the amendments are essential in the administration of the departments controlled by the Minister for Works. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

1, War Service Land Settlement Agreement (Land Act Application).

2, War Service Land Settlement Agreement.

3, Industrial Development (Resumption of Land).

4, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.

5, Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.4]: I support the measure. All down the years there have been many cases in the courts when the charges against the persons concerned have been dismissed, and as a result people have been somewhat puzzled over the decisions arrived at. The parties implicated have got off scot-free, the reason being that they have been charged with manslaughter because there was no provision whereby they could be charged with having committed a lesser offence. This Bill will set that right. In future there will be an opportunity to charge an offender with having committed an offence other than manslaughter. This legislation is long overdue.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 5.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 29th November, 1945.

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

QUESTIONS.

WATER SUPPLIES, UNDERGROUND.

As to Ranney System of Tapping.

Mr. BRAND asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Has the Department of Agriculture given consideration to the Ranney system of water production from underground sources?

2, If so, does the department consider that this system would be of utility in country areas in this State which are at present without adequate water supplies?

3, As this system claims to be of particular utility not only for industrial purposes, but also for supplies for country townships, would the Government be prepared to put down a test Ranney unit in some area like the Greenough district, where underground waters or streams have been proved to exist?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 2, and 3, There is very little information available regarding the Ranney system of obtaining water from underground sources. I am arranging for an inquiry and a statement will be submitted as soon as this is available.

RURAL RELIEF FUND ACT.

As to Assistance to Farmers.

Mr. TELFER asked the Minister for Lands:

1, How many farmers have had assistance granted to them under the Rural Relief Fund Act?

2, What is the total amount of advances made to date?

3, How many farmers have availed themselves of the amendments made to the Rural Relief Fund Act in 1942, providing for the writing off of advances under certain conditions?

4, How many have had the total amount written off?

5, How many have had a partial writing off of the debt?

6, What is the total amount written off?

7, Will he take steps to ascertain the financial position of farmers who have not applied, with a view to further writing off of advances?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 3,832.

2, £1,273,360.

3, 394 applications have been received.

4, 228.

5, 49.

6, £105,860.

7, Yes. The Government is arranging to circularise all farmers concerned with Rural Relief Fund advances in order to have a stock-taking of the position so that further writing off of advances may receive the fullest consideration.

HOUSING.

(*A*) *As to Contract and Day Labour Conditions.*

Mr. DONEY asked the Premier: What were the reasons that prompted the ex-Premier, Hon. J. C. Willcock, to change from contract conditions to day labour in respect of the Government's share in this State's post-war housebuilding scheme?

The PREMIER replied:

The ex-Premier (Hon. J. C. Willcock) did not change from contract to day labour conditions in respect of the post-war house building programme. In order to utilise the services of tradesmen available to the Public Works Department and to augment the work being done by private contractors, houses are also being built under day-labour conditions.

(*B*) *As to Use of Mill Waste for Wall-Boards.*

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

1, Has he been informed that an article appeared recently in the Press stating that a new chemical process had been discovered in the U.S.A. whereby sawdust and other wood waste was being converted into hard wall-board of the finest quality? Further, that the new material can be sawn, planed, nailed, varnished and painted, and is more resistant than ordinary wood to termites, rot, moisture, warping and shrinking, and that its cost is only a fraction of that of regular building timber?

2, Is he aware that it is also claimed that the entire operation from sawdust to finished wood takes less than 15 minutes and that the equipment and the operation are so inexpensive that any timber mill producing a few tons of sawdust daily could make a profit on its sawdust waste?

3, Is he also aware that plans are being made in the U.S.A. to manufacture such sawdust-board machinery in different sizes so that even small sawmill operators will be induced to instal equipment and make use of waste wood?

4, Has the department any information on such process?

5, In view of the importance that such means of utilising our sawdust and waste wood would mean to the industry in Western Australia, will he have inquiries made as to the possibility of securing information on the above and also as to whether it would be possible to have similar machinery made available in Western Australia?

6, What steps have been taken by the department to find ways and means of utilising the immense quantity of sawdust and waste wood available in the timber industry of Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

1, and 2, Yes.

3, No.

4, The department has information on a similar process for the production of hardwood boards and moulded products from sawdust. A company is considering the manufacture of resin bonded sawdust products in Western Australia.

5, Yes.

6, The department has carried out exhaustive investigations regarding the utilisation of waste forest products. The projects investigated include:—Charcoal-iron and wood distillation by-products; charcoal briquettes from sawdust; alcohol from sawdust; resin-bonded sawdust products; paper pulp and building boards from tannin extract residues.

MATERNITY HOSPITALS.

As to Closing and Release of Service Doctors and Nurses.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Health:

1, Has he received representations from public bodies in Narrogin regarding the likelihood of the Vailima maternity hospital closing down owing to serious staff shortages and to the consequent recurring ill-health of the sisters in charge as a result of over-work?

