

getting nothing, well, all I can say is it is a very poor explanation. I think the distance from Kalkalling to Bullfinch is 48 miles; to Southern Cross it is 22, to Carabin 42, and Merredin 21. At Merredin a flour mill is being started and a great quantity of wheat from the Goomarin centre will go to Merredin. That wheat will have to be conveyed over those distances of 48, 22, 42 and 21 miles in order to reach the mill, most of which represent unnecessary haulage. Merredin, by its geographical position, is destined to be one of the big distributing centres of the State. I believe the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) has an idea at the back of his head to start the manufacture of asbestos sheets there.

Mr. Sampson: Union plaster boards.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Perhaps the hon. member may as well have the advertisement. If he gets his supplies of gypsum at Yellowdine and establishes works at Merredin, he will have the advantage of a railway system radiating to all parts of the State. Thus Merredin promises to become a great centre. This is the kind of correspondence I have received on the subject; the letter comes from a settler at Gooramin—

At the Goomarin field day we took the opportunity of putting our case for railway consideration strongly before Mr. Sutton. By his remarks it appears to me a decision has been arrived at that it should go to Bullfinch, no matter what reasons or arguments are against it. If that is so, our only hope lies in our representative strongly advocating that it should come south of the lakes and inside the No. 1 fence, skirting along the southern boundary of the lakes and then proceeding to Bullfinch. It means about another eight miles in length, and bringing it at one point to within 20 miles of the goldfields line.

The statement concludes with the following—

It is the only hope of Goomarin ever getting a service at all. Our present position and past achievements of the State should count for that much, to say nothing of this being a soldier settlement district, that it should have this consideration. Have politicians forgotten their parrot cry, "Nothing we can ever do will repay our debt to our soldiers."

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.1 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 30th November, 1926.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.0 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT, AMENDMENT.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS asked the Chief Secretary: Is it the intention of the Government to introduce during the present session a Bill to amend the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906, as desired by the recent municipal conference?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The Government regret that time available this session will not permit of the careful consideration of the Bill.

BILL—STATE INSURANCE.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central): I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) I move—

That the debate be adjourned until the next sitting of the House.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Why?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I have not had an opportunity to speak on this Bill and I understood that the Chief Secretary intended to make some new proposal to-day; otherwise I should have been prepared to proceed.

Motion put and passed; debate adjourned.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Shearers' Accommodation Act Amendment.

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

2, Lunacy Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—WIRE AND WIRE NETTING.

Report of Committee adopted.

**BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT
AMENDMENT.**

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 9:

Hon. H. SEDDON: Subsection 3 of Section 9 provides that if for two consecutive financial years the revenue derived from the general rates of a board is in each year less than £300, the Governor may abolish the district and include the area in some other district. I understand that the present limit of £300, which it is proposed to alter to £500, is quite adequate. While some districts have declined in respect of population, they have tremendous areas, and the existing boards are in a position to cope with their respective areas better than would be possible if a scheme of amalgamation were introduced. I should like to quote particulars of revenue received by road boards on the eastern goldfields, together with the cost of administration:—Lawlers, revenue £480, administration £166; Mount Margaret, revenue £449, administration £182; Lake Way, revenue £475, administration £160; Leonora, revenue £1,428, administration £338; and Menzies, revenue £782, administration £227. Some time ago the Minister, in reply to a question, gave particulars of road boards that would come under the £500 minimum, and most of such road boards were in the pastoral areas. Seeing that these pastoral areas are expanding, and that their revenue is increasing, I think we might well retain the minimum of £300 in their case.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Although the minimum at present is £500, it does not fol-

low that a board would be abolished if the revenue became less than that figure. The utility of the board and the work it was doing would be taken into consideration. The final decision will rest with the Minister, who is not likely to abolish any road district unless there is complete justification for so doing.

Hon. A. BURVILL: The clause should be passed as printed. I fail to see how a board with a revenue of only £300 could pay much in the way of salary to its secretary. After all, the matter rests with the Minister.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Under the Act a board may be abolished if for two consecutive years the revenue from general rates does not exceed £300. Several of these boards have a revenue of between £400 and £500, and under the clause it would be within the power of the Minister to abolish them at once. No board should be abolished until this Bill has been law for two years. This would bring the measure into conformity with the Act. If certain road boards are abolished members of the remaining boards may have to travel 200 miles to meetings. It would be possible, for instance, for the Norseman Road Board to be abolished, and for the representatives of the district to have to travel either to Coolgardie or Esperance, a distance of considerably over 200 miles in each case.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The development that is going on around Norseman is such as to give the Minister cause to stay his hand in respect to closing down the board. There have been many instances in which boards with a revenue of less than £300 have remained in existence. In any circumstances, two years would elapse before a board would be abolished because its revenue became less than £500. There would be no objection to an amendment being moved to provide for that.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The trouble is that if we create a position like this, it may be taken advantage of. Many of the out-back road boards cover a considerable area, and if any of them were closed down the area for the remainder would naturally be still further increased in size. The Mt. Margaret board, for instance, comprises 37,000 square miles, the Coolgardie Road Board 11,000 square miles; Norseman 15,000 square miles; Hall's Creek 32,000 square miles, and so on. It would be better to retain the £300 minimum.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	..	18

Majority against .. 12

AYES.

Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. A. Burvill

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. C. F. Baxter

(Teller.)

Clause thus negatived.

Clauses 6, 7, 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Repeal of Division 3 of Part III. and substitution of a new division:

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I oppose the clause. As I explained on the second reading, the effect of the clause would be to disband all the members of a road board or district council on a particular day, and this would not be in the best interests of the general conduct of local government business. On this point I drew attention to a letter I had received from the chairman of the Claremont Road Board. A similar provision would be absolutely suicidal in any large private business. An election cry might be raised with the result that not one member would be re-elected. From experience I can testify that it takes considerable time to gain a knowledge of the work of such a body as a road board.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Under the present system there are three representatives of a ward, and it is generally arranged that the representative who at the original election received the highest number of votes shall remain in office longest, or that lots shall be drawn. If the members cannot decide the matter amongst themselves, the Minister determines it. That position is most unsatisfactory. Sometimes two or three members of a board are returned unopposed, and how is the opinion of ratepayers on any question to be determined in

such a case? If the Committee consider the question, they will agree that the members of a district council should retire at the end of three years, since they are being granted largely increased powers, such powers as were not dreamt of a few years ago.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: All those powers might not be agreed to.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There might be instances in which a board exercised a power contrary to the wishes of the ratepayers, who should be given the opportunity to enforce their will at a general election as proposed. If the whole of the old members were defeated, there would be strong justification for it. I know of no instance in which all members of another place were defeated at a general election. If all the members of a district council were defeated, there would be the secretary to enable the new members to carry on.

Hon. E. H. Harris: He would be an autocrat then.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The new members would be in the hands of the secretary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Not necessarily. In regard to procedure they might be in his hands, as is the case with many road boards now; but the members would exercise their common sense. If all the proposed powers are to be granted to a district council, the ratepayers should have power to displace the members at the end of their term of three years.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Chief Secretary has given good reasons for rejecting this clause. What degree of continuity would there be in the policy of a business if the board of directors were changed every three years? I may point out that a few years ago road board secretaries were often found wanting. Certainly many road board secretaries are not qualified to carry on business propositions. I admit that the salaries now paid to them are often too low. There should be continuity in the membership of road boards. It would be absolutely suicidal to force all the members to retire on a given date, and I make that statement from considerable experience in local government. Some old members should always be there to carry on.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I am quite in agreement with Sir William Lathlain, who, like myself, has considerable knowledge of local governing bodies. It would be wrong to have an election where there was just a

chance of all the members being retired at one time.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is practically an impossibility.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: It would be wrong to leave all the affairs of any local governing body in the hands of the secretary and the auditor, because they could not meet the requirements of the ratepayers.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I notice that so far no member has taken into consideration the road board conferences. Though I am entirely in accord with Sir William Lathlain, I am bound to take some notice of the decisions of those conferences. They have been held over a considerable period, and the last conference carried a resolution in favour of this provision.

The Chief Secretary: The last two conferences did that.

Hon. A. BURVILL: As for the whole of the business being left in the hands of the secretary, that has occurred when wards have been subdivided. In those circumstances all the members of the board go out.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Do you know that it is proposed to abolish wards?

Hon. A. BURVILL: I do not favour the abolition of wards. Nothing particularly disadvantageous has happened as the result of all the members going out on such occasions. Delegates come from great distances and at considerable expense to attend road board conferences, and notice should be taken of the opinions expressed by those conferences.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Are you supporting the clause, or opposing it?

