is my big objection to this proxy voting. The Government in some cases, in connection with postal voting, has appointed postal vote officers and prohibited a candidate or his canvasser from taking the postal vote.

The Minister for Mines: The candidate?

Mr. ABBOTT: Well, prohibit the postal votes of those appointed at the instigation of candidates. The reason, I presume, was that the Government did not want any confusion in the taking of postal votes in institutions, and thought the votes of inmates should be taken under the supervision of the electoral officer.

The Minister for Mines: In hospitals?

Mr. ABBOTT: Or institutions.

The Minister for Mines: At the Perth Hospital the secretary is a postal vote officer and can take the votes.

Mr. ABBOTT: I approve of that. If the Bill is passed, an intending candidate may consider that his opponent will be trying to influence soldiers who are going away, and he would be entitled to have a representative in the camp—a soldier, an official or someone else—trying to influence the men about elections that will take place after they have left. That would be most objectionable. If approach to the soldiers could be avoided and they could appoint proxies without being influenced by the suggestions of other people, I would not object. In the circumstances, I shall support the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot follow the member for North Perth. He based his argument on the statement that he did not want the soldier to be influenced before he left the country. I would say that most of the men who would be voting at the next elections have gone.

Mr. Abbott: They could be written to.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I know two who have been written to already. A father would not be worth his salt if he did not write to his boys telling them what was going on.

Mr. Abbott: And other people are entitled to write, also.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Quite so. If we have information to give the boys, why not write it? That was not the hon. member's argument. He said he did not want the men to be influenced before they went away. This amendment marks an alteration to the principle of the Bill, and if we adopt it, where would there be any difference in the matter of pestering the soldiers? I would not mind writing to any one in my electorate to the effect, "Tom Jones is opposing me. I am still here and hope you will not forget me." Tom Jones, if he looked after his job, would do the same thing. The pestering of soldiers will not be altered under this or any other scheme, so the argument of the member for North Perth does not appeal to me.

Mr. Abbott: It is bad enough to pester civilians.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: My experience convinces me that if a soldier does not want to be pestered, he will soon say so. The point about pestering cuts no ice. No matter what scheme is adopted, if letter-writing to relatives can be called pestering, there will be pestering.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I voted against the second reading because the Minister said he would not agree to amendments.

The Minister for Justice: You are unkind.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I know the history of the Labour Party, and how it used to put men into jobs and get cards sent along three days afterwards. What is going to happen under this clause? Representatives of organisations, Trades Hall secretaries and such like people will be going along to the soldiers and putting these forms under their noses with a request, "Please sign." I am not going to help to legalise that.

The Minister for Mines: I would not say too much about Governments if I were you or I will be telling you a good story.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the Minister for Mines to order or I shall take action. Members must maintain order dur-

ing the rest of the sitting or some of them will lose the opportunity to vote on the amendment. That is definite. I frequently call members to order and no sooner has my call subsided than there is further interruption and noise. To continue in that way is very undignified on the part of members, and I will not tolerate it any longer.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am not going to help to have these declarations or nomination forms put under the noses of soldiers going into camp, in camp, or going out of camp. If we pass the clause, we shall legalise a most objectionable practice. I do not think this practice has been indulged in by any other organisation, but I could give instances of cards that I myself checked. I know that one of the timekeepers was put off.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I want the Leader of the Opposition to adhere to the amendment and not to discuss what happened years ago.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: This is what must happen under the clause. I am not going out touting for that class of vote. The principle is wrong. Members on this side are agreeable to giving the soldiers the same sort of vote as has been given them by the Commonwealth Parliament, but I will not approve of a slap-dash system of vote-catching such as the Minister proposes. Further, I will fight the proposal from every angle. It is one of the most objectionable practices that I know of, and to use soldiers for it makes it more disgusting. As I refuse to be a party to a continuance of an objectionable practice, I support the amendment.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Bill sets out more particularly to give the men oversea facilities to express their views at the forthcoming elections, and the Leader of the Opposition has characterised it as a vote-catching scheme. That is a direct insult to the soldiers and casts a slur on their mentality.

