

voting could be adopted in a district not divided into wards. Otherwise, where more than one candidate is to be elected there is great difficulty in counting the votes. I have been assured that at one election in this State where two positions had to be filled, it took no less than 25 counts of the votes to arrive at the result. If that is so, it would be extremely difficult in many places for the officials of the local authorities to count the votes. Hon. members will observe that the system of preferential voting proposed by this Bill is the same as that adopted for Parliamentary elections. The adoption of preferential voting in municipal elections will largely do away with that system which is a curse to-day—justices of the peace going around municipalities with ballot papers and filling them up with the names of their personal friends. A municipal voter has now a month in which to vote before the election is held, but under preferential voting only seven days will elapse between nomination and election, and that will be the limit of time during which ballot papers can be hawked about. Thus the justice of the peace will be largely prevented from canvassing for personal friends, as occasionally he does in return for payment. The clause dealing with that matter has been omitted from the Bill, but I shall introduce it if the measure passes the second reading. Hon. members will observe that I have restricted the Bill to a very few matters, my chief object being to allow the House to express an opinion on the principle of one ratepayer one vote. It is the fairest system that can be adopted; it is fair to the property owner, fair to the occupier, and fair to all persons concerned in the election of members of municipal bodies. Under the present municipal law property owners are protected so far as loans are concerned, because the Municipalities Act provides that on the question of a loan only property owners may vote, the reason being that their property is to be mortgaged for repayment of the loan. But as regards the management of the municipality and the conduct of municipal affairs, the owner, unless he is an occupier, has no vote at all. An owner who is not an occupier cannot vote in the election of mayor and councillors. I consider that this Bill will be the means of doing away with a good deal of the unfairness which now exists. Why should one man have the right to cast four votes for mayor?

The Minister for Works: Why should he not?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I will tell the Minister why not. Very few of the men who have the right to cast four votes for mayor are owners of property. The majority of them are occupiers. Now, an occupier has not so large an interest at stake in the municipality as has the owner, who to-day can cast only one vote. Every penny that a man possesses has been spent in building a home for himself and he resides in it,

and that man, as the owner of the property, is entitled to exercise one vote only. The advancement of the district is to him a matter of much greater importance than it is to the occupier of a place, and that occupier perhaps has the right to cast four votes. That occupier may not have any special interest in the municipality at all. The position is unfair, unjust, and it is not equitable, and consequently we do not get the best administration in connection with our municipal system. The Bill which I am introducing will remedy that defect. In New South Wales a measure on similar lines has been introduced. That is the most populous State in the Commonwealth and it has been realised there that the system which has been in force in the past has been detrimental to the best interests of the State, and consequently they have altered the system of voting. They are following up the practice adopted in New Zealand, South Australia and in other countries of the world except Victoria, Western Australia and a portion of Queensland. I can confidently ask hon. members to agree to the Bill which will provide for a system in force in nearly every part of the world. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Works the debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 2nd October, 1919.

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

POINT OF ORDER—PAPERS ORDERED.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [4.33]: May I draw your attention, Mr. President, to a matter which affects the rights of this House? On the 11th September last the Council passed, at my instance, the following resolution:—

That all papers in connection with the amended regulations under the Explosives Act, 1895, laid on the Table of the House

by the Minister for Education on the 2nd September, 1919, be laid on the Table of the House.

A new regulation under the Explosives Act had been gazetted, and I wanted to know exactly what that regulation meant. I had previously, on the 14th August, asked the Minister for Education the following question:—

What restrictions or regulations are in operation, or are likely to be brought into operation, with reference to the use of sodium nitrate in nitro-glycerine explosives?

The Minister replied—

Regulations are now being framed and will be gazetted on Friday next, permitting the use of sodium nitrate in mining explosives, provided that the presence of that compound is indicated in the marking of the cases.

That is a definite reply to a definite question.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member must, please, for both our sakes, state his point of order as shortly as possible.

Hon. H. STEWART: This House ordered the laying on the Table of certain papers. My object in moving for their production was that I, and others interested, should be able to ascertain the exact effect of the amended regulations before they came into force. After the lapse of more than a fortnight, Mines Department file 918/19, referring to mining stores, explosives, etc., was laid on the Table yesterday. On going through the file I found that the three papers which would give the information necessary for an understanding of the amended regulations had been removed from the file, and in lieu of them, presumably a "cross reference sheet" had been inserted, reading—

Note.—Confidential Order in Council defining the composition of S.N. gellignite dynamite and P.N. gelatine dynamite withdrawn and put up in confidential file No. Mines 705/13.