Hon. A. BURVILL: I am supporting it because road board conferences have asked for it.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They were not unanimous.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I have a memorandum from the Metropolitan Local Government Association, in which the bodies concerned protest emphatically against the inclusion of this clause. The whole of the municipalities included in the association are opposed to it, although I admit they are not concerned with this legislation, and the local governing bodies as well.

Hon. E. H. Gray: But they are reactionary bodies.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: The opinions of these metropolitan local governing bodies are entitled to consideration and they are against the inclusion of the clause.

That is a sufficient reply to Mr. Burvill's assertions. As to his statement regarding country road boards, I am not directly concerned.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They want the tail to wag the dog!

Hon. A. BURVILL: Municipal councils have nothing to do with the matter under discussion. The fact remains that a great majority of the road boards at the conference to which I referred were in favour of this proposal. That conference was attended by representatives of the metropolitan road boards.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: There are 12 road boards in the Metropolitan Local Government Association, in addition to the municipalities I referred to. Although I have been handed the document I mentioned which indicates their opinions regarding various matters dealt with in the Bill, I would not approve of their desires if I did not think they were in the best interests of local government.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I agree that the clause should be deleted. The Chief Secretary stated that we were giving the local governing bodies wide powers and it was right that the ratepayers should have an opportunity to express their opinion at an election. As the law stands to-day, the ratepayers have a chance to do so within 12 months, but if the Bill be agreed to they will have that opportunity once in three years. Something may be done by a board against the desires of the ratepayers and two years hence, when the election may be held, the incident may have been forgotten.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As Mr. Burvill pointed out, the road boards conference approved of the principle embodied in the Bill on two different occasions. The Metropolitan Local Government Association strongly objected to the Bill but that body does not consist entirely of road boards. Eleven of the bodies included in the association are municipal councils that are not concerned with the Bill at all. At the road boards conference 110 local authorities were represented. I could understand that body agreeing to a principle at one conference and then after further consideration, disapproving of it at a subsequent conference. In this instance they did not do that, but confirmed their earlier decision. Thus the question received full and ample consideration. If the clause be not agreed to, the position will arise that I indicated previously. There will be no opportunity for ratepayers to in-

sist upon an effective appeal to the ballot box; that will be possible only by instalments. As to the fear that all the members of a road board might be defeated at the one time, that very fear might cause road board members to act cautiously and not embark upon enterprises to which the ratepayers might take strong exception.

Hon. A. Lovekin: As the law stands to-day, the decision of the ratepayers could be obtained within two years at most.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I have just returned from a visit to the middle North. While there I spoke to a number of road board members regarding the Bill. Without exception they were against the clause, which they considered would not be of advantage to road boards.

Hon. J. Nicholson: And that is the general opinion throughout the country too.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If that is the general opinion throughout the country, it is strange that the road boards conference on two occasions should have voted in favour of the principle under discussion. Men who attended the last conference have had far more experience in local government matters than can be claimed by any member in this Chamber.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I do not know that that is so.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: By a large majority, delegates at the conference agreed that the change sought should be made. It will mean that the ratepayers will take a greater interest in their own affairs. I do not agree with Sir William Lathlain in the illustration he gave regarding his staff. The illustration would be more apt if he had referred to the dismissal of a board of directors.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And that dismissal should be achieved as quickly as possible.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Exactly.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And it can be done now in two years, as against three years if the Bill becomes law!

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Experience shows that if a man has been a good mayor or chairman, he is elected for several terms of office, while a road board member who has served the ratepayers well and faithfully has no chance of being defeated.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: What is the object of the clause? I take it from the remarks of the Chief Secretary and Mr. Gray, that if a road board assumed office in 1926 and did something radically wrong, the ratepayers, at the end of three years, could dismiss the

whole body. As the law stands to-day, should a similar position arise the ratepayers could achieve their object in two years' time. By then they could have got rid of two-thirds of the road board and thus have secured a majority within two years.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	19
Majority against				13

AYES.

Hon. J. R. Brown
Hon. A. Burvill
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. J. W. Hickey

Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. E. H. Gray
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. J. E. Dodd
Hon. W. T. Glasheen
Hon. E. H. Harris
Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. G. A. Kempton
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. W. J. Mann

Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. G. Potter
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. E. Rose
(Teller.)

Clause thus negatived.

Clause 10—Amendment of Section 33:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: What is the reason for the inclusion of the clause, which is couched in similar terms to the section in the existing Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This introduces the principle of one ratepayer one vote.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	5
Noes	..	..	..	19
Majority against				14

AYES.

Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. J. W. Hickey

Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. R. Brown
(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. A. Burvill
Hon. J. E. Dodd
Hon. W. T. Glasheen
Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. G. A. Kempton
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. A. Lovekin
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. W. J. Mann

Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. G. Potter
Hon. E. Rose
Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. H. A. Stephenson
(Teller.)

Clause thus negatived.

Clause 11.—Substitution of new section for Section 34:

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I must protest against this cast-iron way of voting.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is making a personal reflection on the Council.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I had expected members to give some reasons why the preceding clause should be struck out.

Hon. H. Stewart: We gave them on the second reading.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The history of local government in Western Australia has proved the necessity for some alteration. Repeatedly do we find in road board districts that a candidate is virtually returned by a majority of resident ratepayers, notwithstanding which he is not elected to the board. I have known two-thirds of the resident ratepayers vote for a candidate, despite which he has been defeated. Is that not proof that some alteration should be made so that resident ratepayers might have a voice in the constitution of the board? Even in the metropolitan area we see municipal councils and road boards dominated by big men.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: They are the men who pay.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No, they hold land speculatively, whilst smaller ratepayers are battling on to improve the district. Nobody with democratic ideas would stand for such a representation. The history of municipal councils in this State is the history of high rates and mismanagement, chiefly because business people have been allowed to control. Many road boards are better administered than is the Perth City Council; in proof of which, in the metropolitan area one can find streets on one side of which the rates are 100 per cent. higher than on the other side. The high cost of administration is due largely to the fact that the affairs of the local authority are managed by business people, who put their own concerns before the requirements of the district. The principle of one ratepayer one vote would give the people fair representation. Would anyone say that a small householder should be outvoted by another man who, as the result of speculation, has a three to one advantage at the poll? No argument can be advanced in support of such a rotten state of affairs. Suppose a

local resident contests an election for, say the Claremont Road Board. In the interests of some rich candidate, a string of motor cars bring along electors representing three or more votes each and so swamp the local candidate. That is done everywhere, but chiefly in the metropolitan area.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am astonished both at Mr. Gray's outburst and at the subject matter put up by him. Why should a man paying practically nothing in rates be put in a position where he can control the large amounts contributed by other ratepayers? It is ridiculous to suggest that a man paying half a crown per annum in rates is entitled to the same voice as a man paying, say, £50. All the country towns are rated on a minimum of 2s. 6d., and it would be quite competent for a road board to be controlled by a country town.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Do you know any owner of a house who pays only 2s. 6d. in rates?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Even if the minimum were 5s., what is that as compared with £50 paid in rates? Surely the larger ratepayer is entitled to a greater voice in the control of local affairs.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I am entirely opposed to this clause and so, too, was the road boards conference. When it came to a vote on the question the seconder voted against the motion. The present provision is sufficiently democratic. To-day the minimum rate of 2s. 6d. entitles the ratepayer to one vote, whereas the maximum number of votes for any ratepayer is four.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Three too many.

Hon. A. BURVILL: A man paying £20 in rates is entitled to four votes. If we take £20 worth of rates at 2s. 6d., we find that those ratepayers can exercise 160 votes.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Do you know any owner of a house who pays not more than 2s. 6d. in rates?

Hon. A. BURVILL: The minimum to-day is 2s. 6d., and it is proposed to raise it to 5s. Even so, a ratepayer paying £20 in rates would have four votes, whereas ratepayers paying each a minimum of 5s., but in the aggregate £20, would have 80 votes. So those 5s. ratepayers could easily overwhelm the ratepayer paying £20 in rates. Mr. Gray has been talking moonshine. As to the previous clause, some of us spoke against it on the second reading. The clause now before us is preposterous.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: This is a question of one ratepayer one vote, not one man one vote.