2, Has he taken the action necessary to relieve the position at this hospital? If not, will he do so without delay?

3, Does he realise that other maternity and general hospitals in this State are similarly situated and that the early closure of many is imminent?

4, What is the nature of the efforts he is putting forth in order to secure the manpower necessary to end—or at least ease—a state of affairs that is causing the deepest anxiety among expectant mothers and others, especially in the more isolated centres?

5, Is the release of doctors and nurses from the Services correctly proportionate to the release of the total of other personnel?

6, If less than the proportionate number is being released what steps—if any—has he taken to improve the position?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Representations have been made regarding the possibility of the closing down of this private hospital.

2, No request has been made to the department to assist in obtaining staff.

3, A general and serious shortage of hospital staffs exists.

4, Representations have been made to the Federal authorities to expedite to the fullest possible extent the discharge of women from the uniformed Services.

5, No statistics are available.

6, Answered by No. (5).

[86]

BUNBURY HARBOUR.

As to Plans for Future Scheme.

Mr. WITHERS asked the Minister for Works:

1, Has the Director of Public Works completed plans for a future harbour scheme for Bunbury?

2, If so, what are the prospects of such works being put in hand in the near future?

3, If not, will the completion of plans be expedited with this end in view?

The MINISTER replied:

1 and 2, Owing to the shortage of technical staff, progress on the plans for the future harbour scheme for Bunbury has necessarily been held up.

3, In response to continuous applications by the Government, the Army has agreed to release most of the department's technical officers by the end of the year. Preparation of the plans will then be proceeded with.

NORTH-WEST.

As to Lack of Passenger Transport.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Minister for the North-West:

1, Has he information to the effect that there will be no accommodation for passengers travelling from Fremantle to the North-West ports between the middle of December and March or even April in 1946?

2, If he is aware of this lack of passenger transport, will he suggest other arrangements to enable school children now in Perth to reach their homes for Xmas holidays?

3, Is there a scheme for subsidising fares of school children from the North-West?

4, If so, does it apply to air and road travel of such children?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Minister for the North-West) replied:

1, The statement made in the question is not true. Accommodation will be available on the M.V. "Koolinda" in mid-December and on the same vessel again as from the middle of February, and there will be limited accommodation on the M.V. "Kybra" in January. Negotiations have been in hand and are still proceeding to ensure that another passenger ship will be available in January.

2, It is expected that most children will be finished with their 1945 schooling in time to catch the M.V. "Koolinda" ex Fremantle middle December.

3, A vacation concession is available on State-owned vessels for school children.

4, No.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement.

2, Albany Freezing Works Agreement.

Introduced by the Premier.

MOTION—ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.39]: I move—

That during the month of December the House shall meet for the despatch of business on Fridays in addition to the days already provided.

I anticipate that the session will end within the next two or three weeks and, in the interests of members who have so assiduously attended to their tasks in this Chamber during the session, I hope to arrange the hours of sitting so that they will not be too trying in spite of our meeting on four days. I have in mind that we could perhaps on Fridays or some other days sit earlier and finish earlier.

Members: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: But that is a matter for a motion at the appropriate time.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.41]: I do not propose to do other than support this motion, because I fancy I see in it a desire to complete the business of the session—especially when I recollect the remarks of the Premier—without those pestiferous things, all night sittings. If I have not misjudged the hon. gentleman, I am more strongly in favour of the motion for that reason. He has put before us a very great deal of business, and today we have had an indication of some more, some of which will not pass this Chamber without considerable debate and inquiry as to its intention and meaning. As the Premier said, members have assiduously devoted themselves to the work put before them; and I have no doubt they will be given a reasonable opportunity to deal with other legislation when it comes down. I do hope that late sittings will be prevented as far as possible; and, better still, altogether avoided.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motions by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. P. Collier (Boulder); the Minister for the North-West (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley) and Mr. Hoar (Nelson) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT (LAND ACT APPLICATION).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.43]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the third readings of the War Service Land Settlement Agreement Bill, the Industrial Development (Resumption of Land) Bill, the Financial Emergency Act Amendment Bill, and the Mortagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance Bill to be taken at this sitting.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and assured myself that there is an absolute majority of members present. I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

BILL—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.

Report, etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (RESUMPTION OF LAND).

Report, etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.

