Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 29th November, 1922.

	PAGE
Bills: Dairy Industry, 3R.	1870
Licensing Act Amendment, com.	1870
Closer Settlement (No. 2), 2R.	1876
Agricultural Bank Act Amendment, 2R., com.	1879
Dairy Cattle Improvement, com.	1880
Land Act Amendment, 2R.	1881
Dog Act Amendment, 2R.	1886

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

BILL—DAIRY INDUSTRY.

Read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; the Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clause 71—No compensation:

Hon. A. Lovekin had moved an amendment "That all the words after 'when' in line 1 be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—'Section 59 of this Act becomes operative, any surplus moneys then to the credit of the compensation fund shall be distributed as may be determined by the board amongst licensees who have contributed to such fund, and who have been deprived of their licenses under Part VI. of this Act.'"

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I suggest that the amendment be withdrawn to enable me to move an amendment which I think will achieve the hon. member's purpose.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: My suggestion is to strike out of line 1 the words "duly carried" as they are unnecessary; then to strike out the proviso, and insert in Clause 59, in the part dealing with the compensation fund, the provision suggested by Mr. Lovekin as to how the compensation fund shall be dealt with if any money remains in it when prohibition is carried. I do not wish to depart from the principle of the amendment. My desire is merely to insert it in its correct place. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 the words "duly carried" be struck out, and that the proviso be deleted.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I am satisfied that the Minister's proposal will achieve the object I had in view better than my amendment.

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

Clause 78—Register of lodgers:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: During the previous discussion, my attention was directed to the words "by any person" in paragraph (d) of the proposed new Subsection 6. I was unable to state the reason for the inclusion of those words, which seemed to be inconsistent with a previous portion of the clause. The proposed new Subsection 4 provides that the register of lodgers shall be kept on licensed premises, and shall be open to inspection at any time on demand by any member of the police force or inspector. Paragraph (d) of the proposed new Subsection 6 provides that any holder of a license who refuses or neglects to produce such register for inspection when required to do so by any person, shall be guilty of an offence. It is not intended that any person shall be entitled to walk into an hotel and demand to see the register of lodgers. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (d) the words "by any person" be struck out, and the words "under Subsection 4" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Does not the Minister think it necessary to bring boarders under this Clause? In a previous clause lodgers and bona fide travellers are provided for, and it seems as necessary to keep a register of boarders as well. I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the clause:—"For the purposes if this section 'lodger' includes 'boarder.'"

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

Clause 80—Repeal of Section 100:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I have an amendment to this clause which is necessary to avert doing something which I think the Committee do not intend. Cause 80 defines a bona fide traveller, and under its provisions a bona fide traveller in the metropolitan area will be as extinct as the dodo. The holder of a railway refreshment room license under this amending Bill can supply liquor to only travellers on the railway, but under the principal Act, bona fide travellers are provided for. Unless we insert a proviso, there will not be any one in the metropolitan area to whom a railway refreshment room licensee will be able to supply liquor, because there will be no such thing as a bona fide traveller within 20 miles from the Perth Town Hall. I move an amendment—

That the following paragraph be added to the clause:—"Provided that notwithstanding this section, the sale or supply of liquor by the holder of a railway refreshment room license to travellers on the railway shall be lawful during the hours when licensed premises may be lawfully open to the public for the sale of liquor in the dis-

trict in which the railway refreshment room is situated."

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I wish to move a prior amendment.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I ask leave to temporarily withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. F. A. BAGLIN: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (a) the words "an area bounded by a circle having a radius of 20 miles" be struck out, and "20 miles by the nearest practicable route" inserted in lieu.

The radius involves anomalies. Radius means as the crow flies. A place might be 25 miles by the nearest road from the Perth Town Hall, and yet be within a radius of 20 miles as the crow flies, which latter I do not think is intended. Anomalies in point are the Mundaring Weir hotel and the Naval Base hotel. If we force a man to go 20 miles by the nearest practicable route, that is sufficient.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: The amendment might lead to a good deal of litigation and trouble in measuring distances, and in deciding whether a road means a surveyed road, and so on. A compass placed on a map, and a circle drawn by means of it, would show definitely whether an hotel was or was not within a radius of 20 miles of the Perth town hall.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I believe the hotel at Rockingham is the only one which comes within the purview of the clause as it stands. Twenty miles by road from the Perth town hall is a fair thing. I support the amendment.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I oppose the amendment. A distance by radius is very easily ascertained, whereas "the nearest practicable route" might not be easily determined. If we are going to consider practicable routes, we should consider the condition of roads. If a man deserves a drink after travelling a road, it is the Armadale-road; and Armadale is only 18 miles from Perth. Why should the Naval Base hotel be included, seeing that is is only 10 miles from Fremantle?

Hon. J. Duffell: Make the distance 15 miles.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I would like to make it 50 miles. Under this amendment we would have a regular procession of motor cars coming back with drunken drivers and drunken passengers.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Section 21 of the Interpretation Act provides—

> In the measurement of any distance for the purpose of any Act passed on or after the 28th day of December, 1898, such distance, unless the contrary appears, shall be measured in a straight line on a horizontal plane.

If Mr. Baglin wishes to insert his amendment, he will have to alter it a little.

The Minister for Education: But the section says "unless the contrary appears."

Amendment put and negatived.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I again move—

That the following paragraph be added: —"Provided that notwithstanding this section, the sale or supply of liquor by the holder of a railway refreshment room license to travellers on a railway shall be lawful during the hours when licensed premises may be lawfully open to the public for the sale of liquor in the district in which the railway refreshment room is situated."

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Does this apply to the metropolitan area only, or to the whole State? I ask because railway refreshment rooms in the country are entitled to open for so many minutes before a train arrives and so many minutes after its departure. Would not the amendment allow those refreshment rooms to keep open all day long?

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It would not allow them to remain open any longer than otherwise provided. This amendment is confined to railway travellers.

Hon. H. SEDDON: It seems to me that the Minister's amendment does provide for railway refreshment rooms being open all day.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Only where they are now entitled to remain open all day; in the metropolitan area, for instance, because trains are arriving all day. The other part of the measure still remains forbidding railway refreshment rooms to be open except in connection with arrival and departure of trains.

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

Clause 83:

Hon. G. W. MILES: I think that in connection with this clause Mr. Baglin desires to move an amendment to reduce the size of glasses from 1¼ gills to 1 gill.

The CHAIRMAN: I am willing to postpone the clause if the Committee desire it.

Clause postponed.

Clause 104—Amendment of Section 133:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That in proposed Subsection 1, after the words "his licensed premises," lines 4 and 5, there be inserted "excepting by bona fide lodgers."

There are two points in regard to this clause. One is that raised by Mr. Duffell as to bowling greens attached to hotels. I have looked into the matter, and it seems to me that the only way such a case can be met is by the licensee severing his bowling green from the licensed premises. If the playing of games generally by the public is to be allowed on hotel premises after closing hours, it will be a very difficult matter to prevent the illicit sale of liquor. On the other hand, I cannot see why a person living in a metropolitan hotel should be debarred from playing any lawful game at any time on the premises.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I do not agree with the amendment. The hotel referred to is to all intents and purposes severed from the bowling green. The bowling green has been put down at considerable expense and it is used by people who have no ordinary means of spending a pleasant evening. The patrons of this green are resident in the locality. The green has been there for many years and I have seen the wives and daughters go there on a summer evening for a roll-up. The green is an acquisition to that district and is well conducted, while good sport takes place there and the patrons are those who cannot afford to join clubs. It will be imposing a hardship if the opportunity of indulging in this healthy sport is taken away. I am justified in asking my colleagues to assist me in getting this convenience maintained.

Hon. J. A. Greig: What do you propose?

Hon. J. DUFFELL: That permission should be granted and that the games should include bowls played in the open air.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not see how we can legislate for an individual case. I agree with the Minister that if a person is staying at a hotel situated within the 12 miles limit, there should be no reason why, because nine o'clock arrives everybody should cease to play and go to bed. That would be an undue interference with the liberty of the people. It is suggested that if we take away the safeguards we will have a good deal of drinking. In the metropolitan area better control can be exercised than in the country districts. We require this provision less in the metropolitan area than in the outlying centres. I suggest that we should strike out Subclause 1 and alter Subclause 2 to read, "No licensee shall permit any billiards, bagatelle, or other games to be played on his licensed premises after 11 o'clock at night by any person other than bona fide lodgers." There is no good reason why people should not play until 11 o'clock in Perth as is permitted at, say, Northam. I shall oppose the Minister's amendment and hope to succeed in striking out Subclauses 1 and amending Subclause 2.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The difference between my proposal and that of the hon. member is that mine is confined to bona fide lodgers, and his refers to the public generally. I draw attention to the circumstances that would arise if we agreed to his amendment. I might be a lodger in an hotel, and having invited three friends to play cards, I might ring at 9.30 and order a whisky and soda for myself, but nothing for my guests. No lodger would invite friends to play cards knowing that after nine o'clock he could have as many drinks as he liked while his friends would have to go without. No good purpose will be served by the hon. member moving the amendment he has suggested.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I believe I can get over the difficulty with regard to the bowling green if the Leader of the House will temporarily withdraw his amendment.

