

partment necessitated by the award given by the Arbitration Court.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 12.5 a.m. (Thursday.)

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 27th November, 1919.

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

QUESTIONS (2)—REPATRIATION.

Employment in Public Service.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education: Can he inform the House when the return, as promised by the Minister in reply to questions asked by me on 1st October relative to the employment of returned soldiers in the Public Service, will be laid on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: Returns from departments are now almost complete, and it is anticipated that the return will be placed on the Table next week.

Sustenance Allowance.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Minister for Education: 1, Did the Federal Repatriation Department approve of the following paragraph, appearing on page 8, "Soldiers Settlement Guide," 1919, issued under the direction of the Hon. James Mitchell, M.L.A., Minister for Repatriation:—"A sustenance allowance will be paid by the Federal department for six months pending productivity of land, the amount being 20s. per week for single men, 30s. per week for married men, and 2s. 6d. for each child not exceeding four"? 2, Is it a fact that the Federal

Repatriation' Act and its regulations clearly set out that any sustenance granted pending the productivity of land is granted only in necessitous cases? 3, Is it a fact that the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Board, acting with the authority of the Minister controlling the board, determines—(a) what are or what are not necessitous cases; (b) the productivity or otherwise of land granted to discharged soldiers under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act; and upon such determination recommends the Federal Repatriation Department to grant sustenance within a prescribed period? 4, Has any recommendation made by the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Board for the granting of sustenance pending productivity of land granted to discharged soldiers been refused by the Federal Repatriation Department?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: 1, Yes, this being the arrangement entered into by the Federal Repatriation Department. 2, Yes. 3, (a) Yes; (b) Yes. 4, No.

MOTION—STATE TRADING CONCERNS, CONTROL.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.34]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House, and in accordance with the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner, all State trading concerns should be placed under a general manager or board responsible direct to the Treasury.

I do not propose to go into the very important principle of State trading concerns. I take it that the system is established and, since it is established, I wish to see the shareholders of these ventures dealt with as shareholders are dealt with in an ordinary business affair. One of the first steps that will put the State trading concerns on a sound footing is to carry out the recommendation of the Public Service Commissioner in his report for 1918 as follows:—

State Trading Concerns. The sawmills, brick works, implement and engineering works and Boyup quarry are controlled by the Public Works Department. The steamship service, ferries, and hotels by the Colonial Secretary's Department, while the Wyndham Meat Works, refrigerating works and butter and bacon factories are under the Agricultural Department. In making my departmental inspection I was much impressed with what seemed to me the necessity for bringing all trading concerns under one control, and I came to the conclusion that the interests of the State would be best served either by placing the whole of these undertakings under a general manager or an independent board of business men, the general manager or board to be responsible direct to the Treasury and have the management of the vari-

ous trading concerns under his control. I have therefore placed this proposal before the Government for their consideration.

One object I have in moving the motion is that we may have a statement from the Government as to what their decision was on that recommendation. The Public Service Commissioner continues—

It will be easily realised that at the present time each State trading concern's first interest is to make its own particular business a profitable undertaking, whereas if all concerns were under one control they would be viewed from a broader standpoint which at times might mean a slightly decreased profit in one particular concern, but which, on the other hand, might easily mean a very much greater profit for one of the others. The proposed scheme could not fail to give greater satisfaction to the general public, inasmuch as it would be known that the whole of the trading concerns were being handled in a thoroughly business-like manner and made to dovetail into each other whenever and wherever possible.

That seems to me a very sensible and reasonable proposal, but apparently no notice whatever has been taken of it. I am going to read two brief extracts from the speeches of two Ministers of the Crown, as reported in "Hansard," my purpose being to show the attitude they took up during the last year or two. In 1916 the present Minister for Works said—

It is not possible to obtain a correct view of the financial position of each concern. The trading concerns should be carried on identically in the same way as a private business should be carried on.

The present leader of the House in 1914 said—

Of State steamers we are heartily tired.

So far as general principles of State trading concerns are concerned, I am not opposed to State trading so long as it is confined to public monopolies, but directly you venture into a competitive business you will get into trouble. All these State concerns are in trouble already, and the position will not be altered until another Government come along with courage enough to stop them.

I do not propose to deal with the question of the principles of State trading concerns except quite incidentally, because whatever my own views on the subject may be, it seems to me we have established this principle and that consequently we have to work it out the best way we can. If I am asked specifically, "What do you want?" I say that, apart from the proposal to appoint a manager or a board, which I think is a sound one, I want the accounts presented in the way a first-class business concern presents its accounts to its shareholders. The way the reports and balance sheets of the State trading concerns are placed before us is very discreditable from the point of view of the business man-

agement. If I want a model of how accounts should be presented I am going to take the accounts of a London company of which we all know something and in which we are all more or less interested, namely, Millars' Timber and Trading Company, Ltd. I am not going into the question of the policy of that company. I speak simply as one who wishes to know how that company stands, just as the public wishes to know how the State trading concerns in this country are worked. I have here an extract from the "London Economist" of the 2nd August, 1919. It gives the trading profits from 1913 to 1918. It gives the debenture interest, the net profits, the amount brought forward, the depreciation reserve, the preference dividend, and the ordinary dividend. It gives a statement by the chairman of directors as to the operations of the company, and in regard to the future of the company; whether it is in the company's report or not I am not certain, but this article gives a very clear statement of the capital involved, the accumulated preference shares, the ordinary shares, the debenture stock, etc. I say this is a perfect model of how a balance sheet should be presented to the public so that the public can understand it. I am well aware that if you take any item, depreciation reserve, for instance, you must take the figures on their face value. Unless you are an expert and have access to all the departments, it is quite impossible to give an illuminating opinion on the position of affairs. But if the accounts are properly presented the ordinary taxpayer has some conception of the position of affairs. I do not wish to cast any reflection on individual members, because our Ministers are becoming extraordinarily sensitive to public comment on public matters. Let the Government present a clear statement to us of the financial position of each of these trading concerns separately and with the totals. We have something to go on in this Act of 1917, an Act to regulate the establishment of these trading concerns. I asked at the time, and I have asked on other occasions, and I ask again to-day, what is the use of passing an Act of this kind when its provisions are not carried out?

Copies of such accounts—

That is, the accounts to be presented of each trading concern which should be balanced every year to the 30th June.

together with the Auditor General's report thereon shall be laid before both Houses of Parliament on or before the 30th September in each year.

I am aware that there have appeared from time to time copies of certain balance sheets. In the first place we are not permitted and quite rightly, to remove them except for a brief period, and secondly, some of these have been placed on the table without the Auditor General's report and comments. I say, therefore, that for all practical purposes they are most misleading. I have gone to the trouble, with the assistance of some skilled accountants, to go through these accounts,

and the attitude I took up with the skilled professional people whom I saw was this, "Don't give me any of your political views on the subject. I have quite enough of my own. What I want from you is an accurate analysis and criticism from a purely business and financial point of view." I gave them at the same time a copy of this comparative statement of Millars'. I said again "I am not more clever than the ordinary taxpayer, but I have one or two broad principles which I find very useful. You present to me a statement with regard to one or all of these State trading concerns in a form that I can understand, and that form is to be based on Millars' trading concern." The task, I imagine, was a big one, and I had to content myself by taking one of these many works, namely, the State Implement and Engineering Works. I am going to place this on the Table of the House so that any hon. member may look at it. It is very interesting. It contains notes on the balance sheet to the 30th June, 1918. It is, therefore, of comparatively recent date and it is perfectly fair. I will take the full responsibility for anything in this return and in that return. If there is anything hon. members can criticise, they need not criticise the London "Economist" and they need not criticise the skilled help that I employed. I am prepared to take the full responsibility of placing these figures before the Chamber, and of letting hon. members see what they are. I am going to read from these notes in the balance sheet of the State Implement Works as follows:—

The amount by which the buildings, plant, and machinery are now written down is £23,431 greater than the original depreciation account. There is evidently no asset value in the items under "assets" with the 1918 balance sheet, making up the £119,592; therefore, the term "deficiency" would be more appropriate than "suspense" and would be more readily understood.

Even the man in the street knows the difference between deficiency and suspense account. I come to another point, namely, the schedule in the State Trading Concerns Act. I have this statement, which I will also under our Standing Orders place on the Table of the House, so that it can be examined by hon. members. I put this on the Table with some hesitation, because I am not clear in my own mind whether the criticism is justified or not. It comes from the Auditor General, and he speaks with considerable power and weight to Parliament. If hon. members will look at the schedule they will find the amount of fixed capital and the amount of working capital on the 30th June, 1916. Hon. members will find in no other Act of Parliament a schedule such as we have in the State Trading Concerns Act. It seems to me of the greatest importance that these figures should be correct and unquestioned. This letter from the Auditor General to the Minister 12 months ago is as follows:—

Perth, 6th November, 1918. Memo for Hon. A. Sanderson, M.L.C. With refer-

ence to your verbal request this morning: According to the balance sheet as at the 30th June, 1916 (laid on the Table of the Legislative Council on the 23rd January, 1917), the State sawmills had been supplied with the following capital: From Loan Account, £231,520 19s. 5d.; from Consolidated Revenue, £116,999 5s. 11d.; interest and estimated charges due, £26,535 3s.; a total of £375,055 8s. 4d. According to the schedule to Act No. 12 of 1917 (known as the State Trading Concerns Act, 1916) the amount of capital for the sawmills at 30th June, 1916, is shown as—"fixed," £241,157; "working," £108,000; total, £349,156. I do not know how the figures in the schedule have been arrived at. To ascertain the capital expenditure which has not been brought into the balance sheets it will be necessary to read my reports for the years 1913-14 and 1914-15. (Sgd.) C. S. Toppin, Auditor General.

It would be of some value, and it would be very easy, if I made this into a long and elaborate statement, for I have sufficient material with which to do so. It has taken me considerable time to gather this and piece it all together. I realise that it is neither the time nor the place, however, to make a lengthy statement on these affairs. I shall content myself with asking from the Government and from ourselves, what is going to be our attitude with regard to this important matter of State trading concerns? Do not tell me that the country is opposed to them, because this Government came into office pledged up to the hilt against these State trading concerns. I do not wish to emphasise that, because I think that will be common ground and generally admitted. What the leader of the House said in 1914 is true to-day, that until a Government comes along with sufficient courage—courage is very characteristic of the present Government—to deal with this matter, there seems to be no chance of making any alteration. Do hon. members think they can put forward anything better than this? I do not think they can. If it is the wish of the public to continue to launch out further in these State trading concerns, I can see half a dozen ways of dealing with them. I can see each of us made into a director to deal with the different concerns. I would say to the public, "If you are going to launch out into these public works, these State trading concerns, and you are going to have them efficiently managed, you will have to pay for your management." That means that the public will have to increase the salaries of members of Parliament. There is no question about that. I should not have the slightest hesitation in saying upon any public platform to the people, "If you are determined to carry out this method of doing public business, you will have to increase the remuneration of members of Parliament." I am not going into my own attitude on State trading concerns because I am a whole-hogger. I am going to give myself the gratification of reading these few lines from an article

written in 1917 in the "Edinburgh Review," headed "The Pros and Cons of State Ownership of Railways"—

Thirty-five years ago a famous Royal Commission in Italy exhaustively investigated the question. Professor Hadley of Yale ("Railroad Transportation—Its History and its Laws," A. T. Hadley, New York; Putnams, 1886, p. 228) has summed up their conclusions in the following words: 1. Most of the pleas for State management are based upon the idea that the State would perform many services much cheaper than they are performed by private companies. This is a mistake. The tendency is the other way. The State is much more likely to attempt to tax industry than to foster it. 2. State management is more costly than private management. 3. The political disadvantages would be very great. Politics would corrupt the railway management and the railway management would corrupt politics.