Report, etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MORTGAGEES' RIGHTS RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

Report, etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [4.47] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is a very old friend of this House. The Act was passed in 1915 and was introduced to give assistance to farmers who were in difficulties in the 1913-1914 season. The wheat crop at that time was a complete failure. The Act continued in operation but almost ceased in 1934. It was revived following the 1935-36 drought, and was amended in 1940 for the purpose of controlling the distribution of the Commonwealth drought relief moneys. It is interesting to note that since the inception of the measure, up to the 30th June, 1945, no less a sum than £14,386,277 has been advanced and the losses up to date total £2,910,036. The total advance since 1935-36 amounts to £1,351,658. Fortunately, comparatively good seasons have prevailed in the past few years and that has led to a reduction of advances. In 1944-45, the sum of £19,036 was advanced from this fund and an amount of £19,250 was repaid; so a little of the old debt came back on that occasion. In 1943-44, we advanced £24,000 and the amount repaid was £58,000, which showed that men who had obtained advances were doing better and were prepared to pay some of the back debt.

The total outstanding at the 30th June last was £42,970. The finances made available under this Act provide funds for the purchase of super. and stores, and to carry on generally. It is essential that we have this Act under which to administer the funds and to make fresh advances as required, to protect the advances already made. This is one of the continuance Bills that will have to be continued, but it is now through this amendment, operating on other moneys, that further advances under this Act will be made. It has to be re-enacted from year to year, and the present Bill provides for a further period of 12 months. It has been rather gratifying to find that for 1943-44 and 1944-45 the repayments were much in excess of the advances made at that time. The department is appreciative of the way the advances have been met. The measure will be continued for another year, and I do not think there is any necessity to talk at length on it.

Mr. Watts: What is the position of the advances under the other part of the Act, dealing with industry generally?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have not the figures for that.

Mr. Watts: It is a pity, because that is an important part of the Act, on which heavy losses have been made.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The losses could not have been too great since the inception of the Act in 1915, because up to the 30th June last the losses have only been £2,910,036.

Mr. Watts: I would have liked to know details of the rest, apart from farming.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That was mostly by way of guarantee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Had the Leader of the Opposition given notice of that question, I would have had the information ready and, if he desires, I will obtain it. I move:—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Thorn, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th November.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [4.52]: The reason for this Bill is to amend Section 121 of the Land Act, which I think was enacted about 1896 to ensure that the Government did not purchase land more than a certain distance away from a railway, which I think was a necessary precaution. I believe we all agree, with the Minister, that progress in transport has been made since 1896 and today transport methods are much improved since the days of horse-drawn vehicles. Now we have modern motor transport, which means that we can reach to greater distances, and more economically. The member for Pingelly raised the question of hauling to sidings, which is an important matter, but I think he will agree that under present-day transport conditions

the position will not be as difficult as it was in the past. I do not think the Government should be hampered in purchasing land for settlement beyond the 20-mile radius. It must be left to the good judgment of the Government, and I think it will purchase only good land.

The Minister for Lands: We are looking at a property now, 22 miles out, to take six settlers.

Mr. THORN: No distance is stipulated, but I think it can safely be left to the judgment of the Government. I would raise opposition to the amendment if I had reason for doing so, but I have not. I do not think the Government should be hampered if it wishes to go 30 miles out, or even further, so long as it is assured by its officers that the proposition is good.

Mr. Watts: And so long as there is some recognised form of transport available.

Mr. THORN: I think that will be available, as more modern transport is now obtainable and the Government has assisted by subsidising transport in various directions. If the Government puts settlers further out, I presume that provision will be made for transport, and under those conditions I raise no objection to the amendment.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [4.55]: When Section 121 was incorporated in the principal Act, it is obvious that the reason was to make certain that no wild-cat schemes would be indulged in, such as buying land on the Nullabor Plain, or on the Hampton Plain. It is perfectly clear that the limit of 20 miles is not justified today, but I doubt whether we are justified in giving a blank cheque to any Government to buy land any distance from a railway. If the Minister wanted 20 miles struck out and 200 miles inserted in lieu, that would be a reasonable proposition. As it is, he might purchase land somewhere on the border between South Australia and Western Australia.

The Minister for Mines: This man is likely to do that.

Hon. N. KEENAN: His successor might not have all his commonsense and foresight, or any other virtues he possesses, and we must guard against that. I do not propose to move an amendment, but ask the Minister to consider whether it would not be advisable to put some figure in the Bill, and not leave it indefinite. If that were done, it would not empower some successor of the present Minister, if the Government of the day would allow him to do so, to purchase land on the boundary line between South Australia and Western Australia, or in some other outlandish part of the State. I think Section 121 was passed on proper grounds, to protect the public purse against a possibility which might occur. I do not think we should obliterate it, as this Bill proposes to do, and I ask the Minister to consider whether a limit, however wide, should not be imposed on the measure.