Hon. A. Burvill: I should have said one ratepayer.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The whole issue on that principle may be determined on this clause. If we are defeated, we must accept defeat; but if the clause is retained, I hope there will not be divisions on each of the succeeding consequential clauses. There may have been reason for multiple voting in the old days when the functions of road boards were restricted to the making of roads. People then were taxed in accordance with their wealth to augment the funds provided by the Treasury. Under this measure local governing bodies would have extensive powers that concern not only the property owner but every person in the community, although ratepayers only would have a vote. We ask that all ratepayers be put on the same footing. A man with a small property is as much interested in the welfare of the district as is a man with a large property. The small property may represent that man's entire possessions and it is as dear to him as is the more extensive property to his richer townsman. Any blow struck at the ratepayers as a whole through the maladministration of a board would hit the small man just as hard as a man who had been more successful in accumulating wealth. In our national Parliament no elector has more than one vote. Yet that Parliament has great power over property. It could tax property to the very verge of confiscation. At present the ratepayer of a road district might have a vote in every ward provided the total did not exceed four. Twenty years ago only owners of property had a vote at municipal and road board elections. When legislation to alter the old system was introduced in this Chamber there was a strong protest, and all sorts of predictions were made as to what would occur if the administration of districts were handed over to tenants. Those dire results have not followed.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Mr. Gray says they have.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The administration of municipalities and road boards is as successful and efficient as when the property owner had control. The principle of one vote per ratepayer has been recognised in Great Britain since 1882. In South Australia where a district is not divided into

wards, there is one vote. Where it is divided into wards there is one vote which the ratepayer has to nominate. In New Zealand, unless otherwise specially provided, every elector has one vote and no more. Western Australia is much more advanced in other respects than is England, and yet there has always been strong antagonism to the adoption of the principle here. If members extend this measure of justice to the ratepayers, I feel satisfied that good results will follow. Great powers are to be granted under this measure and consequently there should be an extension of the franchise.

Hon. A. BURVILL: The Minister said that all ratepayers were equally interested in the progress of a district. The trouble is they are not. I was once caught under a Drainage Act which provided that a majority of the landholders could form a district. The majority included a number of people who held one acre of land, and a few who owned some hundreds of acres had to pay the rates. The holders of the small areas were interested in the drainage works only because their construction would provide employment for them. If a road board wanted a loan and the question were referred to the people, this clause would mean multiplying the number of small people who paid only the minimum amount of rates. There is no equality of interest because the people do not pay equal amounts. One man might be paying £100 and another man 5s., and it cannot be said that the latter would be greatly worried even if the district went bankrupt.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I do not agree with the Minister, because in a number of country towns particularly, the proposed qualification would enable the small people to rule the district.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It would be a good thing for the district.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: In a town like Merredin, there are a large number of railway employees and people owning small holdings who would probably control the whole district, and the producers who pay the rates upon whom the railway employees live would be penalised. When the question of expenditure of funds is concerned the producers are entitled to special consideration. I oppose any alteration of the present qualification.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The arguments of opponents of the clause may be summed up as life against money. Mr. Burvill referred

to a man who paid half a crown. Where is there a man with a house who pays half a crown in rates? Not in Western Australia.

Hon. A. Burvill: That man would have a block of land.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: A man with one block of land would not bother to vote.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: He is just the one that does vote.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is the absentee that votes, especially when he is stirred up by progressive candidates.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Has that been your experience?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes. Any married man owning a house pays more than half a crown in general rates.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: There is nothing in the clause about a married man.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Such a man would be disfranchised.

Hon. H. Stewart: Is it one man one vote in Sydney?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: In England it is and remarkable progress has been made there.

Hon. H. Stewart: Sydney has made remarkable progress in maladministration.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Under the one rate-payer one vote principle a district will progress, but under plural voting, where the aspirations of the people are stifled, there will be retrogression and reaction.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That sort of stuff is all right on street corners, but is of no use here.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Members of this Chamber have frequently spoken against centralisation. The people should be given a chance to increase their responsibilities in local affairs. They cannot make a success of their own arrangements under the plural voting system. It is neither just nor democratic that one man should have 15 votes and another only four.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Mr. Gray spoke of retrogression and reaction in cases where people have more than one vote. Western Australia has advanced very materially under the existing system. Plural voting appertains with regard to the Legislative Council, and the hon. member himself was glad enough to chase the votes that gave him his seat in the Chamber. He has also represented a union at a Labour congress and exercised more than one vote.

Hon. J. E. Dodd: One man may represent a thousand votes.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The hon. member also spoke of Australian sentiment, but has sat in a Labour congress where unionists have had votes in proportion to the amount of capitation fee paid. The Labour Party would show their sincerity concerning the principle of one man one vote if they abolished the plural system of voting in their own ranks. It is not a matter of one union one vote with them. I am surprised at the attitude taken up by the hon. member.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	5
Noes	..	..	..	20
Majority against				15

AYES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. J. R. Brown
Hon. J. W. Hickey	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. J. Ewing
	(Teller.)

Clause thus negatived.

Clause 12—Amendment of Section 35:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Clauses 15 to 18 are consequential on the last clause which was defeated.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 13 to 18—negatived.

Clause 19—Repeal of Section 60 and substitution of new section:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: This is a clause that is consequential on a previous clause that was negatived, and should in its turn also be struck out.

Hon. H. STEWART: This clause involves the proposal of the Government that there should be one election for road districts every three years.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is so.

Hon. H. STEWART: We have not altered the working of the Act regarding these elections, and in my opinion it fulfils all requirements.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The clause will require to be redrafted. The words "other than an ordinary general election or an election ordered under Section 32" should be struck out, and the word "council" should appear in the clause. I move—

That further consideration of the clause be postponed.

Motion put and passed.

Clause 20—Repeal of Section 61 and substitution of new section:

Hon. H. STEWART: The clause refers to general elections, which are already provided for in the Act. The clause is framed on the assumption that other amendments embodied in the Bill will be agreed to.

Hon. E. H. Gray: But the Bill has now been garotted.

Hon. H. STEWART: I suggest that the further consideration of the clause be postponed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The clause is consequential and should be deleted.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 21—Repeal of Section 62 and substitution of new section:

Hon. A. BURVILL: The proposal embodied in Subclause 2 is a good one. As the law stands to-day, a member may resign and the person elected to fill the vacancy may have an opportunity to sit once only before the annual elections are held.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause 2 the word "general" be struck out.

This will make the subclause apply to all elections, without specifying general elections.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In view of the wording of Section 62 of the principal Act, the Chief Secretary might consider slight alterations that would achieve the same end as the proposed new section embodied in the clause. In the first instance, the reference to the date for an election to fill an extraordinary vacancy could be altered from one month to two months, and, secondly, regarding the period intervening from the date of the vacancy occurring and the annual election, an alteration from three months to four months could be made.

Hon. A. BURVILL: The alteration proposed, from three months to four months, is advisable. I have already pointed out

that as the law stands to-day, it is possible for a newly elected member to sit once and then have to face the ratepayers again. Subclause 2 should be agreed to.

On motion by Chief Secretary, further consideration of the clause postponed.

Clause 22—agreed to.

Clause 23—Amendment of Section 80:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This clause is consequential.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 24—negatived.

Clause 25—Repeal of Sections 123, 124, 125, 126, and 127 and substitution of new sections:

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I have an amendment on the Notice Paper, but the Chief Secretary has also an amendment that seems to embody what I desire. If he will proceed with his, I will not move mine.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That a subclause be added to the proposed new Section 123 as follows:—“(2.) Subject to the provisions of Sections 9 and 10 of the Justices Act, 1902-1926, the president shall, by virtue of his office, be a justice of the peace for the magisterial district in which the office of the council is situated; and Section 9 of the Justices Act, 1902-1926, shall have effect as if in Subsection (2) the words ‘and the president for the time being of every district council’ were inserted after the words ‘the chairman for the time being of every road board,’ and the words ‘the office of the road board or of the district council’ were inserted in place of the words ‘the road board,’ and as if in Subsection (3) the words ‘or district council’ were inserted after the words ‘the road board,’ and the words ‘or president’ were inserted after the word ‘chairman’; and Section 10 of the Justices Act, 1902-1926, shall have effect as if the words ‘or president of a district council’ were inserted after the words ‘chairman of a road board.’”