The Minister for Education: I do not mind withdrawing my amendment for the time being, to give the hon. member a chance to move his.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 between "other" and "games" the words "than outdoor" be inserted.

The subclause will then read: "No licensee . . . . . shall permit any billiards, bagatelle, or other than outdoor games to be played on his licensed premises. . . . ."

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: One way out of the difficulty is for the licensee to sever his bowling green from his licensed premises. Where that could be done, the amendment would not be required; in cases where it could not be done the question would arise as to whether it would not lead to abuses of the law.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: We should try to legislate on some principle. Under the clause a person at Bellevue can play bowls or cards on licensed premises until 11 o'clock at night. At Midland Junction, however, a person must stop playing at 9 o'clock at night, although there is far more police supervision at Midland Junction than there is at Bellevue. When it comes to cards and forms of sport, town and country should be treated alike.

Hon. J. MILLS: I hope the Minister will adhere to the clause. If people wish to play bowls on hotel premises, they can sever the bowling green from the hotel by means of a fence.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am not in favour of Mr. Duffell's amendment. There is something wrong with the clause. If it is not right to play dominoes, billiards, bagatelle or any other game on licensed premises within the metropolitan area after 9 p.m., it is certainly not right to do so on licensed premises outside that area. No case has been made out for this differentiation. We must either make the principle general, or extend the same consideration to the metropolitan area as to the country.

Hon. J. Mills: Or cut it out altogether.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Hotelkeepers have been allowed to keep billiard tables, and should be allowed to use them for the same length of time as other billiard saloon keepers. I do not think it would lead to abuses of the law.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is inconsistent that this should apply within a radius of 12 miles from Perth but not apply outside that radius. Section 133 of the Act, which this clause seeks to amend, provides that no licensee shall permit any billiards, bagatelle or other games to be played on his licensed premises after 11 o'clock at night by any persons except bona fide lodgers, and except under authority of an occasional license.

The Minister for Education: That was passed when 11 o'clock was the closing time.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If there have been no abuses of this particular privilege, it

seems an anomaly to place members of the public inside the radius of 12 miles at a disadvantage over those outside. Lodgers in hotels may want to entertain their friends, but on the stroke of 9 the friends would have to be shown the door. I suggest that we vote against the whole clause, leaving Section 133 as it is at present.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: A number of bowling clubs will be covered by Clause 104, and members will not be able to continue playing bowls after 9 p.m. That was surely never contemplated when the clause was drafted. We should strike out the whole clause.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Mr. Mills said that it would be easy to dissociate the bowling green from the licensed premises by putting up a picket fence. I would advise him to get a legal opinion as to whether such a provision would have that effect. I do not think it would. Again, a man might carry out a dummy sale of the bowling green to another person. Of course the court might contend that his action was merely a colourable evasion and the court might refuse to grant a license for the premises.

Hon. H. Stewart: You are not serious on that point!

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The licensing court could easily adopt that attitude because fraud is one ground on which a license can be refused. We should encourage the playing of bowls and other games, rather than encourage people to drink. People might go further afield where they would play with less police supervision. If, as it is said, the Country Party are governing us to-day, I think they should be fair and recognise that what is good for Northam, should be good for Perth. We should delete the whole clause and retain Section 133 of the principal Act.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: The clause should be deleted because I cannot see any reason for discrimination between the town and the country. I regard bowls, billiards, bagatelle and so forth as perfectly innocent games and I do not see why they should not be played, provided the players do not drink. Mr. Lovekin made an appeal for Mr. Mills's support. I will make a similar appeal. The citizens of Geraldton will be able to play these innocent games between 9 and 11 p.m. but should they come down to Perth, they will find they will be debarred from doing so. In the circumstances, Mr. Mills should recognise his duty to his constituents, and adopt such a course as will enable them to play these games here.

Hon. J. MILLS: The principal object of the extension of hours in the country is that there are not the avenues for amusement there that are available in the city at night. The same thing applies to a certain extent in Geraldton. In any case, I do not think the Geraldton people will worry about this matter.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: In order to show the absolute absurdity of the clause, I would draw hon. members' attention to the innocent game of patience. Should the clause be passed as it stands, no one will be able to play that innocent game in any hotel in Perth after 9 o'clock.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: If the Committee desire to strike out the clause, I suggest that it will be necessary to leave in Subclause 3, as that does not appear in Section 133 of the principal Act. I take it that hon. members desire to retain that subclause and, in the circumstances, it will be necessary for Mr. Duffell to withdraw his amendment so that Subclauses 1 and 2 may be deleted and Subclause 3 retained.

Hon. J. Duffell: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move an amendment—

> That all the words from "Act is" in line 2 to "pounds" in line 17 be struck out and the following words inserted:—"amended by adding a new subclause as follows."

Then will follow Subclause 3 which appears in the Bill at present, and which will become Subclause 2.

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

Clause 105—Prohibition of unlawful games:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

> That in line 2 of Subclause 1, after "unlawful games or" the words "engaged in any unlawful" be inserted.

This amendment is similar to one moved in connection with Subclause 2 when we were in Committee last. As we could not go back to Subclause 1, it was necessary to deal with the matter on recommittal.

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

Clause 116—Sale of liquor:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: This is a peculiar clause. It is provided that if there are two bedrooms in a club outside the metropolitan area, persons staying there will be deemed to be bona fide lodgers. It appears to me that the clause will open the doors to illicit drinking. There is no limit to the number of lodgers who may occupy the two bedrooms and it may be that the only two bedrooms available may be occupied by the caretaker of the club. As it stands, there can be any number of lodgers presumed to occupy the bedrooms and drinking can be continued if the clause is not made more explicit. Before moving any amendment or voting against the clause as a whole, I would like to have the opinion of the Minister in this matter.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The bona fide lodgers must be what the words indicate—bona fide lodgers. A caretaker would not be a bona fide lodger. The provision for two bedrooms in country clubs should meet

all requirements. To make it more definite, I move an amendment—

That in line 9, after "area," the words "in addition to those used by the employees of such club" be inserted.

I know of one case where the licensing court refused to grant a license to the club until the necessary bedrooms and accommodation for meals and so forth had been provided. When they were provided, the license was granted. It was a thoroughly well conducted club in the country. They provided two or three bedrooms which were quite sufficient for their needs.

Hon. T. MOORE: Half the clause should go out. We do not require any of it after "bona fide lodgers" in the fourth line. Strictly there can be no bona fide lodgers unless a sufficient number of bedrooms are provided. To prescribe two bedrooms is ridiculous.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It would be better, as the hon. member suggests, to strike out all words after "bona fide lodgers." It is nonsense to say that two bedrooms in a club shall make club members bona fide lodgers.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: The clause does not say that a person shall be deemed to be a bona fide lodger because the club has certain sleeping accommodation. It merely prescribes that there cannot be any bona fide lodger unless provision is made for bona fide lodgers.

Hon. J. Cornell: The clause would be better out altogether.

Hon. H. STEWART: I disagree with Mr. Lovekin's interpretation that in a club having two bedrooms, all club members are bona fide lodgers. Still, the wording of the clause is far from satisfactory.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The bedrooms have to be there before there can be any bona fide lodgers. Conversely, if a club has a given number of bedrooms the club members may be deemed to be bona fide lodgers by virtue of those bedrooms.

Mr. J. Nicholson: A club member will have to prove that he is a lodger.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Fifty members of a club might declare that they were bona fide lodgers, although the club had only two bedrooms.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But he would be an unsophisticated magistrate who would believe the lot of them.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: If the Minister will withdraw his amendment, I will test the feeling of the Committee by moving to strike out all words after "bona fide lodgers" in line 4.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move an amendment—

That all words after "bona fide lodgers," in line 2, be struck out.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am opposed to the amendment. There is nothing in that part of the existing Act dealing with clubs which sets out the number of bedrooms a club shall be required to have. The words proposed to be struck out have been inserted for the purpose of explaining the position. I think they should remain.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I see no harm in leaving the clause as it stands. Obviously it is to prevent abuse. The provision means that if a club have not the prescribed bedroom accommodation, nobody can be a bona fide lodger in that club. However, the fact of the club having that accommodation does not constitute anybody a bona fide lodger of the club unless in fact he lodges there.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I support the amendment. No difference should be made between a bona fide lodger at a club and one at an hotel. A bona fide lodger at an hotel has to sign a book. Why should not a bona fide lodger at a club do the same? The amendment will greatly improve the clause. We ought not to prescribe the number of bedrooms required in a club.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 131—Amendment of second schedule:

On motion by the Minister for Education, clause consequentially amended by striking out "two gallon" and inserting "one gallon."