I am being put to endless trouble to obtain the information I need, and I ask your ruling, Sir, as to whether the order of the House for the production of the whole of the papers is complied with by the production of a file from which certain documents are missing

The PRESIDENT [4.35]: The circumstances relating to the production of papers are laid down on pages 509 and 510, of "May," Tenth Edition, and are as follows:—

If parties neglect to make returns in reasonable time, they are ordered to make them forthwith; or so much of returns as has not been made. If they continue to withhold them, they are ordered to attend at the bar of the House; and, unless they satisfactorily explain the cause of their neglect, and comply with the order of the House, they will be cen-

sured or punished according to the circumstances of the case.

There are, however, certain modifying circumstances which are alluded to—

Returns may be moved for, either by order or address, relating to any public matter, in which the House or the Crown has jurisdiction. . . . The papers and correspondence sought from Government departments should be of a public and official character, and not private or confidential. . . . However ample the power of each House to enforce the production of papers, a sufficient cause must be shown for the exercise of that power; and if considerations of public policy can be urged against a motion for papers, it is either withdrawn, or otherwise dealt with according to the judgment of the House. My ruling in this question is that unless the leader of the House can show that the production of these papers is contrary to public policy, the papers should be produced.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.38]: I have no knowledge that any papers have been removed from the file in question, and of course it is not practicable for me to reply this afternoon. Mr. Stewart did bring to my notice, just before the House met, the fact that certain papers are missing, and I observe that they have been removed from the file on the ground that they are of a confidential nature. I will have the matter inquired into before the next sitting of the House, and will then report.

PAPERS—STATE SAWMILLS, PROJECTED SALE.

Hon. J. DUFFELL (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.40]: I move—

That all papers connected with the proposed sale of the State sawmills to a French company be laid on the Table of the House.

The papers referred to have already been laid on the Table of another place, and I understand that this Chamber may be called upon to deal with the important question of the sale of the State Sawmills. I understand the Government themselves have no objection to the production of the papers here, and I consider it necessary that members of this Chamber should have the benefit of perusing those papers, so that they may familiarise themselves with all matters which have led up to the present position of affairs. Notwithstanding all the correspondence on the subject which has appeared in the columns of the Press, and all the resolutions which have been carried by various sections of the community, I think that a perusal of the papers for which I am moving will enable hon. members better to judge for themselves as to the advisableness or otherwise of selling that State trading concern.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.41]: The Government are

desirous of giving the House the fullest information on this subject. The papers are at present, as Mr. Duffell has mentioned, on the Table of the Legislative Assembly; but a full copy of the whole of them will be made as speedily as possible and laid on the Table of this Chamber.

Question put and passed.

BILL — KALGOORLIE FRIENDLY SOCIETIES INVESTMENT VALI- DATION.

In Committee.

Hon. J. F. Allen in the Chair; Hon. H. Millington in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short title.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: In order to test the feeling of the Committee I move an amendment—

That the words "Association of Kalgoorlie" be struck out.

The effect of this amendment will be to permit all friendly societies to be on the same level. Since we discussed this Bill yesterday, I have made some inquiries at the office of the Registrar of Friendly Societies. I did not do so in any hostile spirit to the friendly societies, because we all know the good work they are doing. But if we validate this illegal act, which is admitted in the preamble, what will be the position then? The Bill will put the Registrar of Friendly Societies right, and that is important from his point of view. But what will be the position of other societies? Supposing a society at Geraldton wish to do what Kalgoorlie has done, it will be acting illegally and the registrar will object, but it would be absurd for us to refuse to give a validating Act in that case. Why cannot we adopt a business-like course by making provision which will permit other societies to act similarly? This measure is liable to put us in a very foolish position. I am not questioning the procedure which should be adopted, but there is a file in connection with this matter and, when the registrar produced it, I declined to look at it, because one cannot be too careful about using files which the Minister might object to members seeing. Still, I think we should be permitted to see the file and ascertain the exact position of affairs. I wish to help the friendly societies but, at the same time, we must protect ourselves and not put the chemists or the general public in a false position. The amendment will mean a re-drafting of the Bill, but the effect will be merely to hold up the measure in order that other friendly societies might be put on the same footing.