Mr. Mann: Not a bit of it!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Any man in the service can exercise his will, and if he has definite political views, as most men have, he would like the opportunity to vote through someone in whom he has confidence. To say that candidates would pester and influence the soldiers is a slur on the intelligence of the men.

Mr. Abbott: No, a slur on the politicians.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Leader of the Opposition and the member for North Perth are endeavouring to camouflage the position and justify themselves. Their attitude is that they want the soldiers to have a vote, but they are putting up all the Aunt Sallies possible to prevent their getting it.

Mr. Abbott: What objection could we have to their getting the vote?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The statement of the Leader of the Opposition that Trades Hall secretaries and others would be touting for votes was entirely unwarranted.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Of course they would be!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: We should approach the question in a non-party spirit. Anyone would be within his rights in explaining to soldiers the provisions of the measure.

Mr. Doney: That is what should be done, not what will be done.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The soldiers in the State will be able to exercise their votes in the ordinary way, and the Bill merely seeks to give those oversea a chance to nominate a person in whom they have confidence to exercise the vote for them. The Minister has given notice of an amendment to delete the names mentioned in the appendix. I am glad of that; the soldier will be able to nominate anybody to act on his behalf. I oppose the amendment.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am afraid the discussion has ignored the real issue. In my mind and in the mind of the Minister for Mines, it is the principle of the ballot that is at stake. Ever since the days when democracy asserted the right to have a ballot as distinguished from the old open voting, it has been almost a sacred thing to keep the ballot secret. A man shall be able to vote exactly as he likes himself, in such a manner that his vote will not be known to anyone except himself. That is what we by this amendment will secure, that that sacred right will not be debased and thrown out and something else substituted for it. The only answer made to that by any member of the Committee is that it is not practicable. I proceed, therefore, to show that it is; but before doing that may I say how embarrassing the position would be to the proxy under the proposal of the Bill. Suppose the Minister for Justice received 500 proxies in his own electorate, giving him

the right to vote 500 times, and say it happened that before he cast those votes he was 499 behind his opponent.

The Minister for Justice: The same thing might happen to the member for Nedlands.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes, it might happen to me, or to any member. Equally, in either case, it would be an impossible position.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And improper!

Hon. N. KEENAN: Wholly improper. I do not believe that any member of the Committee can honestly cast his vote for the principle embodied in the Bill and against the principle of the secret ballot that has been handed down to us ever since democracy ruled in England, unless it could be said that the proposal contained in the amendment is not practicable. In order to carry out this objectionable proxy system, one has to get into communication with the men at the front wherever they are—whether in Syria or in Palestine or in Libya or in Malaya or elsewhere.

The Minister for Justice: There is only one piece of paper to sign.

Hon. N. KEENAN: All right, but one has to get in touch with the soldiers.

The Minister for Mines: Who has to?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Somebody! Otherwise the soldiers cannot sign the proxy. Each single member of the Australian forces, no matter where he is, who is going to be given this privilege must be contacted. Only the one same single contact is necessary under the amendment proposed by the member for West Perth. The contact under the provisions of the Bill is only to be used to create a position which is disgraceful in the view of those who value the secrecy of the ballot. Under the system proposed by the member for West Perth, the soldier votes exactly as he is entitled to do, in secret. He puts his ballot paper in the envelope, closes the envelope, and sends the letter not to the platoon officer, but to temporary headquarters, where his ballot paper is mixed with a number of other ballot papers, and becomes absolutely unidentifiable; the secret is absolutely preserved.

I am sure the member for Pilbara has a great admiration for the principle of the secrecy of the ballot, and I feel certain that if it is practicable to preserve that principle he will not be tied down by other considerations but will give us his support and his vote. The principle of the amendment is that automatically every soldier at the

front is enrolled. The soldier then makes a declaration as to where he was residing at the time of his enlistment, and he signs that declaration in the presence of an appointed person.

The Minister for Justice: Anybody can make that declaration at the front, any soldier, irrespective of whether he resided in Western Australia or not.

Hon. N. KEENAN: We will suppose that is so, although it is not possible, because, as the member for West Perth reminded the Committee, if there is one thing that is known about a man in the army it is where he came from. The soldier makes the declaration at the time of casting his vote. The vote is taken by the officer of his platoon—not by the returning officer. The officer of the platoon certainly knows where the soldier came from. Suppose a man from New South Wales wants a vote for Western Australia and fills in the declaration falsely. Assume it is possible. To what degree is it possible? How many soldiers would do it?