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 135—Saving of right of renewal of certain licenses under pending applications:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 the words "at the commencement of this Act" be struck out and the words "prior to the 31st day of December, 1922," inserted in lieu.

It is possible that the Act might commence prior to the 31st December and an injustice would be caused where application had not been made.

Amendment put and passed.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That after "gallon license" in paragraph (a) the words "or two gallon license" be inserted.

The present holder of a two-gallon license may obtain a spirit merchant's license if he so desires.

Amendment put and passed.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That after "two gallon license" in paragraph (b) the words "held by or on behalf of a person carrying on the business of a brewer" be inserted.

There are two classes of persons holding two-gallon licenses, and it is necessary to provide for each of them.

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

Postponed Clause 83—agreed to.

Bill again reported with further amendments.

Further Recommittal.

On motion by Minister for Education Bill again recommitted to further consider Clauses 59, 93, 134, and 135.

Clause 59—Compensation fund to be established:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I intimated when dealing with Clause 71 that I proposed to amend this clause. I move an amendment—

That the following subclause be added:—"If under Part VI. of this Act the proposal that prohibition shall come into force is carried, any moneys remaining to the credit of the compensation fund when the proposal takes effect shall be distributed by the board in its discretion amongst those licensees who have contributed to the fund and who have not already received compensation under this part."

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

Clause 134—Licensing Act Amendment Act, 1911, Section 2, and Sale of Liquor and Tobacco Act, 1916:

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That a subclause be added as follows:—"Section 3 of the Sale of Liquor and Tobacco Act, 1916, is amended by inserting after the words 'Licensing Act of 1911' in line 2, 'or a brewer's license or a spirit merchant's license.'"

I have to thank Mr. Stewart for drawing my attention to this matter. When he raised the point I did not follow his argument, but afterwards I discovered that he was perfectly right. Under the Sale of Liquor and Tobacco Act we make provision that the holders of a gallon license and of a two-gallon license shall keep a return of the liquor they sell, the intention being to prevent the sale of liquor under the name of tobacco, vegetables or something of that kind. Now that the two-gallon license has been converted into another form of license and the gallon license might be used by a person holding a spirit merchant's license, it is necessary that such a person should be under the same necessity to keep these records.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: All that we now have left in the Sale of Liquor and Tobacco Act, 1916, is one section relating to the sale of cigarettes. Cannot we get rid of that?

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

Clause 93—Amendment of Section 117.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (a) the words "twenty-one" be deleted and "nineteen" inserted in lieu.

This clause makes a very drastic change in that it proposes to raise the age of persons who may be supplied with liquor from 18 to 21. I suggest that the age be 19. Members should carry their minds back a few years when young fellows of 19 who enlisted were regarded as men. Now it is intended to provide that such a man cannot have a drink until he is 21, not even in the direst necessity. In my constituency young fellows are working 3,000 to 4,000 feet below the surface with men somewhat older and are drawing full wages. One man can get a drink, and the other cannot. There is no limit to the age at which a young fellow may marry, but he must not have a drink until he is 21. This reminds me of the introduction of compulsory training. Politicians provided that the boys must train, but they did not make it necessary for themselves to undergo training. We are asked to provide that a young fellow must be 21 before he can have a drink of beer.

Hon. A. Lovekin: This only says the licensee shall not supply him.

Hon. J. CORNELL: But it will be an offence to supply him.

Hon. A. Lovekin: His mate could supply him.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Of course he could, but let us be honest. If a young fellow is regarded as a man at 19, he should be able to get a drink. I have yet to learn that any gross abuses are committed by young fellows through over-indulgence. I have seen them hilarious, but in my young days the smell of a cork made me hilarious and 90 per cent. of it was pretence. Mr. Dodd, though a lifelong abstainer, would be able to speak on this question.

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

Ayes	.. .. ..	6
Noes	.. .. ..	16
Majority against	..	10

AYES.

Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Mills
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. R. G. Ardagh
Hon. V. Hamersley	(*Teller.*)
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	

NOES.

Hon. F. A. Baglin	Hon. R. J. Lynn
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. H. Boan	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	(*Teller.*)
Hon. A. Lovekin	

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Clause 135—Saving of right of renewal of certain licenses under pending applications:

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I move an amendment—

That in the eighth line "may" be struck out, and "shall" inserted in lieu.

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

Bill again reported with further amendments.

BILL—CLOSER SETTLEMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [7.35]: This is a Bill which has had a good deal of consideration not only here but in another place. Whilst I applaud the desire of the framers of the measure to settle more closely our lands served by the existing railway system, yet the Bill contains certain elements which cause me to view it with considerable apprehension, and with doubt as to its advisability. I am at one with the idea of using all legitimate and proper means for more closely settling our lands, particularly those contiguous to railways; because the benefit which we would derive is manifest. But the Bill confronts us with the position of a limitation to fee simple lands. That is one of the principal objections I offer to the measure. It does not extend to other classes of lands. Another serious objection is that the Bill places no limitation upon the areas of land which may be resumed. So far as I can see, the man with 100 or 500 acres would, under this measure, be in much the same position as the man with 5,000 or 10,000. Possibly it should be assumed that in the course of time certain districts might become so closely settled as to necessitate even the resumption of holdings which at present seem very small—say an ordinary homestead block of 160 acres. At the present time we do not look upon a man with a holding of 500 acres as having taken up too much land at all. In many quarters his prospects of success with that area would be regarded as very doubtful. It is often stated by those interested in land settlement schemes that there is little prospect of a man successfully conducting mixed farming operations on an area so small as 500 acres. Another objection I have to the Bill is this: Assuming that a man has a large area of land bounded by a railway, or in close proximity to a railway, he may be compelled under Subclause 2 of Clause 6 either to subdivide that land for himself or else to pay land tax as there set out. The man with that larger piece of land is placed in a very serious position. I view the powers sought to be given by the Bill with great seriousness. If a man takes up land, be it 100 acres or 5,000 acres, he does so not with the intention, and in very few cases indeed with the hope, of carrying out all the work of development and improvement contemplated by him except in the course of many years. Did our old settlers enter on the lands which they or their successors hold to-day, believing that those lands could be placed practically all at once in a state of absolute fertility? No.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do you not think we ought to quicken our pace in regard to development?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am not saying that we should not quicken our pace; but the man who takes up land must have an opportunity of gradually developing it as circumstances permit. He has complied with all the conditions laid down when he took up that land, and in consideration thereof he has been given the freehold title of his land. Now the Government seek, by means of this measure, practically to take away from him that which was originally given to him after he had complied with the conditions. Such a proceeding seriously imperils the future settlement of our lands, and also the prospects of getting other people to come here to settle. We want settlers here, and we do not want them to come here believing that there is a risk that the land which they take up from the Government might later be practically confiscated, or ruthlessly taken from them, as they might reasonably believe if such a measure as this were on the statute book.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You can re-value your land at a fair price if you do not want to work it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The method of revaluation is wrong. Under clause 4 of the Bill, the value set out in the land tax return, plus 10 per cent., will be taken as prima facie evidence of the value. Is that fair?

Hon. G. W. Miles: You can revise your price.

The Minister for Education: How is that provision unfair?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is unfair in this way. We recognise that when a man takes up certain land, he takes it up at a certain price. He is paying on that basis. He continues to make improvements. Year in year out there is sunk in that land much money that is not visible to the eye. If every penny invested in the improvement of the land, and the value of all the time and labour spent by the settler in connection with the work of improvement, were taken into consideration, the land would undoubtedly bear a greater value than appears on the surface. For the purpose of assessment of either road board rates or land tax, the ordinary individual usually places on his land the smallest value that he can possibly think of.