[*Mr. Rodoreda took the Chair.*]

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.58]: What I have to say is on the lines of the interjection I made when the member for Toodyay was speaking. I think the measure should contain some reference to other suitable means of transport. I see no reason why we should retain in the Act a provision that the land must be within 20 miles of a railway, either existing or authorised. In many areas, railways have been authorised for years, but have not been built, and are not likely to be built. In those areas, a long way from rail transport, it is possible, as the law stands at present, for the Minister or the Crown to accept surrenders and purchase land. As an example, I have in mind the country between Cranbrook and Boyup Brook. There is no railway there, though I think one has been authorised. It is 83 miles between the two points, with a great deal of desirable country just over 20 miles from the railhead at either end, and some of it is almost 40 miles from the railheads.

Under the Land Act at present the Minister could accept a surrender or purchase the land in the middle area between those two railheads, because it is no more than 20 miles away from the railway in that instance. That is quite silly. But the situation is there and although there is no railway there is a recognised transport service, managed or supervised by the Transport Board and operated with the assistance of its funds. In consequence, if the law were to provide that surrenders could be accepted in that area although there was no railway to that portion of the State, I would have no objection whatever to raise. Then I have in mind the country east of Mount Barker.

In that case there is neither a railway built nor one authorised. Under the law as it is at present, although many successful settlers are engaged in industry there, the Minister is prevented from accepting surrender of land in that locality no matter for what purpose he may require it and irrespective of how satisfactorily the business of the adjoining settlers may be carried on. There again a recognised transport service is operating, and it seems to me that in an area like that the absence of a railway does not matter in the slightest degree.

In some other areas where there is neither a railway nor a recognised transport service of any kind and it is just a question of the land being more than 20 miles from a railhead, the transport service available to a settler is only such as he can provide for himself. That has occasioned much concern because we should not leave this matter to speculation. My suggestion to the Minister is that instead of completely deleting the proviso from the Act, he should consider altering it to provide that where there is a railway within 20 miles—I am not worrying at all about railways that have been authorised and not yet built—or where there is a recognised and more or less permanent form of public transport, he would be able to take action. Then we would be perfectly certain that any area that was to be taken up by the Crown for settlement purposes would be one where there were provided facilities, whether it be a railway or some more modern form of transport, which would serve the people who go out there. We would at the same time place a limit on the distance because the institution of a transport service would have to come first and it would not be inaugurated, licenses issued by the Transport Board or subsidies paid by it, unless the area to be served were within a reasonable distance of settlement and public amenity. I suggest to the Minister that he may contemplate altering the Bill along those lines.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [5.3]: I view the proposals of the Minister with sympathy but, like the member for Nedlands, I think it would be advisable to indicate the limit to the distance we can go in purchasing land. In his second reading speech the Minister said it was desirable to secure land for returned soldiers. If that is so, I certainly desire some limit to be fixed because, as I mentioned yesterday when speaking on the War Service Land Settlement Agreement Bill, I had heard of two rather large areas having been purchased by private individuals, which areas included some of the very best agricultural land in Western Australia. I want our returned soldiers to be put on the best rural land available in the State, but not on blocks 50 or 60 miles away from a railway. I heard of another instance today where a much improved property not far from the town from which the member for Williams-Narrogin comes, which has been offered to the Government but has not been accepted. I want some assurance that we are not going to settle returned soldiers away back in the never-never and allow good land to be passed over simply because, while the owner may ask what he considers a reasonable price for his property, the Government or its advisers may regard the price as too high.

I have in mind a particular area in my electorate. It is 50 or 60 miles from a railway. The settlers there have been doing very well and have received reasonable assistance from the Transport Board. Unfortunately the Railway Department, without adequate consultation with the people concerned and the Transport Board, has altered its timetable with the result that it has created what I can only describe as a devil of a mess. The whole of the settlers there will be seriously inconvenienced. I have spent the whole of this afternoon on the job and still have to meet the Transport Board in an endeavour to straighten matters out. When we contemplate settlement in these outer areas, the first trouble that confronts the newcomers, particularly the younger men, is the absence of a school. The area I have in mind is 50 or 60 miles from a railway, and it is not easy to get a school teacher to go to such a place. The settlers I refer to have been on their holdings for 15 years and have been without a school until last year. These are matters that must be borne in mind. It is quite true that in these days motor transport is much faster than the horse and wagon that were used years ago. On the other hand, while the modern system may be faster it is certainly not cheaper.