I would not have the slightest hesitation in saying this to the public, who are the masters of the situation, "If you wish to see this country developed—and you are not the only people concerned in the matter, because there are people outside Australia, as well as the five millions inside it, who are interested in the question of development—I cannot understand how you propose to do it under this system of direct State management of trading concerns." It, of course, goes without saying that there must be State control. I am going to pass for a moment from State trading concerns to another method of dealing with our public finances. The whole of my remarks are practically addressed to this question of public finance and its management in Western Australia. It is not only the State trading concerns in which we have put an enormous sum of money. What that money is I should be sorry to say, because I might be flatly contradicted. It is difficult to say how much money is invested in the State trading concerns. The Government have now gone one better. They have gone to the extent of subsidising private trading concerns, and that is a much more vicious principle than that of having State trading concerns of our own. I am going to give one illustration in our old friend the jam factory. We have not had to this day from the Government a clear statement of what was done in this bagatelle affair involving only a few thousand pounds. It is most discreditable to the Government in charge of that affair. It only involved between £10,000 and £20,000. Some poor misguided, small struggling settlers were induced by the Government to put their own money into this. When the public put their money into a concern and the Minister assures them that without this the industry will collapse, and when we know that an official receiver took charge of the whole affair, we should have had a clear statement from the Government as to what has been done, what is being done and what should be done in connection with the matter. So far as I can understand with regard to the much bigger affairs, the State

Implement Works, for instance, we have had no clear statement from the Government as to the position of those works. All we know is that the Country party has proposed to take over the works and that can be seen by the lengthy interview which appeared in the "Primary Producer" a few weeks ago. I trust that members will consider this motion without any prejudice and I hope we shall have a statement from the Government as to what their attitude is going to be. I can say this, and it is I think the almost unanimous thought in this Chamber, that this discussion will be practically the only opportunity we shall have this session of dealing with the big question of the State trading concerns. We know what the date is, and we know what the Notice Paper is like. We also know what the proposals of the Government are, and we know how this House has been treated with regard to the control of finance. It is almost pathetic to see a new member come to this House, one who holds a high position in commercial circles, and to observe the enthusiasm of youth in his efforts to struggle with matters of business as conducted by the Government of this country. What are we to say to the leader of the House who told us the one thing the Government were going to do was to establish Parliamentary control over public finance? If the Government will not take notice of my remarks, I hope they will take notice of their own Commissioner who made a recommendation in an official paper, and who told the country that it would be considered by the Government. Let the Government take no notice of the mild statements I have made, but let them take notice of their own Commissioner and accept or reject the recommendations he has made. I commend the motion to hon. members.

On motion by Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles debate adjourned.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. F. Allen in the Chair, the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 211—What shall be rateable property:

The CHAIRMAN: An amendment had been moved by Mr. Lovekin, reading: "Provided further, that nothing herein contained shall exempt any trading concern under the State Trading Concerns Act, 1916, from liability from rates under this Act in respect of any land used or occupied by any such trading concern."

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The amendment which I moved yesterday involves a constitutional question and it may, if passed, jeopardise the passage of the Bill. I understand that the Bill is very much needed by the road boards, and seeing that the issue can be thrashed out in connection with another

measure, I will ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Bill reported without further amendment.

BILL—DIVORCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly with amendments.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.

2, Sale of Liquor Regulation Act Continuation.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—ANGLO-PERSIAN OIL COMPANY LIMITED (Private).

Second Reading.

Hon. A. H. PANTON (West) [5.10] in moving the second reading said: Hon. members will see from the report of the select committee that the object of the Bill is to enable the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to provide storage accommodation for oil fuel at Fremantle. The report of the select committee states—

Your committee is satisfied that the undertaking is one of national importance, being part of a world-wide scheme for protecting the shipping of the Empire, and will be of the greatest value to the port of Fremantle and to this State; that the British Government itself is the largest shareholder of the Company; that the powers sought for in the Bill include neither monopoly nor rights over private property, and that with the amendments made by your committee the interests of the Fremantle municipality are properly protected.

The company is purely a British one with a capital of five millions sterling. The British Government have invested £2,200,000 in the company so that they have a controlling interest so far as the output of oil is concerned. The trustees are Right Hon. Lord Southborough, P.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., Rt. Hon. Earl of Lichfield, and the directors (qualification £1,000) Sir C. Greenway, Bart., Chairman and managing; Admiral Sir E. J. W. Slade, K.C.I.E., K.C.V.O., vice chairman; Sir H. S. Barnes, K.C.S.I., K.C.V.O.; J. T. Cargill; D. Garrow; J. Hamilton; F. W. Lund; H. E. Nicholls; Rt. Hon. Lord Southborough, P.C., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.; F. C. Tlarks; R. I. Watson; Sir R. T. Wynne, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E. Appointed by His Majesty's Government, Rt. Hon. Lord Incheape, G.C.M.G., K.C.I.E., K.C.S.I.; Sir F. W. Black, K.C.B. The directors themselves should be sufficient guarantee that there is not much wrong with the com-

pany. Mr. Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, in submitting a motion in the House of Commons for the purpose of obtaining £2,200,000 for investment in this company, made some remarks which I would like to quote. He said—

At this point let me clear out of the way the military argument—the great military argument. There never has been and there never will be, any shortage of oil for the British Navy in peace or war, provided you do not mind how much you pay for it, and provided you retain the power to protect it in transit on the high seas. The supply of oil in peace depends on the price. In war the supply depends on prices, plus force.

The chief idea of the British Government in investing money in this company was to be able to obtain oil at a reasonable price. Mr. Churchill went on to say—

Look out upon the wide expanse of the oil regions of the world. Two gigantic corporations—one in either hemisphere—stand out predominantly. In the New World there is the Standard Oil, against which the Cowdray interests maintain by war and by negotiation a very powerful but semi-independent life. In the Old World the great combination of the Shell and the Royal Dutch, with all their subsidiary and ancillary branches, has practically covered the whole ground, and has even reached out into the New World. Against this, amongst British companies who have maintained an independent existence, the Burma Oil Company, with its offshoot, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, is almost the only noticeable feature. . . . Since then we have experienced, in common with private consumers, a long steady squeeze by the oil trusts all over the world, and we have found prices and freights raised steadily against us until we have been pressed to pay more than double what a few years before we were accustomed to pay, yielding a good profit to the producers for the oil which was required. It is quite true that these price movements arose largely out of an increased demand by the world which is eager to use such an extraordinarily convenient fuel. . . . I can assure the Committee that we have not acted with precipitancy in this matter. For many years it has been the policy of the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the Indian Government to preserve the independent British oil interests of the Persian oil field, to help that field to develop as well as we could, and, above all, to prevent it being swallowed up by the Shell or by any foreign or cosmopolitan companies. . . . We recognise in the Persian field a necessary source of supply for a long period of time. We recognise in it the best source from which we could obtain the best kind of oil. We knew that it was in constant danger of being absorbed by some other

combination and welded into an ever-widening price ring. We knew that by our contract we should confer upon the Anglo-Persian Company an immense advantage which, added to their concession, would enormously strengthen the company and increase the value of their property. If this consequence arose from the necessary action of the State, why should not the State share in the advantage which we created? If, in any case, we had to go so far, why should we not go a step further? Was it not wiser, was it not more profitable on every ground, naval, financial, and indeed equitable, to acquire control of an enterprise which we were bound to help and bound to enrich, which we alone could sustain, and on which, to a large extent, we must rely?

There is a considerable amount of additional information which I could quote, but I think I have said sufficient to show that the Admiralty are seized with the necessity for obtaining a supply of oil for the British Navy. The company propose to store oil in all the principal ports of the British Empire, and the need for accommodation of this description at Fremantle must commend itself to every member. If there is no oil in Fremantle when these oil-driven ships come along, Fremantle will be cut out of their itinerary, and they will go on to the Eastern States.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Why not Albany?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The company have requested permission to instal the plant at Fremantle. The original Bill as drafted was dealt with by a select committee, and amended to meet the requirements and wishes of the Fremantle council, and it will be found that the Bill as amended by the select committee well protects the local authority. The company propose to spend £31,000 on the plant at Fremantle, and to build a reservoir on a lease of nine acres of land. The capacity of the tank will be two million gallons. It is proposed to carry a ten-inch pipe from the reservoir to the wharf and the branch pipes from the main will be 6 in. The Bill itself is a very simple measure. The preamble sets forth the lots of land comprising the nine acres which have been leased by the company. Clause 3 prescribes the limits of the Act, which shall extend to and include the municipality of Fremantle, together with the railway and the property vested in the Fremantle Harbour Trust commissioners. Paragraph (a) of Clause 4 gives the company power to construct the works. Paragraph (b) authorises the breaking up of streets in order to lay down the pipes. The mains and service pipes will be laid only across footpaths 3 feet below the surface, and shall not run the full length of a street.

Hon. J. Duffell: Will they be laid under houses?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: No; they will be laid under the roads other than where it is necessary to cross footpaths. There is a

proviso that the power to break up or interfere with any railway or wharf shall not be exercised without the consent of the Minister. Specifications must be submitted to the Minister and approved by him before the company will be able to break up the ground on railway or wharf property. Clause 5 provides for three days' notice being given to the council or to the Minister before the company may interfere with the streets, the railway, or the wharf, except in cases of emergency, when it may be necessary to effect repairs immediately, and then the notice and specification shall be lodged as soon as possible. It would be unreasonable to ask the company to give three days' notice in the event of a breakage in the pipes because, during that time, the oil would be running all over Fremantle. Clause 6 provides for the reinstatement of the surface to the satisfaction of the local authority where work has been carried out. Safeguards are provided to ensure proper lighting and to guard against accidents where the ground is opened up. Clause 7 provides a penalty for breaking up the ground without notice or for delay in reinstating. If the streets are broken up and there is any delay in taking away the rubbish, the local authority have the right either to do or have the work done at the expense of the company. Clause 9 stipulates that the company shall make compensation for any damage which might be done to the footpaths, railway, or wharf. Clause 10 gives the local authority power to alter the situation of pipes, etc., if they are erected contrary to the provisions of this measure. Clauses 11 and 12 are designed to protect the company against any interference with their works or any tampering with the supply, and they are given power to sue in a court of summary jurisdiction. Clause 14 makes provision for the rates to be paid by the company to the municipal council. The rates will be a sum equal to one-eighth per cent. of the amount actually received by the company for the sale of the oil and liquid fuel conveyed through the pipes, but the minimum amount of rates payable in any one year shall be £100. It was recognised that it would be a difficult matter to calculate the rates which should be paid ordinarily, and the sum would have amounted to only £11 or £12 per annum. As the company were willing to pay on the basis of one-eighth per cent. of the value of the oil run through the pipes, with a minimum of £100, that provision has been included in the Bill. If the tank were emptied once the amount due to the municipal council by way of rates would be between £90 and £100. The oftener the tank is emptied the greater the revenue the council will receive by way of rates, but the minimum per annum will be £100, irrespective of whether any oil passes through the pipes. The payments to the council are to be made half-yearly on the 1st January and the 1st July, but the company are to be allowed two years to construct the works and no rates will be chargeable until after

the second year. Clause 17 lays down that, if the work is not commenced within two years, the Act shall cease and determine. I understand the company are very anxious to start the work. No monopoly will be established under this Bill. It will be possible for any company to secure a private Bill for similar purposes if they so desire. This is a measure to equip Fremantle as one of the outposts of the British Navy principally, and also to provide the accommodation necessary for the ships of the mercantile marine that burn this class of fuel.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What is the proportion of shares held by the British Government?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Just about one-half. It is essential for Western Australia, and for Fremantle as the chief port of the State, to have oil storage if we are to cater for oil ships which later on will be calling here. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. R. J. Lynn debate adjourned.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES (North) [5.28]: I wish to say at the outset that I am prepared to vote against the second reading of the Bill, and I shall briefly give my reasons for so doing. When I was before my constituents, I absolutely pledged myself to oppose any alteration of the franchise for this Chamber. In spite of the march of progress referred to by the leader of the House when introducing the Bill, I am more than ever satisfied that the sound old doctrine that those who pay the piper should call the tune is the correct one. Another reason for objecting to the Bill is that there has been no demand on the part of the public for an amendment of the franchise on the lines indicated in this measure. When we remember that the Commonwealth Parliament control the customs and excise and the revenue derived therefrom, and when we remember the manner in which the Commonwealth Parliament have encroached upon the avenues of State revenue, we must realise that the people who will ultimately have to bear the burden of taxation, not only in connection with our existing liabilities for borrowed money but for the deficit which is being piled up day after day—a deficit which we are told will amount to four millions at the end of the current year—are the electors for this House. When it comes to a settlement—as sooner or later it must—the men and women responsible for the liquidation of the liability are those who have the right to elect representatives in this Chamber. The people who come with their hats on and run the country into all manner of liabilities, in the clear knowledge that when things go wrong they themselves can put on their hats

and clear out, are not, to my mind, people who should have a final say in the legislation of this country. In introducing the Bill, the Minister for Education showed an intimate knowledge of what had happened in the past as regards amendment of the Constitution. He said that the Constitution had not been amended for the last 20 years.