Hon. J. Ewing: Have other societies done the same thing?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We are at variance with regard to the facts. We were told that the dispensary at Kalgoorlie is not selling to the outside public, but the chemists say it is. Mr. Cornell told us that not a

protest had been made by the Boulder or Kalgoorlie chemists.

Hon. J. Cornell: I told you I had heard of none.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I took it the hon. member would have heard if there had been any. Whatever the statement is, it is contradicted by the registrar of the pharmacy council.

Hon. J. Cornell: He might have received one.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I want to know if there have been any protests. The registrar of the pharmacy council says this dispensary is competing with the chemists, and this, if not contrary to the letter, is certainly contrary to the spirit of the Friendly Societies Act. In Perth no one, unless he be a member of a friendly society, can buy so much as a bottle of castor-oil from the friendly societies' dispensary.

Hon. J. Cornell: Would not the amendment make the Bill valueless?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The hon. member should not say I wish to make the Bill valueless.

Hon. J. Cornell: You might do so unintentionally.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: All the friendly societies should be put on the same footing.

Hon. J. Cornell: Your intentions might not be sound.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not interrupt. He will have an opportunity to discuss the amendment.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I merely wish to put other friendly societies on an equal footing.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: Mr. Sanderson assured me that he does not wish to kill the Bill. The measure is introduced for a specific purpose and affects one particular organisation. We are not dealing with supposititious cases. The only societies we are concerned about are those at Kalgoorlie. There will be no sense in the Bill if the reference to the very friendly societies concerned is struck out. The hon. member proposes to validate something that other friendly societies have not done. They do not require any whitewashing. The amendment will render the Bill utterly opposed to commonsense, and will provide an open invitation to other societies to infringe the Act.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Mr. Sanderson should be credited with the most laudable of intentions but, if the amendment is carried, the Bill might as well be withdrawn. The Bill has been introduced for a particular purpose; to strike out the vital words would necessitate the introduction of a new Bill, and I doubt whether we should be able to consider it. Before we validate an act of a particular body we should know the facts very fully.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The object is to explain to the Committee what they are doing if they pass the clause as it stands. Private members are copying the example of the Government by bringing us into the position that we will have no alternative

but to put through a piece of foolish legislation. This will not reflect credit on our workmanship or our knowledge. I am not going to do anything more than to make a protest and to say that the Bill should not have been introduced in the form in which we have it before us. If the hon. member will give me an assurance that he will accept the amendment which Dr. Saw outlined at the previous sitting, I will withdraw mine and say no more about it.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What would be the effect of your amendment?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It would give time to the mover to reconsider the whole position and give us time to get the papers, which would enable us to see what we were doing.

Hon. J. Cornell: And we can discuss the Bill next session.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: It may be news to the hon. member that this matter has been going on for five years. It was discovered four years ago by the Registrar of Friendly Societies and if it remained in abeyance for another 12 months no harm would be done.

Hon. J. EWING: Is it competent for me to move that the Bill be referred to a select committee?

The CHAIRMAN: No; at this stage it is too late. That course should have been taken when the second reading was passed.

Hon. J. EWING: I am very sorry for that. I would ask the hon. member in charge of the Bill to agree to report progress, so that we may get the Registrar's report and peruse it. If it were possible to refer the matter to a select committee we could get over the whole difficulty.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I suggest that the hon. member in charge of the Bill accepts the advice tendered by Mr. Ewing. I am certain it is the desire of the House to do what is right. This is only a small measure and it can be considered at any time, and with the information that Mr. Sanderson has asked for, hon. members would be in a better position to deal with the Bill early next week.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: The Bill is a very simple one but Mr. Sanderson is endeavouring to shroud it in mystery. He has endeavoured to cast suspicion on the Bill—I do not know in whose interests. The matter has not been dealt with hurriedly at all. It was introduced in another place on the 27th August. The facts were stated and published. So far as a select committee is concerned, the main witnesses would have to be brought from Kalgoolie. I do not know whether that would suit the Government. All they could tell us would be what the Registrar is well aware of. The Registrar can give hon. members any information they desire. The Friendly Societies' Association acted in a straightforward manner and accepted the advice of the Registrar. Why, then, this attempt to show that something is being done in an underhand manner? If Mr. Sanderson has any direct charge to

make, let him make it straight out and not give the impression that he could a tale unfold.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The position is quite clear. We do not require a select committee. I only want hon. members to understand what they are doing. From my way of looking at this affair, we are doing a slovenly piece of work if we pass the Bill as it stands.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing the Bill; we are discussing the title.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am speaking as a professional politician for the general public?