In the days of the horse and wagon, although a journey may have taken longer, the farmers grew the fodder for the horses on their farms and, in those circumstances,

expenses were considerably lower than they are today. Possibly a lot of the farming difficulties of today are occasioned by the largely increased cost of production due to the use of motors, imported oil and so forth. If we are to go into these outer areas for the settlement of returned soldiers, we ought not to send them out for an unlimited distance. We should settle them on areas as close to existing transport routes as possible. I do not refer necessarily to railways. The property near Narrogin, to which I referred earlier, while not served by a railway, is practically on a good transport route which is possibly a little over 20 miles from a railway line. I shall support the Bill but I hope the point of view I have mentioned will be borne in mind by the Minister and his department, and that land will not be resumed a long way from a transport route simply because areas there can be purchased more cheaply than land closer to the more popular forms of transport.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville—in reply) [5.10]: I appreciate the remarks of the member for Nedlands and other Opposition members. I am in no hurry to rush the Bill through. If the second reading is agreed to, I shall discuss the points raised with the officers of the department with a view to framing a suitable amendment. It will be rather difficult to state definitely the number of miles that will apply. For instance, the Government has been asked to look at a property situated 22 miles from a railway. The Director of Land Settlement, Mr. Fyfe, informs me that if the property is found to be suitable, as he thinks it most certainly will, we could place six returned men on it. Despite that fact, we cannot touch the property while the Land Act remains on the statute-book in its present form. It is all very well to say that, as it is merely a couple of miles over the stipulated limit, we could ignore that and go on with the proposition. The fact remains that, according to the Act, that area is outside the limit.

Mr. Doney: Is that property for wheat-growing or grazing?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It would be taken over for mixed farming. We have had a number of blocks offered to us. I do not think any Government would start putting returned soldiers or anyone else on blocks in the never-never, particularly in view of our experience with regard to marginal areas and in other directions. If it did so, it would be looking for trouble. In this instance there is no such intention. If members agree to pass the second reading of the Bill the Committee stage can be postponed until Tuesday next, and in the meantime I will discuss the matter with the officers and endeavour to frame an amendment that will meet the objections that have been raised. I do not know how we can overcome the difficulty but I shall see what can be done.

What is required for the settlement of returned soldiers is the best and most suitable land available, and it will not be an easy matter to get holdings complying with that description. It will be readily understood that if we repurchase land that is situated at a great distance from a railway or some suitable form of transport, the first proposition confronting the Government will be the payment of a subsidy on the cartage of the settlers' produce. It would be foolish for any Government to place itself in that position. I have had some experience from that point of view and the Minister for Mines, too, knows all about the payment of a subsidy on the cartage of ore. The same would apply to wheat. However, I have indicated that if the second reading is agreed to the Committee stage can be left over until Tuesday next.

Mr. THORN: The suggestion made by the Minister is very reasonable and if the Committee stage is postponed he may be able to overcome the difficulty by way of an amendment.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister's speech in reply closed the debate.

Mr. THORN: I am very well aware of the fact. I simply wished to get in that point.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 21st November. Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 2 had been agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 49:

Mr. LESLIE: I move an amendment—

That all the words after "by" in line 2 be struck out and the following words inserted in lieu:—"adding a further proviso at the end thereof as follows:—Provided also that, in the case of any municipal district divided into wards, if the general rates payable in respect of rateable land in each ward are administered together as a common fund, any person who holds rateable land in two or more wards shall be entitled to be registered as an elector only on the electoral roll for such ward as such person shall at or before the time appointed for the holding of the revision court by writing under his hand delivered to the town clerk, select, or, failing such selection as aforesaid, for such one of the said wards as the council shall determine."

The object of the clause, according to the Minister's explanation, is to remove plural voting or what is regarded as such in connection with municipal elections. My amendment will meet the desires of the Government insofar as this particular type of plural voting is exercised and will deal justly with the matter, regardless of whether the person has land in one or more wards, but where the funds are administered in such a way that the expenditure in each ward is governed by the revenue collected in the ward, the ratepayer would have a vote in respect of each ward in which he owns land. That would be only just. Where the revenue is expended in accordance with the collections in the wards, the wards are like separate councils under one chairman, and the councillor for the ward is the only one who would have a say as to the work to be carried out in that ward. Seldom do other members of a council interfere. The amendment means that although a man may own land in two wards, he will be able to represent his point of view to only one councillor. This would make the position the same as that of a ratepayer owning land in the Perth and Fremantle municipalities, for each of which he would be allowed a vote.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment would not work well in practice. In a municipality where the revenue of each ward was kept separate, it would continue largely the existing system regarding the number of votes that any ratepayer might record. There are very few municipalities where no wards exist but, if the amendment were adopted, they would probably divide their districts into wards so that the present system would operate. If they did not, we would have different voting systems in different municipalities.

Hon. N. Keenan: You have that today.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but the exceptions are very few. The proposal in the Bill is clear-cut that a ratepayer in any municipality shall not have more than one vote irrespective of whether the district is divided into wards. If members favour the abolition of plural voting they would be unwise to support the amendment because, wherever the ward system prevails, the amendment would continue the existing system.