The Minister for Education: That was a mistake which I corrected.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Minister did not correct it. A member of the House corrected it for him.

The Minister for Education: A member of the House drew my attention to the mistake, and I corrected it.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The fact remains that the leader of this House had given so little attention to the Constitutional question that he came here and told us there had not been an amendment of the Constitution for the last 20 years.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It was a slip.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I deny that it was a slip. It is evidence of the fact that the leader of the House, before introducing this Bill, had not even taken the trouble to look up what had happened.

The Minister for Education: On a point of personal explanation, I think I am entitled to show how I fell into the mistake. The Constitution Act is printed in our Standing Orders as it was amended in 1911, but there is nothing there to show that it was not actually passed in that form in 1899. Reading the Act in the form in which it is printed in the Standing Orders, I was led for a moment to forget something that had happened before I became a member of the House.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I accept the explanation, which, however, does not alter the fact that I have had to look up a matter which the leader of the House should have looked up. I now propose to tell hon. members what did happen, so far as I have been able to judge in the time at my disposal. In 1911 the qualification of an elector for the Legislative Council was £25, and not £17. There was then a proposal before the House that it should be reduced to £15, and another proposal that it should be reduced to £20. Ultimately, after various discussions here and elsewhere, the amount was fixed at £17. On a division 22 members of this Chamber voted for £17, and two for £15, these two being Mr. Kirwan and Mr. Brinago. The leader of the House said yesterday that there had been a misunderstanding as to what £17 per annum meant. When he replies, I should like him to state what the misunderstanding was. So far as I am able to judge, this House in 1911 was perfectly clear as to what it was doing when it fixed the qualification at £17. In introducing the Bill the leader of this House made reference to his own views on the subject of the Council franchise. He said that he was always in favour of household suffrage. In the limited time at my disposal I have not been able to find in

"Hansard" any declaration of the Minister in favour of household suffrage. Evidently he was not in favour of household suffrage when this Bill was introduced in another place, because the clause dealing with the franchise then really amounted only to an interpretation of the £17 per annum fixed by the Act of 1911, apart from the fact that the clause extended the Council franchise to soldiers. The leader told us yesterday what his views were yesterday. To-morrow we shall probably hear what his views will be to-morrow. He claimed that the soldiers who had fought for their country were entitled to full citizenship. He did not, however, advance that claim in favour of the widowed mother, who perhaps lost her only son in the war. He did not urge that she should have full citizenship. The inference is that the omission is due to the fact that the soldiers are a large body, while widowed mothers of fallen soldiers are only to be found here and there. It must be perfectly clear to hon. members that any returned soldiers desiring to do so, can qualify for the Legislative Council franchise under the existing Act. The State law provides that a soldier can purchase Crown land at half price. In connection with the Federal repatriation scheme it is provided that the soldier who buys land can also acquire a house to live in. There is the further fact that the Commonwealth Government are about to distribute amongst all the returned soldiers sufficient money to enable each and every one of them to buy £100 worth of land for £50; and that is all the qualification required in order to be an elector for this Chamber. So that it will only be a question of responsibility on the part of the soldier, as to whether he fritters the money away or throws it up against the wall, or decides to become a permanent citizen of the State and show his bona fides by establishing a home and taking a wife, buying £50 worth of land or renting a house. That is all he will have to do in order to qualify as an elector for this House. There would be some justification for extending the Council franchise if the House had at any time adopted an attitude antagonistic to the soldiers. But on two occasions within the last couple of years this House has fought another place in the interests of the soldier, demanding the fulfilment of the promise given to the soldier that he should be put back where he was before he went to the war. I can find no record of any promise made to the soldier that he should be given the qualification of an elector for this House. I do not think he expects or looks for that. All that the soldier is really looking for, so far as I can ascertain, is that he shall be put back where he was before he left Australia. Various leaders of the Labour section of the community have told me that they can at the present time get, and during the last two or three years have been getting, a fairer deal and more equitable legislation from this House than from another place. That circumstance is, in my opinion, due to the fact that in an-

other place there is a new party who put self foremost first, last, and all the time.

Hon. J. Duffell: The leader of the Opposition thanked God that there was another House.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I can quite understand the attitude of the leader of the Opposition. He says, "My party are in favour of abolishing the Legislative Council altogether. We do not believe in two Houses, we want one House." He is perfectly consistent and honest and straightforward. He says, "Having in view the abolition of the Legislative Council, I am prepared to include in the Council franchise anybody and everybody I can get in. I favour adult suffrage if I can get it. Otherwise I favour household suffrage with the soldiers." The danger I see in granting the soldier vote is that of setting class against class, and possibly creating a military class in our midst. We have evidence of it already. The trouble will ultimately rebound on the soldier, not because the soldier is responsible, but because certain politicians cater for the soldiers in a way that the soldiers do not desire. We may reach the stage when the public will decide that they are getting too much of the returned soldier, and then every other section of the community will be arrayed against the soldier, and, through no fault of his own, the soldier will have a bad time in this country. We have had evidence of that within the last fortnight. One of our most brilliant soldiers, a man who went to the war in its earliest stage and who has come back as a general, stood for the Metropolitan Province. The politicians, Federal and State, kept that man out of Parliament. I make that statement honestly and conscientiously believing it to be true. His defeat was due not to the public, but to the politicians, who, catering for the soldier vote, caused the public to ask themselves, "Where is this thing going to end?" We find Mr. Hughes, the Commonwealth Prime Minister, giving the soldiers 28 millions of money. In this Bill we have our State Government offering the soldier the Legislative Council franchise. If our State Government had fulfilled all their promises to the soldier and had then said, "We will do a bit more now, and give you the Council franchise," probably something could be said in favour of the proposal. But the State has not carried out its contract, and until it does we have no right to offer the soldiers anything not promised them before they went to the war. I can understand the Minister supporting the Bill. He would have supported the interpretation measure in the same manner. My reason for raising the point is that there comes a time when Ministers and members have to go back to their constituents. Under this Bill it is proposed to obviate that. When a member accepts office as a Minister, he should seek re-election. The Minister in charge of the Bill told us yesterday that he was in favour of adult suffrage.

The Minister for Education: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I mean household suffrage, plus the soldiers' vote and plus almost any other vote that this or another place might suggest should be included.

The Minister for Education: Do you suggest that I said that?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The hon. member did not say precisely that, but his attitude, both yesterday and the day before, and probably to-morrow, would justify anyone in coming to that conclusion. This is not the Bill introduced by the Government. I could understand the hon. member standing up for the Government Bill. But this Bill was remodelled by the leader of the Labour party in another place, and the hon. member immediately moulded his mind into line with the amended Bill. The inconsistency on the part of Ministers justifies me in saying that if they want office the least they can do is to go back to their electors for approval or rejection. Every step we have taken during the last 20 years justifies this provision. In the old days, by a straightforward, honest motion the late Mr. F. H. Piessé defeated the Leake Government, but by an intrigue on the part of another party Mr. Piessé was dropped out, and a new Ministry was formed with Mr. A. E. Morgans as their head. That Ministry went to the country, and came back minus three Ministers, whereupon the Leake Government took over with the public behind them. When Mr. Scaddan was included in the Lefroy Government he went back to the gold-fields for re-election and was turned down. Then the Government had to appoint another Minister for Railways. What did they do? They looked around to see which man was most secure in his seat, and so they put Mr. Hudson in charge of the railway system of this State. I need not say any more on the question of the necessity for sending Ministers back to their constituents when they have turned round perhaps half a dozen times. When the war broke out no body of men started better than the Australian soldiers. During the war no man accomplished greater feats than did the Australian soldier. But as soon as a large body of soldiers went forth to the war the politicians of Australia said, "This is a body with whom we must keep on good terms"; and from that to the present day the politicians of Australia, Federal and State, have been chasing the soldiers, not in the interests of the soldiers, but in the interests of the politicians, who will ruin the soldiers' cause as well as ruining the State.

Hon. J. Cornell: We shall see how the hon. member takes the hurdle when his turn comes.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I have never baulked at anything yet, and I am not afraid to face a body of soldiers and talk to them in the manner in which I am talking here. The public of Australia is behind the soldiers, but the politician is out to push his own barrow. From what I have seen in the House, I honestly believe that if ever the socialistic party, the red raggers, the direct actionists,

get into power in this House, the leader of the House has the capacity and the language at his disposal to convince that party that he alone has been responsible for the position and that he alone should be put at the head of the party. That is what I am forced to believe after what I have seen in the House within the last few days. I now come to the Bill as remodelled by the leader of the Labour party. The first clause of the Bill deals with the right of women to sit in Parliament. I have told the women that their province in life is to increase, multiply and replenish the earth.

The Minister for Education: Rather a restricted outlook, is it not?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It will be a still more restricted outlook if they do not.

The Minister for Education: But cannot they do anything else?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes. Parliament, in its wisdom, has decided that they shall be appointed justices of the peace. Parliament having thus given any party in power authority to appoint them justices, I am not going to object to their taking their places in Parliament, if the electors will elect them. The next clause introduced by the Government was an interpretation clause plus the extension of the vote of the soldiers. What it is now, hon. members can decide for themselves. They have the knowledge that presumably both Bills were endorsed by the leader of this House, who, in effect, probably said, "These are my views, but if they do not suit you they can be altered." Clause 5 deals with contracts. We are on very dangerous ground if we open up the constitutional question on that point. Under this clause, if extended, any member of Parliament can make a special contract with any Government department. It is a most dangerous provision. In the existing conditions of State trading concerns, provided a member of Parliament ships in a State steamer, and pays the schedule rate, provided that when putting his wife on a tram he pays for her, and provided that when using water he pays for the service at schedule rates, there is no liability under the Constitution. On several occasions before I came into the House I chartered State steamers. I made more money out of one of those charters than I have received as Parliamentary salary during the six years I have been in Parliament. But since entering Parliament I have dropped that, and I do not want to get back to that position. I am prepared to ship my goods by State steamers and pay my passage, and while I do this no court of equity would interfere with my position. But we are on dangerous ground once we begin to tamper with the Constitution in the direction of allowing members to enter into special contracts with the Crown, because some members may be prepared to use their influence to make a contract which they otherwise could not make. I have dealt with the office of profit. If any hon. member wants any

further reason for sending politicians back to their constituencies, I shall furnish additional reasons if ever we get into Committee on the Bill. I do not think there is any urgent necessity for Clause 7 defining the powers of this House. If there is, we could have a special Bill for the purpose. We have got along very well in the past without this provision and I think we can continue to do so. Now I come to the proposed extension of the life of Parliament. When the present Government came into power I thought they were the best that could be got together from the present Parliament. But when one sees what is going on, when important Bills are brought into another Chamber, and at the first show of opposition the Government balk and say to the Opposition, "Put in what you will; we will send it up to the other place and instruct our Minister there to carry out your views"—when we have men who will adopt that attitude, I say the life of Parliament should be shortened rather than extended. If the present Government are so sure of their position that they want to bring the elections round to the right period, by all means have a general election early next year. The leader of the House said the Governor would not agree to a dissolution. That is all moonshine. If the Government, with their majority in the Assembly, were to ask for a dissolution, the Governor could not refuse it. He would say, "This is done for a specific purpose, recommended by a majority of the Assembly" and would grant the request. These are briefly my reasons for opposing this Bill. If I can get support I shall divide the House, and vote against the Bill on the second reading.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban) [6.0]: As there seems to me some little shyness on the part of the older members of the House in speaking on the second reading of this Bill I should like to express my views. At the outset I must say that I disagree almost entirely with the speech we have just heard. I believe this Bill is on the whole a wise one. The time has arrived when the franchise in this House should be broadened, and I am most emphatically in favour of an extension of the franchise towards returned soldiers. It is extraordinary how very short lived memory is and how fleeting gratitude is. I should like to ask hon. members what would their feelings have been towards the soldier, what would their vote have been had this measure been brought down in March, 1918, or in October or November, 1918. I believe this House from a sense of gratitude for what the soldier at the time was doing for us would most emphatically have conferred the franchise of this House upon him. There are other reasons why this franchise should be extended towards other individuals than

the returned soldier. All the world over, as the leader of the House has pointed out, we are witnessing a state of political unrest. It is in my opinion unwise for members to shut their eyes to the atmosphere and the conditions in which we are living. To broaden the franchise will undoubtedly tend towards the popularity of this Chamber. As one who believes in the second Chamber, and considers it provides a better form of government, I would urge upon members to extend the franchise and to increase the life of the second Chamber. There can be no doubt that there is a considerable amount of dissatisfaction amongst a large section of the population at the limited franchise which at present is enjoyed.