The Minister for Education: That is a very candid admission.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: He places upon the land the very minimum value that he possibly can. Under this measure the settler who is battling against possibly many

difficulties is forced to place what is a maximum value upon his land, and to pay land tax on that maximum value, which is clearly unfair. We are used to minimum and maximum rates in various other matters, and one cannot blame the settler for seeking to get the advantage of the minimum value when it comes to a question of taxation. If he is fortunate in connection with his land, then he pays an increased amount by way of income tax; so that the Government get the benefit of any advantage derived from honest and legitimate success in the development of lands. The holder is carrying on a business, and in regard to that business the clause I refer to would deprive him of that encouragement which is essential. Worse still, the presence of such a measure as this on our statute-book will prove a very serious setback to the taking up of land, and to the advancement of our land settlement policy. I expect the Leader of the House will ask what other kind of measure I would propose in place of this one. I would simply say, "Put a measure in place of it which will provide for resumption with fair and equitable compensation." There are certain statutes at present in existence which give the Government certain power in connection with the resumption of land, and if these are inadequate for all purposes that the Government desire, let them take power to resume lands at a fair and equitable value, but not hedged around by restrictions as we find in the Bill before us. For these reasons I have come to the conclusion that the Bill before us is not desirable in the interests of the country, and that some other measure to carry out the object in view should be introduced. I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. E. ROSE (South-West) [7.48]: I have listened attentively to the speeches which have been delivered on the Bill, and I have been surprised to hear the remarks made by some hon. members. Several members have asked where these lands are that have not been put into use, and they have declared that there is no land that can be taken over by the Government for closer settlement. It has also been stated that the Government already possess wide power to enable them to resume land if they require it. Let us take into consideration the great mileage of railway from Geraldton in the north to Bridgetown in the south, and through the eastern districts, and as far south as Albany, and we must realise that there is sufficient land already served by those railway lines which can be put to use. It will therefore be a poor advertisement for Western Australia if it is told abroad that we have no land available for settlement in close proximity to our railways. I have seen great areas that have not been put to use, and much of the land first class. This land would be eminently suitable for immigrants, and for closer settlement. Therefore, until such time as the Government put through a measure like the one before us, they will not be in a position to take that land for the purpose of bringing it under cultivation. As the Government intend to go in for a comprehensive scheme of land settlement in the South-West, it is necessary that they should have the power they ask for to resume land, as well as the power they seek to enable them to drain the areas along the coast. As has been stated in this House, there are great areas of land in Western Australia, and particularly in the South-West, that are suitable for closer settlement. We know of instances where men are making good on from 40 to 100 acres, and there are many thousands of acres of land of a similar description at present unoccupied. This land has been held for years by old settlers, and the Government, having constructed railways through, or close to these areas, their value has been considerably enhanced, in some cases to the extent of 300 or 400 per cent. Therefore we should give the Government the power they seek to resume properties such as these at a fair valuation. I am not afraid of the values which will be put on those areas because the men who will form the board will be officers on whom reliance can be placed. One will represent the Agricultural Bank, one will represent the Lands Office, and the third, it is proposed, will be a man with local knowledge. I would prefer, however, that the third should be a practical farmer from the district in which the land to be taken is situated. A provision I would like to see included in the Bill is that where there are two or three sons, the provision made for them by the father should be respected. I know of cases where farmers have in recent years taken up land with a view to putting their sons on the areas on those sons leaving school. We know from past experience that the best man you can get on the land is the man who has been brought up on it, and who has had that experience which has to be taught the immigrant on his arrival here. In one clause the Bill sets out—

> Provided also that any owner may, within thirty days after the commencement of this Act, amend his return under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, 1907, for the current year of assessment, by increasing the value placed by him upon his land, and thereupon a re-assessment shall be made by the Commissioner of Taxation.

Thus the opportunity will be given of putting up the value of the land so that the owner may receive a fair price for it. Some hon. members have declared that the proposals of the Government amount to confiscation, that the Government propose to take land by force. I cannot see that that is so when it is proposed under the Bill to put a fair value on the property. Along the coast we have thousands of acres which are well adapted for closer settlement, provided drainage operations are carried out. We have only to see what has been done recently at the Peel estate, in order to realise what the possibili-

ties are ahead of similar country further south as far as Bunbury and Busselton.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And the Swan Valley.

Hon. E. ROSE: And in a number of other places. If hon. members travel through the South-West, they will see what is being done in connection with the group settlement scheme inaugurated by the Premier. A majority of the men who are already settled in the South are well satisfied with their prospects. The intention is to establish townships 10 miles apart, and this will help to make for contentment amongst those people. All will have their conveniences near at hand. There will be schools a few miles apart and the children will acquire that knowledge which is so necessary. The groups will be able to hold meetings and discuss matters that are common to them all. Is it not better that settlement should be carried on on such lines rather than that people should be put on scattered areas hundreds of miles from markets. Then, instead of one man having a thousand or more acres and being able to clear a comparatively small portion, we shall have a dozen settlers on the one block. We know from past experience what the land in the south is capable of doing. There are members who are satisfied that this land should be used for closer settlement, but they are not satisfied with the methods adopted by the Government. Some hon. members think that the Bill should be amended so as to include conditional purchase and other lands. But, I say, let us have this going first. Let us resume the land which is close to railways that are already constructed, and when that is done the Government can then introduce legislation to resume conditional purchase areas not being utilised. I have no desire to see a hardship inflicted on small farmers. It is not the intention of the Government to resume blocks for the sole purpose of putting one person off and putting another on. There is no fear that a policy of that description will be adopted. But it is a fact that with the enormous areas of land which we have in the South-West division, and in the north as well, we should be carrying an enormous population. We have a very big local market for products which we must overtake, and then we should begin to export. We must not forget that every farmer represents eight or ten others who are dependent on him. So that the more people we can settle on the land, the greater will be our prosperity. I trust that it will not be many years before we shall find the scheme now being set in motion by the Premier operating profitably to those who are engaging in it, as well as to the country. It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill and I hope that hon. members likewise will give it their support, remembering the great areas of unused land which are lying in close proximity to all our railway lines.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [7.58]: During the war period we had many measures of a drastic nature submitted to us. It was necessary, however, in those years to submit for the consideration of Parliament Bills of that description. The Bill now before us is drastic in character, and I have been waiting for some information in regard to it. We have had nothing but general statements, and these have been to the effect that there are many thousands of acres here and there which are unutilised and unproductive. No case, however, has been advanced to show the particular state those lands are in. The hon. member who just resumed his seat spoke of large areas which were not being used. But let me tell him that Sir Henry Lefroy, when Premier, had surveyors out classifying land, and they did a considerable amount of this work. It was surprising to find that those lands were being utilised within the meaning of the Bill now before us. The principal objection one can offer to the Bill is its far-reaching effects. Where are we going to finish with what must be looked upon as a precedent it is intended to establish? Interfering as it does with the security of tenure on the land, it is bordering on confiscation.

The Minister for Education: Why did you vote for it last year?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I did not. We are looking to other countries for men with capital to help develop this country without Government assistance. Already we have many settlers here and others are pouring in for whom we have to find money.

Hon. T. Moore: They have not been coming here in great numbers up to the present.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Very little has been done to attract the proper class of population here.

Hon. J. Nicholson: This Bill will not have that effect.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It will drive capital away.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Government have been finding money to assist men to develop the land.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, but we want people here with their own money, and they will require some protection in the matter of their tenure of the land. Before a person can secure the freehold of agricultural land he must comply with the conditions of the Act. If these conditions have not been complied with it shows laxity on the part of the department responsible. Thousands of acres of well improved country can be purchased at ridiculous prices, for amounts far less than it cost to effect the improvements. This shows there is no necessity for the Bill, unless the Government intend to confiscate land without giving the owners reasonable recompense for the properties they have developed. Paragraph (a) of Subclause 2 of Clause 6 says—

> Within three months after the service of such notice by the board, the owner may notify the board in writing of the owner's election either (a) to himself subdivide and offer for sale in subdivisions the land de-

scribed in the notice in the "Government Gazette," or (b) to pay land tax at such rate as Parliament may enact in respect of land declared to be the subject of this Act.

The owner will be in the hands of the board. This board will consist of two Government officials, who will, I assume, have no practical knowledge, and a Government appointee, who will be some person with a knowledge of the district. These people will say whether land is unutilised and unproductive within the meaning of the Act. That is a dangerous provision. The owner is certainly given a right to appeal, but will have to incur a good deal of trouble and expense. It is pretty strong when we find a board like this given power to say whether land is unutilised and unproductive within the meaning of the Act. The Bill also says the owner may either subdivide his land, or pay three times the amount of land tax.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It may be six times.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: When the board have concluded that the land is unutilised and unproductive, the owner has no further say in regard to his property, except that he may subdivide it at his own expense or pay the increased land tax. The Bill says—

> If the owner elects as set forth in paragraph (a) of Subsection (2) he shall (1) forthwith submit to the board for its approval a scheme for the subdivision of the land.