Mr. LESLIE: It is the right of the ratepayers to say what sort of system they will operate under. If the ratepayers desired to abolish plural voting, they could do so by arranging for their revenue to form a common fund. Some councils are doing that at present. The proposal in the Bill is an arbitrary attempt to abolish what must be considered as the right of the individual ratepayer.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Will this provision also cover the voting at a loan poll? At present, if a loan is proposed and a poll is asked for, it is taken on the basis provided for the election of councillors, but if this provision becomes law will it apply to a poll for a loan?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Money may be borrowed to carry out work in a certain ward and the repayment of that money is a charge on the land in that ward. Under the Minister's proposal, the owner would be deprived of a vote in that ward because he may have selected another ward in which to vote.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The whole of the municipality would be responsible for the repayment of the loan.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Not when certain lands are held responsible for the repayment of the money. The municipality would be required only to make good any shortage. An owner should not be put in the position of being held responsible for the repayment of a loan in the raising of which he has had no say.

Mr. WITHERS: Does the amendment mean that the elector would have only one vote in the whole of the municipality?

Mr. Leslie: Yes, if the rates are administered from a common fund.

Mr. WITHERS: From my knowledge of municipal activities, no municipality in Western Australia works on the ward system as far as its revenue is concerned. The revenue is pooled.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Loans are a charge against the whole municipality.

Mr. WITHERS: I do not consider the amendment necessary.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I desire to correct my statement that a ward would be liable. I have had the opportunity to look up the statute and find that it provides that the council shall be entitled, by virtue of the statute, to borrow on the credit of the municipality. I was in error.

Mr. LESLIE: The amendment differs vitally from the provision in the Bill. The Bunbury Council is operating on a common fund received from all the wards, but not all councils do that. Some councils have their funds split up. Bunbury is merely divided into wards for electoral purposes. In some councils each ward is a separate entity, not only for electoral purposes, but for the spending of money. A ratepayer may own land in, say, both the east ward and the west ward, and may find that the councillor for the east ward is proposing to spend money for a specific purpose which does not meet with his desires, or that the councillor may be following a policy with which he does not agree. At present, such a ratepayer is deprived of the opportunity to express an opinion at all on the policy. If work is undertaken for one ward, it is possible for a rate to be struck only on that particular ward for the purpose of repaying the loan raised to do the work. The amendment gives the ratepayer the right to a say in the separate wards of the district.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 50. Repeal and new section:

Mr. WITHERS: As I mentioned on the second reading, I am concerned about the position of joint owners and joint occupiers. Under the present Act, as I read it, if there are four votes for a property, the joint owners or the joint occupiers would have four votes between them. I do not know how this Bill will affect that position, if there is still to be plural voting.

Mr. Doney: This Bill does not upset plural voting.

The Minister for Works: We have already upset plural voting to some extent.

Mr. WITHERS: If plural voting is not abolished, then for a property with a valuation of over £75 joint owners and joint occupiers would be entitled to four votes. According to what happened in Bunbury recently, if the valuation is £200, they are entitled to four further votes. I do not think that was the intention even of the existing legislation. Will this amendment overcome that position?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The point appears to be that where two persons are joint owners or joint occupiers they may, under the existing Act, have double the number of maximum votes provided for one owner or one occupier of property of the same valuation. The existing Act and this amendment will not alter that procedure, unless, of course, if plural voting is abolished when they would have a fewer number of votes than they have under the Act as it now stands. I have been rather interested during the last few days in this proposed amendment, because I have been concerned to know just how wide its application may be and I have tried to ascertain how widely the existing section of the Act has been applied. There seems to be some doubt as to what conditions have to exist before two persons can be regarded as being joint occupiers. There is no doubt in regard to joint ownership, because that fact can easily be established in the legal sense, but the establishment of the fact or otherwise of joint occupancy is much more difficult. My inquiries are not yet conclusive. When they are, it may be necessary to submit an amendment in another place to this amendment as set out in the Bill. In giving consideration to the point, we will, before arriving at any conclusion, also give consideration to the point raised by the member for Bunbury.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I understand that this clause is rather important in connection with the qualifications for voting for the Legislative Council. So long as anybody is registered as a ratepayer on a municipal or road board roll, he can apply for

enrolment for the Legislative Council. I would like the Minister to look into that matter, too.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister's remarks would seem to indicate that the clause, in his opinion, does not mean what it purports to mean on its being first scanned.

The Minister for Works: That is not so.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister's remarks seemed to be an admission that that was so. I thought the Minister might find some means of setting aside a decision until his information comes to hand.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The clause in the Bill is clear-cut. There is no doubt what it means or what it aims to achieve. The point which came to my mind in looking over the Bill was what would constitute a ground to enable more than one person to become enrolled as a ratepayer in regard to joint occupancy. The other point, raised by the member for Bunbury, is whether two persons jointly owning or occupying should have double the maximum votes allowed to one person owning or occupying premises of the same value. Those are two points that will be closely investigated. If it is found finally that something further is required in connection with Section 50 of the Act, it will be put forward by way of amendment by the Government's representative in the Legislative Council.