Hon. H. Stewart: The poll shows what the people think.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I think the small poll is an argument in favour of the extension of the franchise.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The abolition of it!

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: There seems to be very little interest taken by those who have the franchise, when they have to be literally carried to the poll before they will vote. The supporters of the candidate have to beseech them to go to the poll, and to send for them in motor cars and even then they give a grudging assent.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You will have so many more to send for.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: If the franchise was extended those who at present have these privileges might wake up to the fact that it is their duty to go to the poll and protect their own interests. I am not going to touch upon the different clauses in the Bill. I consider the most suitable occasion to do that is when we reach the Committee stage. I merely rose to speak on the broad principles underlying the Bill. I most emphatically declare that this Bill should pass the second reading stage, and that it will cause a good deal of dissatisfaction should it be thrown out on the second reading.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [6.6]: I have listened with a great deal of interest to the remarks which have fallen from preceding members, and I feel I must add a few of my own to the discussion. At the outset I cannot help expressing surprise that the Government should have seen fit to bring down such a Bill as this. It is of such a contradictory nature and embraces such different views that it is almost embarrassing to know what to do with it. Part of it one can agree with, but the other part one cannot agree with. I am unable to make up my mind whether I shall vote for the second reading or not. The portion of the Bill to which I feel some opposition is so much greater than the other that, unless I hear something more convincing with regard to its subsequent effect, I shall have to consider carefully whether I shall vote against the second reading or not. We must approach this matter as calmly

and as dispassionately as we can, and as far as possible without prejudice.

Hon. J. Cornell: And with amity.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I think we shall all do that. We desire a Parliament that will meet with the approbation of the people, and not only that but give confidence to the people. The people should feel, when matters which immediately affect them are being considered by Parliament, that these will be discussed and dealt with in such a way as to be entirely satisfactory. This will doubtless be very difficult. To find any Parliament which will give universal satisfaction is almost impossible. The only point is to get one as nearly perfect as possible. What is the position of the Parliament of Western Australia? We have two Houses with a certain franchise. The Legislative Assembly admits to its vote every adult person over the age of 21 irrespective of whether such persons are fit to have a vote, and irrespective of whether they have had any experience or not. There are no conditions whatsoever imposed, and unconditionally they are entitled to vote, on every question and for every purpose for the Legislative Assembly. That Assembly is a powerful House, inasmuch as it has the control of all money matters and all matters of taxation. Every individual, therefore, whether he be fitted or unfitted, whether he has experience or not, whether, if it be a woman of 21 or a man of 23, provided he or she has done nothing which has unfitted him or her to exercise a vote, can send a member to the Legislative Assembly who shall have the power of taxing everyone in the community, a power which cannot be interfered with by this House. It is no use saying that the people have not got full representation. They have the fullest and freest representation under our constitutional system that can possibly be given to any one in the world. The only drawback at which they grumble is that there is a second Chamber which is elected on the qualification basis, and which is composed, or supposed to be composed, of more business-like and educated men, men of more experience perhaps than is the case with the other Chamber. It is presumed that they have more experience on account of their extra qualifications. I do not say that position and wealth necessarily carry with them intelligence and brains, but I think I can safely say that the want of these qualifications often shows the absence of them. It is fair to say that a man who has been successful in his own affairs (because none of us have inherited much of our wealth) is at all events as well fitted to deal with the affairs of State as are the people who are elected by those who have no qualification at all. It shows the freedom of our constitution when a candidate for Parliamentary honours requires no qualification whatever. As long as he is an adult and is not afflicted with any dis-

abilities he can be a candidate for Parliament.

Hon. H. Carson: He must be 30 years of age.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: The Legislative Council, however, tries to get people with experience.

Hon. J. Cornell: I think the age ought to be 80.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Will the hon. member be serious! It is evidently contemplated that members should have some experience because of the age limit, and that they should be those who have been fairly successful as they have to be elected on the property qualification. In these circumstances it seems to me that it is not a very great drawback to have a House of this description. It is really a House of revision. It cannot impose taxation or interfere much with money Bills, and in fact from our experience of it we must all admit that the deliberations and results of the debates in this House will compare favourably with the results or debates of any Chamber of the same kind in any part of the world. I say this with a considerable amount of pride. With regard to extending the franchise, Dr. Saw has made a big point of this. We find that a revolution took place in a portion of Australia called Port Darwin because the people there had taxation without representation. I can easily prove that in Western Australia we have lots of representation and no taxation. There are hundreds of people who have votes in this State but never pay a penny in taxation towards the revenue of Western Australia. Until perhaps this year when the amount of exemption was lowered—it used to be £200—no one had to pay an income tax if his income was under £200 a year. To get £200 a year means that a man must earn, with holidays, etc., thrown in, £5 a week. There are hundreds of people who vote for the Legislative Assembly who do not get £5 a week. Therefore, they do not pay any taxation to Western Australia.

The Minister for Education: Yes.

Hon. E. H. WITTENOOM: They do not pay any income tax and they probably pay no land tax. There are thousands of young men and women in the State who pay no income or land tax, and they probably pay no rates and they certainly pay no wheel tax. They pay nothing at all to Western Australia except 25s. per year, which is returned from the Commonwealth Government. Everyone says, "But what about the Customs duties and the Customs taxes?" Unfortunately these all go to the Federal Government and do not come to Western Australia. The Federal Government take all our customs taxation which these people pay for their socks, their boots and their frocks. They take that and give us 25s. a year. That is what the very large majority of the voters pay towards the taxation in Western Australia. There

is no contradicting it because it is an absolute fact, and yet we hear people talk about taxation without representation.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM. Before tea I was trying to show that a very large number of voters for the Legislative Assembly pay little or no taxation owing to the exemption of up to £200. Latterly, of course, the amount has been reduced to £100, and therefore there is less exemption. What these people have chiefly to pay is the 25s. per head returned to the State out of the Customs revenue by the Commonwealth Government. The total amount thus received is absolutely paltry. Three hundred thousand people at 25s. per head comes to something under half a million a year. The interest on our public debt amounts to £1,600,000 or £1,700,000 a year, and thus the amount which is received through the customs—and with the total loss of which we are threatened—does not pay one fourth of the interest bill, let alone anything else. There is another source through which these voters pay something, and that is the picture shows, but the amount is almost infinitesimal. Let it not be thought for one moment that I am arguing that every adult shall not have a vote. I hold that every adult should have a vote, should be able to say under what laws and government he or she will live and what taxation he or she should bear. But there should be some protection for those who are thrifty and industrious and try to get along in the world. It seems to me wrong in principle that a large number of people with no responsibilities whatever and contributing little or nothing to the revenue should have the power of imposing taxation on a large class of the community, and the most industrious class too. These people have the power to send to Parliament men who impose taxation on the whole of the community, towards which taxation most of these electors pay nothing, as I have shown. I do not think one could look for a better reason for the defence of the Legislative Council than this. And let me ask what do these people obtain in return for the little they contribute to the revenue? Let us see what advantages they have from being voters. First of all they get their parks free, in which statement I shall no doubt be supported by Mr. Lovekin, who has done so much to make the parks a pleasant resort for the people. They get our charitable institutions, such as hospitals, free—even our lunatic asylum, I believe, is free. Police protection is free. Administration of justice is free. Education is free. All those things are for the benefit of the people who have votes empowering them to impose taxation on other people, while they themselves pay very little, although they enjoy all these advantages. I hardly like to include the railways, which are run for the convenience of the people at a loss. In the circumstances it seems to me superfluous for Dr. Saw to talk about extending or broadening the franchise for fear the people would become so dissatisfied with this House as to

sweep it away. I do not think many of them would want to do so. We have known of hon. members entering this House with the object possibly of sweeping it away, but the House has not been swept away yet. As a parenthesis on that subject I may add that I believe it will be a very long time before the House is swept away. When I hear remarks coming from the Labour party or any other party about wanting to do away with the Legislative Council, I do not believe a word of it. There is no desire to abolish the Council. What a lot of those who profess to be desirous of abolishing the Council really do want is to abolish the qualification of voters for the Council.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is the only way to do it.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: In that case, why does not the hon. member interjecting do it? He came here for the purpose of sweeping away the Council, but he has not taken any steps towards that object yet. I would not have made that remark but for his interjection. I consider the hon. member has been a very good member and has contributed towards the efficiency of the House. But we have heard from him nothing so far about doing away with the House. If there is any sincerity in all the talk, it is not the Council that these people desire to abolish, but the qualification. Even my moderate acquaintance with commercialism leads me to doubt whether any body of men who have the opportunity of occupying seats here will want to do away with 30 positions carrying £800 a year. I believe that the existence of the Legislative Council may be regarded as fairly safe. That, I think, disposes of Dr. Saw's remarks about the advisability of extending the franchise. No doubt everybody would like to have a vote for anything—whether the vote is of any value to them or not. Next I will deal with one or two clauses of the Bill, and the matters concerned in them. The meaning of the amendment proposed by Clause 2 is that the right to sit in Parliament shall be extended to women. I have given that matter a great deal of consideration. It may be within the memory of hon. members that I was very pronounced in my opposition to women being rendered capable of appointment as justices of the peace. I opposed it on the ground that I consider women not capable of carrying out the duties of a justice of the peace, on account of their sex, on account of their bringing up, and on account of their want of ordinary business experience. However, that proposal was carried. On the other hand, I am not so pronounced in my opposition to women sitting in Parliament, for this reason—and it is the same sort of reason as applies to women practising as doctors and lawyers—that there is a choice. In the one case women have to be elected first, and in the other two cases they have to be employed first. But once a woman has been appointed as a justice of the peace, there is no choice. If a man has to go to court he is just as likely to find himself appearing before women justices as before male justices. Per-

sonally I would strongly object to jurisdiction being exercised by a woman in a court of justice. However, that may be prejudicial. At all events, the question of women sitting in Parliament is not on all fours with the question of women sitting as justices of the peace. There is nothing a woman can do that a man cannot do, except as regards domestic affairs, in which she is very much the better. As there is any amount of work in domestic matters for women to do, I see no necessity for opening up to them avenues in which they will come into competition with men. In the circumstances I do not think I shall vote for this clause. In my opinion it would not be to an advantage to have women sitting in Parliament, because their duties relate more to domestic matters. There is a great tendency nowadays for women to take up men's work instead of confining themselves to domestic work. We find them invading offices, shops, and all sorts of businesses. Many men would say, "All the better." Perhaps it has been for the better in some cases. I understand that during the recent large railway strike at Home many women were able to take up the work of driving lorries and other duties hitherto performed by men. Still, I am generally opposed to women taking up men's duties, and coming into conflict with men, and performing other work than the domestic duties which they are naturally so well fitted to undertake. Clause 3 I think restricts the votes of electors to one province.

The Minister for Education: No such provision is in the Bill; no such suggestion.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I am very pleased to hear it, but Subclause (2) of the clause says—

Provided, however, that no elector, being the inhabitant occupier of more than one dwelling-house within the State, shall be entitled to be registered for any province other than that in which his principal place of residence is situated.

The Minister for Education: That is as regards the residence qualification. It does not affect the other qualifications.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: If that does not mean restricting the right to vote to one province, I do not know the meaning of the English language.

The Minister for Education: You can read the English language, but the clause does not mean that.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: If the clause means what I think it means, I shall not support it. If people have the energy and enterprise to extend their operations to various portions of the State, they should have some say as regards the representation of those portions.

