

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 12th December, 1918.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

[For "Questions on Notice" see "Minutes of Proceedings."]

SITTING DAYS, ADDITIONAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.2]: I move—

That for the remainder of the Session the Council do meet for the despatch of business at three p.m. on Fridays and Mondays, in addition to the days already ordered.

Hon. H. Stewart: Is it the intention that the House shall meet on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 3 p.m.?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If the motion is carried the hour will be fixed for 3 p.m. for Monday, Thursday, and Friday. If on next Monday it is considered desirable to meet at 3 o'clock on Tuesday and Wednesday, I take it it would be sufficient on Monday to move that the House at its rising adjourn until 3 p.m. on the following day.

Question put and passed.

STANDING ORDER SUSPENSION.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.3]: I move—

That for the remainder of the session Standing Order No. 62 be suspended.

This is the Standing Order which prohibits the taking of fresh business after 10 p.m.

Question put and passed.

BILL—CHURCH OF ENGLAND DIOCESAN TRUSTEES AND LANDS.

Read a third time and *passed*.

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BILL—POSTPONEMENT OF DEBTS CONTINUATION.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.6] in moving the second reading said: This is one of the war emergency Acts, which I think has worked satisfactorily. There have been no complaints regarding it. Its administration has been careful and sympathetic. Many cases have arisen in which the existence of this Act has brought about good results, and I think it is desirable that it should continue in force at all events until after peace is declared. Unless this Bill is carried the Act would cease to have effect at the end of the year. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Continuation of Acts:

Hon. H. CARSON: I hope the Committee will be given an assurance that the question of the Statute of limitations will be entirely fixed up by the next session of Parliament.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The matter has been carefully considered by the Crown Law authorities, and it is considered that an Act of Parliament will be necessary. There is no occasion for it now, and next session will be ample time to introduce it. Everything is in readiness for this.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—ROADS ACT CONTINUATION.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.10] in moving the second reading said: This Act has been continued in operation from year to year for some time past, always with the intention that a consolidating measure would be introduced. That consolidating measure has been prepared, and it was intended to submit it to Parliament this year. It is a tremendously voluminous Bill, and after consideration it was found that it would be impossible to get it through during the present session. It is, however, intended to introduce it early next session. In the meantime, it is necessary to continue the existing legislation. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.11]: The statement made by the Colonial Secretary is perhaps inevitable, but will be most unsatisfactory to the road boards interested. Without trying to ask the impossible of the Colonial Secretary, may I be allowed to suggest that the Bill, which is long overdue, might be introduced at a very early stage next session, and referred to a select committee. As far as I am concerned I would be prepared to take the opinion of three members of this Chamber, and if they gave me an assurance that they had gone carefully through the whole Bill, and that there were half a dozen points they wished to discuss, I believe we could put the Bill through in a short time. Simultaneously, it might be possible to adopt that procedure elsewhere. It is intolerable that these road boards should have to go on in this way. Ministers make these statements in good faith—I do not suggest anything else—and we accept them in good faith. The fact remains that this Bill, of first-class importance to the local governing bodies of this country, is hung up year after year. Unless some strong protest is made, and unless Ministers give the matter their most careful consideration I feel satisfied that by this time next year

we shall be in exactly the same position we are in now. Without impugning the good faith of Ministers in their statements, I do ask them to take into their most careful consideration the suggestion that I now make.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Continuation of Act:

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I thought I should have had an answer from the leader of the House.

The Colonial Secretary: I thought I made the matter clear in my second reading speech.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We simply had the customary assurance. If we amend this clause to make it read either the 30th June or the 31st July, and then let the Government bring in a Bill every month, say after the 31st July, until we have this measure dealt with, I think it would be received with much appreciation and thankfulness by the road boards of this country. These boards are doing admirable work and are being hampered by the postponement which has taken place, I think, five times in the introduction of this consolidating Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I hope the hon. member will accept the assurance that I gave in moving the second reading. I am quite in accord with everything he has said in regard to the delay, which has been extraordinary. At the same time, circumstances have been extraordinary. The Bill has been prepared, and the Minister for Works has given a definite assurance in another place that it will be introduced at the beginning of next session. It is his intention, because of the size of the Bill, that it shall be referred to a select committee, for it would be impracticable for the House as a whole to deal clause by clause with a Bill of such magnitude.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Of course I accept that assurance, but in view of that assurance what objection could there be, in order to compel this matter to come before us, to altering the date to, say, the 30th August? This would be no reflection on the bona fides of Ministers or their honourable intentions, but it would compel the Government to bring this matter up in the early part of next session. To make the date the 30th September would not be any reflection on the bona fides of Ministers, but would compel them and Parliament to review the situation. I move an amendment—

That, in line 4, the words "31st day of December" be struck out, and "30th day of September" inserted in lieu.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: I have pleasure in supporting the amendment, which enables us to enter an emphatic protest against the treatment we have received in the way of business being rushed through the last hours of the session.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to, because even assuming that the consolidating Bill is intro-

duced, as it will be, at the beginning of next session, I doubt very much the possibility of passing it through both Houses by the time stated. It will simply mean that another continuation Bill will be necessary, putting Parliament to needless trouble.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: I understand a consolidating Bill is already prepared, and I suggest that in the interval between this session and the next that measure might be submitted to the road boards for their consideration.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I fear the procedure suggested by Mr. Allen would be regarded as rather irregular. Parliament might hold that such a course represented an invasion of its privileges. Members of Parliament, I believe, consider themselves entitled to the first view of a Bill.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: I have sat on two municipal conferences years ago, and one of the principal matters considered was a Municipalities Bill. The same course was adopted in the case of the Health Bill, which was submitted to the health boards of the State.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

BILL—SALE OF LIQUOR REGULATION ACT CONTINUATION.

Second Reading

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.21]: This is a Bill to continue an Act which was passed in the early days of the war, its purpose being to give the Government power to close licensed houses in any part of the State at any time of disorder or turmoil. It has not been found necessary to apply provisions of this nature, for the reason that the Federal Government, acting under a similar measure, have closed hotels whenever they thought it was necessary. I think it highly desirable, however, that our Act should remain on the statute-book, for the present at all events. My own impression is that this Act should be embodied in our licensing law, thus forming a permanent piece of our legislation. The Government should at all times have power to close hotels during periods of disorder and disturbance. I do not think any Government would be likely to abuse the power. An instance occurred only recently, when on the occasion of the signing of the Peace Armistice by Austria we had trouble in one of our districts. The populace ceased work and started to celebrate. What then occurred was that the hotel keepers, of their own volition, closed their hotels, and kept them closed for about a day and a half, when the whole trouble was over. But they knew very well that this Act would be put in force if they did not do so. Although I do not doubt for a moment that most of the hotelkeepers, if not all of them, were quite willing to close, still, had there been one amongst the whole number who was unwilling to do the right thing, the fact that this Act was in force would have compelled him to fall in with the

wishes of the majority. Therefore, I think it would be a great mistake to allow the Act to lapse, and it is well worth consideration whether the Act should not form a permanent provision of our legislation. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.26]: This Bill is intended to continue what is known as the nine to nine provision in regard to the trading hours of hotels. I think it is generally admitted that the measure has operated to the advantage of the community generally; and the necessity for restriction in the hours of hotel trading will be just as great during the next few months as it has been during the past two or three years. So far as I am aware, no argument has been advanced against the continuance of this measure; and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

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

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [3.28] The object of this Bill is merely to continue the existing Industries Assistance Act. Under the Act as it stands, the operation of the measure would cease on the 30th March, 1919. The object of the present Bill is to continue the operation until the 30th March, 1920. No alteration or amendment, apart from that, is made in the Act as it now stands. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.29]: I really am driven to the conclusion that there is a good deal in the argument that this House fulfils no useful public purpose. Here is this particular measure, the Industries Assistance Act, the importance of which need not be emphasised in this Chamber. One of the most valuable reports that I have seen on Western Australian public affairs was laid on the Table of this House the other day, I believe. It must have been comparatively recently, because I always turn over the papers on the Table; and it was only the other day that I came across this one. If there is one paper that should have been printed and distributed amongst members, so

that they might have an opportunity of carefully analysing it and going through the figures, it is this report. It was even with some hesitation that I removed it from the Table to this bench. I would like to get hold of a copy of such a report at least one month before the matter comes up for public discussion in order to be able to grasp the details of the work of the department. I want to know why the Government do not take an intelligent part in the conduct of the affairs of this country, instead of adopting the procedure of rushing legislation through here in the last week, and refusing to give us these papers. I cannot go through them and mark them, or cut out the portions that are of special interest, and unless I am able to do that, how can I be expected to do the work I am sent here to discharge. The financial position is paramount; we have our responsibilities, but we have no opportunity of either understanding these questions, or when we do understand them we have no opportunity of bringing them forward and discussing them amongst ourselves. I make this reference as emphasising the position I take up. I have already announced that I intend to devote as much time as I can spare to what I call the State trading concerns, and if there is one that wants understanding more than any other it is the Industries Assistance Board. The Minister stated that he was affronted by the comments I made, because I said I did not put any reliance on the figures supplied to us until we had an opportunity of making our own inquiries. What do I find now? That in the particular balance sheet of the State Sawmills—I only give this as an illustration—there is a discrepancy of £30,000 in the figures. We know, of course, that Ministers have not got to that depth of degradation that they deliberately put figures in these reports with the intention of misleading us. I do not suggest that for a moment.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It may be a clerical error.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is a question of the different way of looking at these things. All business men and all accountants are wrestling every day of their lives with similar things. Our State trading concerns are in a deplorable position from a financial point of view, and it is essential, if we are to have a legitimate discussion on the position of affairs, that we should have all the papers put before us. We are asked not to delay business but to put it through, and that everything will be all right next year. If I had the time to go through these things, and work out the figures, I feel satisfied I would be able to assist hon. members and they, too, would be in a similar position, to put before the country the exact position of affairs. The one grave objection to this method of doing business is that we waste so much time, instead of letting me have this report which I have now, three months ago, thus enabling me to do all my work outside this Chamber, and then submit to hon. members the result of that labour, I am compelled to rush through it or leave it alone, in which case, of course, I

am neglecting my business. We have before us six Bills of prime importance, principally affecting the financial position of the country. What are we supposed to be doing? Are we supposed to be attending to the business of the country? I might be permitted to quote one set of figures from the report of the Industries Assistance Board. The report shows the financial statement regarding assisted settlers to the 31st March, 1918. The position is divided into good accounts, fair accounts, doubtful accounts, and bad accounts. The figures run into something over a million and a quarter under the heading of advances, but I will not detain the House by alluding to them in detail. There are certainly over a couple of thousand selectors and we are asked now to put through this legislation, which will enable the Government and the board to go on for another 12 months. Is that a satisfactory state of affairs?

Hon. H. Millington: What does the analysis show?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have read it through and the report which Mr. Richardson submits may be said to be a report within a report. Reading it the first time it struck me as one of the most illuminating and helpful criticisms with regard to the land settlement question. It is intimately connected with the soldiers, and in fact is one of the best reports I have seen in this State. It is written by a man who must be admitted to be one of the most level-headed and experienced people in this country connected with the settlement of the land. I suppose this particular Bill must be allowed to go through. I only rose to make this protest. Looking at the wider question, we are certainly putting a weapon in the hands of the opponents of this House outside with which to belabour us, and that will surely happen if we continue to conduct the business in the manner we are doing.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Kirwan, debate adjourned.