Hon. J. Cornell: Professional?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Yes, and I am proud of the profession, and I am trying to turn out good work. I have my responsibilities as one representing a certain section of the community and proud to consider himself a professional politician interested in his profession. I am not going to let this pass without making a protest.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—Validation of investments of society.

Hon. Dr. A. J. H. SAW: I indicated yesterday what I thought would clear up any little doubt there might be in regard to the clause. I move an amendment—

That after "company" in line 2 the words "to the extent of 300 contributing shares and 500 fully paid up shares" be inserted.

Hon. J. MILLINGTON: The amendment appears to be clear. At the same time I am afraid it would not prove as definite as the mover intends. The actual share capital held by the Kalgoolie Friendly Societies Association is 500 fully paid up shares and 300 contributing shares. The total amount of the share capital called up is £300, and the balance of the share capital has been paid out of the profits of the company. It is scarcely fair to ask me to accept the amendment, because I am not quite sure that it would not inflict a hardship upon the Kalgoolie Friendly Societies Association. They have also an interest in the £950 paid towards the share capital out of profits. Therefore, it may be that this definite amendment, if agreed to, would affect the interests of the friendly societies, seeing that they were partners in the business during the last five years when profits to that amount were made, and seeing also that the original holder has been paid £950 out of the profits. I cannot admit that all the interest the Friendly Societies Association have in the business is comprised in the terms of the amendment.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What is the total capital?

Hon. J. MILLINGTON: The price paid for the business was £1,600, which with interest made a total amount of £1,750.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I took these figures from the circulars supplied by the secretary of the Kalgoorlie friendly societies. From that circular I learn that the Kalgoorlie Friendly Societies Association is simply a shareholder in the M. Kelly Coy., Ltd., holding 300 contributing shares and 500 fully paid up shares, and is one of 60 shareholders. I do not wish to embarrass the Kalgoorlie Friendly Societies Association. I simply wish that it shall be made clear that we are validating one act of the Friendly Societies Association of Kalgoorlie. I do not wish them to put any more money into the enterprise nor to make this a precedent.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There is no need for the amendment. The Kalgoorlie Friendly Societies Association have incurred certain liabilities. I assume that upon assent being given to the Act, the action of the Kalgoorlie Friendly Societies Association will be validated. That will be the end of it. The clause does not empower them to take up any more shares.

Hon. J. EWING: They could take them up in the meantime.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The clause gives them no power to make further investments than they have already made. Why should we insert words which may conflict with the company law under which the company is working? The clause will not permit them to go any further than they have gone.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I can fully appreciate the refusal of the hon. member in charge of the Bill to accept the amendment. I do not feel inclined to support the amendment myself, because it would not have the effect of spragging the wheel, but would simply have the effect of making this Committee's work appear worse than it is now likely to do when it is finished. It has never been suggested that anything improper has been going on. Neither the proposer nor the member in charge of the Bill can tell us the position of the company. The friendly societies have committed an illegal act by investing funds in a chemist's shop. It would not make the slightest difference in regard to the illegality of the act if they had invested their money in a bootmaker's shop. The other point of view is not the amount of the actual investment, but the fact that this is a chemist's business, and when we have a chemist's business and a friendly societies' business, it does not matter whether they can put £5 or £500 into it. The point in regard to the chemist's business is not the amount of money, but whether they can go into the business of supplying medicines to themselves as well as to the general public.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the amendment. It is not a question of the class of business to be engaged in.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If the amendment were carried, it would not give what the hon. member wishes. He is not certain of his facts and there is no one in the Chamber who can give us proper information. I do not see how he can expect us to support him.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The point appears to me to be that the Kalgoorlie friendly societies have collected funds from their members for a specific purpose. As to the amount of the funds, this Committee has no knowledge, nor as to whether they have bought shares on the time payment system and have invested more money than they have funds to provide for. It is now proposed to ask, not the members of the society, but Parliament, which knows nothing whatever about it, to ratify the action which has been taken. I urge upon the hon. member to report progress so that we may see the file. If I can get further information and am satisfied with it I will support the Bill.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I ask Dr. Saw not to proceed with his amendment. He wishes to take a particular sentence from the circular we have received and embody it in the Bill. I do not see what object can be gained by putting it in. The Attorney General has supported the Bill and the Registrar of Friendly Societies is satisfied with it. Mr. Millington has also put the matter clearly before us. What purpose can be served by the amendment I do not know. The Bill does not affect any future investments, but only affects the investments actually made by these friendly societies.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I have no desire to rush the Bill through, or prevent hon. members from making any inquiries they may wish to make. The clause is definite on the point that the Bill is to validate something which has been done by the Friendly Societies Association. I think reference to the file will satisfy hon. members as to the exact interests the friendly societies hold. It is apparently the wish of hon. members, however, that progress should be reported, and I am quite willing that this should be done.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