The Minister for Education: I assure the hon. member that the clause has not the meaning he imagines.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: In that case I will delay further remarks on the clause until the Committee stage. The proposed new Subsection (4a) extends the Council franchise to returned soldiers. I really

see no reason why this should be done. I do not think any body of people have a higher opinion of soldiers than this House has—certainly not than the individual who now speaks. But for the life of me I cannot see that because a man has been a successful soldier he is qualified to become an elector for the Legislative Council, or that the Constitution should be altered in order to reward him with the Council franchise because he has done his duty in defending his country. If he is entitled to reward—and we all admit he is—let him have his reward in the shape of a gratuity and in the other ways in which it is being bestowed. I cannot see any reason why the Constitution should be amended for the purpose of giving him this particular reward. This was opposed by the very men whom one would have thought would have supported it in another place, for the one reason that it would broaden the franchise of the Legislative Council with the view of ultimately destroying this Chamber as quickly as possible. It is illogical and inconsistent to give soldiers only the vote. What about the other people who were not able to actually fight, but who helped materially in other ways? Look at the number of people who contributed to the numerous funds! I myself tried on two occasions to go away, but I was unsuccessful, and I did what I could by way of subscriptions and in other ways. There are a good many other things to lose in this world besides one's life. Why single out one particular body?

The Minister for Education: Do you not think that their services were singular as compared with the services of others?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: No; my opinion is that there was an obligation on the part of every man in our Empire to help to defend his native land when it was in danger, and that opinion was confirmed more than ever after I heard the speeches of Messrs. Hughes and Cook, both of whom stated definitely that the objective of the Germans was Australia. Therefore, I considered that there was an obligation on the part of all to do what they could, and had the people of Australia done what I consider they should have done, they would have gone boldly for conscription. There would then have been none of this obligation. Everyone would then have been allotted certain work and all the more honour to those who went away. The disgrace lies on those who opposed compulsory service. Just fancy any class of man, knowing that his native land was in danger, saying that he would not fight for it. Had we secured compulsory enlistment, when everybody would have had to do something, then we would not have heard so much about this obligation because everybody would have had to do his share. That is the reason why I do not think it was a special service on the part of those who went. It may have been a bit of a picnic for some, but at the same time we are grateful to those who did go. Moreover, as Mr. Holmes has

pointed out, under the circumstances by which many are being assisted, they will be able to qualify themselves for a vote for this branch of the Legislature. Why is one portion of the community picked out and dozens of others like munition workers and people who subscribed left out. I really fail to see. Mr. Holmes dealt with other matters to a very large extent. Therefore, it is not particularly necessary for me to go into many more details now. I shall reserve any further remarks I may have to make until the Committee stage is reached, that is if the Bill does go that far. In the meantime, I am not going to declare which way I intend to vote on the second reading until I have heard the remarks of other hon. members.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN (West) [7.50]: As I shall not be able to discuss the various clauses of the Bill during the Committee stage, I am taking the present opportunity of emphatically protesting against the measure passing the second reading. There are certain provisions in the Bill which I consider dangerous, and as the measure may reach the Committee stage, I have no option but to enter my protest on the second reading. If I had the opportunity of dealing with some of the provisions of the Bill in Committee it is possible that I might take up a slightly different attitude, but under the circumstances I am compelled on this occasion to oppose the second reading. This Bill I believe is practically the outcome of the expressed intention of the Government to alter the period of election for the Legislative Assembly so as to bring it about in the earlier portion of the year, and thus give Parliament an opportunity to deal with the finances at an earlier period in the financial year than has been done in the past. We were told by the leader of the House at the beginning of this session, or at the end of last session, that it was the intention of the Government to bring in a measure of this description, and if such measure had been brought in to deal with that matter only, I have no doubt it would have been considered on its merits and something of the sort might have been enacted. On the top of that we have one or two other questions which wanted a little definition and the Government put them in the same Bill. Then again on top of that they have introduced innovations which make the Bill a dangerous one indeed. I claim that this is not the time in the history of the State and the Commonwealth when such changes in the Constitution should be effected. This House stands for reflected judgment: it stands to give the people an opportunity of second thought. I am saying something now which has been said hundreds of times, but because it has been said often it cannot be said that it is any the less true. Whenever successful government has been carried into effect it has always been done through the bi-cameral system. Wherever we seek in the pages of history from the distant past to the present day, we find that the most suc-

cessful methods of government have always been those which have had the bi-cameral system, and when the people talk of abolishing the Legislative Council and putting nothing in its place, they are doing something which is diametrically opposed to the matured judgment of the civilised world. This is not the time for us to introduce drastic changes in our Constitution. They should not be made at a time when the minds of the people are not free from bias and prejudice. No such change should be suggested when the minds of the people are not capable of that mature judgment which such a change warrants, and when the very constitution of this Chamber emphasises the necessity for such reflected judgment. The Chamber is constituted in this way: that at no period can the whole of its members go before the electors at one time. One third of the members go before their constituents every two years, so that in that way any sudden wave of enthusiasm or anything which may be agitating the public mind cannot at a single election materially change the nature of this Chamber. That cannot be said of the Legislative Assembly. All the members of that body appear before the electors at the same time, and it is possible that the minds of the public at that particular time may be inflamed with certain ideas or sentiments created by events then current. There may be an election which may reflect at that time the views of the people, which views six or 12 months later may be of a different character. The Legislative Council is elected in such a way that it cannot be entirely influenced by any passing wave or emotion or sentiment as the case may be. The Bill before the House deals with practically seven principles, but even though they have been dealt upon by previous speakers seriatim, I desire to make a few comments also in regard to them. The first deals with the extension to women of the right to sit in Parliament. The only objection I have to that is, that I consider all enactments of that description should first emanate from a demand by the people themselves. No amendment of our Constitution should be contemplated unless we have a public expression of opinion in that particular direction. Amendments should not come from a small section who make a great deal of noise and who very often clamour for these things, and who parade through the streets asking for the extension of the franchise to women as was done in the streets of London. We should get an expression of opinion from the mature judgment of the people themselves, and if that expression of opinion is given in no uncertain voice, Parliament must yield to the demand of the people and grant what the people desire. So far as I know no such demand has yet been made by the people. I have not heard that the people have asked for this change. I do not even know that the women have asked for it. A small section of the community may have done so, but the people as a whole have not. I am not certain whether women are particularly fitted

to carry out Parliamentary duties. We know, of course, that in recent years women have been taking their places successfully in almost every walk of life. Personally, I have no objection to the right being granted to women to sit in Parliament, and I consider that the judgment of the people at election time should be obtained in order to see whether the general opinion is that this right should be extended to women. The next question dealt with is the elimination of the rental qualification from the franchise of this Chamber. The rental qualification applies now to all those who occupy a dwelling of a permanent character being a fixture to the soil, etc. These are the people who shall have the right to vote for this Chamber. The clause is rather a peculiar one and is open to a good deal of question. It says—

The term "dwelling-house" means any structure of a permanent character being a fixture to the soil which is ordinarily capable of being used for human habitation.

Let me ask what is permanent amongst us? Can we say that any one dwelling is permanent, and that another is not permanent? It is after all a question of degree. Will not the ravages of time and the elements destroy one equally with the other? When we say a thing is permanent, what do we mean by that? What is the definition of permanent, and how are we going to apply it, and who is to apply it? Then the clause says that the dwelling must be a fixture to the soil. What does that mean? A building erected of marble is not a fixture to the soil because it stands on the soil and is kept on the soil by its own weight, whereas the tent is fixed by a peg. Who, then, is to say which is which? How are we to draw the line?

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I will take the marble house every time.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: One may be heavier and more difficult to remove, but practically speaking, if I were asked which was a fixture to the soil, I should say a tent and not a palace. The leader of the House, in introducing the measure, said that statesmen of wide vision who were in touch with the spirit of the times recognised the necessity for the change. This might be true, but who is to say who are these statesmen? Who is to say we have them? Are we gifted in our Government or in our Parliament with these statesmen of wide judgment, broad vision, and in touch with the spirit of the times? They may be in touch with the ephemeral, the passing spirit of the times. Throughout Australia to-day, we have statesmen who are seizing every straw upon the political stream to grasp and save their political positions. That is the condition to which we have come. These are the statesmen of broad vision and in touch with the spirit of the times. We are asked to follow them in passing measures of this description. There is no doubt that Clause 3 was amended in another place for the purpose of removing one of the supports of this Chamber. Every extension of the franchise is welcomed by a

certain section of the community for the purpose of undermining this House. I venture to say that, if they got this Bill passed, it would be only a stepping stone to something else. I say what others have said, and what I conscientiously believe is true, that they do not desire the abolition of this House. As Sir Edward Wittenoom pointed out, they desire to retain it but to so mould it that it will become a creature of theirs, like other places are, and thus legislation of this State will fall into the hands of those who are not best entitled to it.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You are a bit hard on the Country party, are you not?

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: This House stands for something more than the reflected judgment of the community. Sir Edward Wittenoom has rightly pointed out that it represents the great taxpayers of the State. It was created for something more than a second Chamber, to repeat the process of passing Bills which goes on in another place. This House is here for the purpose of seeing that those who are the true citizens of the State, the permanent citizens of the State, who have made homes and established industries here, are protected, as well as other sections of the community. I am not disparaging any one section of the community or any individual of it, but so long as we recognise the rights of private property, so long as we recognise the rights of individuals to own land, so long as we recognise the marriage tie, and parental control of the home and home life, we must differentiate between those who are described as carpet baggers and permanent citizens of the State. I do not use the term carpet baggers in a disparaging way, but I refer to those who may pass out of this State at any time they care to pack their bags and put on their hats. A man with the ties of family and the ties represented by the investment of the savings of years as a result of his thrift and industry, is surely worthy of consideration as apart from those who are not interested in this State as he is. This House stands for that. It stands for the sanctity of the home life, because the franchise is given to the head of the family, as against men and women who have no family ties and who live in lodgings. Some people would give them all equal rights, and equal voice in the government of the State, but I personally oppose anything of the kind. So long as we recognise the rights of individuals to the advantages and enjoyment of their earnings and savings, it is necessary to have a second Chamber such as this to preserve their rights and protect them. The third phase of the Bill is that dealing with the extension of the franchise to the soldiers. Neither the leader of the House nor any member of Parliament can claim to be more sincere in his recognition of what the soldier has done for us than I am—for the great work he has done and the sacrifice he has made. But a greater sacrifice has been

made by the men who lie in foreign graves, and by the wives and the fathers and mothers of such men who, under this Bill, will not be granted a voice in the election of members for this Chamber. The soldier who served in our forces during the recent war—it does not say whether at home or abroad; even if he never left Australia but had a good billet in the barracks or in the forts at Fremantle—is to be given the right and privilege of a vote for this House, which the widow or the bereaved mother or father of a soldier who died on foreign service does not possess. I would rather see the franchise extended to all adult people than pick out one section of the community.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: You have your opportunity.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: I may have my opportunity but I do not desire to accept it. If we adopt this principle, we shall be creating a privileged class in Western Australia. We should not forget that our soldiers were citizen soldiers, and if we endeavour to encourage the military spirit in the soldier who has returned, we shall be doing something detrimental to the best interests of the State. We do not desire our soldiers to remember that they were soldiers; we desire them to forget it. We desire to put them in positions where they will be able to take their places equally if not better than they would have done if they had not gone to the Front. If this is done, the soldiers will not demand this empty honour of a vote for the Upper House. Every soldier who comes back and desires it will get it. Every soldier who comes back and lives up to the principles of citizenship which we expect of him will, under the conditions existing to-day, automatically acquire the franchise for this Chamber. There are settlers whom we desire to see upon the roll of the Legislative Council, but there are black sheep in every flock, and I venture to say that no one will deny that there are many soldiers coming back who are not worthy of this honour. Yet this Bill proposes to give them a privilege and a right which the widow or mother or father of a soldier killed in action probably does not possess.

Hon. J. Cornell: They will if I can get through an amendment to that effect.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: We as a people entered the war in order to retain our rights and privileges. There was no idea of aggrandisement. We took up arms to preserve our civilisation and every soldier who fought, fought in the spirit of our forefathers. Men of our race have fought and died on a thousand battlefields, and lie in the arms of another earth in every corner of the globe, and the liberties and privileges we enjoy are preserved to us by the blood of those who have made the supreme sacrifice, sprinkled on the lintels and doorposts of our dwellings. Recognising this as the principle, we give honour to our soldiers for following in the spirit of

our ancestors, in that they fought and died for the retention of our liberties and privileges and not for the pultry reward of a vote for the Legislative Council. I say, all honour to the soldier. Give him what we have promised. Let him accept that which the Government are offering, or should be offering, the provisions which they are or should be providing, and let him automatically become an elector of the very best type. I do not desire to give him an empty honour. It is an empty honour to be made an elector for this Chamber unless he has the qualification. If the elector has nothing at stake to induce him to vote in the right and proper manner, he will become only a catspaw for the politicians who, as I said before, are grasping at straws on the political stream, and will not vote in accordance with his judgment.