The Minister for Justice: It would never be discovered.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Why should a Queenslander or New South Welshman want to make a false declaration pretending to have resided in Western Australia prior to enlistment? What reason can the Minister suggest for his doing so? There is a considerable penalty if the man is found out, but apparently the man at the front is to take advantage of the opportunity falsely to declare that he was residing in a certain place in Western Australia at the time of his enlistment. Of course the suggestion is absurd. Equally well he might make the false statement when creating this extraordinary proxy. There might possibly be one or two or half-a-dozen in the whole army who would do so, but I doubt it. The member for West Perth asks that the Bill be framed on a principle which will enable the secrecy of the ballot to be preserved. The soldier will vote. Under the principle of the Bill the soldier will not vote, but his proxy will vote. That is the most extraordinary principle ever advocated in a democratic community.

The Premier: The principle of the amendment is impracticable.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The only allegation made against acceptance of the principle of the amendment, in lieu of the vicious prin-

ciple included in the Bill, is that it is not practicable; otherwise it would be accepted apparently unanimously. That contention does not bear examination, because the scheme under the amendment means that immediately after the Bill becomes law all the necessary electoral material will be sent abroad, to every part of the world where Australian soldiers are now serving. It will be available when the names of the candidates are known. Those names will be telegraphed and at once the soldier on the spot, wherever he may be, will be given the opportunity to vote. The only suggestion of its not being practicable is not really that it is impracticable but that it may be abused by men who allege in the form provided for voting that they were residents of Western Australia at the time of enlistment, but who were not really residents.

The Minister for Works: That is not my objection. My objection is that under your scheme only 5 per cent. of the soldiers can get a vote.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the member for Nedlands to address the Chair and to take no notice of members interjecting, to whom I will attend presently.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Every single man in the ranks can get a vote under the scheme proposed by the amendment.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the member for Nedlands resume his seat? I continually call for order, and as often as I call for order it is immediately breached. I want to tell the members of this Committee that my patience is just about exhausted. There is nothing but continuous cross-firing, which is most disorderly. Now, this is my last warning. The first member to offend will be named.

The Minister for Works: I hope, Mr. Chairman, you are going to maintain order and see that members do not make slanderous assertions. Do you think we are going to sit still under them?

The CHAIRMAN: I want the Committee to understand that if any slanderous statement has been made—

The Minister for Works: Well, there was!

The CHAIRMAN: Then the Minister should have taken action immediately.

The Minister for Works: What are you there for?

The CHAIRMAN: Obviously I did not notice the remark or I would have taken action. No member will slander another while I am in the Chair—not to my knowledge and without being disciplined—and, if any member hears anything of an offensive nature, my attention has only to be drawn to the fact for me to take immediate action. I do not wish it to be implied that I would permit anything of this kind to continue. I ask members to assist me to preside over the Committee, and to display every dignity that is necessary for the proper conduct of business. The member for Nedlands may proceed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not think the Minister—

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Nedlands will kindly address the Chair.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am addressing the Chair in the proper way by conveying to the Minister, through you, Sir, that I had no intention of saying anything insulting to him.

The Minister for Works: You did not.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I understood that was the cause of the interruption. Members of the Committee must interject to some degree or the debate would be difficult to carry on. The Minister suggested that not 5 per cent. of the soldiers, or at any rate only 5 per cent., would have the right to vote under the amendment proposed by the member for West Perth. As a matter of fact, 100 per cent. will have that opportunity. In the event of the amendment being carried, all the electoral papers necessary for voting would be sent by the electoral officer to the parties he appointed in various parts of the world to act for him. Those papers would be in their hands long before Christmas. Except in respect of very distant places, the papers would reach their destination before December—probably in November. At any rate, they would be in the hands of the deputies early in the New Year, even allowing for every possible delay. They would arrive as quickly as would any notice to the soldiers at the front telling them they were entitled to appoint proxies. Obviously, whatever length of time is required to send such a notice, the same length of time would be required to send the papers. What would be in their possession under the proposal of the member for West Perth? Only ballot

papers, awaiting nothing more than the filling in of the names of the candidates, which would be telegraphed by the Chief Electoral Officer as soon as nominations closed. What is to prevent that? How long would it take? Only the time occupied in telegraphing—a few hours. Then the papers would be issued to the various units.