MOTION—TRADE WITH STRAITS SETTLEMENTS AND JAVA.

Debate resumed from the 30th September on the following motion by Hon. J. Duffell: That in the opinion of this House, in view of the necessity for the encouragement of production by the provision of adequate markets, it is advisable that the Government take steps to develop trade and commerce between this State and the Straits Settlements and Java.

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [5.40]: The importance of the motion is fully recognised. The report made by the Hon. Mr. Kingsmill in July, 1917, is most interesting and informative, and has been fully appreciated by the Government. It is also of great value to the producers of the State. With the restoration of normal shipping facilities, Western Australia can look forward to a good trade

with the Straits Settlements and Java. We enjoy the happy position, geographically speaking, of being the nearest State to those markets, and we should avail ourselves of the opportunities thereby offered. The main lines of export will probably be flour and meat. There are also large fields for manufactured products, including manufactured foods and dried and preserved fruits, that can be supplied under the best conditions from this State. There are certain firms doing good business already with the Islands, particularly Messrs. Plaistowe and Co., and Messrs. Mills & Ware, both of them dealing with manufactured food lines. I understand that in their operations they have aimed, not only at sending the best of these lines, but preparing commodities suitable for the consumers in the Islands, which seems to be a very great factor in their success. As the islanders become greater consumers of meat, an extension in our meat trade should be brought about. The Government are making extensive inquiries regarding the disposal of the products of the Wyndham Meat Works, which are situated not far from the Islands. I have looked up a few figures regarding the stock export to Singapore and Java. In 1912 cattle to the value of £19,257, and sheep to the value of £10,942 were exported; and in 1917 the figures were, cattle £13,381, horses £300, and sheep £2,016. In 1918 the figures were, cattle £218, horses £1,700, and sheep £8,817. The great falling off shown is due to the fact that shipping facilities were not offering, but in that respect matters are improving every month. We have also established a good trade in flour with the islands. In respect of that trade, the Government do not claim any credit. The persons to be thanked for that trade are Messrs. Thomas & Co., and Messrs. Ockerby & Co. Both firms are represented in the islands, and have done a great deal to promote the export of Western Australian flour there. There is an order now in hand for 4,000 odd tons of flour, and the steamer which carries that order will also have a consignment of 2,000 sheep. Notwithstanding the restricted freight facilities, there has been a rapid increase in the export of flour from Western Australia to that market. In 1907 our export of flour to the islands totalled 2,464 tons, in 1912, 4,666 tons, and in 1918, 13,829 tons; and during this current year there has been about 22,000 tons exported. The flour now being supplied is manufactured from wheat purchased at 8s. per bushel, so that the return to the growers of this State is very good.

Hon. V. Hamersley: But the Eastern States have stopped that trade now.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The Eastern States have not stopped the export of flour to Java or the Straits Settlements. The Australian Wheat Board has not even stopped parcel shipments of flour, but only full shipments to Mediterranean ports. The demand from the islands and from India

for our fruits is expected to increase largely. The possibilities of such a development have been carefully watched. A few months ago, being in charge of the Agricultural Department, I sent half a dozen sample cases of apples to India. I feel sure that when the quality of our fruits becomes known in India and the islands there will be a big sale for them in those markets.