Even in the case of subdivision the owner has to submit his scheme to the board for their approval.

Hon. V. Hamersley: And at his own expense.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. The Bill also says:—

> And (2) make as and when required by the board the surveys of the land or such portions thereof as in the opinion of the board are suitable for closer settlement.

When the board has approved of the subdivision the owner has to make the necessary surveys, at the sweet will of these three men, and has to pay the piper. If the owner is possessed of the capital necessary for him to incur all this expense, he will be able to finance his own property and get beyond the clutches of the board. The man who will suffer most will be the owner who is dependent upon some financial institution for his developments. The Bill goes on to say:—

> (3) Cause the subdivisional lots from time to time as required by the board to be offered for sale by auction or private contract at such reasonable upset prices and upon such reasonable terms and conditions as the board may approve.

This shows that the owner is the last person who will have any say in regard to the property.

Hon. H. Stewart: Do the Government guarantee a buyer?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, and when the owner has done all this he may still be unable to sell his property. If there is a slump in land he will have very little opportunity of doing so. The Bill further says:—

> If an owner fails to notify the board under Section 6 within the prescribed time the Governor may by notice in the "Gazette" declare that the land has been taken under this Act for the purpose of closer settlement. (2) Upon publication of such notice (a) the land therein referred to shall by force of this Act be vested in His Majesty.

If that is not confiscation it is bordering very close upon it. A reasonable Closer Settlement Bill would receive my support, but this is so one-sided I cannot vote for it. Settlement is badly needed in this country, but I fail to see where all these unutilised lands are. They are not in the Avon Valley or in the Geraldton district.

Hon. T. Moore: There are some big estates there.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Unutilised and unproductive?

Hon. T. Moore: Yes.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not think so. The latter part of the Bill provides that the Act shall continue in force until the end of December 1924 and no longer. This shows that it is merely an experiment, and a dangerous one too. A lot of harm will be done to the settlement of land in that short period. If it was not of an experimental nature there would be no limit placed upon its duration, and Parliament would be left to say whether it should be continued from year to year or not. This Bill must come up for review at the end of 1924. I regret that it is of such a drastic nature. The land owner will have no title left to his land. We may not always have in office a Government that is sympathetic to the man on the land. Furthermore, the Government officers who will sit on this board may be over zealous and so much damage may be done during the two years that it will take us a long time to remedy it.

On motion by Hon. J. Mills, debate adjourned.

BILL—AGRICULTURAL BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 23rd November.

Hon. J. MILLS (Central) [8.12]: This is a Bill containing four clauses, but it is nevertheless a highly important one. It has for its object the liberalising of the operations of the bank. To-day the repayment of principal has to be made after the first five years. This Bill provides for an extension of repayment to ten years. It is absurd to say that the man going upon virgin land can put it in such order in five years as to be able to make payments on the principal. I know from experience that, although in a few cases men have done well, a great majority have had a hard struggle before their earning power enables them to

make repayments of capital. There are isolated cases of farmers who have been able to pay for their properties in two years. I know of a soldier who took up 900 acres partly developed. There was a crop upon the farm, but it was too early to say what it would be like. Fortunately for him it turned out well and he got a good price for his wheat. The following year he had another good crop and obtained a good price for his wheat. To-day the farm is his own and he drives a motor car. There are not many cases of that sort. The Bill provides for increasing the amount of advance from £2,000 to £2,500 in the case of returned soldiers. I am sure they will welcome this additional facility. Many of them are now at a standstill for lack of funds. A soldier will sometimes buy a property, which he knows to be good, and pay the limit for it, which leaves him with little or nothing for the purchase of horses, machinery and for the payment of working expenses. If he had a little more money he could clear a further acreage, which would reduce the capitalisation per acre and enable him to carry on. The trustees of the Agricultural Bank will under this Bill be able to grant further advances, paying due regard to the value of the security. In some cases the maximum advance has been made upon a security; it cannot carry any further liability; but in cases where the securities warrant an extra advance can be made which would prove very helpful to the soldier settler. The last clause in the Bill empowers the bank to charge compound interest. The Agricultural Bank Act was originally passed in 1904 and up to the present the Bank has not had any authority to charge interest on arrears of interest. That may be so, but I am satisfied that the bank has, nevertheless, made those charges.

The Minister for Education: I do not think so.

Hon. J. MILLS: The bank has been in existence for 28 years and it is only now that it has been discovered there is no authority for charging compound interest. The farmers who are clients of the Industries Assistance Board have paid their interest and sustenance charges, which are a first charge against the proceeds. Although they are sometimes spoken of in a slighting manner, the farmers have done that. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill and I do not think it needs any further argument from me to commend the measure to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 33:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I cannot follow the clause, particularly paragraph (c). It refers to repealed Subsections 5 and 6 which are replaced by Subclause 4 appearing in the Bill. When were Subsections 5 and 6 repealed?

The Minister for Education: They were repealed under Act No. 18 of 1912.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: If those subsections have been repealed, I do not see the necessity for mentioning them in the clause.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think all that is necessary is to provide that Subclause 4 be added to the section.

Hon. H. STEWART: When Acts have not been consolidated but have been amended from time to time, the form adopted in the clause is the best. Anyone looking up the present measure will see that at some time Subsections 5 and 6 were repealed by an earlier measure and he can trace the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: It is rather a curious way of doing it, but there is no doubt that Subsections 5 and 6 were repealed by the 1912 Amending Act. The position is a very simple one, although somewhat unusual.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I would like the Minister to interpret Subclause 4. It provides that after the expiration of 10 years, each half-yearly instalment is to consist partly of principal and partly of interest, the half-yearly instalments of principal commencing at 2s. 6d. per £100 and increasing half-yearly by a similar amount, the interest being proportionately reduced. On that basis, it works out at only four years so far as I can understand it.

The Minister for Education: At the end of four years, he would have repaid only £1 per £100.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: How many years will it take to pay the £100?

The Minister for Education: It will take the client 20 years to pay the whole lot, after the lapse of the 10-year period. I have a schedule showing how it works out.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 and 4—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—DAIRY CATTLE IMPROVEMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Ewing in the Chair; The Minister for Education in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Method of registration:

Hon. A. BURVILL: I have an amendment on the Notice Paper which would have had the effect of slightly increasing the fees at the outset and reducing them later on. After discussion with those interested in the raising of stud stock I have come to the conclusion that it is better to leave the clause as it is.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member need not move his amendment.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 7 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Appeals from refusal of registration:

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That after "appellant" in line 5 of Subclause 3 "with costs" be inserted.

A successful appellant receives back the fee which he had to deposit with the appeal. That is not sufficient. He ought to get costs as well.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I do not object to what the hon. member desires, but the amendment is the wrong way to do it. If the hon. member will withdraw the amendment, I will move to insert a satisfactory provision at the end of the clause.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to the clause: —"If an appeal is upheld the board may award to the appellant such reasonable costs as the board in its discretion thinks fit."

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

Hon. A. BURVILL: I move an amendment—

That after "owners" in line 5 of Subclause 4 "risk and" be inserted.

It is right, not only that the operation should be at the expense of the owner, but that it should be at his risk also.

Hon. H. STEWART: The amendment is just the opposite to what the hon. member intends.

The Minister for Education: Surely the hon. member knows what he wants.

Hon. H. STEWART: He may do, but certainly the amendment will confer no benefit on the owner.

The Minister for Education: Does it seem so strange to the hon. member that a member of his party should propose something in the interests of the State?

Hon. E. ROSE: I support the amendment. The Government should not be held responsible for anything that may happen as the result of the operation.

Hon. A. Burvill: A condemned animal must be emasculated. If the owner compels the Government to carry out the operation, the owner should take the risk.