Hon. J. W. Hickey: Speak for yourself.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: Clause 5 proposes an extension of the privilege for members to trade with Governments. If for nothing else than this, the Bill to my mind would stand condemned. If for no other reason than that this clause appears in the Bill, I should oppose the second reading. The grand principle underlying the Constitution of Great Britain, the greatest and most honoured Parliament in the world, is that freedom from corruption which exists in that place. We honour the Mother of Parliaments for the integrity of its members, and when times have arisen and those members have been swayed by personal influences against their better judgment and the interests of the State, the fortunes of Britain have gone down. But we have found that, when in difficulty, she has called upon the right type of man to lead her, and we have found these men of the most upright character and unimpeachable integrity taking the control of affairs. If a breath of suspicion ever touches a member of the British Parliament, it is sufficient for him to walk out. A few years ago, a member of the British Cabinet was supposed to hold shares in the Marconi company and, because there was a suspicion that he was interested in a company doing business with the British Government, he had to retire from the ranks of Cabinet. That is the spirit I should like to see in Australia. That is the spirit I should like to see in our public men—not men with hands spread to receive the benefits from the positions they occupy in Parliament. I should like members of the Ministry not to be influenced by the fact that they are interested in organisations outside Parliament. The more we open this breach, the more we shall be laying our parliamentary system open to corruption. We cannot be too careful to see that members of Parliament and Ministers of the Crown are prevented from being placed in a position such as this clause would enable them to be placed in. In the interests of good government and the advancement and improvement of the State, and in the inter-

ests of moral progress, such an opening should not be given, and for this reason I am convinced it is my duty to oppose the second reading of the Bill. Clause 6 provides that members accepting Ministerial rank shall not be required to group for re-election before accepting office. This is a question which has been fought and argued on many occasions. At the beginning of a Parliament, when members are fresh from their constituencies, it is possibly a hardship for a member, elevated to the Government, to have to go back within a few weeks or months and submit himself to his constituents. But let us take the experience of the present Parliament. We have had Government after Government. If there had been no provision for the endorsement of members by the people before they accepted Ministerial positions, we should have had a Ministry simply supported by a caucus in Parliament, and not in any shape or form reflecting the principles and ideas of the people outside. I believe it is right that this principle of members of Parliament going to their constituents to be re-elected before accepting office should be retained, and I oppose the measure also for that reason. Clause 7 deals with the powers of this Chamber in regard to financial measures. I am one of those who hold that the powers of this Chamber are much wider than some people admit. I have recently had reason to look into the question of our powers, and I am of opinion that we have powers far in excess of what this Bill provides for and, before we surrender them in this manner, we should be perfectly sure we are not retiring from a position which it is valuable for us to occupy. This Chamber stands for the thrift and industry of the people and, if we have a second voice in this matter, it is a good thing for the people we represent. We should have that second voice. We should have the right to say to a certain extent how the finances of this country shall be handled. We should have the power to amend or reject financial measures or portions of financial measures in the manner we have been accustomed to do in the past. The actions of the Council in this respect have been disputed, but I would rather retain what we have than voluntarily give up, as this clause suggests, the powers we believe we possess to-day. Lastly we have the question of the extension of the life of Parliament. Had that been brought in at the beginning of the session I should have argued against it on the ground that the Government instead of coming here had plenty of opportunity to go to the people and ask them for their opinion on this question. Because of the manner in which Governments in this State have changed during the last two years, I venture to say the people would not endorse this provision of the Bill. The time has arrived when the people should be asked to express an opinion on the Assembly of this Parliament. As this was not brought down early enough to give people an opportunity to consider it, the proper thing to do would be to dissolve Parliament next

year and so bring it into line with the financial year of the State. That is practically all I intend to say on the Bill. There are, as I said, some provisions which I might have felt inclined to support, but as I shall have no opportunity of doing so I intend to oppose the second reading. I should like to draw attention to the qualifications of the various second Chambers in Australia. In the official "Year Book," No. 11, page 929, are given the qualifications for the various second Chambers. The first is the Commonwealth Senate. That I need not go into, because it has adult suffrage. New South Wales has a nominee House, the members of which are appointed by the Governor. New South Wales is frequently held up to us as the most democratic of the States, and the Labour party pride themselves on many things which the New South Wales Government have done. Some members smile, but perhaps those members think one way and smile another. In Victoria the qualification is adult British subjects of either sex if (a) the owner of a freehold of the annual value of £10 or of a leasehold of property rated at £15, or (b) a graduate of a British University, matriculated student of Melbourne University, qualified legal and medical practitioners, ministers of religion, certificated school masters and naval and military officers. Naturalised subjects must be of three years standing and must have resided in the State for 12 months. That is a more liberal franchise than ours, yet in Victoria we have the peculiar fact that they have never had a Labour Government. In Queensland, a State which has been held up as the most progressive of all, there is a nominee House, the members being appointed for life by the Executive Council, just as in New South Wales. In South Australia the qualification is adult British subjects of either sex who are either (a) owners of a freehold of the clear value of £50, (b) owners of a leasehold of the clear annual value of £20 with at least three years to run or containing a right of purchase, (c) inhabitant occupiers of a dwelling-house, (d) registered proprietors of a Crown lease on which there are improvements to the value of at least £50. Claimants must have resided in the State for six months prior to application for enrolment. Western Australia we know all about. In Tasmania the qualification is adult British subjects of either sex who have resided in the State for 12 months if either (a) possessing freehold to the annual value of £10 or leasehold to the value of £30, or (b) graduates of a British university, qualified legal or medical practitioners, officiating ministers of religion or retired naval or military officers. So in every second Chamber in Australia except the Senate we have the property qualification for the election of its members. In the four States where an elective House exists we have the property qualification. I am not to be told that the whole of those States are wrong.

The Minister for Education: South Australia is practically what the Bill says.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: No, it has a property qualification. I do not know that any man

will claim that South Australia is the most progressive State. Certainly they know how to grow wheat, but the progressive legislation of Australia does not come from South Australia. The State mostly held up to us is Queensland, which has a nominee House, with permanent members appointed for life.

Hon. H. Millington: There is no property qualification there.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: They are appointed for life, and no Ministry have been in power long enough to fill that Chamber for the purpose of distorting legislation. We are doing something opposed to the good sense of Australia when we attempt to abolish the qualification which exists for this House. For those reasons I will oppose the second reading.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [S.22]: The Bill as it stands can be conveniently divided into four parts: 1, the alteration of the franchise; 2, giving the vote to the soldiers; 3, the alteration of the status quo, the working of the Standing Orders between both Houses; and 4, the extension of the life of Parliament. This Chamber need not discuss the question of women entering Parliament, because we showed the way to the other place in regard to the appointment of women as justices of the peace. As for the alteration of the relationship that exists between both Houses, I do not intend to debate that, inasmuch as I was a member of the select committee which met a select committee from another place and agreed unanimously on the provisions regarding money Bills which are set out in the Bill before us. I will support those proposals. The most important part of the Bill is the alteration of the existing franchise.

Hon. J. Ewing: It is the crux of the Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member who preceded me drew comparisons between the qualifications of the second Chambers in the various States. In my own research I have arrived at the conclusion that the bi-cameral system can only logically be maintained on the basis of age; that is to say, the age of an elector for this Chamber should be greater than the age of an elector for the Assembly. We have affirmed that principle in our Constitution, inasmuch as it is laid down that the age of a person eligible for election to this Chamber shall be nine years more than the age of a person eligible for election to the Assembly. The principle has much to recommend it. The older the elector, the more mature is he in his thoughts and views. Why should a man born in wealth or who has acquired wealth in a night, be given a privilege qualifying him to elect members to this Chamber? I say it is not right. Denmark, during the course of the war, amended her Constitution to provide that the age of an elector for the Legislative Council shall be 10 years greater than the age of an elector for the Assembly. I believe that as time goes on, if the bi-cameral system continues it will only be on that basis of age. However, we have to take things as they are. The position to-day is that we have certain

qualifications which have never been given an intelligent interpretation. It has led to endless confusion, dissatisfaction, and disappointment. I understand that although an attempt was made by the Government in another place to give a clear interpretation of the existing qualification, another place resolved that it would be infinitely better to place the basis of an elector on the qualification of household. It would be more satisfactory and in its general application would not add many electors to the roll. It is a qualification which has this to its credit, irrespective of the tirade delivered by Mr. Holmes: It has so far as the vote in another place would lead us to believe, the fullest approbation of all parties in that place. That being so, our position is such that we must not approach the matter from our own selfish point of view. I intend, if we get into Committee, to support the household qualification. I am guided in this not by property as to who should vote for this place, but by the manhood and womanhood of the State, and by what we hope are the brains of this place. The hut or the cabin of the working miner, the timber hewer, or any other worker of the State is, after all, as much endeared to his heart as is the mansion of the millionaire. If the property qualification is going to remain as the basis of the franchise for this House, let us approach the matter from the true aspect of property qualification, and say that the man or woman who is the occupier of a dwelling-house and maintains that it is a dwelling-house, shall have extended to him or her the property qualification. The issue may be clouded, but I say that the occupants of these humble dwellings are as useful to this country as is the millionaire. After all, we are accepting the property qualification. Why should we place a premium on property? Does the person who dwells in a humble cabin or shack dwell there because he likes to? He dwells there because he is obliged to, and cannot erect a larger home, or he would do so. The aim of the public men of the State should be not that the shacks and cabins in which some of our best citizens have to reside to-day shall remain as they are, but that they should so stimulate the industries of the State that it will be possible for the occupants of these dwellings to rise to a higher plane in the habitable world. At no time during my life as a public man have I believed that the more property a man has the more qualified is he to vote to elect members to this House than the man who possesses no qualifications. Mr. Allen referred to the various franchises which exist so far as the Legislative Council is concerned. In our Commonwealth Constitution we have a free and grand franchise such as no other country on earth has, and which many other countries in the world would like to have. This Constitution sets out that the qualifications for electors for either House shall be equal.

Hon. J. Ewing: How does it work out?

Hon. J. CORNELL: So important is this Constitution that it is worth a few moments

being spent in retrospection. Who framed this grand Constitution of ours? It was framed by statesmen, and as the world goes on they will be recognised for that alone. Were the framers of our Federal Constitution confined to the manhood suffrage of the various States? No. They were representative not only of the popular Chambers, but of the property Chambers as well.

Hon. H. CARSON: What is the Senate for?

Hon. J. CORNELL: They were representative of both Chambers and of all Parliaments of Australia. Be it to their everlasting credit that they placed no bar from the property aspect upon any person to elect a representative for the Commonwealth Parliament. In the light of events we can cast aside any reference to our State Constitutions, which were given us many years before our Commonwealth Constitution by the British Parliament. The British Parliament left it to the various States in their wisdom to amend them. The Commonwealth Convention came along and in its matured judgment and great wisdom decided to make a new departure from the Constitution of the various States and to give the adult franchise for the Commonwealth. Mr. Carson asks, what about our Senate? This is equally representative of all the States. It can truthfully be said that the Senate is not a democratic Chamber inasmuch as the more populated States have a greater representation than the less populated States. We have to approach the Constitution of our Commonwealth as it affects the community from the point of view of the franchise upon which the elector elects his representative for the Senate, as that is on the same basis as the House of Representatives, namely, the adult suffrage. I wish now to deal with the proposal to give the vote to soldiers. It has been said that because a man enlisted and went overseas and fought, he is to have a vote for that reason alone. We must remember that there is another side to the question. If it is logical to give a vote to that man it is just as logical to take the vote away from the man who would not go. If I attempted to bring that principle into operation I would be disturbing the property qualification. Any man not in possession of the qualifications set out in our Constitution who did go as a soldier would not be affected. But the man who possessed the qualifications and did not go would be affected. I do not intend to go as far as that. The soldiers' conference resolved that the franchise for this Chamber should be granted to persons eligible to become members of the association. Mr. Panton will bear me out when I say that the question was approached from the point of view of how it would affect persons who were eligible to belong to the Returned Soldiers' Association, and they spoke for their members and for no one else. I am not going to construe their resolutions by suggesting that they declared that they alone, because they have been soldiers, should get the vote, and that those without the necessary qualifications should

not get it. No such thing was intended. They spoke within their organisation, and for the members of that organisation. I am not opposed to the clause. We find, however, in the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Bill a clause which leads me to conclude that if the clause in this Bill is accepted as it stands any man who enlisted in the A.I.F., irrespective of whether he went beyond the confines of the Commonwealth or not, will be entitled to vote. That was not intended. There is no need for a section such as this in the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act. This sets out—

“Discharged soldier” means—(a) any person who being or having been a resident in the Commonwealth or the Dominion of New Zealand was appointed as an officer or enlisted as a member of the naval or military forces of the Commonwealth, or was appointed as an officer or enlisted in the United Kingdom, or in any of His Majesty's Dominions for service in His Majesty's naval or military forces, and has served in such forces in the present war outside the Commonwealth.