BILL—FORESTS.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 5th December; Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Postponed Clause 24—Hewing of railway sleepers within State forests prohibited:

The CHAIRMAN: An amendment had been moved by Mr. Millington that in paragraph (a) all the words after "after" in the first line be struck out and "such area has been cut over for saw milling purposes, or" be inserted in lieu.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: When this amendment was previously under discussion the leader of the House took exception to it on the score that it did not clearly define the position. I recognise that. But I also say that the interpretation of the clause as it stands depends upon other provisions of the Bill and upon the regulations. I moved the amendment because I considered that, as at present drafted, the clause does not even

give opportunity for making provision for those whom I desire to see considered. The view taken by the timber hewers is that their interests are not protected by the clause. If the timber hewer is to be allowed to ply his calling, we must have a guarantee that he will be so allowed. With all due regard to the importance of the industry, we have to consider men as well as trees. There are in the timber districts many men who, in their spare time, hew sleepers in order to eke out a livelihood. I think those men, as well as the returned soldiers, are entitled to consideration. It would be a calamity if the timber hewer were to be suddenly banished from the forests. If the timber hewer is to go, I should like him to be permitted to go gradually, and so avoid dislocation. Although the amendment does not set out everything clearly, yet it is capable of being administered sympathetically, in which case it will allow of the timber hewer being displaced gradually instead of abruptly. On a strict interpretation the clause as it stands means that if in an area of, say, 1,000 acres there were one tree suitable for sawmilling, the Conservator would be justified in refusing to allow a hewer on that area. I cannot offer any better solution of the present difficulty than that presented in my amendment. All I wish to provide for is that the hewer shall have the right to go into a bush after it has been cut over for sawmilling purposes. Whatever may be said of the intention of my amendment, no one can contend that the clause makes the provision which many of us feel to be necessary. Although on two or three occasions I have said here that it is the policy of the Conservator to cut out the timber hewer as far as possible, that statement has not been contradicted. The Colonial Secretary, instead of denying it, sought to justify the position by reading a report setting out the waste involved by the work of the sleeper hewers, and making it as high as 75 per cent., which is emphatically contradicted by recognised authorities on the subject. Clearly, therefore, the policy of the Government is to cut out the timber hewer, and personally I wish to avoid the proposed sudden transition. If the Government cannot make some suggestion which will get over the difficulty, I hope the amendment will be carried. Throughout the discussion no sympathy has been shown by the Minister for the sleeper hewer, and no attempt made to get over the difficulty I have alluded to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I adjourned the discussion on this clause in order that during the week-end consideration might be given to the matter; because I took the same view as most hon. members, namely that if we are going to put in the Bill a provision, whether expressly or impliedly, giving a privilege to returned soldiers, it should be clear and definite. I do not think Mr. Millington's amendment would make the position very much clearer than it is at present. But I understand that Mr. Cornell has an amendment. If that amendment is

of the kind I am led to believe it is, I shall be glad to accept it, in order that the position of the returned soldier may thereby be made perfectly clear.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: In regard to paragraph (a), I am sure that if a sawmill cannot get a sleeper out of a log the hewers cannot. The sawmill can deal with a tree the grain of which is twisted, whereas the hewer can split only straight trees. This provision, I think, is giving but very little to the timber hewer. In regard to a locality from which, in the opinion of the Conservator, it is impossible to draw timber for sawmilling purposes, I may say I have seen places from which it seems utterly impossible to draw any timber for the mill, notwithstanding which the mill has succeeded, with the aid of steam, in getting out all the timber it wanted. Paragraph (a) is virtually no concession at all, because it is impossible to split a straight sleeper out of curly grain, whereas the sawmill can take any sort of grain. If this is a concession to the timber hewer, it is a very small one.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Unless the Committee agree upon some definite protection to the hewer, and something which would be acceptable not only to those interested in hewing but in the preservation of our forests it would still be a matter of difficulty to pass this clause and reach finality with the Bill. The question might be referred to a select committee. I think this would get over the difficulty.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I support Mr. Millington's amendment. I am not tied to the returned soldier as a hewer in this connection. There are other men who have been hewing in our forests for a number of years for the purpose of enabling them to carry on the holdings which they have on adjacent country. These people are also deserving of consideration. If we tie ourselves down to the returned soldier as a hewer, what compensation are we to give to those settlers I have mentioned? During the past year or two the Victorian Government have called upon hewers from this State to take up work in their forests, and numbers of hewers have left this State as a consequence. There are other timbers which are not mentioned here in connection with hewing, such as bridge timbers, and beams and ties that are required for railway construction and other works. There is no specific provision in this Bill for the hewing of timber of this class and railway sleepers alone are specified.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I take it that Mr. Cornell's amendment would have precedence over that moved by Mr. Millington. Perhaps Mr. Millington would temporarily withdraw his amendment in order that the Committee might determine whether or not they would agree to Mr. Cornell's amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the House is Mr. Millington's amendment.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I am not prepared to withdraw my amendment. I do not entirely agree with Mr. Cornell's amend-

ment, and do not believe that the returned soldier who was a sleeper hewer would agree either. I do not think that the men who went away to fight wish to have legislation brought in which would exclude their fathers, brothers or friends from following their occupations as hewers. Whatever is done in this respect ought to be done for the sleeper hewer generally, and not given to the returned soldier as a concession. It is about time we ceased talking about giving special concessions to returned soldiers, and saw that they got a fair deal and their citizen rights restored.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment before the Committee deals with the question of the locality in which hewing may be done, and not with the personality of the hewers.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: These are my reasons for not being prepared to withdraw my amendment.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I am opposed to the amendment. I am not prepared to concede anything further than is given in the clause. I am out to abolish sleeper hewing in the forests. I have seen so much waste that I think to give the returned soldier what is left after the mill has been through is not fair to him. There are, however, places in steep gulleys between hills in which probably a few returned soldiers might make something out of the industry. The only alteration I should like to see in the clause is the addition of such words as "and is a discharged soldier." Apart from that I am not prepared to give the sleeper hewer any rights in the forest at all. We should provide for our returned soldiers in some other way.

Hon. J. EWING: I am afraid the hon. member would be doing a great injury to the South-West if his proposal was carried into effect. I am in sympathy with Mr. Millington's suggestion. The question, however, is such an important one and the Government apparently do not intend to back down that I think it would be better to postpone the clause and refer it to a select committee, so that we might take their decision into consideration on Monday next. Such select committee might consist of the leader of the House, Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Millington, and Mr. Cornell, and I think these gentlemen would be able to bring something of a fair nature before the House.

The CHAIRMAN: The clause itself cannot be referred to a select committee, but it is competent to members to refer the Bill to such a committee.

Hon. J. EWING: Could I not have the Bill referred to a select committee for the purpose of considering this particular clause? This is a matter of paramount importance to men who have been earning their living in the South-West for many years past. As it is at present this will mean the dislocation of their employment, and I for one do not intend to see that carried out. If this clause were postponed the rest of the Bill might be gone on with.

The CHAIRMAN: It would be impossible to carry out the course suggested by the hon.

member. If a select committee is appointed, it is appointed to consider the Bill, and all proceedings in Committee must cease until the report of the select committee is made on the whole Bill. We have no definite Standing Order upon the question as to the stage at which a Bill may be referred to a select committee. "May," however, on page 470, is perfectly definite, and says that a motion to refer a Bill to a select committee can be made although the Bill is under consideration by the Committee of the whole House. That refers to the whole Bill and not a clause of it. Mr. Ewing cannot move his amendment while the Committee is considering another amendment.

Hon. J. EWING: I ask the Colonial Secretary to postpone the clause, and give us an opportunity of further considering it. We should have some opportunity of getting together those men who are interested, and see if something cannot be devised for overcoming the difficulty. It would be better to have a meeting such as I suggest.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Perhaps it would be better to postpone consideration of this clause and consider the remaining clauses of the Bill. The measure might then be referred to a select committee, and would go to them on the understanding that they should deal with this particular clause only. My only desire is to get something reasonable, and I have no objection to the course proposed.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: I suggest, in regard to the amendment, that the following words might be added to the clause—"That does not contain more than three loads in the round of timber." The forests are classified, and a first class forest averages seven or eight loads per acre. The addition of the words I suggest would get over the difficulty.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: These various proposals are very interesting, but they make discussion difficult. I understand Mr. Millington's amendment to be the business before the Committee. Although I am satisfied that the entire Bill should be adjourned for reconsideration, still, as we are going on with the discussion, I shall support the Bill. Mr. Greig has clearly stated that he wishes to abolish the hewer. Mr. Millington, on the other hand, is trying to protect the hewer, whether he is a returned soldier or not.

Hon. H. Millington: Temporarily.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: While I extremely regret, and am even shocked by, the opinion of timber experts that hewing must soon cease, still we must accept that opinion. Mr. Millington's proposal seems the best way of meeting the difficulty temporarily. Without using the threat of one hon. member, I certainly urge that the leader of the House should consider the position.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: After careful consideration I have come to the conclusion that I might support Mr. Millington's amendment. Mr. Cornell's amendment extends such wide preference to hewers that I am compelled to object to it rather. I understood from Mr. Cornell that it was his intention

that hewers should enter virgin forest before the mill fallers.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Under the clause as it now stands, the activities of the indiscriminate hewer are closely curtailed. But the hewer who has been on active service receives nothing whatever of substantial value under the clause. I therefore move a further amendment—

That the following be added to the clause:

"Notwithstanding the provisions of this section it shall (subject to the provisions of Section 75 of this Act) be lawful for any person holding an active service discharge from the Australian Imperial Forces, who satisfies the Conservator that immediately prior to enlistment he was engaged in the occupation of hewing railway sleepers, to hew timber for railway sleepers on the area of any timber concession, lease, or permit granted before or after the commencement of this Act; but no such permit shall be granted within any virgin forest."

The issue is clear. The Committee have gone a certain way, and all that my amendment asks is that Parliament should not alter to any material extent the position of the hewer who went on active service. But, as it stands, this clause does materially alter his position, and does not leave his old job open to the sleeper hewer. If my amendment is carried, I shall, later, move a new clause providing that the concession shall remain in force for four and a half years and no longer. Virgin forest is peculiarly hard to define, but what I am after is that the soldier hewer shall be permitted, as before 1914, to go on almost any forest country.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Cornell's proposed definition of virgin forest is much that there would be no more virgin forest. I would be prepared to agree to the amendment if Mr. Cornell proposed a definition of virgin forest which might be regarded as reasonable—say such a definition as that suggested by Mr. Miles.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: I would support the amendment if the definition of virgin forest were "timber land containing not more than three loads in the round per acre."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move an amendment on the amendment—

That the words "for the purpose of this section 'virgin forest' means land from which no timber has been drawn" be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"Any area may be classified as virgin forest which will yield for saw milling purposes more than three loads of round timber to the acre."

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have given consideration to the definition put forward by the leader of the House, and I am satisfied that that definition does not allow the soldier hewer anything like the same scope as he had prior to enlistment. For that reason I rejected that definition when drafting my amendment which appears on the Notice Paper. There are members of this Committee who know the exact position of the sleeper hewer who enlisted in 1914. I want that posi-

tion preserved for him as nearly as possible. The only other definition which would, in a sense, conserve the soldier hewer's position, would be to this effect, "For the purpose of this section 'virgin forest' means any forest lands in the possession of the Crown not held under a timber concession, lease, or permit." I do not want the Chamber to give the returned soldiers something which amounts to nothing. We want to try and embody in this Bill something like the privileges which existed before 1914.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Do you want them to go into the virgin forests?

Hon. J. CORNELL: Did they go there before 1914? You will find that they did.

Amendment (Colonial Secretary's) put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	11
Noes	12

Majority against .. 1

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. V. Hamorsley	Hon. H. J. Saunders
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. B. Rose
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. J. E. Dodd	(Teller.)
Hon. J. Ewing	

Amendment thus negatived.

Amendment (Mr. Cornell's) put and passed.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If the clause as it stands fulfils the object of protecting the interests of the hewers it has my support, but I question whether it does. If the leader of the House says that the clause as it now stands carries out what is undoubtedly the intention of the Committee, I shall be very glad to support it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am not competent to state what is the intention of the Committee. I have not the slightest doubt the clause, as it now stands, will protect the hewer, but it will afford no protection whatever to the forests. One of the main intentions of the Bill will have been destroyed by the clause as it stands at present.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Postponed Clause 41—Revenue to be paid into Treasury:

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: On behalf of Mr. Kirwan I move an amendment—

That after the word "revenue" in line one the words "less the expenditure" be inserted.