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

Clauses 12 to 15—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [8.40] in moving the second reading said: This is a short but necessary Bill. Clause 2 relates to the purposes for which reserves may be set apart, and adds to those purposes "for sites for workers' homes under the Workers' Homes Act, 1911." The need for this clause arises chiefly out of the amendment of the Workers' Homes Act passed last session, under which the Government are erecting a number of workers' homes in various parts of the State. Clause 3 provides that notwithstanding anything in Part IV. of the Land Act, town lands may be disposed of to the Workers' Homes Board without auction, to be dealt with under the Workers' Homes Act. At present any town lands have to be offered at auction. That is to obviate any person getting an unfair advantage over anybody else. But when in a town there are lands not yet sold, and the board desire to provide homes in that town for workers, it is advisable that the board should be able to take over land from the Lands Department without submitting it to public auction, and proceed to erect homes and sell them to the workers. Part III. of the Act provides for perpetual leases under that Act. Such leases are not affected by this clause, nor by Clause 8, which provides that Section 52A of the principal Act is amended by inserting after the words "town or suburban land" the words "acquired at public auction or leased under the regulations published in the 'Gazette' on the 18th day of March, 1912, or the regulations published in the 'Gazette' on the 23rd day of August, 1912." That is to make clear the class of land acquired under leasehold which may be converted into freehold. Previously that has not been clear. Clause 4 is an amendment of Section 68 of the Land Act, which has reference to sand plain country unsuitable for agriculture. It is provided that notwithstanding anything contained in Section 68 of the principal Act it shall be at the discretion of the Governor to dispose of land under that section at not less than 1s. per acre. It is for the purpose of reducing the price at which sandplain may be disposed of. Under Section 68 the minimum price is 3s. 9d. per acre, which is altogether too high for certain classes of sandplain. In the ordinary course of events survey fees are spread over the period of the purchase, but it is hardly reasonable, when the land is sold at such a very cheap rate, to spread the survey fees in that way. Where land is sold at that very cheap rate, provision is made that the survey fees shall be paid with the application.

Hon. J. Ewing: That will only apply to the poor land.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes.

Hon. H. Stewart: Not necessarily; they made it apply to the first-class land at Newdegate.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Clause 5 provides that land may be disposed of under Parts V. and VIII. of the principal Act, without such land being declared open for selection, to applicants approved by the Minister under any scheme for group settlement. This is obviously necessary for carrying out the group settlement scheme. Otherwise, when the Government have established a group, they will be compelled to offer the land for competition. That is entirely undesirable. Only the people who work in the group are entitled to land in the group, and the group settlement conditions provide a method by which the land shall be apportioned between the different members of the group. Clause 5 simply gives the Minister power to make these allotments under a group settlement scheme without declaring such land open for selection. At present the only way in which land can be disposed of is to declare it open for selection, when anyone can step in and compete for it. Clause 6 amends Section 147 of the principal Act by omitting the words "at the rate of five pounds per centum per annum" and substituting the words "at the prescribed rate." This applies to the rate of interest.

Hon. H. Stewart: What is the rate now?

Hon. A. Lovekin: Seven per cent.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I think it is about 6½ per cent. It will vary from time to time, in accordance with what the Government have to pay. It is well known that five per cent. is not the rate at present, and the rate should be that which the Government have to pay. Clause 7 amends Section 71 of the Act of 1906, and there again, instead of the rate of interest being 5 per cent., it will be the prescribed rate. The last clause in the Bill sets out the class of land acquired under leasehold which may be converted into freehold. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South) [8.47]: There are only two clauses on which I intend to speak. I shall leave the balance of the Bill for members representing country constituencies to deal with. When the Scaddan Government took office they had a scheme of leasehold for residential purposes which was put into operation in agricultural centres. The same scheme has been in operation for many years in connection with miners' homestead leases and other forms of leases on the goldfields. A certain amount of red tape is involved in order to ascertain how these leases might be acquired or renewed. One part of the Land Act says that the tenure shall be 20 years, and when the tenure expires, the block has to be put up to public auction. The holder has the right to take it at the upset price and convert it into freehold, or carry on the leasehold. This amendment proposes to overcome these difficulties and allow a straightout transaction for the disposal of land for residential purposes throughout the State. This will enable many complications to be easily adjusted. Simultaneously with the Scaddan Government inaugurating the scheme of leasehold tenure in rural towns, they also started freehold. The Bill proposes not to perpetuate the principle of making the leasehold or freehold optional, but the applicant will be confined to taking a workers' home site as freehold. I was one of the supporters of the Scaddan Government who believed in the system of leasehold, and I took a block; but when the Scaddan Government went out of office, their successors proclaimed from the housetops their opposition to leasehold and their belief that everyone should have freehold. The manifesto of the late Frank Wilson at Busselton in 1916 definitely stated that every man would be able to get his freehold.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You backed the wrong horse.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The descendants of that Government have demonstrated that they are opposed to leasehold. No houses have been built under Part III. of the Act, which provides for leasehold.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Is Scaddan opposed to it?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I understand he was not one of the flies who went into the trap. The Government since then have changed the freehold principle. It is about time that those who availed themselves of leasehold asked why they should be made the victims.

The Minister for Education: You admit it was wrong?

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am prepared to continue the tenure I hold if the Government make it optional, but ever since the Scaddan regime, Governments have been against leasehold and in favour of freehold. It is only fair and reasonable that the position should be re-cast, and that those who have leasehold should be given the option of retaining it.

The Minister for Education: I quite agree with that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have been in agreement with the Leader of the House for six years.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You will be able to get land at 1s. an acre under this Bill.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Since the Scaddan Government have been succeeded by Governments who maintained that leasehold was wrong, consideration should be extended to those who took up leasehold. If they wish to convert, they should be allowed to do so. If not, they should be allowed to continue. I do not suggest any ulterior motives, but, had it not been for the war and the cost of building, the present unsatisfactory position would have been altered long ago. I do not intend to adopt a dog-in-the-manger attitude. I intend to support the second reading, and I trust that those who have leasehold will not die of anxiety while waiting for this adjustment.

Hon. J. MILLS (Central) [8.55]: I shall confine my remarks to Clause 4 which relates to Section 68 of the principal Act, dealing with grazing lands. At present land acquired under Section 68—that is, third-class land—

costs not less than 3s. 9d. per acre plus survey fees, which bring it up to about 4s. 3d. an acre. You, Mr. President, know there is a very great difference in the feeding value of third-class land. You might get third-class land which is worth 3s. 9d. an acre—although I doubt it—and you might get land of the same quality which is not worth 3d. or in fact anything. It would be impossible to make enough off it to pay taxes. This clause will overcome the difficulty, because the Minister may sell such land for as little as 1s. an acre; but it must not be forgotten that the survey fees will be added.

The Minister for Education: You would not pay 1s. for the first five years.

Hon. J. MILLS: No, but the taxes will have to be paid. What is to be done with land which is of no feeding value? All that can be done is to roll and plough out the indigenous scrub and make it fit for sheep feed. In 1915, when the Labour Government were in power, the first-class land was sold at any price the inspector or surveyor liked to assess it at over and above 10s., and a great deal was sold up to 30s an acre, which was very unsatisfactory to those who got it. People on the coast got the best of the land at 10s. an acre, while people inland had to pay up to 30s. an acre. The Government recognised the injustice and amended the Act, making the maximum price 15s. per acre. That was a reasonable price. The present Government have realised that Section 68 is unfair as it asks more for the land than they are entitled to receive, but there is second-class land also. What about that? If the prices of first-class land and third-class land were fixed too high, the same applies to the second-class land. There are tens of thousands of acres of second-class land for which men are paying 9s. 6d. to 9s. 11d. per acre, and it is not worth very much more than one-half of that. The grading right through was too high. The price of third-class land was too high and consequently the price of second-class land must be too high. I hope the Government, having gone so far as to see the advisableness of amending this section, will also investigate the price of second-class land. Third-class land costs from 3s. 9d. to 6s. 3d. per acre, while second-class land costs 6s. 3d. to 10s. an acre, and all above that is first-class land. I intend to move an amendment to this clause, and I hope the Minister will allow time to draft it.

The Minister for Education: I do not propose to take the Bill into Committee until Tuesday next.

Hon. J. MILLS: There are tens of thousands of acres of third-class land held to-day for which men are paying 3s. 9d., 4s. and even 5s. per acre, and it is not worth more than the 1s. per acre land dealt with in Clause 4. My amendment will make the alteration retrospective subject to reclassification of the land. I am grateful to the Minister for having undertaken to hold the Committee stage over until Tuesday next.

Hon. H. Stewart: Do you propose to move an amendment with regard to second-class land?

Hon. J. MILLS: Possibly so.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan) [9.0]: I cannot quite follow Clause 4 of the Bill, notwithstanding the explanation given by Mr. Mills. It seems to me that the 1s. per acre refers to second-class land as well as third-class. Section 68 of the Act provides—

> The price of such land—

That is second class and third class land.

> shall be fixed by the Governor, but shall not be less than 6s. 3d. per acre for second class land, and 3s. 9d. per acre for third class land.

Those are the minimum prices. They become, under this measure, 1s. per acre for both second and third class.

Hon. J. Mills: No; not second class.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I have read Section 68. Clause 4 of the Bill says—

> Nothwithstanding anything contained in Section 68 of the principal Act (as amended by Section 38 of the Act No. 29 of 1906, and Section 8 of the Act No. 19 of 1917) to the contrary, it shall be in the discretion of the Governor to dispose of land under that section at not less than 1s. per acre, exclusive of the value of the improvements, if any, and the survey fees.