Hon. H. STEWART: The further consideration of the clause should be postponed. We have not had an opportunity of examining it critically to ascertain how the clause, together with the proposed amendment, will be affected by the alterations already agreed upon. A number of consequential amendments may be required. My attention was diverted when Clause 2 was put and carried, otherwise I would have moved an amendment that, if agreed to, would have materially affected the position. My amendment deals with the name of the local gov-

erning bodies. I propose to retain the name of road boards and if that were adopted, we would have to delete references to district councils and presidents. The inclusion of the references to district councils may lead to possible misunderstandings, because district councils already exist in connection with political bodies. The change of name will also lead to confusion and expense in connection with printing. The clause will have to be recommitted.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the further consideration of the clause as amended be postponed.

The word "general" appears in two places and the clause, together with the amendment, requires some further examination.

Motion put and passed.

Clauses 26, 27—agreed to.

Clause 28—Amendment of Section 136:

Hon. H. STEWART: What is the necessity for the amendment? It provides for the appointment of a committee who may not be councillors to advise the council regarding the management or control of an institute, cemetery, recreation ground, etc. This is a new departure and may involve the council or the people in considerable expense.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The reason for this is similar to the reasons that I have already outlined in connection with a preceding clause. A council may require the advice of a committee to assist them in organising and administering agricultural shows.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Or even a library.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: It may be necessary for a council to ask someone with special experience to advise them, or to join in with them in a particular scheme that the council may have in view. This is a provision that should be agreed to.

Hon. A. Burvill: It is certainly a very good addition to the Bill.

Hon. H. STEWART: While I do not disagree with the proposal, it seems to me to be the height of absurdity to have to secure legislative sanction in connection with the appointment of such an advisory committee.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 29 to 31—agreed to.

Clause 32—Amendment of Section 141:

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: The road boards desire that this clause be deleted. The Chief Secretary, however, has put up a strong reason for its retention, and therefore until I hear the views of other members I shall not take any steps towards deleting the provision.

Hon. H. STEWART: The principle involved is that a majority of the ratepayers in one ward may override the considered judgment of the road board members who represent the whole district with regard to the opening or diverting of a road. I know of an instance that occurred within the last 12 months where roads were laid out by the Lands Department in order to give a number of settlers access to a railway siding. Pending the construction of the railway, however, and in the early days of the settlement, the settlers made a track for themselves over an unfenced portion of country. Thus, they established a short cut to their holdings. A Public Works Department official constructed a Federal-State road on that unsurveyed track and ever since then the settlers have been agitating to have the piece of land acquired so that the road may be retained. Of course the money should not have been spent there. That instance clearly points to the danger that may arise from passing a clause such as the one in question, giving power to call a meeting to declare a road. The clause itself may be for the purpose of validating a wrongful act, and to force the hands of another department to do something that is not right.

Hon. A. BURVILL: It is possible in an instance such as that quoted by Mr. Stewart to have a survey made and to pay compensation to the owners of the property. In its present form I consider the clause dangerous. It means that a majority at a meeting of ratepayers may take a certain action. There may be only half-a-dozen at that meeting and four or five may carry a resolution. If we strike out the words "present at a meeting" the question then will have to go before the Governor-in-Council. I move an amendment—

That in line 3 the words "present at a meeting" be struck out.

If it is only to be a majority of those present at a meeting, I do not agree with the proposal.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Sometimes there are only two men and a dog present at the annual meeting of ratepayers.

Hon. A. BURVILL: In connection with one annual meeting I had to go out and get a few ratepayers to attend it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There might be a majority of the ratepayers of the whole district, or there might be a majority of the ratepayers of a particular ward, present to carry the resolution; but it does not follow that the road will be declared by the Minister, who, before arriving at a decision, will investigate fully whether the road is necessary. If the amendment is carried, a majority of the ratepayers of a ward will have to sign a requisition in favour of the road, although the declaration of the road may be manifestly necessary. There are road boards now refusing to declare roads which are needed. Even in connection with soldier settlement that difficulty is being experienced. Therefore, the Government should have power to declare roads as proposed. Plurality of voting gives a few landholders great power over small settlers, who sometimes have to travel miles unnecessarily to reach a siding.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment would abolish the proposed method of determination without providing any other method. I suggest to Mr. Burvill that he also move the striking out of the words "in the prescribed manner" in line 3 of the proposed new section.

Hon. A. BURVILL: To convene a meeting a certain number of ratepayers give notice to the chairman, and then the meeting is called. Under the amendment a majority of ratepayers in the ward or district would have to vote for the proposed road.

The CHAIRMAN: This is a proposed new section, and not an amendment of the existing Act.

Hon. A. BURVILL: My proposal is to amend the new section so as to make it less dangerous.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Committee would do well to vote against the clause. The Chief Secretary should propose another clause which would effect in a less roundabout way what the Government desire. If a clique are preventing the construction of roads which should be constructed, somebody should have power to see that those roads are provided. The clause takes a steam-hammer to crack a nut.

Hon. H. STEWART: If the amendment is carried, the clause can still apply to a ward as well as to a whole district; and I

want to hear some sound reasons why the clause should be permitted to stand. The Minister's statement as to refusals to declare roads will not hold water any more than a colander will, because the Government can resume land for any purpose.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will read the information I have here—

The Government at present has no power to open a new road unless the road board consent. In the case of a soldier settlement it has been found necessary to make a considerable detour in order to get to the siding, whereas a much shorter road could have been obtained direct.

In that instance the people have been asking the Government to declare the road for the past 12 months or more, and the Government cannot do so.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There seems to be good reason for doing something as proposed, but the clause is too dangerous, leaving it open to a small handful of people to have a road put through a property without justification. Members of this Chamber who have been on road boards know how often that kind of thing is attempted. The Chief Secretary might well hold the matter over.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. J. EWING: Do I understand that the Minister will give us more information about this matter? There should be some power to overcome the difficulty which he has described, but the method proposed by the Bill is too crude. A dozen ratepayers would be able to determine the question. The Chief Secretary says the matter will then be reviewed by the Minister administering the measure, but something more satisfactory to the Committee should be proposed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: At present there is no power whatever to declare an ordinary road. If a Government road is declared, the Government have to bear the cost of construction and maintenance. For years it has been a grievance that road boards refuse to declare roads, especially where they themselves are interested. It is no use trying to disguise the truth. Do members expect me to give instances with names of road boards who have done that sort of thing? I do not think that is advisable.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is not the Minister's duty to give information of that kind, but it is the duty of the Minister or of the Crown Law Department to provide a clause which will meet the wishes of this Chamber. Members are prepared to give

the necessary power to the Government, but not to half a dozen ratepayers at a meeting, with possibly four voting in favour of the road and two against it. It is true the clause says that the Governor then "may" declare the road, but I suppose that means the Governor "shall." The Committee should not allow the clause to pass, but should give the Minister the authority he desires. I suggest we delete this clause and let the Government come along and ask for the power they want.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is all very well, but I have no clear indication as to the lines the Committee wish the Government to go upon. All I have is a general instruction to bring down something else. That is no good. Will the Committee be prepared to give the Government full power to do it if, after investigation, they find it necessary? It does not follow that because it is recommended by a majority of ratepayers present at a meeting the Government will accept the recommendation. The first thing the Government would do would be to refer the matter to the road board for a report. Even then the Government would not necessarily accept the road board's views, but would consider the position and endeavour to do justice to both parties.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The Minister will recognise that the clause is almost certain to perpetuate the very evil he says exists, namely that sometimes road boards are lacking in declaring roads that would be of real convenience to the general public. I agree with Mr. Holmes that members desire to assist the Government and are ready to grant specific power to the Government to declare roads when road boards are not carrying out their duty in that respect. Under the clause, however, the evil would be transferred from the road boards to a group of ratepayers. I suggest that the Minister have a clause prepared providing for a petition to be signed by a majority of ratepayers resident within a certain distance of the proposed road. That petition could be presented to the Minister; and if, after application, the road board persisted in refusing to declare the road, it could be competent for the Governor in Council to declare the road in answer to the petition. That would overcome the difficulty. Perhaps the Minister would agree to postpone the clause.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, further consideration of the clause postponed.

Clause 33—Amendment of Section 148

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in lines 8 and 9 the words "provide the prescribed requisition has been duly made be struck out;" be struck out; and that, in line 10 the words "as soon as" be struck out and "if required so to do by the owner within six months after" be inserted in lieu.