The intention of the amendment is to prevent the whole of the revenue derived under this Bill from being absorbed to such an extent

that the Consolidated Revenue of the State might be called upon to make up the difference. The administrative costs of the department may increase to such an extent that there will be no balance left to meet the expenditure, and it is proposed that half the revenue derived is to be expended in various extensions and the balance shall be paid into the Consolidated Revenue. The balance may not be sufficient to meet the increased expenditure of administration which may be incurred under the Bill, and the amendment provides that the first charge shall be the administrative expenditure of the department and the balance, if any, shall be divided equally between the extension of forest work and payment into Consolidated Revenue.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not know whether members sufficiently realise how urgent it is that money should be provided to repair the damage that has been done in the past. The sum asked for, half of the gross revenue, is not likely to be adequate for the purpose, and if it is to be cut down by deducting half the expenditure, the amount left over will be entirely inadequate for the purposes for which it is required. Two years ago an additional royalty of 1s. per load was put on all timber and that was put on with the understanding that the money so received should be put back into the forests on improvement work. That has not been done. The extra royalty went into general revenue, simply because there was no machinery for applying the undoubted purpose for which that royalty was imposed. In 1914 the gross revenue of the department was £50,000 and the cost of running the department was £12,000, leaving £38,000, which went to the Treasury. The greater part of the revenue is raised by royalty, and the amount received for lease rents is at the present time £10,000. That will be gradually increasing as the holders of the timber leases cut out country and surrender their leases. The revenue of the department would be approximately doubled by this increased royalty. If half the gross revenue goes to the Forestry Department there is no reason why the Treasury should be appreciably worse off than it was before. Under the New South Wales Forest Act of 1916 one half of the gross income of the department is earmarked for use in regeneration and other remunerative forest work. Victoria at the present time is providing for the payment each year into a forest fund of £40,000 for forestry purposes, and in addition when the gross income from royalties, etc., and the sale of forest produce exceeds £80,000 annually half of this will go into the forest fund. In New Zealand Mr. Massey recently announced that the Government had decided on a forest policy and that the sum of £150,000 a year would be furnished as a preliminary for the improvement of the Dominion forests. The forests of Victoria and New Zealand are in a fair way to become much more important than they are at present, but they do not contain any greater potentialities than the forests in this State. I think the amount involved is not so great, although it would be a great mis-

take to curtail the opportunities of the Forestry Department in the way suggested.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The amendment seems to be on sound lines, and the illustrations given by the Colonial Secretary confirms the desirability of supporting it. This country is financially embarrassed, but has a great asset in its forests. We must cut our coat according to our cloth, and say how much we are able to pay over to this Forest Department. The reference to New South Wales is worthless. The Bill was put through while the Standing Orders were suspended, and only about a column and a half of "Hansard" occupied by the debate. The whole thing was rushed through without consideration. New Zealand is a rich country, and they say they are going to make a grant of £150,000 for looking after the forests there. In Victoria too they have given a specific grant of money. Let experts tell us what amount should be allocated to forest work in this State. Do not let us have this dangerous proposal of half the gross revenue of the department being handed back to the department. I understand that the amendment moved by Mr. Allen would put a stop to this.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I favour the proposal suggested by Mr. Sanderson of setting aside a sum of money for forestry.

The CHAIRMAN: Hon. members will be able to discuss the clause generally when this amendment is disposed of.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Before the war the department had a revenue of about £50,000 and the expenditure was about £12,000, the balance going to the revenue of the State. Can we afford to lose a sum of £40,000 from our revenue in this way? Assuming the revenue to be £50,000, £25,000 will go to the Conservator and the balance will be eaten up in administrative expenses. The State, therefore, will get nothing out of its forests. The present generation is entitled to something from that asset. Under Mr. Allen's proposal, assuming that the expenditure is £10,000 and the revenue £50,000, £10,000 will be the first charge on the £50,000, which would leave a balance of £40,000, half of which would go to reforestation and the other half into general revenue. The least the present generation can expect is that we shall have not less than £20,000 of the revenue of the Forest Department in order to assist in carrying on the country.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE: Our forests have been neglected for many years and very little has been done to restore them. I think this clause provides a fair way of doing it. We cannot go on cutting down timber and doing nothing to replace it. We should go in for planting and fostering not only our own timbers, but imported timbers too. We have no soft woods here. What will the rising generation say, when the timber becomes very valuable, if we do not make some attempt to restore our forests? I shall vote for the clause as it stands.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I am not going to support the amendment, which will mean the starving of the department. If we starve the department, the Bill will be of no use. The

principle involved in the Bill will mean the expenditure of money, and we must face that. I am going to vote for the clause as it stands in order to give the department a chance to carry out its policy.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: I understand that it was never intended that the forest administration should be a charge on the consolidated revenue of the State in excess of the revenue to be derived from the department. This amendment appeals to me, for the reason that in all propositions of this nature it is a sound principle that the first charge upon the revenue should be its administration. If the contention of the Colonial Secretary is sound that half of the balance left would not be sufficient for the projects which the Government have in mind, that difficulty could be got over by altering the words "one half" to "two-thirds or three-fifths," or whatever other amount may be necessary. It is possible that the expenditure may increase to such an extent that it may exceed half the gross revenue, and then the Consolidated Revenue of the State will be called upon to make up the balance, but the first charge upon the revenue of the department should be for its administration.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I should like to remind Mr. Holmes that prior to the war the revenue was partly from rent but chiefly from royalty, and that the royalty recently has been doubled. I recognise there is a good deal in the contention of Mr. Allen. If it is the desire of the Committee that a first charge on revenue should be the expenditure, I shall be prepared to accept the amendment, provided it gives a reasonable chance of our getting adequate revenue. If Subclause 2 were amended to three-fifths instead of one-half, it would be acceptable. The whole of the expenses would be paid, and the State would get two-fifths of the revenue, which is more than it has had in the past. The effect would be much the same as it is under the present Bill, with the exception that if the Bill stands as now, and the departmental revenue is greatly increased, the State revenue might suffer; but if the Bill were amended as suggested and the department was careful to keep down expenditure, then from their three-fifths they would get about as much as they get now under the one-half.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Provided the expenditure is made a first charge on the revenue I do not mind how the proportion is made up. The first charge on the forest revenue should be the cost of administration. This would protect the revenue.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If the Minister were perfectly free I believe he could produce a clause that would meet with the approval of the Committee. Is the planting of a tree to be put to the cost of administration? If not, why should it not be? The proposal represents a premium on the spending of money by the Conservator. To propose that all revenue, less expenditure, is to be paid into the Treasury, is to place a premium on extravagance.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is making a mistake. The amendment is in Sub-clause 2.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The mistake is mine. However, it is not of much consequence, because everyone who has spoken clearly understands what we are after. The Minister wants to get as much revenue as he can for the Forestry Department. There is a great deal to be said for that; but the proper way to do that is to come before Parliament periodically and say, "We want £10,000 a year."

The Colonial Secretary: That would be of no use; we want from £30,000 to £35,000 per annum.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Well, the constitutional way, the honest way, and the sensible way would be to come to Parliament and say, "We want £30,000 per annum for forest work." The effect of the amendment on the department would be to place a premium on extravagance. We should keep the control in our own hands. If I had my way the whole clause would come out, but on the principle of half a loaf I am prepared to support the amendment. The responsibility for not putting things on a sound business basis is not on the Conservator, but on the Government. If the Colonial Secretary and the House and the country would agree to this elective Ministry business we would support him.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is scarcely speaking to the amendment.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: My excuse is the desire to put the finances of the State on a sound basis. I accept the amendment as the only hope we have of doing anything to protect our financial position.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I am glad the hon. member is going to support the amendment. If he wishes to control the Conservator he must vote for it. The way to keep down the administrative expenses is to make the expenditure the first charge on the revenue, and so provide an additional surplus for reafforestation. Knowing that the sole object of the Conservator will be to create money for reafforestation, surely this is the proper method of procedure.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In the circumstances I ask that Mr. Allen temporarily withdraw his amendment in order to give me an opportunity of amending the first two words of the subclause. If the Committee is willing to make those words "three-fifths" instead of "one-half" I will accept the hon. member's amendment.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: I ask leave to temporarily withdraw my amendment.
Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line one of Subclause 2 the words "one-half" be struck out and "three-fifths" inserted in lieu.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The effect of that would be that three-fifths would go to the Conservator and two-fifths to the Treasury. I wish to protect the revenue to the extent of the administrative expenses. If the leader of the House thought the Conservator should have

three-quarters instead of three-fifths I would gladly give it, after having made provision that the administrative costs should be a first charge on the revenue.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I fail to see any great improvement in the amendment. I prefer the clause as it stands.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I am prepared to support the amendment to give three-fifths of the revenue, less the expenditure. It is giving a little more to the Forestry Department, but I think it is on sound lines. We are establishing here another State department which comes under the Public Service Act, and we require to be careful that the department does not run into more expenditure than we have revenue to meet. I do not mind the Forestry Department getting more than one-half so long as it does not land the State in difficulties. Our forests to-day are more valuable than they ever will be again in our time, and they should show a substantial profit to-day. The present day generation have a right to expect something from the forests. I do not see why the pioneers of the State should have to provide for future generations in every thing.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I wish Mr. Greig would speak a little oftener in Committee, he is so clear. He now says that he supports the amendment because it will give more power to the Forestry Department. I assume that he is right, and I consider that is a good reason for voting against the amendment. Let us not repeat the mistake made in our original Constitution Act of inserting a percentage instead of a specific sum. It is stupidity to insert in an Act of Parliament a sum of which we do not know the amount.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: Some hon. members seem to overlook the fact that the Colonial Secretary intends to move an amendment removing this proviso from where it stands to the end of paragraph (2).

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Mr. Sanderson stated he was in favour of the amendment reading "one-half of the revenue less the expenditure." A half is equal to two and a half fifths. When that is altered to three-fifths, Mr. Sanderson opposes the provision.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The actual difference may be stated in these figures. When the revenue of the department reaches the sum of £70,000, assuming that the expenditure is not decreased, then the department will be in about the same position under the proposed amendment as it would be if the clause were passed as at present it stands. Assuming that the revenue was £70,000 under the clause as it now stands, the department would receive £35,000, and £12,000 would go in administrative expenses, and the balance of £23,000 would go to the State. Under the proposed amendment, with a revenue of £70,000, there would first be deducted £12,000 for administrative expenses, leaving a net revenue of £58,000, of which the department would receive three-fifths, which is £34,800, just a trifle less than the one-half of the gross revenue; the State, of course would receive a trifle more. But under the two proposed amend-

ments there is this protection, that if, as the Bill stands, the expenditure is considerably above the existing £12,000, then it would be State revenue and not departmental income. If the amendments are carried and the administrative expenditure increases, then it will be the department that will suffer. I am inclined to think the amendments propose a better way of cutting up the revenue.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: The Colonial Secretary has just used the argument I intended to advance. With a revenue of £50,000, the department would receive £25,000; then the cost of the department is £12,000, making a total deduction of £37,000. Under the amendments, giving the department three-fifths, the department will have £2,000 less.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Mr. Greig tells us one thing, and the Colonial Secretary, very properly, points out the difference between what the hon. member has said and the existing state of affairs. My difficulty in Committee frequently is to know exactly first of all what we want to do, and secondly, when we have agreed on that, whether the particular words will carry out our intention. What the department will receive depends, as the leader of the House has explained, on circumstances.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am tired of sitting still and listening to the discussion raging about this thing. Private businesses, small and large, are built up almost without exception from the profits made by them, Mr. Sanderson subscribed to that principle for the Forestry Department, but because of a slight difference he was going to vote the opposite way. Now, however, the Colonial Secretary's speech has blown Mr. Sanderson back again the first way. I will vote for the amendment because it represents a sound business principle, and because it will constitute an inducement to the Conservator to keep his working costs down to a low figure and so obtain funds for improvements and re-afforestation.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: I move a further amendment—

That in Sub-clause 2, line 1, after the word "revenue" there be inserted "less than the expenditure."

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I suggest that instead of "less the expenditure" the mover of the amendment should use the words "ascertained after deduction of the expenditure." That is three-fifths of the revenue less the expenditure. My view is that that is what is intended. I wish to secure to the department the three-fifths of the revenue, so that they can carry out the work of re-afforestation and of making good the improvements which are essential in the department.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It seems to me that by inserting the word "net" before "revenue" we will get what we desire in a simpler form, and a form which will be readily understood.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: The suggestion of the Colonial Secretary will meet the situation and I will withdraw my amendment to permit of the word "net" being inserted.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment before the Committee now is to insert the word "net" before "revenue."

Amendment put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have already informed hon. members that the proviso which appears at the end of the clause is there improperly. It was intended to follow Subclause 2. I therefore move—

That the proviso be transposed to follow Subclause 2.

Hon. J. EWING: Suppose the Bill is not passed this session, will the Conservator be able to go on with his work?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We are going to agree in a few hours to the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds without any discussion whatever. What will be the position this year or next year, I would like to know.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If this is the way in which we are going to conduct business, there is food for reflection for people outside. I presume there will be a separate set of Estimates prepared by the Conservator and put up for Parliament. I presume also that the financial year will end on the 30th June and when we meet in July next year the Conservator will submit his Estimates to Parliament. If he does not then the matter will be in the hands of Parliament. We can refuse him payment for his staff: or do anything we like.