Paragraph (b) says—

(b) any person who being or having been resident in the Commonwealth was appointed as an officer or enlisted in the naval or military forces of the Commonwealth for active service abroad in the present war, but whose service was confined to the Commonwealth, and who, in the opinion of the board, was unable, through circumstances not within his own control, to serve abroad as aforesaid.

That is the only measure that has been passed by this Parliament which definitely deals with the soldier. There we have a distinction between the man who served outside the Commonwealth and the man who did not.

Hon. J. EWING: There is not much distinction there.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There is a large distinction. The soldier who served outside the Commonwealth can go to the soldier-settlement board, produce his discharge, and there is no question about him. The man who enlisted and, through circumstances over which he had no control, could not serve beyond the confines of the Commonwealth, must have the approval of the board. The board has to agree on a different basis so far as he is concerned, and on a different line of reasoning from the man who did go outside the confines of the Commonwealth. This clause makes no distinction. It says “served in the present war,” but in dealing with the discharged soldier it says, “served in such forces in the present war outside the Commonwealth.” I have no objection to the Government placing a man, who enlisted and went to Blackboy or any other camp in Western Australia and was discharged for medical reasons, in the same category as the man who went outside the confines of Western Australia. I want the leader of the House to clear up that point. Let us know when we are voting for the clause whether we are

voting for the man who went beyond the Commonwealth, or whether we are voting for the man who enlisted for service in the A.I.F., but did not go beyond the Commonwealth. Why the distinction between two classes of soldiers? A discharged soldier under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act will, I presume, be a discharged soldier under this measure. If the Bill is intended to affirm the principle that a man who enlisted in the A.I.F. should have a vote for the Legislative Council, I shall endeavour to have that principle extended in Committee. Individually I do not think we shall please the discharged soldier by passing an Act of Parliament which says, "Because you fought for this country or offered to fight for it you shall have the franchise for the Legislative Council; but your father shall not." During the Committee stage I shall move that the franchise be extended to either of the surviving parents or to the widow of a deceased soldier. If a living soldier who has come through is entitled to the vote, then a soldier's widow is doubly entitled to it. Next on the question of the extension of the life of another place. I know of no Constitution governing popular Chambers which contains a similar provision. During the war it has occurred that Parliaments have resolved to prolong their lives owing to the exigencies of the war; but I can find no case where prolongation is definitely laid down in the Constitution.

The Minister for Education: That provision is taken from the South Australian Act.

Hon. J. CORNELL: One of the reasons given is that as things are now, or as they may be later on, the period at which a general election occurs is not satisfactory to the great mass of the electors. But the clause has been made, as it were, a drag-net one. We have the Prime Minister urging that December is a better month for going to the country than May, and a Premier arguing that May is a better time for a general election than November. It makes one wonder whether the clause does not ask for grace over a period which is most opportune for a general election. However, I shall vote for Clause 8 in Committee, because it is a matter which closely concerns another place and hardly concerns this Chamber at all. If the electors for another place are of opinion that the Government did wrong in causing such a provision to be enacted, I for one will be content to leave them to the electors. The last point I desire to deal with is the proposal to abolish the necessity for a newly appointed Minister going to his constituents. I will vote for the clause in question. The system of re-election is entirely antiquated. Even the British Parliament has done away with it. The broad view which characterised the Australian Federal convention definitely rejected the system of re-election, which has never formed part of the Federal Constitution. It could be a matter of serious importance only when the numbers in another place are almost equally balanced. I know of no reason why we should not make this new departure, which other coun-

tries less advanced than Western Australia have already made. With these remarks I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. H. Millington debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to certain amendments made by the Council, but had disagreed to one amendment and had agreed to another amendment subject to a modification, and giving reasons, now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. J. F. Allen in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

No. 8—Clause 40, paragraph (a), before the word "regulate," insert the words "prohibit or":

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Having looked carefully into the matter of this amendment, I ask the House not to insist upon it. It is really not a matter of great importance. Clause 40 of the Bill provides that the Governor-in-Council may by regulation do certain things, and one of those things is to "prohibit or regulate processions on roads." This Chamber inserted the words "prohibit or" before "regulate." I can hardly conceive of circumstances in which regulations would be drawn up to prohibit processions. A procession is prohibited unless it is carried out in accordance with the regulations drawn up.

Hon. J. Ewing: But have not people first to get authority to hold a procession?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The local authority can have their own regulation on such a point so long as it is not inconsistent with the principal measure. But I fail to see how regulations framed by the Governor-in-Council would be likely to prohibit a procession. They would simply lay down conditions under which processions are to be held. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted upon.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The fact remains that the Bill as originally introduced in another place, having been compiled I understand by the Attorney General, provided that the word "prohibit" shall appear in the paragraph as well as "regulate." If there is any doubt at all as to whether "regulate" includes "prohibit," now is the time to make the matter clear. Can any hon. member here or elsewhere conscientiously argue that we should pass an Act of Parliament which does not give power even to the Governor-in-Council to prohibit a procession if that is thought necessary? Common sense suggests that the word "prohibit" should be included; otherwise we shall have processions of all descriptions at all hours of the day and possibly at all hours of the night.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am at a loss to understand the reasoning of the leader in suggesting that there is not much need for the word "prohibit" and that practically it is of no use. The hon. member will find that the word "prohibit" is already there in paragraph (b) of Clause 40, while it appears again in paragraph (g) of the same clause. The object was to prohibit processions on roads, and if the leader of the House can convince members of this Committee that the word "regulate" will have the same force and effect as the word "prohibit," he will be doing something marvellous. But he certainly will not be able to convince a court of law. The word "regulate" implies that a thing is lawful and can be carried out. For the sake of the maintenance of law and order I affirm it is essential that the word "prohibit" should be retained. We do not want to have in our streets anything which will give rise to disturbances, and I venture to say that there is nothing more calculated to cause disturbances in any community than the freedom that would be given by such a power as this, if the word "prohibit" is not included. It is our duty to give the Minister the fullest power in regard to this particular matter, and it is an important matter, too. It is essential, in the interests of the community at large, that the Minister should have the power to prohibit processions when he considers it unwise and undesirable for them to be held.

Hon. J. EWING: If we do not insist upon this amendment a very serious position will occur. We will have the power to regulate traffic but we will have no power to prohibit processions, which might, if held, be a menace to the people. A procession can take place so long as it is orderly and properly regulated, but if it is intended to hold a procession that is not likely to prove desirable, there will be no authority to prohibit it unless we pass the amendment.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I maintain that sufficient power is given in the paragraph which provides for the regulation of traffic. I am one of those who believe in upholding what is generally known as law and order. We generally find that in a British community, people are prepared to abide by any agreement they enter into. Why then suppose that someone is going to act in a manner which is going to be detrimental to the interests of the community? All that is required in such cases is that the authorities shall have the power to do certain things. We agree that it is necessary that the local authorities shall have power to regulate processions on roads. Why put in powers that are not necessary? In the case quoted by Mr. Nicholson, instead of the local authority stepping in to prevent something of danger to the community, the good sense of the people asserted itself. I have confidence in the good sense of the community. If citizens are put upon their honour to observe law and order, that is more effective

than compulsion. The amendment is not worth arguing about.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If we were seeking to impose something that did not at present exist, there would be some force in Mr. Millington's argument. The power exists to prevent processions. We have not had any trouble consequent upon the existence of power to regulate processions. If the 12th July people wished to hold processions on the 17th March, there might be bloodshed if the Minister had not the power to prohibit the former from holding a procession on that day. I understand the leader of the Opposition in another place thought it wise to include the word "prohibit" in order that law and order might be observed.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: On the only occasions the local authority tried to prohibit the holding of processions in Perth, they failed and only because they asked impossible conditions. I see no reason for including the word "prohibit." Under the Criminal Code, the Minister has sufficient power to prohibit any unlawful assemblage.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is a different thing.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: If a section of the community wanted to hold a procession which would be likely to disturb the peace, application would be made to the Minister, but I fail to see how he could decide whether a procession was likely to have that effect. Let us either prohibit processions altogether or proceed against those responsible if disturbances occur. This is only a move to uphold the dignity of the Perth City Council.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I support the leader of the House. I stand for the right to demonstrate provided the law is complied with. The Minister will set out reasonable and sane conditions under which processions shall be conducted, and one thing I trust he will insist upon is that only proper flags shall be carried at the head of the processions. While there is power to prohibit processions now, the amendment will mean that the power will be placed in the hands of one man.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: When the Bill was before us we made certain amendments and sent them to another place. We are not here to represent any particular section of the community; we represent the whole. The difference between the regulation regarding processions and the conditions which previously prevailed is that formerly the demonstrations were controlled by the local authority, whereas in future they are to be controlled by a Minister of the Crown. We thought it wise to insert the word "prohibit," but another place considered it would not be in the best interests of the whole of the community, and I think we should respect the recommendation of another place in this regard. The Minister will have power to control all processions, and I have every confidence in the Minister. So long as the procession is regulated by the Minister it should be sufficient safeguard without the power to prohibit.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: One member has expressed indignation that I should ask the Committee to alter its previous decision. We have sent some ten amendments on this Bill to the Assembly. That House has altered, its previous decision in regard to eight of them, and partly in regard to the ninth, and only on this one does it stick to its previous decision. If both Chambers were to take up the attitude that they would not alter previous decisions, where should we get to? I ask whether the difference between us is sufficiently important to continue fighting for it? Under those Acts specially framed for the purpose of maintaining law and order we have ample power to prevent disorderly gatherings of any kind. We cannot regulate traffic if it is specially dangerous; we must prohibit it. But a procession is a very different proposition. What is contemplated here is, not that somebody is going to send in an application to the Minister to be allowed to have a procession and that the Minister will simply ask, "What are you going to do?" and then make his regulations accordingly. That is not the case. The Minister will frame permanent regulations. And, in framing permanent regulations, of what use will be the word "prohibit"? The Minister will set out all the conditions under which a procession can be held, and under any other conditions all processions will be automatically prohibited. So it does not matter much whether or not the word "prohibit" is included.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Minister has said that we made about ten amendments and sent them to another place. He forgot to remind us that the greater number of those amendments were merely consequential. Another place is insisting upon this amendment, although I do not think it even had a division on it. There may come a time when a certain procession should be prohibited. The day will assuredly come when law and order can no longer be flouted, when someone will have to stand up for what is right and, if necessary, use force of arms to preserve it. If there is nothing in the word "prohibit," why all this trouble? The Attorney General, when introducing the Bill, knew that the word "prohibit" should go into it. We might have a German procession in the street one of these days, with no power to prohibit it. The Minister will have power to make by-laws to regulate processions, but will not have power to prohibit them. What is the use of the Minister regulating traffic without having power to prohibit it and to regulate one procession to the right side of the street and the other to the other side of the street? Someone has to stand up for what is right. Until we have a Government who will say "This is right and we will insist upon it," we will never get back to normal. Otherwise the rabble will take charge, and the more power they are given the more trouble will they bring upon the country.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The question to be decided is a very simple one. The whole thing lies in the question of what is meant by the words "prohibit" and "regulate,"

and whether the one has the same force and effect as the other. There is not one hon. member who, if he views the matter fairly, but must admit that if a Minister in charge who has power to exercise and enforce these regulations only has power to regulate he will not have power to prohibit a procession, which for the benefit of law and order it is essential he should have power to deal with. If it is recognised that there is someone who is capable of exercising a wise discretion in this matter there should be no hesitation on the part of hon. members to oppose the proposal to accept the amendment which has been made.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: I realise that the word "control" would not meet the case which is in the minds of certain hon. members with regard to processions. It would be unwise for the law to provide that a municipal council should have this power. If I were a member of the municipal council I would resent having to prevent that which is in the minds of hon. members. It is more the function of the Government or the police. Every member of the public should have a right to travel along the streets without let or hindrance unless he interferes with some other member of the public.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: It is possible that the occasion may arise when the Minister may be a man who is opposed to a particular section of the community, and he might have certain religious convictions which would have great weight with him in dealing with such a matter.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: He would not remain there long; we have passed that stage.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: We have not passed that stage. If this power were granted it is possible that such a man would prohibit a certain procession and precipitate the gravest trouble. I ask hon. members to think before they vote against the amendment and allow this to go in.