Under the clause as read with the principal Act, when land for a road is taken out of unfenced or partially fenced land held under conditional purchase conditions requiring the owner to fence the land, the owner must, within six months, either give notice to the local authority to fence the road, or specify the time when he will fence it. That is unfair to the landowner, for under the Land Act he would have five years in which to do his fencing and, if it were a grazing lease, he would have ten years.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Under the principal Act, if a freehold property is surrounded by a 6-wire fence and the road board puts a road through it, they have to erect a 6-wire fence on either side of the road and if the property be enclosed in a rabbit-proof fence, the board have to erect rabbit-proof fencing along both sides of the road. However, under the proviso to this clause an effort is made to substitute cattle pits for gates. Cattle pits will not keep out rabbits, and if we allow cattle pits to be used instead of gates, we shall render our rabbit-proof fencing useless. I do not know why a democratic Government should make special provision for men in motor cars. The man in a huggy has to get out and open the gate, but special provision is to be made for the man in a motor car provision that will let him through the fence and let the rabbits through at the same time. I move an amendment—

That the proviso be struck out.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think the rabbit argument has much force. On the Murchison, within a distance of 3 miles there are no fewer than 11 gates that be opened by people driving motor cars. Not one of those gates is rabbit-proof, and in an event frequently the gates are not closed.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Does this proviso apply to the Murchison only?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. The cattle pits are already in existence in the

Mingenew district, and are giving satisfaction. There is nothing whatever in the argument that rabbits could get through. Where would they come from, and where would they go to?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: This cattle pit system is in force on the main road between Mingenew and Geraldton, but there are no rabbit-proof fences on either side of that road. Apparently special provision is to be made to allow motorists to pass through those 11 gates on the Murchison. But why make special provision for the man in the motor car, and neglect the man in the buggy? The Minister ought to know that between Mingenew and Geraldton the whole area is infested with rabbits.

Hon. H. Stewart: Is it explained by the fact that a number of Ministers recently visited the North-West?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It may be. The Minister should know that between Mingenew and Geraldton, especially about Dongarra, the rabbits have travelled west to the sea. I have seen the pest there as bad as anywhere in the Eastern States. Between Mingenew and Mullewa there are large areas netted against rabbits. Does not the Minister know that on the road between Mingenew and Mullewa there are 25 gates to open? People do not object to opening the gates, because they know that the country has to be fenced against vermin. Is special provision to be made for the man in the motor car so that the rabbits will follow him in and out?

Hon. J. Nicholson: So long as they follow him out, it will be all right.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The proviso has evidently been inserted by someone ignorant of the fact that we have rabbits in this State. This is not the first time I have had to tell the Minister that inside the rabbit-proof fence a large number of holdings have been netted. We have recently passed a Bill under which wire and wire netting will be supplied to the farmers, and in face of that the Government propose to make for motorists roads that will give the rabbits ingress.

Hon. J. EWING: If the gates could be dispensed with, travelling in the country would be facilitated, but if cattle pits are provided on motor roads, what will there be to prevent the rabbits from crossing those pits?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The proviso states that the cattle pits must be constructed and maintained as prescribed by by-law.

Whether they could be constructed in such a way as to prevent rabbits crossing them, I do not know.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They could not.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I appreciate the objection of Mr. Holmes.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Recently I received from a friend in the Eastern States a pamphlet descriptive of a patent gate invented by his son—a young Western Australian. The gate has a mechanical appliance and can be operated to permit of the passage of motor cars, buggies or other conveyances. I believe that gates of this pattern are in use in one of the other States and are proving satisfactory. I mention this so that the Minister and his colleagues may consider whether the difficulty cannot be overcome by the adoption of this patent.

Amendment put and a division called for.

The CHAIRMAN: Standing Order No. 152 provides that a member calling for a division shall not leave the Chamber until the division has taken place, and shall vote in accordance with his voice. Whether or not Mr. Stewart was confused regarding my decision before the division was called for, I know not, but his certainly was the only voice that I heard call for a division. Having given my decision in favour of the ayes, I think the only logical course for Mr. Stewart to pursue, after calling for a division, was to vote with the noes.

Hon. H. Stewart: I undoubtedly voted with the ayes, but I did not realise the effect of your decision. I have spoken to another member who says there were two distinct calls for a division before mine.

The CHAIRMAN: I accept the hon. member's explanation.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I also called for a division.

Division resulted as follows:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	17
Noes	..	..	..	..	5

Majority for .. 12

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	(Teller.)

NOM.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. J. R. Brown
Hon. J. W. Hickey	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 34—agreed to.

Clause 35—Amendment of Section 151:

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: What effect will this clause have upon road closures? Perhaps the Chief Secretary will explain it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Section 151 gives power temporarily to close a road, but no power is given to reopen one. The clause will remedy that.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 36—agreed to.

Clause 37—Amendment of Section 155:

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I was going to move an amendment to strike out paragraphs (a) and (f), but after going further into the matter have decided not to do so.

Hon. H. STEWART: Paragraph (a) says that "no way not exceeding 16½ feet in width shall become dedicated as a road." This savours of retrospective legislation and it may affect some of the more thickly populated centres.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know to what the hon. member is objecting.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Has not a mistake been made in referring to the Roads Act, 1911? Was it not intended to refer to the Act of 1919?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am rather inclined to agree with the hon. member. I will look into the matter, and if necessary have the clause amended on recommitment.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 38—Amendment of Section 156:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Paragraph (b) says that an appeal may be heard by an officer of the department. Ample provision is made in Section 156 for appeals to be made to the Minister against any refusal on the part of the board to grant a subdivision.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Minister may have no knowledge of the business in

question, in which case an officer of the department would be asked to hear the appeal. Surely the Surveyor General can be entrusted with work of that nature.

Hon. A. BURVILL: The clause says that some officer of the Lands and Surveys Department may hear the appeal, but in my view the clause should state definitely who the officer is to be.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 39—Insertion of section between Sections 156 and 157:

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: After reconsidering the clause, I feel that it is unnecessary for me to move the amendment I have on the Notice Paper.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 40—Amendment of Section 159:

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The clause does not say when notice has to be given by the owner of a building as to his intention to demolish or remove it. Provision should be made for at least 24 hours' notice being given. The clause might be redrafted.

Hon. H. STEWART: The clause asks for more power than is necessary. It should be confined to townships. Every building should not be under the control of the board. I move an amendment—

That after the word "building," in line 8, the words "in any town site" be inserted.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In order to make the amendment as suggested by Mr. Harris, I move—

That the further consideration of the clause be postponed.

Motion put and passed.

Clause 41—Amendment of Section 160:

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I move an amendment—

That a new paragraph, to stand as paragraph (b) be inserted as follows:—" (b) By the insertion in Subsection 18, after 'seats' in line 1 of the following words: 'shelter sheds or other conveniences.' "

At present there is authority only to provide seats. The further powers I suggest

are necessary. In Melbourne old cable cars and dummies have been secured by local authorities for use as seats in parks and as shelter sheds at convenient places where people wait for trams.

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

Clauses 42 to 46—agreed to.

Clause 47—Amendment of Section 196:

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I move an amendment—

That all words after "paid" in line 5 of paragraph (a) be struck out and the following words inserted in lieu: "Within 30 days computed from the date of posting the rate notice."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If all rate notices were posted on the one day, the amendment would be acceptable. Secretaries prefer to post the rate notices in batches, and much labour would be involved in keeping a check so as to determine which ratepayers would be entitled to a discount.

Hon. A BURVILL: I agree with the Minister. If the amendment were agreed to, it would cause delay because secretaries would keep back the notices until all were ready for posting. That would be inconvenient for the local authorities.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: It is true that rate notices go out at different times but that is what has influenced me in moving the amendment. The object is to give all ratepayers the same opportunity to secure the discount. It would be impossible to post all the notices at one particular time and the amendment will place all ratepayers in the same position.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amendment would entail a lot of work upon each road board secretary, who would have to keep a record of the date upon which each particular notice was posted.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: My experience has been that rate notices are sent out on different days as they are ready for posting. On each notice there is stamped the date on which it was sent out. Presumably duplicates are kept, and the ratepayer would be entitled to a discount if payment were made within 30 days of the date specified on the notice.