The clause does not distinguish between second and third class land.

The PRESIDENT: Would it not be better to go into all that in Committee?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I am merely drawing the Minister's attention to the points that strike me, and he may give explanations when he replies. Section 68 also provides that the minimum area in either of these classes shall be 1,000 acres.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The maximum.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No. The maximum area shall be 3,000 acres in second class, and 5,000 acres in third class; and the minimum area 1,000 acres in either class. Section 38 of the Act of 1906, to which this clause also refers, reads—

> The price of such land shall be fixed by the Government, but shall not be less than 3s. 9d. per acre. The maximum area held by one person shall be 5,000 acres, and the minimum 500 acres.

Hon. H. Stewart: Look up all the amendments, and you will find that it goes much lower.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I am following the matter clause by clause. The 1917 Act provides, by Section 8—

> The maximum area to be held by one person shall be 5,000 acres. The minimum area, except in special cases to be approved by the Minister, shall be 100 acres.

That is at 3s. 9d. per acre. We have it here that a person can have 100 acres at 1s. per acre. I do not know why we have got down to that. I should think any sand heap anywhere is worth 1s. an acre.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You try it.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: If these lands are going to be taken for workers' homes——

The Minister for Education: This has not the remotest connection with workers' homes.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: In this Bill there is provision for workers' homes, and the Bill says that notwithstanding anything——

The Minister for Education: Section 68 has nothing to do with workers' homes.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I cannot gather what it has to do with.

Hon. H. Stewart: Did you read the Bill before you came into the Chamber?

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member had better study the Bill up a little before he goes on with it.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Sir, I always try as a member of the House to be respectful to the Chair; and I expect a little courtesy in return.

The PRESIDENT: In reply to that, I do not think you have any right to keep the House sitting here while you get up your case. You should be ready with your case. You referred to an Act which has nothing whatever to do with the subject.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I will try to put my case to the best of my ability. I do not often take up the time of the House longer than I can possibly help. I say these two clauses are in proximity to one another in the Bill, and I take it that they have some relation to one another.

The Minister for Education: They have none whatever.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I do not know whether a worker's home could not be erected on some of this land at 1s. per acre. The Governor has power to price any third class land, whether it is in proximity to towns, as stated in this clause, or not, for the purpose of workers' homes. I should like the Minister, when he replies, to explain why it is that this land, which years ago was worth 6s. 3d. and 3s. 9d. per acre, is now to be reduced to 1s. per acre.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (East) [9.7]: I support the second reading of the Bill, and congratulate the Government on amending Section 68 so as to meet a situation which has caused no end of trouble throughout the State. I am sure that the Premier, who is so keenly interested in land settlement, and also the Leader of this House, will be very glad if Mr. Lovekin will give practical expression to his view that the land is very cheap by taking up a large area at 1s. per acre. There are considerable areas in this country which are going to cost a lot of money to bring into use. In reducing the price of certain lands to 1s. per acre the Government are taking a big step towards utilising lands which, if not so dealt with, are bound to lie idle for years.

Hon. J. Mills: These are not necessarily poison lands.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The hon. member, who has been an Agricultural Bank inspector, knows pretty well that the land inspectors are very competent officials, and that if they value virgin country at 1s. per acre, it is not worth much more.

Hon. J. Mills: You will see.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Apparently the hon. member, who represents a country constituency, is afraid that the Government are going to give lands away by this measure.

Hon. J. Mills: Nothing of the sort. I know more about the land laws than you do.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I can only suggest that the hon. member's interjections tended in that direction. There are areas of land here which it would pay the Government to give away on an improvement system, so as to get them utilised. The Government are to be commended for proposing these amendments.

Hon. H. STEWART (South-East) [9.11]: I desire to congratulate the Government on having brought forward this measure. I have been through it carefully and I have not noticed anything that is peculiar in the way Mr. Lovekin thinks. I certainly looked through the original Act and the amendments to see the significance of the latter. The only point which could possibly be raised is as to the provision in Clause 3 that suburban land for workers' homes need not be submitted to public auction. The point might possibly be raised that the Workers' Homes Board might in some cases show favouritism, partiality and undue leniency. However, the record of the Workers' Homes Board is entirely satisfactory both administratively and financially and in every other respect. No one can cavil at the administration of the Workers' Homes Board. I do not think there is any real difference between the attitude of Mr. Baxter and that of Mr. Mills. They both realise that it is a well-judged step to reduce the price of certain land to 1s. per acre. When accompanying the Leader of this House and Sir William Beach Thomas through a certain portion of this State —which portion I will not particularise —I was very glad indeed that Sir William Beach Thomas closed his eyes when the train was passing through a long stretch of very poor land. I certainly did not try to engage him in conversation during that period. One is very glad indeed if a distinguished visitor fails to see some of the land alongside our existing railways. The 1917 Act provided that poison lands could be repriced at 1s. per acre, plus survey fees. But there had to be a lot of indigenous poison on such land. In some cases it cost from 10s. to £1 per acre to eradicate the poison. Such land can be used for grazing purposes, and it will be gradually improved by the sheep running on it. In course of time the scrub will disappear, and the country will become of productive value. I congratulate the Government on adopting the method here proposed of dealing with group settlements. It is interesting to turn to some good legislation which was piloted through this Chamber by our present Leader when the Lefroy Government were in power. I refer to the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act and the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act,

under which the Government would be able to get all the land required for all applicants by way of compulsory acquisition. Only slight amendments are needed. These Acts at present refer only to British or Colonial soldiers and their dependants. They laid down the principles of group settlement for soldiers. Section 19 made full provision for group settlement and the Bill before us is simply in accord with the legislation in existence. Clause 5 enables the Government to proceed on lines laid down in connection with soldier settlement and so in the matter of land acquisition for closer settlement, a simple amendment of the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act would have enabled a similar thing to be done. I compliment the Government in that they have adopted a certain principle in connection with this measure, but it would have been simple to avoid complications when bringing in the Bill. I support the second reading.

Hon. J. EWING (South-West) [9.20]: I have been much impressed by the debate which has taken place on the Bill. I have been struck more particularly with the proposal contained in the Bill regarding workers' homes, which is an excellent one. I have had considerable experience of the poorer lands of the State, not only in the South-West but in the Midland country. I have been through the whole of that country and care will have to be exercised by those administering this measure, when it is passed, to see that what is called the poorer land is not given away for 1s. an acre. I have surveyed a good deal of that land and regarded it as being utterly worthless, but at the present time it is producing magnificent growths of subterranean clover.

Hon. J. Mills: Where there is a 30in. rainfall.

Hon. J. EWING: It appeared the poorest land I have ever seen in my life, and if it had been possible to dispose of that land for 1s. an acre it would have gone to the people for that. My knowledge of the South-West is considerable. I have heard members say that there is a considerable area of useless land, but I fail to see where the poor land exists in the South-West except it be in the jarrah hills. Regarding Geraldton, Carnamah, and the surrounding districts, I am familiar with the sand plain there, and I know it to be in many instances almost equal to first-class land. If smoke-bush sand plain is to be given at 1s. an acre it will be disposed of too cheaply. The Midland Company have found out the value of sandplain.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why do you assume that the Government will sell it for 1s. an acre.

Hon. J. EWING: If it is good the Government should get the benefit of it. I wish to impress upon the Minister, and through him the Minister for Agriculture, the importance of seeing that the men who will value this land and who will put a price upon it will know what they are doing. They should know the difference between first, second and third class sand plain.

Hon. J. Mills: They know well enough.

Hon. J. EWING: I hope they do. I want the people to get land as cheaply as possible; at the same time the Government should get something for high class land.

Hon. T. MOORE (Central) [9.23]: I am afraid the hon. member who has just resumed his seat has misrepresented the position in regard to sand plain, when he says it is worth 3s. 6d. per acre.

Hon. J. Ewing: I did not mention any price.

Hon. T. MOORE: Then I misunderstood the hon. member.

Hon. J. Ewing: The best of it is worth a lot more.

Hon. T. MOORE: There are millions of acres of it which can be got for 3s. 9d.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Millions of acres between here and Dongara.

Hon. T. MOORE: It is about time something was done in the direction proposed in the Bill; it should have been done years ago. I would have favoured the giving away of land of the description referred to provided the people who took it up carried out improvements which would give them some return. In time to come, with the use of fertilisers, people will be educated to take up this land. At the present rate, however, it is not likely to be rushed.

Hon. J. Ewing: There is plenty of sand plain.