Hon. H. STEWART: The proviso does not say that the scheme for the expenditure shall "first" be subject to the approval of Parliament. Will Mr. Sanderson support me if I move to insert the word "first"?

Hon. A. Sanderson: Certainly.

Hon. H. STEWART: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the proviso the word "first" be inserted after the word "shall."

This will provide that the scheme for expenditure shall be submitted annually, and shall first be subject to the approval of Parliament.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I consider that would embarrass the department. If the financial year begins on the 1st July and Parliament is not in session, and Parliament does not approve of the Estimates, the Conservator cannot go on. He cannot work a year ahead of the Estimates. We will complicate his administration if we carry this amendment.

Hon. J. EWING: This money will be in the hands of the Conservator and he will be able to spend it without any other authority than the Act. Mr. Holmes is wrong in his contention. The Conservator has to put up certain plans before Parliament and he must not spend one penny until he has the approval of Parliament if the amendment is carried, unless of course he works two or three years ahead. I have no desire to impede the work of the Conservator.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I support the amendment, and there should be no difficulty in putting it through. I think that the plans should be laid on the Table of the House 18 months before it is required to put them into execution, setting forth the area of country upon which it is intended to operate and showing what it is intended to spend upon it. Is it unreasonable to ask that we should have this scheme put before us in outline at least 18 months ahead, otherwise it does not matter whether the clause goes through or not? I would point out that I am a member of the Forest League myself, and am as much interested in the subject as anyone else.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Does Mr. Sanderson wish it to be thought that he is expressing the views of the Forest League on this clause?

Hon. A. Sanderson: Certainly not.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I venture to say that there is no member of the Forest League who would endorse his views. The expenditure applies only to the three-fifths which it is agreed should be set apart for the purposes of the department. It is unreasonable to hamper the operations of the department by saying that before it does anything at all it must first get approval for it. Parliament is well protected, for if the scheme submitted is not approved of it can be stopped. The whole purpose of the clause is to ensure revenue to the department and a continuity of policy.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I hope Mr. Stewart will withdraw his amendment. We must give the Conservator credit for knowing better than most members of Parliament what is desired to be done within the forests. We can surely rely upon him to carry out his work satisfactorily. It is unnecessary to tie his hands in this way.

Hon. H. STEWART: In Clause 2 we have laid down a sound business principle.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And you want to take it away by this.

Hon. H. STEWART: There are many hon. members who would have no difficulty in a business undertaking in laying out a scheme of work covering several years. It is laid down that the Conservator should outline a working plan on which he shall conduct his forestry work. The only time when the insertion of the word "first" would cause any trouble would be in the first year, for when this scheme is first drawn up it will doubtless cover a longer period than the 12 months. I thought the word might lead to a different method of dealing with the finances of the State, and to some light being thrown on the matter, but in view of the attitude of the Committee, I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The hon. member has convinced me that this ought to go out of the Bill altogether. The idea of giving the Conservator three-fifths of the net revenue with which to start out on a policy of re-afforestation, and then to say that he must first put up his scheme to Parliament is absurd. We have an expert at the head of the

department, and I would therefore like to move this out altogether.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: It is necessary that these things should be submitted to Parliament. So one considers that Parliament is capable of judging of the details of these schemes, but any scheme involving an annual expenditure should be approved by Parliament. The provision does not mean that the Conservator must annually expend the amount collected during the previous year and paid to suspense account, but that the scheme generally should be approved by Parliament.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: On behalf of Mr. Kirwan, I move a further amendment—

That at the end of Subclause 4 there be added "with the approval of the Minister."

The approval of the Minister has to be obtained by the Conservator before he expends the money in the actual work where his skill and knowledge are being utilised in the development of forestry, but in the actual administration of the department there is no provision for the Minister having any control at all. Under the amendment the Minister will have to approve of the administration of the department.

Amendment put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the proviso at the end of the clause be struck out.

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

New clause:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 48.—Fire-breaks.—(1.) Whenever the Conservator deems it necessary to burn a fire-break for the protection of a State forest—(a) he may appoint a day for the purpose, and shall notify the owners of land contiguous to the State forest, and the occupiers, if any, of his intention; and (b) he may, by notice to the owner, and also to the occupier (if the owner is not the occupier), require him or them to burn a fire-break not exceeding two chains in width on the land along the boundary of the State forest, and such owner or occupier shall burn a fire-break accordingly: Provided that the Conservator shall place at the disposal of the owner or occupier such labourers as are employed in burning the fire-break within the State forest. (2.) In case of non-compliance with such requisition as aforesaid, the Conservator may cause the burning off to be carried out, and the expense incurred shall be a debt due to the Conservator by such owner, or such owner and occupier jointly and severally, and shall be recoverable in any court of competent jurisdiction: Provided that where the owner and occupier are different persons, then, as between themselves, the expense shall, in the absence of any agreement to the contrary, be borne by the occupier. (3.) When any person on whom notice as aforesaid is required to be served under this section is not within Western Australia, or if his place of abode is not

known to the Conservator, and cannot after reasonable inquiry be ascertained, such notice shall be deemed to have been well and sufficiently served if published as an advertisement in a newspaper.

The intention is that this work, which is for mutual protection, shall be done mutually between the department and the owner. I think the provision is a fair and reasonable one.

Hon. H. STEWART: There is not much consideration here for the small owner. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (b) of Sub-clause 1 "by" be struck out and "after giving" inserted in lieu.

Later I will move other amendments calculated to throw upon the Conservator the onus of burning the fire-break. I do not see why people on small holdings should be put to this expense.

Hon. J. EWING: In my opinion it would be better to strike out the whole of the proposed new clause. I am opposed to both the amendment and the new clause.

Hon. H. STEWART: I should be prepared to support Mr. Ewing in striking out the clause, but in the meantime I have several amendments to move which will give the Conservator authority to burn fire-breaks if he wants to do so.

Amendment put and passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: If it is not intended that the settler should bear any part of the cost of, or responsibility for, these fire-breaks, I do not see any use for the clause at all. If it be in accordance with the feelings of the Committee I am prepared to abandon the clause.

Hon. J. EWING: That would be the best thing to do.

The CHAIRMAN: The procedure adopted by Mr. Stewart is quite correct, namely, that all his amendments should be considered before the clause is put. Then, after the hon. member has moved his amendments, he will be quite justified in voting against the clause.

Hon. H. STEWART: If the Minister is prepared to let the clause go, I think that would be the most satisfactory way out of the difficulty. In view of the Minister's intention, I will not move any further amendments. I merely wished to protect the small holder.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Under the provisions of the Bush Fires Act will be found all that the Minister requires.

New clause as amended put and negatived.

New clause:

Hon. J. EWING: I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 75:—"The area comprised within the boundaries of the Greenbushes State Forest except any area within such boundaries being the subject of any timber lease or permit, is hereby excluded from the provisions of this Act, and shall be subject to the Mining Act, 1904."

I have many letters from people at Greenbushes complaining of the position obtaining down there. The trouble is chiefly over firewood and timber required in the workings of the tinfields. For the last 30 years the people

down there have used what timber they required, under the jurisdiction of the Mines Department. The latest regulations prohibit this being done. The timber which the Conservator thinks quite satisfactory for those people is lying on the ground, and, I believe, is quite soft and of no use whatever. Again, other timber which they are offered by the Conservator is gnarled and crooked, is altogether unsatisfactory, and will not get up steam. The Greenbushes area consists of only 13,000 acres. It is but a small plot in the forest area of three million acres. We have to consider the value of one industry as against another. I do not think it will be argued that the timber required by those people for the next 20 years is of greater value than the labour employed down there. The dredges alone are paying £4,500 per month in wages. If there is no serious opposition to the proposed new clause I will not delay the Committee any further.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have no objection to the proposed new clause.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move—

That the following clause be added to the Bill:—"The provisions of Section 24 in relation to the issue of hewing permits to discharged soldiers of the Australian Imperial Forces shall have effect from the commencement of this Act until the 30th day of June, 1923, and no longer."

This clause is subsidiary to the amendment of Clause 24. The concession to the returned soldier is not asked for all time, the object is only to enable him to resume his occupation as a hewer under the same conditions as governed it when he quitted it in order to enlist. The Returned Soldiers' Association are prepared to give and take.

New clause put and passed.

Schedule—agreed to.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have on the Notice Paper a new clause to stand as Clause 8.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand the hon. member's new clause is contingent on the excision of Clause 8 as it now stands.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: In order to save the time of the Committee as much as possible you, Sir, gave what I almost understood was a direction that if a new clause could come in at the end of the Bill it should do so, instead of the proceedings being delayed by its discussion at an earlier stage.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot have been in his place when new clauses were being moved. However, the hon. member need not be placed at a disadvantage, as he can move to recommit the Bill.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am sorry I misunderstood you, Mr. Chairman. I followed what I understood was almost your direction on the subject.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am aware that it is the intention of some hon. members

to move that the Bill be recommitted. I would suggest that they withhold that motion until to-morrow, so that we may have an opportunity of seeing, in the "Minutes of Proceedings," the amendments which have been made.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported with amendments.

As to recommitment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move—

That the Bill be recommitted at the next sitting of the House for the purpose of the further consideration of Clauses 5 and 24. I am aware that other members have clauses which they desire should be further considered.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have Clause 8.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I have Clause 6.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: I have Clause 14.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have Clause 8.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I propose to move the insertion of a clause to stand as Clause 76.

The PRESIDENT: The question is that the Bill be recommitted at the next sitting of the House for the purpose of the further consideration of the clauses which have been mentioned, and for the consideration of a new clause to stand as Clause 76.

Question put and passed.

BILL—GOVERNMENT ELECTRIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

BILL—STATE CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Colonial Secretary in charge of the Bill.
Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 4:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (1) be struck out. I am submitting this amendment at the request of the members of the Children's Court. They require wider powers in dealing with certain children who come under their charge.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move a further amendment—

That in line 3 of paragraph (2) the word "or" be inserted between the words "incorrigible" and "uncontrollable."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I hope that when the amendment is made the words will be added to the end of the clause "or a child committed to an institution." I understand there will be no objection to that.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move a further amendment—

That in lines 3 and 4 of paragraph (2)

"or a child committed to an institution" be inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 3—Addition to section to Part 3:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 the words "special magistrate" be struck out and "any member of the Children's Court" be inserted in lieu.

The reasons are fully explained in the select committee's report.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I hope this amendment will not be carried, because it is not necessary. At the present time any officer of the department can visit these institutions, and it was thought, if power was given to every member of the Children's Court, to visit the institutions, we might create a power whereby those institutions might be harassed. Anyone who wants to visit an institution can always do so.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: If the Colonial Secretary had read the report carefully, he would have seen that it is proposed to give special powers to the members of the Children's Court. This court will be composed of certain members, men and women, and these magistrates, having dealt with the cases, it was considered it would be advantageous to enable them to follow up those cases.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Children's courts necessarily sit in all parts of the State and any justice may be a member of a children's court without a special appointment. It is necessary that that should be the case. I am not strongly opposed to the amendment, but the people interested in the principle institutions saw me after the Bill was introduced, and while they offered no objection to a special magistrate visiting them, they raised strong objections to a proposal which would allow a number of people to have the right to visit the institutions. A member of the children's court can always follow up a case but the amendment is likely to cause trouble and dissension.

Hon. J. EWING: I do not think any harm can be done by passing the amendment. Only a limited number of people take an interest in the children's court, and it is only right that those people should be given permission to follow up those cases over which they have had jurisdiction.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The members of the children's court, five men and five women, are regarded as enthusiasts in that particular work, and it is only right they should be given this authority to visit the children after they have been committed to an institution.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The court is appointed in order that they may administer just decisions, and having arrived at those decisions and committed children to certain institutions, it should not be the duty of the members of that court to follow them up. It should be the duty of a State officer to make periodical visits and see that the children are properly cared for.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I would draw attention to the fact that the clause as it reads states, "A special magistrate shall have the right of

any time to enter, visit, and inspect any institution." We have men and women devoting their time to the children's court, and when giving evidence before the select committee they freely commented on the fact that they desired to have the privilege of following up cases without having to make an application before being able to pay a visit to an institution. I am convinced that if the amendment is carried beneficial results will follow in many respects.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	13

Majority against .. 4

AYES.