Does the Minister suggest that the deputy officers appointed by the Chief Electoral Officer would refuse to carry out their instructions? Of course he does not! The papers would be in the hands of the men entitled to vote, within a day or two, or in respect of distant outposts within a week or two of the time they reached the deputy returning officer. The men would then exercise their vote and the papers would be returned within a fortnight or so of being received, and the deputy returning officer would count the votes as provided in the schedules suggested by the member for West Perth. This is not a new procedure. It has been tried and succeeded admirably during the last Federal election. There is no trouble about the voting, and about counting the votes and telegraphing the results to Australia. Why assume that things cannot run as smoothly because the matter is conducted by the State? There is no difference. Our Chief Electoral Officer is just as intelligent as is the Commonwealth Chief Electoral Officer, and the people he appointed would be just as efficient. There is no possible objection to the proposal except the objection of the Minister—who continues to shake his head—that it is not practicable.

The Minister for Justice: You are not giving the whole of the facts I have given. You have not been listening. You have not touched on my facts at all.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It is unfortunate that on account of the construction of this Chamber it is difficult to hear the Minister. I do not know if he can hear what I say, but I do know that when he or the Minister sitting next to him speaks, it is exceedingly difficult to hear half of what is said. I have attempted to deal with what I conceive to be his objection, namely that the proposal is not practicable. Is not that the objection? He has said so two or three times. That it is practicable has been proved by the Commonwealth. It preserves the secrecy of

the ballot, and that is a very high principle which is at stake, a principle for which we should be prepared to sacrifice a lot.

The PREMIER: Unfortunately the member for Nedlands is out of joint entirely with four or five responsible State Governments in Australia, that have given a good deal of consideration to devising a method to enable soldiers to vote. The Federal system is regarded as impracticable.

Hon. N. Keenan: By four or five Governments?

The PREMIER: Yes. South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales have Governments of different political complexions, but they all have as earnest a desire as have we that soldiers should be given every opportunity to exercise their civic responsibilities even though they are oversea. All Australian soldiers have a vote in regard to the election of members to the Federal Parliament, and the expense of such a method as was adopted by the Commonwealth Government was therefore warranted; but only about 10 per cent. of the troops are Western Australians, and they are scattered all over the place, and consequently the system is impracticable and the expense unwarranted. That is the conclusion these Governments have reached after having considered the matter in all its bearings. After the war has been in progress for some time and an election is imminent, it becomes necessary to consider how our boys at the front can be given the right to exercise their vote.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It can be done by accepting this amendment.

The PREMIER: The opinion expressed by several State Governments is that this method is not practicable.

Hon. N. Keenan: In what sense would it be more expensive?

The PREMIER: On behalf of seven million people in Australia, the Commonwealth can appoint returning officers to deal with every soldier, but the expense is not warranted in regard to a State election in connection with which only a small percentage of the troops abroad would be entitled to vote.

Hon. N. Keenan: Have you compared the expense of the scheme proposed by the member for West Perth and that envisaged by the Bill?

The PREMIER: The practicability of a proposal of this type—

Mr. Berry: Have the other States passed measures identical with this one?

The PREMIER: No, but they consider that to follow the Federal Government's method is impracticable.

Mr. McDonald: And they refused to follow the Queensland method!

The PREMIER: It is not denied that the Queensland plan is practicable. It was carried out and the experience was that a considerable number of soldiers took advantage of the privileges and exercised their vote. I do not think it made much difference to the result, but it did preserve the civic rights of the soldiers fighting oversea. Getting down to tin-tacks, I do not know that this will make much difference to any electorate here, but we have no right to deny the soldiers some opportunity to exercise their civic rights. The Commonwealth system was deemed impracticable for the reasons I have stated, and, as the Queensland system had worked satisfactorily, it was decided to submit a similar proposal to this House.

Progress reported.

BILL—PROFITEERING PREVENTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Assembly to the Council's amendment.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.