Mr. McDONALD: Under the Act, the section deals with owners and occupiers. If there are two or more, two of them may be registered or enrolled as ratepayers and electors, but not more than two, even though there are six or seven others. In the case of owners the position is simple, because ownership is recorded in the Titles Office. In the case of occupiers, where there are two or more, the present Act provides that two, but not more than two, may be enrolled with the municipality as ratepayers and electors in respect of the same piece of land; so it is important as the member for Geraldton said, regarding Legislative Council qualifications. But the amending Bill will, I think, make no difference in that respect. Both the original Act and the present Bill provide that not more than two people can be ratepayers and electors in respect of the same piece of land.

The Minister for Works: Either as owners or occupiers.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. But what the amendment will do is this: If plural voting is retained, a particular piece of land will confer double the existing votes, because, under the existing Act, when two people are enrolled as ratepayers and electors in respect of one piece of land, each one is deemed to own half the land; and therefore each one of those two has the voting strength applicable to half the value of the land. The amending Bill provides that if two are enrolled as electors or ratepayers in respect of one piece of land, each shall be deemed to be the owner or occupier of the whole of the land. Therefore, a piece of land which when owned by one person, may confer four votes for a mayoralty, will, if two people are involved, confer eight votes on those two people. To draw attention to what I may call an extremely unlikely possibility, if another place should reject plural voting and retain this clause, plural voting will be more plural than before!

Mr. LESLIE: The inclusion of this clause is the most astonishing part of the Bill, because I interpret it as definitely establishing the principal of plural voting. In my second reading speech, I pointed out that the voting was actually vested in a parcel of land. Now we are saying that one parcel of land is going to have the right to exercise two votes. As the desire of the Minister is to abolish plural voting, I should say the correct procedure would be to abolish this clause and stick to the principle upon which municipal councils and local governing authorities are established, the vote being in a particular parcel of land. If we are going to abolish plural voting let us say that one particular parcel of land shall have one vote irrespective of its value, the number of occupiers, or anything else.

Mr. DONEY: The member for Mt. Marshall is taking a queer stand on the matter. Here, without the tiniest doubt, we have just secured a convert to the idea of plural voting, and now the hon. member talks about abolishing this clause. This, I expect, has been done deliberately by the Minister. I daresay that under the cloak he wears in respect to this matter, he is at heart as much a plural voter as anyone else. The clause confers on each of two owners the right that was conferred on one owner.

The Minister for Lands: That is so.

Mr. DONEY: Therefore it doubles the voting strength of such a piece of land. I prefer to see the clause remain as printed.

Mr. HILL: I oppose this clause. I am not a ratepayer of a municipality, but I am the owner of a block of flats. If I had voting power in accordance with the rates I pay, I would be entitled to four votes, but the preference is given to the occupiers. As I understand this clause, the tenants, man and wife, of each of the four flats, would be able to register as occupiers so that the property could record eight votes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This clause had necessarily either to abolish Section 50 or amend its wording.

Mr. Leslie: To be consistent you would have to abolish it.

Mr. Doney: Suppose we accept that plural voting—

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the section were left as it is and plural voting had been abolished, then each of two joint owners or occupiers would have half a vote each. That would be an impossible position

Mr. McDonald: They would have one vote each.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They would have half a vote each. Instead of the Minister being a convert to plural voting, this clause is an attempt to prevent the development of an impossible situation. If the majority of members believe that this section should go out altogether, the Government will be able to accommodate them, but the necessary alteration had better be made in another place.

Mr. ABBOTT: I disagree with the Minister's interpretation. Section 50 is very clear. Under it not more than two joint owners of any land would have a vote. As long as they are owners of rateable land of a certain value, they have a vote.

The Minister for Works: If plural voting were abolished one would not have a vote.

Mr. ABBOTT: They would both have a vote.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister is foreseeing a situation that is entirely unlikely to arise. Having regard to the complete acceptability of this clause to us, what will happen is that this clause will be accepted, and plural voting will once more maintain its ground, in which case the Minister will be in precisely the kind of fix that I referred to earlier.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Amendment of Section 53:

Mr. DONEY: The Minister said a little while ago that plural voting had already gone. What has gone, so far as Clause 3 is concerned, is multiple voting as applied to wards. The question of plural voting for mayors and councillors has not been touched. It is in this clause that we see the first sign of the cloven hoof. I hope members will give the clause close attention because it is the test clause so far as plural voting is concerned. This is where we find the first reference to full rateable value, number of votes, etc. The object of the Bill is to abolish in the Act all mention of those terms and any other similar implication. In this as well as in the majority of the other States, the right to vote in municipal elections is based mainly on the rateable value of property.