Hon. H. STEWART: The date fixed should be such that each ratepayer would get 30 days' notice. It would be an equit-

able provision if a ratepayer, by paying his rates before a specified time in the financial year, were entitled to receive the discount.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Then it resolves itself into a question of the wording of the notice. If it were provided that if a ratepayer paid his rates before, say, the 30th September he would be allowed 5 per cent. discount, it would be all right. It would then become a question of payment and not of the date on the notice. In those circumstances it would not matter whether the ratepayer received his notice on the 1st January or the 1st June, he would get his discount so long as payment was made before the 30th September.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The financial year ends on the 30th June and rate notices may be issued any time after that date. If the rates are paid before the 30th September the ratepayer will be entitled to discount. Surely that is a reasonable provision. I see no reason for amending the clause.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The amendment suggests a very fair and reasonable proposal. When a man pays his account within so many days, he receives the ordinary trade discount. If a rate notice happened to be sent to the Chief Secretary or myself on the 15th September, we would be required to pay within 15 days otherwise we would lose our discount. The proposal of Sir William Lathlain seems fair. If the rates were paid within 30 days computed from the date of posting the notice, one would then know exactly that he had 30 days in which to claim discount.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Mr. Nicholson's suggestion would place some ratepayers at a disadvantage. The 2's would get 90 days' grace because they would not receive their notices until the end of September. The hardship would be in connection with the early notices sent out. The advantage that I can see will come from the fixing of a definite date. Regarding taxation, everyone knows that the returns must be in on a certain date and that payments must be made on a certain date. If we give three months' grace to everybody, then the position will be that all will know that the rates must be paid by the 30th September in order to get discount. If anyone chooses to pay earlier no harm will be done.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I do not see any use for the amendment. If we are going to extend the time further and make a man

prove that he has had 30 days' notice, we shall create a lot of complications.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I never have favoured giving discount in connection with the payment of rates, and I am glad to know that discount is not given in the city. The city has to collect so much money in rates, and if discount be given, it means that so much more must be collected from other people. Road boards are in need of funds and the idea is that immediately notices are sent out, there is a shortening and not a lengthening of the time in which to make payment. In some districts the sending out of notices involves a considerable amount of work. There is a great difference between the time the first person receives his notice and the time the last person receives his. My idea is to give discount to those who pay promptly.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: There are instances where notices have not gone out until after September. In such cases the net result would be not to give the discount. By fixing a date within which ratepayers can claim their discount, and by omitting to fix a date within which notices of assessment must be sent out, we shall be inflicting a hardship on some ratepayers. Sir William Lathlain's amendment is therefore wise.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The amendment sets up a position exactly opposite to that which Sir William Lathlain claims exists and should exist in the City of Perth. Discount is not given because, if it were, some ratepayers would be at an advantage and others at a disadvantage. Why does Sir William Lathlain propose to set up a different position for ratepayers under this measure? Say one-third of the rate notices are sent out on the 30th July, for payment within 30 days. The other third are sent out on the 1st August, and the recipients have to pay within thirty days, which means within 60 days of the 30th July. The last third of the notices, representing the last third of the letters of the alphabet, are only payable within three months of the 30th July. People who want the discount will inquire for their notices and pay in time.

Hon. H. STEWART: An addition has been made to provide something that is not mandatory but permissive. In certain circumstances a discount may be allowed on general rates paid before the 30th September, but no discount is to be allowed on general rates paid later. According to my

reading of the section, the discount is to be allowed only on general rates, and not on supplementary rates. The wording of the section should not be "shall be allowed" but "may be allowed." I regard the section as mandatory insofar as the discount shall not apply to anything but general rates. At present the section is not sufficiently restrictive. The matter should be made clear. On broad principles of equity the clause as it stands is fair as between one ratepayer and another. The secretary to the board should get the notices out in time to allow all ratepayers an opportunity of securing the discount.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Minister may grant an extension of time under exceptional circumstances—say when the secretary has cleared out, as secretaries have sometimes done.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Nicholson states the rate is not a debt before the notice is sent out. With all due deference, that is not so under Section 237, which provides that upon publication of the rate notice in the Press the rate is a debt due and payable. Then if the ratepayer wants to get the benefit of the discount, he can interview the secretary and find out the amount he owes, and pay it less 5 per cent.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I agree with Mr. Stewart as to the advisableness of substituting "may" for "shall." If road boards do not give a discount, we should not interfere. The object of metropolitan road boards is to get their money in sooner, and therefore they allow the discount. Rate assessments are spread out very much; I have received one in the year following that in which the assessment was due. The amendment places all ratepayers on a fair and equitable basis. Road boards may be wanting money for works, and if they do not get their rates in they are compelled to resort to overdrafts, on which they have to pay interest. In the absence of a discount very little money will be received before the 30th September.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The effect of the amendment will be to split the ratepayers into three sections. One section will pay 30 days after the 1st July, another section 60 days after the 1st July, and the third section 90 days after the 1st July, and all three sections will receive the same discount. Why should not people who pay within 90 days of the commencement of the financial year receive a discount, as against those

who go on for years and years without paying their rates? If rates are not paid, the board must have an overdraft. Ratepayers who do not pay promptly are penalised by not getting the 5 per cent. discount. Mr. Stewart's proposal to substitute "may" for "shall" will not bring us to finality, as under it we shall have the Perth Road Board giving no discount and the Jandakot Road Board taking anything they can get and giving nothing. If we leave "shall," those that pay within 30 days will get 5 per cent., while those who do not pay within that time will not get it.

Hon. H. STEWART: My suggestion to substitute "may" for "shall" was made in the belief that it was in accordance with the spirit—

The CHAIRMAN: That question is not under discussion.

Hon. H. STEWART: No, but we are considering a discount on rates paid within a certain time, and I want to show that it makes a difference if the discount be mandatory. I pointed out that in offering that suggestion I was not expressing an opinion as to which word I favoured; I merely put up the suggestion as being in accordance with the spirit of the Act. For the provision does not instruct the road board to allow a discount, but simply gives the board power to do so. If the board does not make any bylaws to that effect, I fail to see that the proviso proposed to be added would really be mandatory.

Hon. G. A. KEMPTON: I do not think it matters much whether we provide for one month or three months. Personally I like the clause as it stands. If we make it one month, they will get in a certain amount of money because of the discount, and if we make it three months they will get a greater amount than they would if they did not give discount for three months. Mr. Nicholson said the ratepayers would not know what they owed until the bill was sent in. But if you go into a shop and buy goods you do not have to wait till the bill comes before you owe the money; you owe it from the time you buy the goods. In the same way, this amount is owed as soon as the rate is struck.

Hon. H. STEWART: I want to ask the Minister what he thinks of the point raised by me as to substituting "may" for "shall."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! In order to help the Committee, I have permitted a discussion that was not really in order.

The Committee has agreed to the retention of the word "shall," by virtue of an amendment to a later part of the clause having been moved. I hope, therefore, the discussion will be confined to the question before the Chair.

Hon. H. STEWART: When first I spoke as to whether this should be mandatory or optional, it was to direct the attention of the Minister to the position. As for the later amendment, the mover could ask leave to withdraw his amendment to permit of the moving of an earlier one. However, I do not intend to ask the mover of the amendment to do that; because, later on, if it be considered desirable, we can recommit the Bill.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I have on the Notice Paper an amendment proposing to increase the license fee for the keeping of goats. I do not wish to go on with that amendment. I find that whilst there is serious trouble in certain parts of the metropolitan area over the keeping of goats, my amendment would inflict a hardship in country areas, particularly in gold-fields districts. In any event I do not think the raising of the license fee from 6d. to 2s. 6d. would cause any diminution in the damage done by goats.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Paragraph (e) proposes to insert in the Act a new section, Section 46e, giving the local authority power to declare a building line and to prohibit the erection or re-erection of any building in front of that building line, and to order the setting back of a proposed new building to the building line. I move an amendment—

That in line 7 of proposed new Section 46e, after "compensation," the following be inserted:—"by the council to the owner and any lessee or tenant."

My object is to make it clear that the compensation is to be paid by the council to the owner and any lessee or tenant who may be affected by the change.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will not oppose the amendment. It appears to be all right, but I will submit it to the Solicitor General.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The amendment requires looking into. I do not know if there be anything in common law defining how much compensation should go to the owner, and how much to the tenant or the

lessee, but I can see something for the legal fraternity to fight over if these words proposed to be inserted are inserted. I will vote against the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 48—Insertion of section after Section 196:

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of proposed new Section 196a the words "and prescribed areas" be struck out.

As it stands, it means another regulation to be observed before a person in the country can make bricks or get gravel or stone from his own property or, with his neighbour's permission, from that neighbour's property.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have no objection to the amendment. The provision was not in the Bill as introduced by the Government, but was inserted by a private member in another place.

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

Clause 49 to 51—agreed to.