Hon. H. Carson	Hon. J. Ewing
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. Duffell	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. W. Milen
Hon. E. M. Clarke	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. H. J. Saunders
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. E. Rosa
Hon. R. J. Lynn	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Substitution of new section for Section 18:

The CHAIRMAN: There is an amendment here which may be taken as rectifying a clerical error. In Subclause 1, line 4, the word "time" has been omitted, and the word "time" will be restored.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 3 all the words after "members" in line 3 be struck out.

The evidence taken on this matter is preponderantly in favour of the Children's Court having jurisdiction over such matters as are provided under the Bastardy Laws Act. It would be a reflection on the court if after being constituted their powers were limited to some extent. In view of Clause 5 it would appear that the proviso had been inserted in error.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: This is not a point on which I feel strongly, but I assure the hon. member that no mistake has been made regarding it. Under the existing Act the Children's Court have no power to determine complaints and applications under the Bastardy Laws Act. The intention of the Bill is to confer that power on the Children's Court in order to secure the same privacy in the hearing of these cases as is secured in the hearing of other cases before the Children's Court. But it was considered in the case of points of law arising in connection with cases under the Bastardy Laws

Act that it possibly might not be wise to confer this new power on a court which might be constituted only of a couple of justices, or perhaps one justice and one lady member of the court.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Chairman could always be a special magistrate.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: But he very seldom sits. Two members are competent to form a court. If that provision is struck out it would be competent for one justice and one lady member of the court to hear and determine cases under the Bastardy Laws Act.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And decide points of law?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am rather inclined to doubt the wisdom of this. I think cases of this kind should be heard by a trained man.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Under the Justices Act two justices would be competent to hear such cases. In the Children's Court each of the members of the court would be appointed justices, so that the members of the Children's Court would be just as competent as members on any police court to adjudicate. I should not object to a special magistrate being one of the members of the court in the hearing of cases under the Bastardy Laws Act; and the special magistrate would then preside.

Hon. J. E. DODD: It is rather late in the day to raise any objection to women sitting on cases of this sort. Where illegitimate children are concerned there are two parties, the man and the woman, and surely women have the same right to adjudicate in cases of this sort as men have. If it came to a point of law, I should be prepared to give the special magistrate the power, but I do not think anything would arise in connection with the Bastardy Act more seamy than is heard in scores of other cases that come before the Children's Court.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I have no objection to the amendment in the altered form as suggested by Mr. Nicholson. I do not mind the other members of the court being present at all.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I should like to withdraw my amendment in favour of another one.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 3 the following words be struck out, "Provided that cases under the Bastardy Laws Act, 1875, shall be heard and determined by the special magistrate alone" and the following inserted in lieu, "Provided that in cases under the Bastardy Laws Act of 1875 a special magistrate shall be one of the members of the court to hear such cases."

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

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Amendment of Section 24:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 the words "paragraph is" be struck out and "paragraphs are" inserted in lieu.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I intimated that I was not altogether favourable to the clause, but if the proposed new Clause 7, of which Mr. Nicholson has given notice, is agreed to. I see no objection to the proposal of the select committee. My objection to the proposal of the select committee was that if passed and left at that it would mean practically that once the court had given a decision there would be no means of altering it except by going to the Supreme Court.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: In accordance with the views of the select committee, I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as paragraph (d):—“(d) Upon any order having been made in connection with any child by the Children's Court, it shall be the duty of the department to carry out in all particulars such orders.”

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

Clauses 7, 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Amendment of Section 44:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: In accordance with the wishes of the select committee, I suggest that this clause be struck out.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 10—Amendment of Section 45:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: So, too, in this case the clause should be deleted.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 11—Substitution of new section for Section 46:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: It is the wish of the select committee that this clause, also, should be struck out.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 12—Amendment of Sections 47 and 48:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: Here, too, the select committee desire that the clause should be struck out.

Clause put and negatived.

Clauses 13 to 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Amendment of Section 106:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The select committee desire that this clause should be deleted.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 19—Addition of sections to Part VIII.:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move an amendment—

That in the seventh line of Subsection 3 of proposed new Section 107a the word "periodical" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move a further amendment—

That at the end of the proposed new Section 107a the words "but so that no sum shall be paid more than four weeks in advance" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That after "age" in line 2 of proposed new Section 107b "or other than a person obtaining an order of adoption under the Adoption of Children Act, 1896, and amendments" be inserted.

If anyone obtains an order under that Act he should not be subject, as he will be under the proposed new section, to the necessity for having to give the prescribed notice. Such order is made under the Supreme Court and is not made unless the fullest evidence is given that the party adopting the child is suitable in every respect, and is able to support and maintain the child. Therefore if the Supreme Court is satisfied on those points there should be no necessity for a person receiving an order under the Adoption of Children Act to give notice under the State Children Act.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move a further amendment—

That in proposed new Section 107b, after the word "name," in line 6, there be inserted "age, religion, and place of birth." The foster parent may be the guardian for only a limited period, and the select committee do not think it advisable that such guardian should have all the particulars required under the proposed new section. On the carrying of the amendment, I shall move the striking out of the words "and such other particulars, if any, as may be prescribed." Any other particulars which may be required can be more suitably obtained by the Registrar General.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move a further amendment—

That in proposed new Section 107b the words "and such other particulars, if any, as may be prescribed" be struck out.

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

Clause 20—agreed to.

Clause 21—Insertion of new sections after Section 117:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move an amendment—

That in proposed new Section 117a, after the word "department," in line 4, there be inserted "on the written authority of the secretary."

This matter was explained during the consideration of the select committee's report.

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

Clause 22—Insertion of new section after Section 118:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move an amendment—

That the words "and liable on conviction to imprisonment with hard labour for three months" be struck out, and "Penalty £30 or imprisonment with hard labour for three months" inserted in lieu.

The select committee consider that the alternative of a money penalty should be provided.

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

Clauses 23, 24—agreed to.

New Clause—No summons to be issued in certain cases:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 2: "The State Children Act Amendment Act of 1915 is hereby repealed."

"This amendment has already been explained.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 6: "Where the offence charged against a child does not amount to an indictable offence, or where the alleged offence consists of the breach or non-observance of some by-law, rule, or regulation promulgated by virtue of a statute, no summons shall be issued or served upon such child unless a notice has been first posted to or served upon such child at its usual place of residence, and such child has failed to appear in response to such notice."

The object of this new clause is to prevent the issue of summonses in the case of trivial charges for breach of municipal by-laws, for instance. Such charges are frequent, and the members of the Children's Court consider they should not form the subject of summonses, but that the parent should be afforded an opportunity of bringing the child to the court to be reprimanded, without the parent being involved in needless trouble and expense.

Hon. J. E. DODD: This new clause is a very necessary one. Utterly ridiculous charges are brought before the Children's Court by the City Council inspectors—picking a flower in a park, riding a bicycle in a park, playing in a park. Actually, convictions are recorded against children for such offences as these.

New clause put and passed.

New Clause—In committing to an institution, court to have regard to the future of the child:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 7:—"The court in committing any child to an institution shall have regard to the future welfare of such child, and may direct such child to be detained in one of the institutions scheduled in the State Children Act, 1907, or in some other institution, as the Governor may approve of, at which such special training and supervision can be provided as may best meet the needs of any special case."

Members of the Children's Court occasionally are in a difficulty to decide in what institution to place a child—one of weak intellect, for instance. They have even been compelled to act without authority in cases of the kind.

New clause put and passed.

New Clause—Court may refrain from recording conviction or from imposing punishment or fine:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 8: "Notwithstanding the provisions of any Act, by-law, rule, or regulation, the Court in awarding punishment or penalty upon any child may have regard to the antecedents, character, age, health or mental condition of the child convicted and may take into account the nature of the offence or any special circumstances of the case, and such Court may, notwithstanding the nature of the evidence adduced, refrain from recording such conviction or from imposing any punishment, penalty, or fine."

This new clause is intended to apply to the trivial cases brought under municipal by-laws—such a case as that of a child charged with fishing in a park when it had been throwing into the water and drawing out again a piece of string minus a hook. In that case a conviction had to be recorded and a fine imposed. Another case was that of a boy charged by a City Council inspector with kicking a football in a reserve. There, again, a conviction and a fine necessarily followed, much to the chagrin of the parent and much to the disgust of the magistrates. If this clause is added hon. members will see that although a child may admit having committed the grave offence of fishing without a hook at the end of the line in a pond, or kicking a toy ball, it will not be necessary to enter a conviction against that child.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move—

That the following be added to the Bill to stand as Clause 9:—"The court on application made by the department or by the parent or guardian of any child against whom an order has been made under this Act, may vary or rescind any such order."

This clause has been suggested by Mr. Lovekin, who is one of the most ardent workers amongst children. This will fulfil an excellent purpose in connection with the Bill. It is one of those essential provisions which unfortunately was omitted. In connection with these cases against children it is necessary there should be some provision to vary the decisions from time to time, and unless power is given to the court to do so it cannot legally be done.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The select committee desire that Section 46 of the principal Act shall be amended. I therefore move—

That the following be added as a new clause:—"Section 46 of the principal Act be amended by the addition of a proviso as follows: Provided further, that all accounts under this section shall be audited at prescribed periods by the Auditor General."

This refers to the moneys earned by the children who go out to service and which moneys have been placed, as previously pointed out in the Bill, in charge of the guardian. In the evidence it was stated by the various witnesses who had charge of these institutions that they would agree that the funds which they receive should be subject to a Government audit.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I move—

That the following be added to stand as Clause 14.—Section 62 of the principal Act is amended by adding the following subclause to stand as subclauses (2), (3), (4):—
(2.) A maintenance order made under this Act shall direct that on default being made in payment of any sum of money or costs thereby ordered to be paid, the same shall be recoverable by execution against the goods and chattels of the person liable, and that in default of payment and of sufficient goods and chattels he shall be imprisoned for a period determined by the court in accordance with the provisions of section one hundred and sixty-seven of the Justices Act, 1902, and subject to the provisions of that section: provided that the court may, in lieu of directing that such sum of money or costs shall be recoverable by execution, direct that in default of payment the person in default shall be imprisoned as aforesaid: And the maintenance order shall direct, with regard to any periodical payments thereby ordered, that whenever and as often as default is made in any such periodical payment, the person in default shall be liable to such process of execution and imprisonment, or to such imprisonment only, as aforesaid. (3.) Every such maintenance order shall have effect according to its tenor. (4.) The provisions of this section shall be without prejudice to any other provision of this Act.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—VERMIN.

Assembly's Message.

Consideration resumed from the previous day of Assembly's message giving reasons for not agreeing to certain amendments made by the Council.

In Committee.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on amendment No. 1 made by the Legislative Assembly to the Vermin Bill. On that amendment the Honorary Minister moved the following modification:—"This section shall apply to the south-West division of the State except such portion thereof as is situated northward of the Government fence running westward to Bluff Point, but shall not apply to any other part of the State."

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I would suggest an amendment on the amendment made by the Legislative Assembly which would be in the form of a modification and which perhaps the Honorary Minister might accept. It reads as follows:—

This Act shall apply to all the south-western portion of the State situated west

of the No. 1 rabbit-proof fence and south of the rabbit-proof fence running into Gum Creek Well westward to Bluff Point, and shall not apply to any other part of the State.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Holmes' amendment is really an improvement on the amendment I moved at the previous sitting, and with the permission of the House I would ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I now move the amendment which I read.

Hon. H. Carson: Where is Gum Creek Well?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is the point where the fence leaves the No. 1 rabbit-proof fence to travel west to Bluff Point.

Hon. J. MILLS: I cannot understand the attitude of Mr. Holmes. It seems to me that the Bill is applied to the whole of the South-West Division, which excludes almost the whole of the pastoralists in that province which he represents. This I think is unfair. If the Bill is to apply to pastoralists let it apply to all of them. I must oppose the amendment.

Question put and passed; the modification agreed to.

The CHAIRMAN: Amendment No. 2, which the Assembly has not agreed to, is as follows:—"Original Clause 2.—Strike out the words 'are hereby repealed to the extent therein stated, but notwithstanding such repeal,' and insert 'shall cease to have effect in that portion of the State to which this Act applies: provided that.''" The reason given for the objection to the amendment is that it is consequential upon No. 1.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I take it that this would now apply to the modification?

The CHAIRMAN: The Honorary Minister had better move that the amendment be insisted upon.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

That the amendment be insisted upon.

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

The CHAIRMAN: Amendment No. 3, which the Legislative Assembly has not agreed to, is as follows:—"Original Clause 2, page 2, line 6—Strike out the words 'Any Act hereby repealed' and insert 'the said Act.''" The reason given for not agreeing to this amendment is, as in the case of No. 2, that it is consequential on No. 1.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

That the amendment be insisted upon.