Hon. J. Nicholson: If only six cases were sent, not many people would taste the apples.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There appears to be a disposition to treat the subject with levity, but I assure the House that I took care to consign those half dozen cases to a very good commercial man, who will make the best use of them. It was only with considerable difficulty that the officers of my department were able to obtain samples of the various kinds of apples that were needed. According to the information given me by the Forestry Department, there appears to be very little opening for our timbers in the islands. The Forests Department write as follows on the point—

There does not appear to be any hope of opening up a profitable trade in timber with either the Straits Settlements or the Dutch East Indies. There are undoubtedly possibilities for opening up markets for some Western Australian products in the islands, but it cannot be hoped that timber will find a place amongst these products.

In the development of these markets, two golden rules will have to be observed. The first is that we must see that the quality of the article we export is good, and the second is that we must suit the requirements of our prospective customers. Many persons appear to be of the opinion that the inhabitants of the islands are not wealthy. That is a great mistake. Mr. Kingsmill's report has already shown the error of such a view. What may be termed the wealthy population of the islands exceeds in number the total population of Australia. It must not be thought that we can send second class products to that market. This impression has already done a great deal of harm to various lines of Western Australian goods. One shipment of goods, I know, was lying in the islands for some months, and could not be disposed of because it was not suitable for the trade.

Hon. J. Duffell: Do the Forestry Department report unfavourably as to the prospects of exporting our timbers to Java?

The HONORARY MINISTER: That is the view they take at present. The Government fully recognise the value of the general trade that awaits Western Australian producers in those markets, and are anxious to do all they can towards developing the trade. As regards the appointment of a trade commissioner, I cannot give Mr. Duffell a definite answer now. I may say that I discussed that matter with Mr. Kingsmill on his return from the islands. I will bring it before my

colleagues again. Every consideration is now being given, and will in the future be given, to the capturing of the very valuable trade which should be established with the Straits Settlements and Java.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) [5.56]: After the instructive speeches delivered by the proposer of this motion and by the Honorary Minister, it is not necessary for me to say much. The matter is specially interesting to me because I happen to be acting Consul for the Netherlands, and Java is part of the Dutch nation's possessions. When the Consul General in Melbourne requested me to take the office, he gave me distinctly to understand that he did not wish me to carry out the ordinary duties of a consul, signing a few letters and sending round a few circulars, but that he wished me, if possible, to cultivate the most friendly relations between the two peoples with a view to developing trade between the two localities.

Hon. J. Cornell: He could not have made a happier choice in that respect.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: In addition, he said he hoped that I would at the earliest opportunity take a trip to the Dutch East Indies, when he would furnish me with introductions, and do everything in his power to assist me. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to undertake at all events that part of the consul's duties. We have at our doors almost, an enormous population of working people who produce various necessities and luxuries of life of which we can very well avail ourselves. On the other hand we produce many things required by those people. That phase of the matter was referred to in detail by Mr. Baxter just now. Were it not for what I call our mischievous legislation in connection with sugar, we might at the present moment be importing sugar at a reasonable price and in a commercial manner. I spoke of certain legislation as mischievous for this reason, that it is inadvisable as well as harmful that we should protect and foster an industry which cannot be carried on economically in Australia by white people, whilst we can get sugar at our doors very much cheaper. And not only that; but we could exchange for the sugar other commodities that we produce ourselves. Let us extend our reflections a little by imagining that we are importing sugar at fairly cheap rates into this State: look at the industries we would have in the way of fruit preserving and jam-making. At present a great deal of fruit goes to waste here. Though timber, for some reason with which I am not familiar, seems to be barred, we can send to Java flour and meat. But if we export those commodities, we must be prepared to take something in exchange for them. We cannot expect those people to pay us in gold. I feel confident that if the trade could be developed it would be to the mutual advantage of both peoples, and not the least advantage, I think, would be ours. If we

could obtain from Java cheap sugar and some other commodities produced there, and ship in return our meat, our flour, our wool, and our preserves and wines—all of the very best quality—I think it would be advantageous to both parties. Although I have been personally prevented from paying a visit to the Dutch East Indies, a visit which both the Consul General and I think might be of advantage to Western Australia, I am pleased to have been forestalled by an ambassador with even greater powers of making known the good qualities and advantages of Western Australian products. I refer to our President, who took a trip to the Malay States. We have all read his report, and I am exceedingly sorry that to-day, owing to the position he holds, Mr. Kingsmill is unable or unwilling—I do not know which—to contribute to this debate and afford the House a great deal of light and information. In the circumstances I have very much pleasure in supporting the motion, and I congratulate Mr. Duffell on having brought it forward.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell debate adjourned.