Clause 52—Amendment of Section 225:

Hon. H. STEWART: This and the previous clauses bring about a drastic amendment of valuations. The boards used to be able to make an annual valuation, but that power has been deleted and the only lands in respect of which an annual value can be arrived at are those mentioned in Section 214. Section 215 states the rules to be observed in obtaining the annual value of land. It is laid down that the annual value of land which is improved shall in no case be less than £4 per cent. upon the improved value, or less than 5 per cent. upon the unimproved value. On land of an annual value of £100 the maximum amount would be 8s. On the unimproved value, however, there is a range from 1d. to 3d., with 6d. in special cases. A later provision in this Bill mentions 9d. as the minimum rate on the annual value, which would mean £3 15s. per £100. Clause 52 gives the Minister power to accept the valuations of the Commissioner of Taxation. Those valuations have been greatly increased, but road boards, in order to obtain the Government subsidy,

must impose the minimum rate. Seeing that the valuations have been increased so greatly, it would not be necessary for some boards to adopt such a rate. A board with a lower rate might be able to obtain sufficient revenue.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why not strike out the minimum.

Hon. H. STEWART: I do not think we are in a position to do so. Unless a board impose a rate of 2d. on the unimproved value, they receive no subsidy from the Government, and that means a loss of about £300.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That is not in the Act.

Hon. H. STEWART: No, I think it is done by administrative act.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 53 to 56—agreed to.

Clause 57—Amendment of Section 243:

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: This provision is rather drastic. Although it allows the right of appeal to the local court, the court is to be precluded from reducing any valuation made or caused to be made by the Minister provided the valuation of the Commissioner of Taxation has been adopted. Even if the court gave a verdict to reduce the valuation of the Minister, so long as it was in accordance with the valuation of the Commissioner of Taxation, it would hold good. Thus the right of appeal is of little use. Can the Minister dictate to a local court?

Hon. H. STEWART: This clause has a bearing on Section 225 of the Act, which provides that the Minister may make or cause to be made any valuation and require the board to adopt it. It is proposed here to restrict the right of appeal. When it comes to a question of valuations some effective system and method of appeal must be instituted. The restrictions contained in the clause should be opposed. There should be a right of appeal when the valuation has been made by the Minister. When a ratepayer appeals against his valuation, an officer of the Taxation Department fights the case against him. He should, therefore, be allowed to appeal to the board itself against any excessive valuation.

Hon. A. BURVILL: This clause deals only with valuations made by the Minister, in which case an appeal must be made to the court. If the unimproved valuations imposed

by the Taxation Department are fair, then this clause is fairly worded. It would be waste of time to appeal against such valuations.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are you going to accept anything at the hands of the department?

Hon. A. BURVILL: A taxpayer can always appeal direct to the department.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Why bring the court into the matter?

Hon. A. BURVILL: If we let go the right of appeal to the department, we must accept the valuation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: When a ratepayer is rated by a road board he appeals to the board, but when the rates have been fixed by the Minister he appeals to the local court. If the assessment of the Taxation Department has been adopted, there is no necessity for an appeal to the local court. The opportunity for an appeal has become exhausted. The person whose land has been taxed was given the opportunity to appeal to the Commissioner or the local court, but did not do so. Why should he, after six months, object to the valuation when it has been adopted by the road board at the dictation of the Minister. The ordinary resident magistrate in the country is not competent to sit in judgment on these cases.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If I wanted anything to convince me of the necessity for deleting this clause, the illustration has just been afforded to me. If there is no necessity for an appeal against the departmental valuations, there is no need for the clause. If a man appeals and the valuation is reduced, all his other rates and taxes are reduced accordingly but the majority of people hesitate to appeal. The wickedness of the Taxation Department lies in the fact that if an appeal is lodged, the valuation is reduced, but if another man with a block of a similar value does not appeal, the valuation in his case remains. There is no equity in such a system.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 58 to 73—agreed to.

Clause 74—Reprinting principal Act with amendments:

Hon. H. STEWART: While I had an amendment to Clause 2 that would test the question of changing the name of road boards and road board members to district councils and councillors, and missed that opportunity

when my attention was diverted, paragraph (a) of Clause 74 provides the opportunity for achieving the same end. Paragraph (a) sets out that the short Title shall be the District Councils Act, 1919-1926.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will resume his seat. Clause 2 has already been discussed by the Committee and cannot further be discussed unless on recommitment.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If Mr. Stewart moves for the recommitment of the Bill, an amendment to Clause 74 will be consequential.

Clause put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That progress be reported.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I suggest we recommit the Bill with a view to dealing with Clause 2 now. We can then test the question of the name of road boards for the future and determine whether those sitting on boards are to be given the glorified title of president and councillors.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There can be no discussion at this stage.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not desire to discuss the matter, but merely suggest recommitting the Bill now so that we can consider the point that has been raised. If we determine that point there will be a number of consequential amendments that will save a good deal of money in printing and so forth.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The President will decide when I report progress to him.

Motion put and passed.

[The President took the Chair.]

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: At this stage can we move to recommit the Bill?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The point is as to whether we can recommit the Bill to reconsider Clause 2. If we can do so there will be a number of amendments that will be consequential.

The PRESIDENT: It is in accordance with the practice of the House to recommit Bills.

Hon. J. Cornell: As Chairman, I reported progress and asked leave to sit again.

The PRESIDENT: I did not understand the position.

BILL—COAL MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to Nos. 1, 2, and 5 of the amendments made by the Council, that it disagreed to No. 4 for reasons set forth in the Schedule, and had amended the Council's amendment No. 3, in which further amendment the Assembly desired the concurrence of the Council.

BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly read notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendment No. 2 but had disagreed to the Council's amendment No. 1 for the reasons set forth in the Schedule.

BILL—DAIRY CATTLE COMPENSATION.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—NAVIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned without amendment.

BILL—TIMBER INDUSTRY REGULATION.

Second Reading—Amendment "Six months."

Debate resumed from the 25th November on the motion for the second reading and on amendment by Hon. J. Nicholson to strike out "now" and add "this day six months" to the motion.

HON. W. T. GLASHEEN (South-East) [9.13]: I have not a great deal to say regarding this Bill. I intend to support the second reading, for I regard the legislation as necessary. It is long overdue. Holding that view I cannot understand the amendment moved by Mr. Nicholson that the Bill should be considered this day six months, which means, of course, the defeat of the measure. Some comparison has been drawn between the risks taken by men working in mines, with those taken by employees in the timber industry. I cannot subscribe to the view that the industries are on all fours, because the timber industry is carried on in God's good daylight, and those employed in it can see the dangers before them. On the other hand, the men in the mining industry work underground in inky black darkness and have not the advantage of daylight to see dangers ahead. I hope legislation will be enacted that will provide some measure of protection to people engaged in the timber industry in accordance with the risks they run. While I shall support the second reading of the Bill, I intend to be watchful in Committee regarding the various clauses. It is intended to enforce the timber companies to clear the routes of the mushroom structures known as railway lines, through the bush. An area is to be cleared back from the line on each side so as to minimise the danger of trees falling on the lines. The Bill says dangerous trees must be removed. Those who know the bush will recognise the extreme difficulty in determining what is dangerous and what is not dangerous in respect of trees. For instance, the strongest tree in the bush is not exempt because of the effect of storms, lightning, or other acts of God, as they are sometimes called, and were we to insist upon trees being cleared altogether from the bush railway lines because of the danger, we would immediately increase the costs of the industry, and that increase would react upon the workers themselves. After all it is the workers who are most concerned in this legislation. Another amendment sets out that we must make provision for the removal of dangerous trees from house sides. For the life of me I cannot understand such intended legislation. In cave times that most of us have read about, the cave man got into his cave to protect himself firstly from the cold, but also to protect himself from danger of various kinds that confronted him. It seems extraordinary in the extreme

that we must put something into legislative shape to compel a man in these modern, thoughtful and educational times, to remove any danger that may overhang a hut. He is certainly wanting in everything that the cave man provided for. I would suggest that any man so unmodern regarding his own safety would be better killed. Whilst these are the irritating clauses that appear in the Bill, there are also many others that I need not specifically mention at this stage. We must not forget the fact that if we enact irritating legislation, the inevitable result will be that it will increase the cost of the commodity that it is affecting, in this particular case, timber, the cost of which must rise. Then that increase will in turn react upon the people who are most concerned, those who are engaged in the industry. The history of the timber industry shows that during the last ten years prices have increased 100 per cent. I do not say that legislation is not generally necessary, but I do trust that we will prevent, as far as we possibly can, irritating and costly charges on the industry, charges that will react upon the people employed in it as well as other sections of the community. Everything that is proposed will cost money. I will not subscribe to the view that we need as rigid inspection in the timber industry as is required in connection with the mining industry because of the fact that the timber industry is conducted in broad open daylight, while the other is carried on in inky darkness underground. I hope in connection with the Bill that sanity will prevail in the final enactment.