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

The CHAIRMAN: Amendment No. 4, which the Assembly has not agreed to, is as follows:—"In the definition of 'Government fence,' after the word 'erected' in line 8, insert 'by the Minister'"; and the reason given for not agreeing to the amendment is as follows:—"Because the amendment provides for the removal of a liability for the maintenance of a fence already existing."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: These words were added on the query raised by Mr. Holmes. I

did not think at the time they were essential. The interpretation of Clause 3 is that a Government fence means the barrier fence No. 1, and fence No. 2, and fence No. 3, and any other vermin-proof fence or rabbit-proof fence erected out of public moneys. I do not think it improves the clause. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted upon.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted upon.

The CHAIRMAN: Amendment No. 5, which the Legislative Assembly has not agreed to, is as follows:—"Clause 3—In the definition of 'hold,' after the word 'lease' in line 4, insert 'including or granting right to the surface of the ground'; and the reason given for not agreeing to it is as follows:—"That it is deemed unnecessary, as this Act does not provide legislation dealing with anything below the surface."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: This is quite unnecessary, and will not affect the working of the Bill. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted upon.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted upon.

The CHAIRMAN: Amendment No. 7, which the Assembly has not agreed to, is as follows:—"Insert the following clause, to stand as No. 7:—This Act shall not apply to unalienated lands of the Midland Railway Company of Western Australia, Limited, except such areas thereof as are certified by the Chief Inspector to be vermin infested or the breeding ground of vermin, and such areas as having been the subject of agreement for the purchase thereof are abandoned by the purchaser and except as provided in Section 81. For the purposes of this section lands under contract for purchase thereof shall be deemed to be alienated." The reason given by the Legislative Assembly for not agreeing with this amendment is as follows:—"Is similar to the reasons expressed in No. 1. It is felt that all portions of the State should be subject to the Act."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

That as an alternative to the amendment No. 7, made by the Council, the following further proviso be added to Clause 50:—

"Provided also that unalienated lands of the Midland Railway Company of Western Australia, Limited, except such areas as having been the subject of agreement for the purchase thereof are abandoned by the purchaser, shall not be rateable, but for the purpose of this proviso, lands under contract for purchase thereof shall be deemed to be alienated."

If the Midland Railway Company are brought under the Bill, and under the definition of owner, they will be liable for rates on the whole of the properties which they hold by reason of their concessions. I do not think it would be unreasonable to ask the company to pay rates on land on which they hold concessions and have difficulty in disposing of. The State also holds land of a similar nature. The Midland Railway Company would be compelled to go to the same length as the Government, who are spending a lot of money in dealing with

bad breeding grounds. The only difference is that it will be mandatory upon the Midland Railway Company to destroy the rabbits, whereas it cannot be mandatory upon the Government.

Hon. G. J. G. W. Miles: Will the Government under the Bill have power to compel the Midland Railway Company to acquire unalienated lands?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: This alternative amendment seems to be a somewhat unusual procedure. I cannot recollect that we have done anything like this before.

The CHAIRMAN: It is quite in order.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It is somewhat unusual.

The CHAIRMAN: That is so.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have read the report of the general meeting of the Midland Railway Company. Do the Midland Railway Company approve of this? If they object I think they should be given an opportunity of putting their views before the Committee and letting us understand what the position is.

Hon. H. Carson: This is in the interests of the Midland Railway Company.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The Honorary Minister says that the Midland Railway Company will be compelled to do what the Government propose to do. That at once arouses my suspicions. If it is against the Midland Railway Company we may be sure that the power will be exercised. If we treated ourselves in the same way as we propose to treat the Midland Railway Company that would be quite reasonable.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out that Standing Order No. 223 explicitly sets forth what may be done—

In cases when the Assembly—(1) Disagrees to amendments made by the Council, or (2) agrees to amendments made by the Council with further amendments thereon, the Council may in case (1) Insist or not insist on its amendments. (2) Make further amendments to the Bill consequent on the rejection of its own amendments. (3) Propose new amendments as alternative to its own amendments to which the Assembly has disagreed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Sanderson said that this was unusual. The intention of the Government is to treat the Midland Railway Company as fairly as possible. In carrying that out they are asking them to do that which the Government are doing. The Midland Railway Company have not been approached to ask whether they agreed to this or not. I think it is a matter for members to say as to whether they shall pass this legislation or not.

Hon. J. MILLS: When previously the Bill was before the Committee I objected to the Midland Railway Company being exempted from its operations. They are a wealthy company and are comparable with some of the private landholders here. I know one private landholder who holds 200,000 acres, yet he is not exempt from the Bill. Why, then, should the company be exempt? I will vote against the provision.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: This provision is very different from the one we had previously. Under the first one the lands of the Midland Railway Company were exempt except those declared by the chief inspector of rabbits to be vermin infested. In this provision the whole of the lands are to be exempt.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Let me explain. If the amendment is agreed to, the whole of the Bill, except the rating provisions, will apply to the Midland Railway Company.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The Midland Railway Company are entitled to the same consideration as would be shown to anyone else in the State. From the statement of the Minister the Midland Railway Company would be fairly entitled to give an opinion on this provision. Mr. Mills has stated that the Midland Railway Company are wealthy. I do not care whether they are wealthy or poor, they should get every consideration. I ask the hon. member to read the reports of the company. If he does that he will find that the company are certainly not wealthy.

Hon. J. Mills: They own the railway and the land both.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We should not do something which in the end will injure ourselves. In London the company are threatening to injure the credit of Western Australia, for they say they have been injured by Western Australia. We should give the company a hearing, at all events. From the statement of the Minister it seems that the question requires further inquiry. This is the Chamber in which the company should get due consideration. It is no argument to say that the Midland Railway Company should be brought under the provisions of the Bill because the Government have to submit to the same provisions.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If the amendment is carried the Midland Railway Company will be an owner within the meaning of the Bill, and will be compelled to carry out all the provisions of the measure except that they will not be subject to the rating. If the company do not eradicate rabbits on their land the Government will do it for them and will recover the cost from them. Is it a fair thing that the whole of the company's land should be subject to a rateable charge imposed by two or three small landholders who will fix the highest rate they can? The company have to report the rabbits on their land and have to eradicate those rabbits, and the only protection they are to get is protection from the publican and the storekeeper and the sinner, who will fix the local rating.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I support the proposal of the Minister. If hon. members will recall what was stated previously in regard to the Midland Railway Company, I think the Minister's modification will be carried. If there is any company at all entitled to consideration it is undoubtedly the Midland Railway Company. To suggest that the company is wealthy is altogether misleading.

Hon. J. Mills: Well, they are a strong company.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: They are not. They have had a chequered career. We have to consider the position of those people who have

invested a large sum of money in this State, and have not had a single penny back. That is the position of the shareholders of the Midland Railway Company to-day. They would be very glad to get out.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: They will have a chance now under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Bill.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Probably. But it is our duty to give consideration to the claims of a body of people whom a previous Government succeeded in inducing to come out here and invest their money. The railway was built by their own money, and it is only of late years that a market has been found for some of their lands. The company are liable to all the penalties under the Bill.

Hon. H. J. SAUNDERS: I have been here a great many years, and I know a good deal about the Midland Railway Company, a number of those who originally started that scheme being old personal friends of mine. I can vouch for what Mr. Nicholson has said in regard to the company. I do not believe that the shareholders have ever received a penny out of their investment. I support the Minister's modification.

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Committee really is the subject of the modification of the amendment proposed by Mr. Baxter as against the original amendment.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: It is my intention to oppose the modification. Whilst listening to the debate on the Vermin Bill when that measure was before the House I had ample opportunity to form the opinion that there is no special need to single out the Midland Railway Company for special treatment. It has been urged that the Midland Railway Company are not a rich company, but many of the settlers who have taken up land from the Midland Company are not rich either. Perhaps the best course would be, notwithstanding the length of time for which this measure has been under consideration, to drop it again, and see whether it is not possible to draft something that would mete out justice not only to the Midland Railway Company, but also to the settlers I have mentioned in this connection. We know the Bill makes special provision for certain portions of the State, but there is good reason for the making of such special provisions. Again, the Bill proposes to exempt certain lands of the Midland Railway Company from rating. But those lands adjoin the holdings of settlers on Midland lands. Where is the fairness in the discrimination between these people and the company?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I wish to ask Mr. Holmes through you, Mr. Chairman, whether he is satisfied with the clause as it stands? If the Minister would say even that the company are strongly opposed to this provision, it would be some help. But according to the Minister the company do not even know that this clause is proposed. Is that a reasonable way to treat the company? They will have more reason than ever to say that they are not treated fairly. If Mr. Holmes is satisfied, I shall be ready to support the motion.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: As regards the amendment, I think half a loaf is better than no bread. I was in favour of the previous amendment, exempting the Midland Railway Company from many of the drastic provisions of this measure. However, let us put the Midland Railway Company under the thumb of the Government, and not under the thumb of the publican and the sinner. As regards the submission of this clause to the Midland Railway Company, they do not care much what happens in this State, where, they recognise, they have very few friends. Let the Government or the Rabbit Department administer the measure as regards the Midland Railway Company, and not irresponsible boards.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Government have given the Midland Railway Company every consideration. The Government are not concerned with the past, but are concerned with treating the company fairly under this Bill, and that will be achieved by the carrying of the amendment. The most important question is not the Midland Railway Company, but the eradication of rabbits throughout the State, including the Midland lands. The lands held by the company under their concession now return no revenue. The best of the Midland lands have been disposed of, and the remainder is poor country from which there is not likely to be any considerable revenue for years. The amendment put forward, to which I have assented on behalf of the Government, is reasonable to the company.

Question put and passed; the modification made.

The CHAIRMAN: Amendment No. 8.—Clause 16. transpose the proviso to Subclause (6) to Subclause (3). The Assembly's reason for not agreeing is "The amendment is deemed unnecessary, as the clause expresses the sense sought to be conveyed."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The proviso was added to Subclause 3 by the Legislative Assembly on Recommendation of the Bill. The object of the amendment made by the Council was to carry out the idea better. I have had the matter gone into, and it does not make much difference either way. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: Amendment No. 19.—Clause 76, Subclause (4), paragraph (b), strike out the words "shall be assessed according to the benefits derived, and to be derived, from the fence." The reason given for not agreeing to the amendment is as follows:—"No. 18 makes this amendment unnecessary."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It would be very difficult to arrive at the benefits derived from a fence. I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: The next amendment is in Clause 91.—Add the words "and demonstrate to the owners, if required, the best methods of getting rid of the vermin."

The Assembly's reason for not agreeing to the amendment is that "The words are not necessary, as the clause is complete without the amendment."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: The next amendment is to Clause 94.—After the word "vermin," in line ten, insert the words "care shall be exercised that the lives of stock, pigs, and poultry are not endangered." The Assembly's reason for not agreeing to the amendment is that "It is not deemed wise to merely express mere advice without sanction in legislative enactments."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

The CHAIRMAN: The next amendment is to add a new clause, to stand as 96 as follows:—" (1) It shall be the duty of the board to secure the enforcement against all owners and occupiers of holdings within its district of the provisions of this Act relating to the suppression and destruction of vermin." The Assembly's reasons for not agreeing to the amendment are that "The provisions in this amendment are already provided for."

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move—

That the amendment be insisted on.

In no part of the State is it mandatory for the boards to carry out the provisions of this Act. We find there is a tendency on the part of the governing bodies to escape administering the Act, and it is important that there should be some such mandatory clause as this. If the clause is not carried the measure will be worthless in that direction.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment insisted on.

[The Deputy President resumed the Chair.]

Re-committal.

Resolutions reported.

On motion by Hon. J. NICHOLSON, Message recommitted for the purpose of further considering amendment No. 5.

In Committee.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; the Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

No. 5.—Clause 3, in the definition of "holding" after the word "lease" in line 4 insert "including or granting right to the surface of the land":

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move as an alternative to the amendment—

That the words "or other lease" in the definition of "holding" be struck out.

It was explained by the Minister that it was not intended that the measure should apply to leases other than those mentioned where one had the right to the surface of the land.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I oppose the amendment because it is important that those words should not be struck out.

Amendment put and negatived.

[The Deputy President resumed the Chair.]