BILL—DIVORCE ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. F. Allen in the Chair; Hon. J. Nicholson in charge of the Bill.

Clause 7—Amendment of Section 23 of principal Act:

Hon. J. W. Kirwan had moved an amendment—"That the following be added to the clause:—'And is further amended by adding at the end of paragraph (d) the following proviso:—Provided that the insanity of a wife, when such insanity is the result of pregnancy, childbirth, or lactation, shall be no ground for a petition for dissolution of marriage on the part of the husband.'"

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I have brought the hon. member's amendment before the women's organisations and have received the following letter:—

On behalf of the members of the above organisations, we desire to make it clear that we consider provision should be made for divorce in cases of incurable insanity after five years. Whatever the causes of incurable insanity might be, the result is the same to those most concerned.

The women most concerned with the hon. member's amendment are desirous that it should not be inserted in the Bill.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I am extremely disappointed that the women's organisations should take that view of this important amendment. I have the greatest respect for the ladies responsible for that document, and the organisations they represent, but I am convinced that, if the matter were placed before the women of Western Australia they would not take the same view.

Hon. A. Sanderson: What organisations were they?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I would like to know when they met.

Hon. J. Nicholson: To-day.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I can hardly conceive it possible that the women of Western Australia would take that view. Is a woman to be punished because she has faithfully performed her duties as a wife? Is not she punished sufficiently by suffering from insanity? Is further punishment to be imposed on her because of her fidelity to the marriage arrangement by permitting the husband to cast her off? It is positively cruel, and I am opposed to anything of the kind. This is a most important question; several members have left for their homes, and it would be most unfair to send the amendment to a division in such a thin House. I hope progress will be reported.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Is the information I sought last night, regarding the law in other States, available? I am fighting the Bill on one principle and that is on what is done in other parts of Australia.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I agreed to report progress last night to enable Mr. Sanderson to ascertain all the information he required. The duty to provide it does not devolve upon me. We are here to consider our own legislation, not the legislation of the other States.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am more than satisfied with the answer. The member in charge of this important Bill does not know the position in the other States, but wishes to throw on me and on other members of the Committee the onus to ascertain it. If I ever take charge of a Bill I hope I shall be able to answer any reasonable question. This is a reasonable question, and the hon. member professes himself ignorant on it.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Does the leader of the House propose to sit after tea?

The Honorary Minister: No.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Then I suggest that progress be reported. I have a medical book which I do not wish to start reading now but if the points it contains were brought before the Committee, they would have an important bearing on this discussion. The work is by Blandford and is entitled "Insanity and its treatment."

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is not fair of the hon. member to ask for further delay. Every opportunity has been given to make the fullest inquiries, and he should be satisfied with the decision of the women.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: What organisations were represented by the ladies who sent the letter?

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Women's Service Guild and the W.C.T.U.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Have those organisations communicated with the ladies in my province? I can hardly believe that they have communicated with the women throughout the State during this morning. Evidently a few ladies met together as an executive and expressed this opinion. With all due respect to them, I am quite convinced they do not represent the views of the women of this

State. If the amendment is not agreed to, there will be some justification for the statement frequently made in opposition to man-made-law. It is a provision under which women will receive first consideration, and it is our duty to give them first consideration.

Hon. J. Duffell: Do you expect to carry the amendment by stonewalling tactics?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I would like the hon. member to explain what he means. It is unfair to have to take a division on such an important question in such a thin House. I know of no instance where such an important question has been decided on a Thursday afternoon in a thin House.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.16 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 2nd October, 1919.

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

QUESTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT, DANGAN DISTRICT.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Premier: 1, How many different applications have been made by returned soldiers in the district covered by the Dangan local repatriation committee? 2, How many of those applications have been approved by the Soldier Settlement Board and how many refused? 3, How long was Inspector Sugden a resident of this State before he enlisted, and what were the qualifications on which he was appointed as lands inspector?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Information is not available, but can be obtained after communication with the local committee. 2, Answered by No. 1. 3, We have no information as to actual date of Inspector Sugden's arrival in Western Australia. He had five years' practical experience in pioneering in the wheat belt—he took up land in Latham in 1910. He has a knowledge of rough sur-