The Honorary Minister: In what way do you say it will prove costly?

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I have already indicated that and referred to what will be required in connection with the construction of bush tramways which may need to be lifted in perhaps six months.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Sometimes these lines are down for a few weeks only.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Have any accidents of the nature suggested ever happened?

Hon. J. Nicholson: I do not believe there has been one.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Every man on going into the bush takes a sporting chance and those are sporting chances that cannot be provided for.

Hon. H. Stewart: You can, by insurance.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Yes. Even in the ordinary work of cutting down a tree a man takes his life in his hand. You cannot protect him by legislation.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What about the whim driver?

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: He is in a similar position, and also the fellow behind the saw. He too is running a risk. It is easy to perceive how a measure of this kind will have the effect of increasing the cost of timber, and incidentally the cost of building homes is just about as high as it can possibly be.

HON. SIR EDWARD WITTENOOM (North)-[9.22]: I rise rather reluctantly and with some diffidence to refer to the remarks made by Mr. Gray the other evening when he said that no one should speak in this House when interested in the subject under discussion. Mr. Gray gave Mr. Nicholson a bad time because he happened to be interested indirectly in the timber industry. I too am in the same position, but on looking round the House I realise that many hon. members have dared to address themselves to subjects in which they have some kind of interest. Were they precluded from doing so by being interested in those particular subjects, the debates generally would suffer. Mr. Holmes could not speak about shearing sheds or shearing because he happens to be interested. Mr. Ewing would not be able to say anything about coal.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Mr. Ewing supported the Coal Mines Regulation Bill.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: How could Dr. Saw speak about the medical faculty? How could anybody say anything about insurance, and moreover how could Mr. Gray himself discuss the question of unions? How could he give voice to any opinion on a subject that had any reference to the bodies that he represents? We could say to him, "How dare you make any remarks about the liability of employers?"

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: He should, inasmuch as he has to cast a vote.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Exactly. The very men Mr. Gray says should not speak on subjects because they happen to be interested in them are the very men who know what they are talking about. Why are we sent here? Because we happen to know something about the particular interests that we represent. Surely the hon.

member would not have representatives in this Chamber who do not know what they are talking about? Take the West Australian Turf Club and let the hon. member see who constitutes the committee and the stewards. All are interested in racing or own racehorses. Why are they there? Because they know all there is to know about horse-racing. They are the proper men to be there. In those circumstances I do not ask to be excused if I talk on a subject in which I am indirectly interested. I intend to ask hon. members to support the amendment moved by Mr. Nicholson for the simple reason that I think the Bill is unnecessary. I do not for one moment say that all the conditions associated with the timber industry are perfect. I do not say there are not many ways in which they could be improved, but I cannot see any reason for carrying out such drastic alterations as are proposed in the Bill, the only effect of which will be to increase the cost of timber and also, I am afraid, disturb the peaceful working that exists at the present time. So far as I am aware the industry is being conducted very satisfactorily just now. From the remarks that have been made one would think that there was no inspection carried out at the mills.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Very little.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: Then why are not the provisions of the various Acts enforced? There is power for officers to carry out inspections. The Honorary Minister interjected that if the inspectors went down there they could only do a portion of the work, but if I mistake not there are eight or nine Acts under which inspectors can be sent to the timber districts. Surely then there is enough legislation in existence. I intend to be brief because Mr. Nicholson has dealt very fully and convincingly with the subject, so much so that it leaves me very little to add. There is, however, one point I wish to stress, and it is that the industry is very important and the operations are carried out by many companies all of which have spent a considerable sum of money in it. The company with which I am associated employ 2,000 men and its weekly wages bill is £10,000, by no means an unimportant consideration. Surely the 2,000 men would not work in the industry unless the conditions were unsatisfactory. Timber workers are not unlike sheavers. They will not put up with anything that savours of unhealthy or danger-

ous surroundings. They will work under the best conditions and they get those conditions through the Arbitration Court. The timber industry is continually before the Arbitration Court and now it is proposed to harass it with additional legislation. Surely hon. members will see that it is to the advantage of the State that an industry like this is encouraged as much as possible.

Hon. A. Burvill: Do you think that a proper inspection is made?

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I say that power exists by which a proper inspection can be carried out. Those are the only things I can speak of. The industry, we must bear in mind, has to compete with the whole world in its products. It is not one of the self-protected industries, or one of the industries surrounded by a wall of Customs duties. It has to compete with the whole world. The advantage of that to the State is that the industry, for its products, does not take money out of our pockets, but brings into the country large amounts of money every year. Apart from what is locally used, two-thirds of the timber milled is sent out of Western Australia. The whole of the money for that comes into Western Australia and is distributed here. It is money from foreign sources. The timber industry is not an industry which takes money out of one pocket in this State and puts it into another. Money from timber is just the same as wool money, or money for gold when it is sold—all money coming from abroad. I am bringing forward these considerations to show that the timber industry should be encouraged and not harassed. Whilst the workers connected with it are getting fair play, there should not be an endeavour to impose conditions which are almost impossible and which will prove exceedingly expensive. Therefore I regard the Bill as quite unnecessary. Several reasons have been advanced why it should not be proceeded with. Another important fact about the one company I have spoken of—there are ten or twelve others—is that it keeps 500 horses. We can easily imagine what the farmer gets out of that in chaff. All this is of great help to the country. The destruction of such a company and I repeat it is only one out of ten or twelve—would be a great injury to the State.

Hon. A. Burvill: The industry would not be destroyed through having proper inspection.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: The industry would be destroyed by the putting on of expenses which would prevent it from carrying on. A private industry is not like a Government enterprise.

Hon. A. Burvill: Inspection would not be an injustice.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: I am coming to that. The Arbitration Court takes care of the workers in the timber industry, and gives them a great deal of attention. Therefore I consider that in view of the facilities afforded by existing Acts, and in view of the conditions continually being imposed by the Arbitration Court, it is not necessary to ask Parliament to harass the companies with further conditions. Let the Arbitration Court do what is right and fair and no one will object.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: The inspectors would not be paid by the industry.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But certain fees are charged for inspection.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: It has been stated that the conditions for which this Bill asks are similar to those obtaining on the mines. If the timber industry is to meet with the same fate as the unfortunate mining industry, then I say God help it. If the conditions proposed by this measure are going to bring about such conditions as now exist in the mining industry, that is sufficient reason for rejecting the Bill. There seems to be an idea that timber companies are anxious to make things as uncomfortable as they can for their employees. It is all the other way. The companies are doing all they can to make their employees comfortable. It is far better to have a contented body of workers than a lot of discontented ones. My experience is that anything feasible and reasonable is done for the comfort of the workers. We must remember, however, that when industries are carried on in the bush, as shearing and timber work are, one cannot expect the same facilities and conveniences as are found in city factories. In the circumstances, it is absurd to ask for all these numerous inspections. Looking at the Bill I find that under Clause 4 there are four inspectors provided. Those four inspectors are not going to work for nothing. If they find matters are being carried on satisfactorily, what position will they be in? Inspectors appointed by the present Government will naturally have Labour inclinations, and will have something to do with the Labour Party. If another Gov-

ernment were in power, the inspectors appointed would probably not be quite so exclusively Labour.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is a certainty.

Hon. Sir EDWARD WITTENOOM: In any case, the inspectors would have to find some reason for their existence. If the work was being carried on satisfactorily, it would be necessary for them to create some causes for their continuance in their positions. Otherwise, people would say, "What is the good of keeping you on? You do not find any fault." Therefore, it is not exactly the expense involved by the appointment of inspectors—on this point I appeal to Mr. Burvill—but the expense and annoyance to which the inspectors can put the proprietors if they choose, that makes the Bill objectionable. I do not say all the inspectors would proceed on those lines—doubtless some of them would be reasonable—but we know perfectly well that a man must do something for his living. The more satisfactory things are, the less chance there is of finding fault, and the more reason there will be for people to say that the inspectors are useless. I do not know that I need say any more. I appeal to the House not to harass a large private industry such as this. Whilst I admit that conditions might be better and that everything is not perfection—perfection is impossible in the case of the timber industry as in the case of every other isolated industry—still things are fairly good, and anyone inspecting the mills would be satisfied as to that. With these few remarks I have pleasure in supporting the amendment.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Macfarlane, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.36 p.m.