Resolution reported and a Message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—DISCHARGED SOLDIERS' SETTLEMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [9.58]: I have no wish to delay the House or to speak at any length on this measure. I congratulate the Government on having brought forward the Bill at last. I want to state my belief that the administration in connection with the repatriation of returned soldiers, has not been what it should be, and that what we want is better administration and better arrangements made so that soldiers may be more quickly settled. At the end of last session, in speaking to the motion of Mr. Ewing on this subject, I read out a letter that I had just received from Mr. Camm, who was then in charge under the Soldiers' Settlement Board. When men passed the Land Qualification Board they were then sent on to the Returned Soldiers' Settlement Board, and all who came into contact with Mr. Camm, whether they were soldiers or others who were interested in seeing soldiers rapidly settled on the land, they were firmly impressed that Mr. Camm was an extremely energetic and competent officer, and that he was very familiar with all parts of the State, and having sympathy with the returned men he seemed to be doing excellent work. I read out in that debate the letter which I said showed, from its contents, the verbal statements which had been made to me by Ministers were not being carried into effect in connection with the revaluation of land in the hands of the Agricultural Bank, before they were offered for resettlement, revaluation in accordance with their present day value—for the lands had deteriorated in value in many instances since they reverted to the bank. The Minister had told me that it was not the policy of the Government to retain any land and endeavour to get rid of it at its book value, but their policy was to get rid of it at its present day value, and that he had left a minute to that effect. On page 1901 of "Hansard" of last session it will be seen that the letter shows that the verbal statements were not being carried into effect. Another statement had been made that there were lists of these suitable forfeited farms that had reverted to the bank, lists which were available for perusal so that soldiers could look at them, inspect the localities, and inspect farms in desirable localities. This letter stated that there were no separate lists. After that debate the whole matter was, however, reorganised. I had occasion to see the Minister and the Premier in connection with returned sol-

diers, who were desirous of getting land. Shortly after this we learnt from the Press that there had been a meeting of Ministers, and that a new board had been formed. Then we heard that Mr. Camm had been moved. I suppose he was too energetic. This seemed to be another instance of competent, pushing, and energetic officers being placed where their energies could not cause too much disturbance to those who desired to proceed somewhat more slowly. It was similar to the instance of Dr. Stoward which I dealt with last session, for Mr. Camm was located at some place where he could not do too much good work. A successor was appointed to Mr. Camm, and now the state of affairs is different from what it was at that time. I have no knowledge that it is any better, or as good as it was then. One thing which appealed to me in the interview with the Premier, and in connection with the difficulty in settling these men, was that the Premier stated that much as they might desire, by writing minutes to the bank, that properties should be revalued, the matter ended there, because the Government were powerless to compel the bank to have their properties revalued. If that state of affairs exists, it needs consideration and action. If these revaluations cannot be made, and the properties made available for occupation by returned men in localities and in circumstances which are suitable for them to be comfortably settled and where they can make good, the whole matter needs inquiry. Amongst the contributions to the Press there appeared in the "West Australian" on 29th November a communication from the Deputy Comptroller of Repatriation in this State, Colonel Tilney, in which he reviewed the letter written by an ex-private of the 48th battalion. In that he said the writer implied that men are induced by the department to remain in Perth while unemployed; this was not so, as the department was represented in country centres by repatriation committees, whose duty it was to endeavour to repatriate all returned soldiers in their own areas. That may be the object, but the method under which the repatriation proceeds, and the difficulties which are put in the way of returned men getting their sustenance regularly after it has been awarded to them, all tend to bring returned men to Perth or its immediate suburbs, so that they can be at hand for receiving their sustenance. I say that advisedly, because there is the instance of the returned man, Mr. Gladstone, with regard to whom I asked a question in the House recently. No doubt Mr. Gladstone did not care much about having his name brought forward. It is not for us to endeavour to get individual cases righted, but when such cases as this occur it shows that the administration is not what it should be. No doubt if I had moved privately I could have had the matter rectified, and it was rectified, as soon as some stir was made about it. If this could happen to a good and first-class man, I say these things should be brought forward, and the administration shown up, in order that some other man, who perhaps does not know a member of

Parliament and has no one to act for him, may not have to put up with the same sort of thing. It is, therefore, incumbent upon me, I think, to bring forward such cases, as they show that the administration is not what it should be, in order that it may be improved, and I hope perfected. This man about July last asked me how to proceed. I am fully acquainted with the procedure and said, "The first thing to do is to apply to the Land Qualification Board." He did that, and almost immediately was passed by the board. He was told to come down here. He got his fare down, and made application here for a parcel of land. He received his sustenance, but had to wait here for about a fortnight in connection with his application for a block on the Yandanooka estate. He was not the successful applicant, and had to make another application. In connection with his first application he got no word as to the result of it until after he had gone to Wagin. They told him they would advise him of the result of the application and would see that the sustenance was sent on to him. He received no word as to whether he was successful or not, until he sent a reply paid telegram to the Returned Soldiers' Settlement Board. He was not successful, and his sustenance did not go on. He came to Perth to make another application. He is a married man, but was kept for a month without his sustenance. To this day he has not got it for the time that he was waiting for the land. He has not got it because he will not make a fuss about it. The Lands Department communicated with the Repatriation Department, and told them he had been unsuccessful, and that the sustenance should go on.

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister): Has he any family?

Hon. H. STEWART: No. On 2nd November he wrote to me, but I did not get his letter until about the 8th November. He says—

I wonder if you would see if you could hurry up the Repatriation Department re my sustenance. I made application for it five weeks ago, and they told me it would be all right to go to Mingenew, and it would be posted to me. Since then I have heard nothing more, although I wrote about it 10 days ago.

It was about the 9th November that I consulted the clerk as to whether I could ask a question, mentioning the name concerned, with the object of getting information with regard to the procedure. Notice of this question was given on the 12th November, but by the 15th November my correspondent was able to write that he had received a cheque for his sustenance. Why should that man have been kept waiting for five weeks, during which he was spending his accumulated savings, which should have been going into his farm? He had to keep himself all that time, and his sustenance was withheld from him.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is the fault of the Repatriation Board and not the Land Settlement Board.

Hon. H. STEWART: I quite understand it is not a matter for the State Department.

The Federal representative of the Repatriation Department, however, works in conjunction with the State department. I think the least we could expect is that the two departments should work in harmony, and be mutually helpful to each other.

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister): The State has no control over that department.

Hon. H. STEWART: The Lands Department undertook to communicate with the Comptroller of the Repatriation Department, and to notify him that this man had not been successful and that the sustenance should go on. If that had been done it would have been helpful to him.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Repatriation Department and not the State Department are responsible for the sustenance.

Hon. H. STEWART: I understand that. The Repatriation Department should have kept the sustenance on until this man obtained his land. He was not in Perth to receive his sustenance, and the Federal Repatriation Department said that if the Lands Department advised them that this soldier had not obtained his land, the sustenance would go on, and that they would give them his new address. They were dependent upon the Lands Department for this information. I do not blame the Lands Department, but I say there is something wrong between the two. I realise that this is the avenue in which the State is permitted to act by the Federal authorities, but it seems to me that, if they so desire, the State Government could go further and assist in the repatriation of men in addition to their settlement on the land. I know they have done a good deal in connection with the education of soldiers' children. I believe no Government could have greater sympathy for our returned men than the members of the present Government, because they are so well and nobly represented themselves in the Australian Imperial Forces. I mean represented by their own kith and kin. But it seems to me that an opportunity was missed before the Federal Government went into all the avenues of taxation, now covered, before there was an entertainment tax. I think our Treasurer could have started there, or even with a luxury tax. He could have taxed the section of the community which is best able to bear it, and in that way he could have raised funds to help in the repatriation of soldiers. And with the funds so obtained the Government might have been able to go farther than the settlement of soldiers on the land and the vocational training work in which they are giving assistance, and also in further extending the facilities they are helping to provide, as for example in the fitting out of prospecting parties of soldiers. Even after the Federal Government came in with an entertainment tax, but while the smaller entertainments were still exempt, the State Treasurer could have come in on those smaller entertainments with a tax, and thus have raised some money for repatriation purposes. Since he missed those opportunities, the Federal Government have snapped them. I think the State Treasurer could help the repatriation of soldiers other than those on the land by raising money by, say, a tax on

luxuries or indulgences enjoyed by the stay-at-home community. I understand that since there has been a land qualification board and a returned soldier settlement board, the number of men who have passed the qualification test is largely in excess of the number that have been settled on the land. I believe there are probably from 100 or 150 to 200 men who have passed the land qualification board and are awaiting land. If that is the case, it behoves the Government to get a move on and help those men to acquire land.

Hon. J. Ewing: Surely that is not the truth?

Hon. H. STEWART: It was true six months ago. I cannot vouch for the figures now, but I believe conditions are probably similar. Clause 16, I think, goes too far in providing that all moneys advanced by the board or by the Agricultural Bank, with interest thereon till repaid, shall be a charge on the crops and chattels of the discharged soldier to whom such advances have been made. The provision "and chattels" is unnecessarily harsh. The Government would be adequately protected if instead of "chattels" we had "stock and machinery or plant." Where we are satisfied that the administration in respect of returned soldiers is not what it should be, it behoves us to direct attention to it, so that the returned soldiers shall not be subjected to avoidable delays or disabilities.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [10.22]: In common with everyone in the community we are deeply interested in this question, and most anxious to do the proper thing both for the men and for the State. My reading of the Bill brings me to the conclusion that it is going to be unsatisfactory to the soldiers and uncommonly dangerous for the State from the cash point of view. Let us recall that the Federal Government are responsible for the returned soldiers. They have accepted that responsibility fully. Why, then, does the State now put itself in the position that the financial burden, if there is a failure, will rest on Western Australia and not on the Commonwealth? We are guaranteeing the money which the Commonwealth Government are to advance. I understand the Commonwealth Government will make certain advances at current rate of interest to the Government of Western Australia in connection with this land settlement, and that we guarantee the interest. I say that is a very improper way of handling the subject, both from the soldiers' point of view and from the point of view of the State. Although the Federal Government have taken the responsibility in regard to the returned soldiers, I do not see that thereby Western Australia has escaped its responsibilities. We are anxious to do all in our power to assist in this work. But in order to put the position quite clearly and avoid this dual control already referred to by Mr. Stewart and confirmed by the Honorary Minister, who intimated that as a State we have no control over repatriation, surely the proper attitude for the State department would have been to say to the Federal Government, "We will do everything we can to assist you. We are more anxious than any other State to see our lauds settled. We have

more unalienated land than any other State, but we do not wish to take on a responsibility which we ought not to bear and which we cannot bear, and therefore, will you put us, the State Government, in exactly the same position as a private landholder or private land agent, so that the whole financial responsibility and the moral responsibility will be upon you, that no one single soldier will go on the land except on the recommendation of a Federal officer. Then the position will be clearly established. We have the land ready, we have skilled officers, we are anxious to get a fair price for the land, but not the least anxious to take the soldier down or to take you down, but we wish the responsibility for putting the soldier on the land and financing him to rest upon you, the Federal Government, who have openly told us that you accept the responsibility." I ask hon. members to look at Clause 15. If I understand that aright, it means that money will be advanced by the Commonwealth Government to the State Government at current rate of interest. I thank the leader of the House for those nods he gives, but it is very important that one should be right in these matters. I ask hon. members to listen to this. It is not a question of party Government, but it is the one object of helping the soldiers and of protecting the State of Western Australia. The leader of the House has told us in words of his own that that is the procedure—the Federal Government will advance to the State at current rate of interest. But what is going to be current rate of interest? It is uncommonly near six per cent. The important thing is to know what the current rate will be, and most of us agree that it is not going to be less than six per cent. It certainly cannot be five per cent.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I think it will be less than six per cent.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I certainly hope so, and I do not wish to put anything into the picture that will make it darker than it really should be. Let us assume a rate of five per cent. Somebody is going to lose over it if the rate is five per cent. Western Australia gets that money—whether a million sterling or a hundred pounds does not matter—at five per cent. from the Commonwealth Government. What are we going to do with it? Advance it out to the soldier and only charge him for such advance—and very properly too—not more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the first year, four per cent. for the second year, and so on. It is a very proper provision for the soldier that he should not be compelled to pay the full rate of interest, or to repay the capital. But who is going to lose on the deal? We get the money at five per cent., and we are going to charge the soldier $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the first year. Who is going to make up the difference of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.?