Hon. T. MOORE: In the district which I know pretty well there is no good sand plain. Something should be done with that vast area over which our railways are running to-day, and from which the State gets nothing in the way of freight. There will be no rush for the land which has been described, at 1s. an acre. I commend the Government for having done something that should have been done years ago in the direction of bringing into use the great area of sand plain.

Hon. G. W. MILES (North) [9.25]: I am glad the Government have introduced this measure and am pleased that there will be power under Clause 4 to get rid of some of the poorer land at as low a rate as 1s. an acre. Comparing the land in the South-West with the land in the North I consider that the latter is worth a lot more than it has been appraised at. It may surprise members to know that most of the pastoral areas have been capitalised at considerably under 1s. an acre. If the pastoral lands are appraised at 1s. an acre, instead of the land being rented at £1 a thousand acres, £3 per thousand acres would be the minimum that the pastoralists would be paying. At 6d. an acre it works out at 25s. a thousand acres and at 3d. an acre at 15s. a thousand acres. There is a good deal of pastoral land appraised at 15s. a thousand acres. If that is all the pastoral land is worth, I am satis-

fied that some of the land in the southern part of the State is not worth 1s. an acre.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East—in reply) [9.27]: I sympathise with Mr. Cornell in connection with the points he raised. Only an amendment to the Workers' Homes Act, however, can meet the case. I regret Mr. Lovekin is not in his place because I wish to express to him regret that the insufficiency of my explanation in introducing the Bill led him into an error. No doubt that is what happened. My introductory remarks were quite clear to those who knew the circumstances, but I should have made it clearer that these clauses have no relation to each other. The workers' homes provisions have really nothing to do with the Bill except that we want to set apart reserves under the Land Act which can be taken for workers' homes, and under Clause 3 we want to allow town and suburban lands to be handed to the workers' homes board without those lands having to be submitted to public auction as provided in the Land Act. Clause 4 has no relation to workers' homes, but enables the land which under Section 68 of the principal Act has been declared unsuitable for agriculture, to be sold for grazing purposes. Mr. Moore suggested that we might have gone further by giving the land away. We cannot do that. Something must pass and 1s. an acre, without interest, when the payment is spread over 20 years is getting pretty close to giving it away.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—DOG ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [9.30] in moving the second reading said: I am glad of the opportunity of introducing to the House an old friend. We had the Dog Act Amendment Bill before us a couple of sessions ago. I think we passed the Bill, but it was amongst the slaughtered innocents in another place. This latest Bill now passed the Legislative Assembly and been sent on to us. Seeing that we considered the Bill so short a time ago, I do not propose to do anything more now that to indicate to members the provisions contained in this one. The existing practice throughout Australia is that a dog is not licensed until it is six months old. In this State it has been required to license a dog if it is three months old. We now propose under Clause 2 to come into line with the other States and make it six months. The present Act is found to be almost unworkable owing to the necessity for proving that a dog has been in the possession of its owner without registration for 21 days. Local authorities have known that a dog has been kept for a period exceeding 21 days without registration, but when they have sent witnesses to secure proof of this, have found that the dog has been exchanged. Clause 3, therefore, provides that the dog shall not be in the possession of its owner without registration for a longer period than seven days. I see no necessity for any time limit whatsoever, but at any rate the time of grace now proposed to be allowed is a fair compromise between the 21 days and no grace at all. Of course, it ought to be possible to obtain a conviction against a person at any time if he is keeping a dog without registration that ought to be registered. The Bill is entirely in the interests of land settlers. Local authorities have found it almost impossible to carry out the existing Act. Stray dogs have become a great menace to settlers, especially in the South-West. Clause 4 rectifies a typical error. The word "regulation" is used in the Act where "registration" was undoubtedly intended. The present Act makes the calendar year for registration end on the 31st December. In all other Acts referring to licenses, etc., we make the years end at the same time, that is the end of the financial year, and it is intended to conform with that principle in this Bill. Clause 6 has been inserted at the request of several road board conferences. The present Act provides for a reduced fee if the dogs are bona fide engaged in the tending of sheep or cattle, without indicating what they may be. The result is that almost throughout the State claims are advanced for the registration of dogs at the reduced fee. This Bill provides—

> That when any person makes use of any dog or dogs in or about the droving or tending of not less than five head of cattle or twenty head of sheep, he shall, on making application in the prescribed form, be entitled to register any such dog at half the prescribed rate.

That gives effect to the intention of the Act. It was not intended that a person should be allowed to take advantage of the reduced fee for a smaller number than five head of cattle or 20 head of sheep. Clause 7 is merely a verbal alteration of the existing Act. Clause 8 deals with registration discs and collars. Various road board conferences have requested that the assistance of the police should be afforded to them in the direction of insisting that all dogs should be licensed and of making an executive officer of each local authority supply to the police a list which would enable them to know which dogs were licensed, and take steps against those which are not licensed. The clause provides—

> Every registered dog shall have a collar round its neck, and the dog's registration disc shall be and remain attached to the collar.
>
> If any dog is found in any public place without a collar round its neck with the registration disc attached thereto, the owner of such dog (unless he shall prove that the breach of this section was not due either to his negligence or wilful act or omission) shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds.

The original Bill omitted this necessary provision although a penalty is provided for the unauthorised removal of the collar from the neck of the dog. It was intended that the disc should be worn, but that provision was not made. The next clause was also inserted at the request of road board conferences. The provision which makes it necessary that stray dogs shall be seized and kept for a certain time before they are destroyed has been difficult to carry out in country centres. Extensive depredations have been caused in the South-West by neglected dogs which have been allowed to roam at will in the bush. Clause 10 amends Section 29 of the principal Act. Clause 11 was also inserted at the request of road board conferences. It has regard to dogs that are kept by aborigines. These people are allowed to keep one dog unregistered, but it is found that they can keep as many as they like. It is impossible to tell to which aboriginal a dog belongs. The proposal now is that each aboriginal must register his dog, but no fee is charged for the registration. We have excised the words "lawfully keep one unregistered male dog" and substituted the words "register one male dog free of charge." There are also consequential amendments. These do not place any hardship upon the aboriginals. Clause 12 is a consequential amendment on the alterations made by Clauses 2 and 3 of the Bill. These have regard to the age and the period. Clause 13 provides a penalty which was omitted from the original Act owing to an oversight. A serious obstacle has been placed in the way of the local authorities and the police in the enforcement of the Act and the regulations made thereunder. Clause 14 is consequential on the alteration made by Clause 5, which relates to the day of registration. This also deals with the amount to be paid. It is not intended to increase the amount of the registration fee. The existing fees are contained in the third Schedule, namely 7s. 6d. and 10s., and 2s. 6d. and 5s. in the case of dogs used for farming purposes. The 2s. 6d. fee has been increased to 3s. 9d. while the other fee remains at 5s. In the case of dogs used for farming purposes a declaration had to be made, and the maker of the declaration had to affix a shilling stamp. In the one case this meant a fee of 3s. 6d., and in the other case a fee of 6s.

Hon. A. Burvill: That is for male and female dogs?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes. The net result is that the ordinary registration fee stands as before, but the concessional registration is 3d. higher in the one case and 1s. lower in the other.

Mr. A. Burvill: The declaration is done away with.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes, for the reason that it is clearly set out in the Act what shall constitute a dog kept for these special purposes.

On motion by Hon. J. Duffell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.40 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 29th November, 1922.

	PAGE
Questions: Traffic Act, speed limit	1887
Railways, Mullewa-Meekatharra section ...	1887
Rowley Forest Products Co., advance ...	1888
Calyx Porcelain Co., advance	1888
Sitting Hours	1888
Leave of absence	1893
Bills: Companies Act Amenndment, report ...	1893
Western Australian Bank Act Amendment (Private), 2R., Com., report	1893
Jarnadup-Denmark Railway, Com. ...	1907

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

QUESTION—TRAFFIC ACT, SPEED LIMIT.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Works: Is it his intention to introduce this session an amendment to the Traffic Act to limit the speed of light vehicle traffic in the congested centres of the State; and also to provide a better method of indicating than projecting the arm when a driver of a vehicle proposes to turn or travel, more especially when travelling after dark?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: (a) No. There have been attempts made in different parts of the globe to fix speed limits, but experience has caused the authorities to rely on Section 26 of the Traffic Act; (b) inquiries are being made in this direction.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, MULLEWA-MEEKATHARRA SECTION.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the total amount of revenue received from the working of that section of the railway from Mullewa to Meekatharra? 2, What is the total expenditure for running and maintenance of that section?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, The information asked for is not available, as particulars of earnings and expenditure are not recorded separately for different sections of the railways, except in the case of the two isolated railways, i.e. Port Hedland-Marble Bar and Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe. 2, To compile the information re-