Hon. J. EWING: I cannot conceive it possible that such a man could exist as instanced by the hon. member. It is ridiculous to think that a Minister of the Crown would allow his religious view to interfere with the good government of the country.

Hon. J. Nicholson: He would not hold his position for long.

Hon. J. EWING: If a man did such a thing he would not last two minutes in any Government. The leader of the House said that an hon. member expressed indignation that he should ask hon. members to refuse to agree to this amendment. I did not express indignation, but I expressed regret that the leader of the House should be called upon to adopt the views he did. I am satisfied he does not believe in what he is asking us to do. He is a member of a Government and is carrying out the wishes of the Government he represents. He cannot do otherwise. The Government have accepted this amendment and are prepared to abide by it, and as their spokesman in this House the Minister must express their views. I, therefore, regret he is placed in such a position. The day may come when the Government will be thankful

that we have put such a provision in the Bill. Mr. Millington's speech was simply so much birdlime. He says that the people of this country are such law-abiding citizens that nothing can happen. There are people who have not high principles, and who are forever preaching the gospel of discontent. We have people in our midst trying to lead the good and useful citizens into the wrong path. No Minister would exercise this power otherwise than in the interests of the State. He would never refuse to allow a procession to take place in normal circumstances. If a time of stress and danger occurred in this country surely the Minister would desire to have authority to prevent something which might prove disastrous to the people. It is necessary in the interests of good government, that this power should be given.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I believe that the right of prohibition is one which should be really exercised. The circumstances under which that right should be exercised should be only those in which violence or similar disorder is feared. To be able to prevent an occurrence of such a nature is a right which the Government should have and which this House should insist upon. I intend to disagree with the recommendation of the leader of the House and to support the provision made by this Chamber.

Question put and negatived; the Council's amendment insisted upon.

No. 10. Clause 40.—Council's amendment—Add a new paragraph, to stand as (xiv.), as follows:—Regulate the use and driving of camels, and for that purpose may—(a) limit the number of camels to be driven by one driver; (b) require the annual registration of camels and the payment of an annual registration for pack camels: Assembly's modification—Substitute for subparagraph (b) of the proposed paragraph:—(b) Require the annual registration of all camels and the payment of an annual registration fee of five shillings per head for pack camels used for the carriage of goods: Provided that camels used for prospecting shall be exempt.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I see no objection to the proviso that camels used for prospecting purposes should be exempt, but I am doubtful whether the registration fee of 5s. per head is adequate. The reason for the amendment was that certain local authorities in the north derived considerable revenue from pack camels owned by Afghans, who should pay something reasonable. Apart from that I see no objection to the amendment. I move—

That the Assembly's modification be agreed to.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: This affects the northern portion of the State where there is a body of Afghans who are really pilgrims of the night. They have no habitation. They come in from the back country with their loads and take back stores. They pay no rent or taxes. Their camels live upon the

reserves or they trespass upon other people's property. The custom has been to charge an annual fee of 15s. per camel.

The Minister for Education: Little enough, too.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes, the Wyndham road board, for instance, gets a revenue of £300 per annum from 400 camels, and Wyndham has a tribe of Afghans who are a nuisance to the community. A license fee of 15s. is, in the circumstances, equitable, especially as camels used in wagons are to be exempt. I move an amendment—

That the Assembly's modification be amended by striking out "five" and inserting "fifteen" in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We are in rather an awkward position, and have been from the outset, in regard to this matter. It is very difficult for this House to insert a provision imposing taxation. For that reason we did not insert in our original amendment a fee, although it was necessary that a fee should be inserted in order that it could be collected. The Assembly have inserted a fee, but, unfortunately, rather a low one. If it were competent for us to increase that fee to 15s. I would heartily support such an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment moved by Mr. Holmes is not in order. Therefore I cannot accept it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Can we express a request in the matter?

The CHAIRMAN: We can make any request, but we cannot insert an amount.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: We were fortunate in getting a fee inserted by another place.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Would it be competent to insert such words as "such fee as may be prescribed and published in the 'Government Gazette' by the Minister"?

Hon. A. H. Panton: That would give the Minister unlimited power to impose a fee.

[Hon. W. Kingsmill took the Chair.]

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Five shillings seems to me a reasonable fee for pack camels, in view of the value they are to outback development, and in view of the fact that they do not now interfere with any other means of transport. Other camels eat just as much grass as pack camels, and yet the former are exempt from the fee.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The distinction is made because of the different purposes to which the two descriptions of camels are put. It might be competent for the Chamber to disagree with the modification. Then we should probably be asked to furnish reasons for disagreeing, and we could give as our reason that we considered the fee too low. Thereupon it would be competent for another place to consider the question of raising the fee.

Question put and negatived; the modification not agreed to.

Resolutions reported, and the report adopted.

Reasons for insisting upon the Council's amendment No. 8 and for disagreeing to the Assembly's modification of the Council's amendment No. 10 adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon C. F. Baxter—East) [10.20] in moving the second reading said: The Industries Assistance Act was passed in the year 1915 and it had for its object the rendering of assistance to settlers on the land, who principally through drought were faced with ruin. The assistance which was given by the Government to these settlers had a beneficial effect inasmuch as it kept on the land a lot of those people who would otherwise have been forced to go off it, a result which would have had the effect of throwing a lot of land on to the hands of the Government. The number of settlers who have received assistance is 1,742 and clearances have been granted to 476. The outstanding advances on the 31st March last amounted to £1,209,000 and the estimated advances this year will be £675,000, making a total of £1,884,000. Dividends have been collected amounting to £125,000, thus leaving a balance of £1,759,000. The estimate of the return from the harvest is a million and that will leave a balance outstanding on the 31st March next of £759,000. The present Bill is a short one of only six clauses. Clause 2 gives power to acquire machinery already on the property at the time the original Act was passed. This power is required for three purposes. Some 2½ years ago an agreement was arrived at with certain machinery merchants by which implements were supplied to assisted settlers on the hire purchase system, and if that balance of the money had not been fully met, it was arranged that the implements should be retained on the farm conditionally on certain payments being made by the Industries Board extending over four years, and also conditionally on the continuance of assistance being given to the settlers by the board. Some time ago advantageous offers were received by the Government from two local machinery merchants, one, the International Harvester Coy., and the other Harris, Scarfe & Co., to complete the purchase of machinery on the farms at a considerable discount. The figures which have been published show that the amount due by the different farmers to the International Harvester Coy. came to a total of £25,800 and the amount which that company agreed to accept in settlement was £18,700. I might say that the amount of £25,800 was covered by

tangible assets. As a matter of fact the International Harvester Coy. did very little business outside machinery, and the machinery supplied under the hire purchase system gave them protection over the assets. The position was quite different with the other firms. The amount owing to Harris, Scarfe & Co. by settlers was £18,581. That firm were prepared to accept £7,000. It might appear curious to hon. members seeing that one firm wanted such a large amount while the other were prepared to take a small amount. As a matter of fact, in connection with Harris, Scarfe & Co.'s amount, there was only a small proportion of it for machinery. The balance was made up of superphosphate and other goods in connection with which there were no assets in existence. Members will understand why the difference is so great.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: They had a very poor idea of the value of the cockies' assets.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In the case of the International Harvester Company, the machinery was on the ground and deposits had been paid upon it, but in the case of Harris, Scarfe & Co. the greater proportion of their debts represented manure and other things which had been used up. These two values were accepted by the board which enabled the machinery to be retained on the farm.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What asset did the Government get in regard to Harris, Scarfe's debts?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The board saw that there were good assets for the £7,000. That value at least would be represented by the machinery.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: Is there any schedule of the amounts?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I have not a schedule of the amounts. In the case of many abandoned farms, the machinery was partly paid for and the completion of the payments was desirable as the valuation of many of the machines showed a considerable margin of profit. Where a machine was considered to be a good proposition, the implement was passed on to another settler. It is not considered that further transactions under B are likely in the future, but further transactions under A and C will be continued, and it is very desirable from the board's point of view that necessary authority should be given to legally carry out this business. The Auditor General is pressing for the endorsement of this provision to enable him to pass the transactions. The two amounts paid by the Government will carry no advantage to the farmers, but there is an offer by George Wills & Co. amounting to £77,000, for which they are willing to accept £22,500 which will carry any benefits above that amount pro rata to those who contributed by making payments in liquidating the amount. Putting this transaction through will mean the saving of 3 per cent. interest. Whereas these people will be paid by bonds carrying 5 per cent. in-

terest, the interest paid by the farmer to the machinery merchants through the board is 8 per cent. One of the advantages of the I.A.B. was that the people who came under it were previously paying 10 per cent. Thus, when this payment is made, the farmers will be saved 3 per cent.

Hon. H. Stewart: What will the farmer pay to the board?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The interest on the bonds—5 per cent.

Hon. H. Stewart: Is that all?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, on this particular transaction. Clause 3 has been provided with the object of enabling the board if they so desire to purchase settlers' claims at a discount. It is proposed that the board shall take the place of the creditor and be recouped for any outlay by sharing the surplus proceeds pro rata with other creditors.

Hon. R. J. Lynn: It is really a validation clause.

The HONORARY MINISTER: This clause is submitted to get an expression of opinion from the House. It has been frequently stated, and the statement is borne out by fact, that many creditors have been badly treated owing to the passing of the Industries Assistance Act. The Bill will enable the board to negotiate for such debts and, if a satisfactory price is agreed upon, to buy them, but it is for the House to say whether further transactions of the kind shall be carried out. Clause 4 gives the board a lien over all free chattels, except personal chattels. On the face of it, this proposal would appear to be a hardship, but such is not actually the case. At the beginning of the war, we placed on the statute book the Postponement of Debts Act. This was purely a war measure, but it made special provision for the protection of assisted settlers' property against legal process by creditors. This Act will expire in December next and the Government do not intend to ask Parliament to renew it. Consequently it is necessary to make provision to protect assisted settlers' free chattels under this clause. The amendment will not benefit one section only. It will benefit the settler by securing him against legal process, because it is apparent that if those chattels are free in December, creditors will press and will sacrifice the chattels and put the settlers in a very awkward position. Some of them would probably be ruined, though they are now on the road to making good. The provision will also protect the board by securing the free chattels as a fixed asset on the property, and will obviate the need for replacing them. The creditor will be protected against the sale—

Hon. R. J. Lynn: It is really an extension of the moratorium to settlers.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It will protect the three parties. The creditors will be protected. When a man abandons a farm, he will not be in a position to dispose of the chattels, but the distribu-

tion will be carried out pro rata by the board after the abandonment. Therefore the creditors will be protected and will benefit. Provision is made whereby personal chattels are not brought under this clause.

Hon. J. A. Greig: What do you mean by personal chattels?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Household effects. I have an amendment on the Notice Paper to rectify a matter which escaped attention in another place. The amendment provides that the board in its discretion may allow the whole or any portion of the proceeds of the sale of pigs and poultry to be retained by the settler. This power is very necessary, because there are a lot of settlers—

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is not in order in proceeding to discuss the amendment at this stage. As an amendment, he can say it is desirable.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is desirable to introduce the amendment so that no bar will be placed in the way of settlers who are making good, and who under the restriction might suffer hardship. Clause 5 provides for the extension of the present clause by adding the words "or of any subsequent crop." The need for this is purely one of administration, brought about by the delay in payments of dividends from the wheat pool until after the closing of the board's financial year. Clause 6 provides for the continuation of the operations of the board for another year, and enables the board to make advances up to March, 1921. A similar clause was adopted last year. We want an extension to March, 1921, in order to be able to finalise the year's operations. If any other portion of the year were stipulated it would put the Government in an awkward position, because they could not finalise until the crop had been realised. If further information is desired I shall give it in Committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. R. J. Lynn, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.