The Colonial Secretary: The Commonwealth and the State, in equal moieties.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Why should Western Australia make up one moiety? The responsibility has been acknowledged by the

Federal Government. They should carry their burden. They are ready to carry their burden. We cannot carry their burden. If we attempt to do so, it simply means one more stone round our neck. That is why I do not like this Bill. I put these things forward with some hesitation, because I know hon. members are very keen about this measure—just as keen as I am. But I fail to see how Western Australia is going to be fairly treated, or how the soldiers are going to be fairly treated. The best commentary on this Bill is that Industries Assistance Board report to which I have referred. I tried to get hold of the copy laid on the Table, but someone else has possession of it. It is greatly to be regretted that a lot of those reports are not circulated.

Hon. J. Ewing: It is not printed.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: No; but I am not going to make a formal complaint about that, though I regret extremely that the report is not before us now, because for the understanding of the question of land settlement in Western Australia, and of the financial responsibility in which we have involved ourselves, that report is essential. Possibly, as one who wishes to save time, I had better stop there. But I hope I have made myself clear to hon. members. I hope that any hon. member who has been good enough to listen to me will give consideration to that aspect of the question. No one will be better pleased than myself if events turn out somewhat differently from what I expect. However, it is the broad principle of dealing with this affair, in which both our honour and our interests are involved. Getting information as to the position, coupled with the knowledge we ought to have of what is going on in the country, and remembering the references made to the Federal factor in this matter by the Colonial Secretary in his admirable speech introducing the Bill, I must confess my belief that that aspect of the question deserves the very fullest consideration of hon. members. The other point which possibly does not come into the Committee stage, or possibly not into the second reading stage, of this Bill, although it must be mentioned, is as regards soldiers other than those coming under this Bill. One does not expect the impossible, and therefore one does not expect to find in what is practically a Land Bill any reference to soldiers who cannot or will not take up land. But what is the position so far as they are concerned? They cannot, evidently, be treated worse than the land applicant soldier. They ought to be, and must be, put on the same kind of terms, on terms of equality with the soldier who applies for land. Say a soldier wishes to go in for pearl fishing; I do not see how we can say to him, "While we are willing to advance £500 to the soldier applying for land, we will not give a penny piece to you."

The Colonial Secretary: Neither is that done.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: But what will it involve in the way of financial liability if Western Australia is going—

The Colonial Secretary: The Federal Government do that.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That is very valuable information, but it is all the more reason why the Federal Government should be asked to do the same as regards land settlement. I will leave that matter to the consideration of hon. members who will deal with the subject from other points of view. We are all interested in the soldiers, and I am likewise interested in the land question, to which I have given some little attention; and I must own that this Bill alarms me. There is a possible solution of this Bill, though it is with some trepidation that I advance that solution. One does not like to suggest that in this matter the Government are actuated by any but the highest motives. I think that must be so; I am sure I think it is so. But we know the frailty of human nature, and it is possible, in view of the financial embarrassment of the Colonial Treasurer, of the Government, and of the country, that the Government may say to themselves, "We will take all the money we can get from the Federal Government, and never mind the terms." I hesitate to suggest that explanation, but it seems to me the only possible explanation of our taking such a serious responsibility on our shoulders. I will try and put the matter in the best way I can, because I at once admit that the Government must be actuated by high motives in dealing with the soldiers. But I think the Government must be carried away with this idea, "We are in difficulties with land settlement in Western Australia at present, but if we can get more cash to carry on with all will be well." In taking that view they would be justified to a certain extent, having regard to the history of the land industry in Australia. Anyone acquainted with that history knows perfectly well that these terrible reversals do occur. There are banks and rabbits and droughts, but if one can carry on one gets up again and forgets all about the bad conditions of the past. The Government possibly are carried away with the idea that the whole country is committed to such an enormous expense in a policy of land settlement, and our financial position, to say nothing of the reputation of the Government, is so completely at stake, that we must make one more desperate effort to pull things together, and if we do not succeed, well, then it is going to be the deluge. That is my reading of the Bill before the House. I will withdraw anything that hurts the susceptibilities of the Government. If I have made a single suggestion that there is any bad motive, or any deliberate attempt to play a trick either on the country or on the soldier, I withdraw the suggestion. If I have conveyed even a hint of that kind, I withdraw it unreservedly. But I do say that the points of view I have mentioned call for consideration. First of all, there is the Federal responsibility. There is the danger involved to this State by the proposals of this

Bill. Thirdly, there is the fact that all soldiers other than land applicants are, as admitted by the leader of this House, to receive equal treatment with the land applicants. As regards financial responsibility for soldiers other than land applicants, the State Government have none.

Hon. J. EWING: But they can take the responsibility if they like.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: But they are not going to do so. Why should they? They have enough responsibility under this Bill. I have tried to see whether the opinions I have expressed could be incorporated in this measure, whether by Committee work they could be incorporated in it, assuming for the moment that I can induce hon. members to look at the matter from that point of view. I have studied the Bill with a view to whether it can be amended in those directions. But I doubt very much whether, even with the most skilled assistance, which, fortunately, we have available here, it would be possible to incorporate in this Bill, as it stands, the views I have put forward. I do not think they can be incorporated in the Bill and therefore my remarks in Committee will be very brief indeed. I sincerely trust that members who have been good enough to listen to what I have said will look into that aspect of the matter and will see whether there is not a good deal to be considered in the attitude I have taken up and the suggestions I have ventured to make.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [10.47]: In accordance with the wish expressed by the leader of the House that we should get on as far as possible with this Bill to-night, I intend to make a few remarks, notwithstanding the fact that we have had a long sitting and that most of us feel somewhat weary. At the same time I realise that the Bill is of such great importance that it behoves members, even at some disadvantage to themselves, to do all they possibly can to facilitate the passage of the measure with as little delay as possible. I was much impressed and deeply interested by the remarks made by the Colonial Secretary when he moved the second reading of the Bill. I say without hesitation it was a privilege to hon. members to have the opportunity of listening to that gentleman's magnificent address. I realise that much of the success of this Bill will depend upon the composition of the board which it is proposed to appoint. In supporting the second reading I feel sure that hon. members will realise we have a mandate from the people whom we represent to do all we can in the direction of helping returned soldiers. When we realise the responses which Western Australian has made during the past four years in every direction we surely will not fail at this juncture to do our duty in the direction of making preparation, in fact more than the Bill proposes, if it is within our power to do so to assist those who fought so gallantly and who won such glory for Australia and Western Australia in particular. I said Western Australia in particular, because I realise that Western Australians who volunteered in such great numbers fought so well

in the Eleventh and Sixteenth Battalions and in the artillery and other arms of the service. We feel proud that we have been able to do something in the direction of keeping the wheels of industry moving while those brave men were doing their duty on the battlefields of Europe and Palestine. The Colonial Secretary remarked that it was the duty of everyone to find satisfactory and remunerative employment for the returned men. We realise that we all have that duty to perform, notwithstanding the fact that it has been pointed out that we are passing through times of great stress and financial trouble. But we realise also that whilst we have been doing our part to keep those men provided with all the necessaries, we have not yet finished our duty, and that duty will not be completed until we have done whatever we can to reinstate those men in civil life and provide them with the means of livelihood suitable to their physical conditions. I am very pleased indeed also that the Bill embraces men from New Zealand. Last year it was my privilege to be in the Dominion, and during my wanderings there I came across soldiers who then had returned and who were doing home service duty. It was surprising to me to find that many of the men whom I met had a knowledge at that time of the conditions which were prevailing in Western Australia as to the acquiring of land, the inducements which were being offered by the Government, and many of them realised that they could do better by leaving New Zealand and coming to Western Australia to settle on the land. I am pleased, therefore, that the Bill proposes to extend to soldiers from other parts of the Commonwealth and New Zealand the same facilities for acquiring land in Western Australia. I realise that the State Parliament has a duty to perform, and it is regrettable that we have not earlier entered upon our duties in that direction. Mr. Cornell spoke of the disappointments which were being felt by returned men who were going about from place to place endeavouring to find employment but without success. I know that many must be feeling keen disappointment at the conditions prevailing at the present time, but it is not possible for merchants and others to always find employment for men when they come along. I know in my own small way I have been obliged, to my sorrow, to turn away a number of men who have applied to me for work. I do think, however, that the opportunity could be availed of to give relief if the Government were to awake to the possibilities of providing employment for those men who are physically capable of clearing the land which is to be occupied later on by returned soldiers. There is a good deal of land in this State that could be cleared without the employment of very arduous manual labour. There is land in the ranges close by which is highly suitable for fruit culture and on which the Government have already spent some money by way of surveying and classifying, and it now awaits clearing before men can be placed on it. Unless this land is cleared within the next few months, it means that a whole year will pass before the men can be settled on the fertile

gullies there and make a commencement in the way of earning their livelihood. The State Government could well spend some of the money which they have at their disposal by finding employment for those men who are willing and able to take on that kind of work. The Colonial Secretary remarked that the period of repatriation should be looked upon as a period of opportunities. I quite realise that. It should be a period of opportunities, but when one takes into consideration the fact that this Bill only provides opportunities in a certain direction, I think that the Government can very well turn their attention to other avenues. We cannot expect all these returned men to be ready and willing to enter upon a course of instruction as provided for in Clause 9 of the Bill, whereby they would have to obtain a qualification certificate before they were permitted to enter upon even the conditions for acquiring land. We cannot expect all returned men to go in for the cultivation of land. There are other avenues which will have to be opened up and other means of employment will have to be provided. I am given to understand that on the troop ships, before the disembarkation of the men, the question is asked the men what kind of work they would like to engage on. It is surprising to find the number and variety of answers which are given. A man called upon me a few days ago and he said he was tired of waiting for a reply to the form which he had filled in. This man was a pastrycook; he was qualified in all branches of that work, and he stated he would like to be assisted in the direction of establishing a small business. He waited until he was tired of waiting and eventually was successful in getting employment, not in his own line of business, but at a sufficiently remunerative wage to enable him to make a home for his wife and family. That is only an illustration, but the fact remains that there are many avenues which have not been exploited and which have not been considered to enable the returned men to obtain a livelihood. The Bill which is before us is worthy of our best consideration and support, and we can only hope that when in Committee the clauses will receive such attention that the Bill will be made all the better for the close consideration which it will be given. The period of demobilisation must not be a period of stagnation. I agree with that. This can best be brought about when we take into consideration the conditions prevailing. Western Australia, and Australia generally, have performed a gallant part, and those who remained behind have helped to supply the silver bullets which were necessary to carry on to a successful issue the war which has terminated to our entire satisfaction. Whilst Great Britain and her Allies were not responsible for the war, and considering the fact that the cities of the German Empire were not devastated as the cities of France were, it seems to me that it would be only a just thing, and our due, that when the terms of peace are being considered, Australia should be indemnified to the extent of the interest and sinking fund she has become liable for, and that one of the conditions laid down by our representatives at the Peace Conference

should be that this matter should be taken into consideration. I am not in order in stating this on the floor of the House, but I realise, after long consideration, that it would be just for the future generations of Australia that they should not be saddled with the expense of finding interest and sinking fund for something like £300,000,000 sterling, an expenditure which has been brought about through no fault of our own. Those who have been the means of causing us to spend such an enormous sum of money, and who have been the means of our sacrificing the best of our manhood and the flower of our land, should be made to pay the piper after having called the tune. I hope we will have the satisfaction, when the peace terms are fully considered, of Australia being indemnified to the extent, as I have said, of her interest and sinking fund, and that this will be part and parcel of the indemnity. Mr. Lynn also referred to the soldiers who enlisted having debts or mortgages on their properties. I realise that this should be one of the factors brought prominently under the notice of the board when this particular board is formed, and that it should consider the just claims of all those brought under its notice. There is also another point which has been lost sight of. There is a particular instance known to hon. members in which the father consented to his sons going to the war. He probably had engaged in tilling the land and in farming operations, relying upon the energies and strength of his boys to enable him to get through successfully. When his sons heard their country's call they went away and paid the supreme sacrifice. Surely this must be a case worthy of attention on the part of the board, when they are considering the provisions of the Bill, and as to how far the claims of parents, such as the father I have mentioned, should receive just consideration. I trust these points will be noted by the leader of the House, and if he can see his way clear to embody them by means of amendments in Committee, they will have my favourable consideration and support. I am heartily in accord with the Bill so far as it goes. I am sorry it does not provide ways and means whereby employment may be furnished, for other men, who are just as much entitled to consideration as those who go upon the land. I hope the Bill will pass through its different stages this session, and that we will have the satisfaction of knowing that we have done something towards helping these men when they return and assisting them into civil life once again. I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Greig, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.