We on this side of the Chamber believe in municipal votes on that basis because, among other things, it does enable the person who pays the piper to call the tune, and because it induces in people, young and old, a sense of public and private responsibility. It would not be going too far to say that most members opposite also believe in that, but the point is that they do not care to admit it publicly. Privately, of course, they have no such qualms. Once every two or three years—or possibly more often than that—Government members have tried to abolish plural voting. I do not think they really wish to succeed in the attempt, because when they fail it does not worry them a bit. We have noticed that repeatedly after attempts have been made.

Mr. Triat: Vote with us this time, and you will see whether we want it or not.

Mr. DONEY: In between the attempts I believe the question of plural voting does not enter their minds at all. I do not think anyone here can point to any disability that arises from the exercise of plural voting. I have recently perused a number of debates on this question and do not find anyone attempting—except here and there, with no success—to show that plural voting brings in its train any harm to the municipality wherein it is exercised. I know the late Mr. McCallum used to claim that if it were abolished the interest in municipal life would increase enormously, as members will recall, but no one recalls Mr. McCallum going further and giving the reasons for putting forward that claim. He was shrewd enough to stop there.

The only State that has gone to the length of abolishing plural voting is Queensland and no-one has claimed—nor has there been evidence from any other quarter—that interest in municipal elections has increased in that State. For all we know, it may have gone the other way. The weapon given to municipal voters, wherewith to defend their homes when they elect a councillor, is the one or two votes conceded them by law for that purpose. Who looks most keenly after his defence, and who works the hardest, is he who has the most to lose. There can be no doubt about that. The Labour householder exercises those votes just as shrewdly and jealously as do the Liberals or Country Democrats and that is why, year after year, the Government fails with Bills of this kind. I think the matter is not political at all but plainly the Minister—I do not think he will deny it—wants to make it so.

The Minister for Works: That is not correct.

Mr. DONEY: I have no wish to say anything the Minister would not like, but I think he would admit that about two-thirds of the requirements of the Bill are based on what might be called Government policy, with small regard for the wishes of the municipalities in these matters, because, with minor exceptions only, their views have not been ascertained.

The Minister for Works: That is not correct.

Mr. DONEY: We can think nothing but that the Government does wish to impose on the municipalities a political policy of its own.

The Minister for Works: Your speech is provocative, and almost reckless.

Mr. DONEY: It worries me, as members know, to have a difference of opinion with the Minister, but he will be pacified to a degree when I say that my remarks are based on his own admissions during his speech on the matter. When it comes to a Government, through its chosen Minister, putting up proposals of this type, I do not regard that as democratic, but as bureaucracy, plain and unadulterated. Party politics do no good to municipal life but rather tend to stir up passions that would be far better left latent. I think also that municipal politics, if permitted and encouraged, would breed a sharply hostile atmosphere among members of the municipal councils, and would hold up a great deal of progress th might otherwise take place.

The Minister for Works: What has this to do with the matter before the Committee?

Mr. DONEY: The Chairman of Commi tees decides whether it is relevant or not

The CHAIRMAN: I have been investigating the position for the last 10 minut and have arrived at the conclusion that t member for Williams-Narrogin has got w away from the clause. I ask him to confi his remarks to the matter in hand.

Mr. DONEY: I bow to the Chairman ruling, and will conclude my remarks the clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Amendment of Section 15

Mr. DONEY: This is the clause that r quires all municipal meetings to take pla not before 7 p.m. on any one day. The pri ciple of changing the hour of meeting to o that suits the greatest number of councillo or prospective councillors is fair and soun Whether 7 p.m. is that hour is, to my min quite arguable. I consider it also arguab whether a Government should intervene a matter so purely domestic as a questio of the time at which a municipal counc meeting should be held. Under the sectio proposed to be amended municipalitie quite properly, are permitted to choose a hour that suits the majority. Because t Perth City Council meets in the afternoo we can assume that afternoon hour suits t wishes of the majority of the councillor The Government wishes to say that t council must not hold its meetings in t afternoon but only at some hour betwee 7 p.m. and midnight.

The Minister suggested that worke would find it difficult to attend council mee ings in the afternoon but would be free fro 7 p.m. onwards, and unless the meeting hou were altered such workers would be pr hibited from becoming members of the cou cil. That may be quite true, but it is equall true that if the council meetings are to b held at 8 p.m. night-workers and others wi be penalised seeing that they might prefe the meetings to be held at 3 p.m. It ha been represented to me that the Perth Cit Council is the only recalcitrant body in thi respect.

Mr. Cross: You do not worry about the night-workers here when you make long speeches at a late hour!

Mr. DONEY: I do not make long speeches at a late hour, but at any rate that is not mentioned in the Bill. I oppose the clause and I would like to hear the views of metropolitan members.

Mr. ABBOTT: Had there been any public demand for such an alteration of the Act—

The Minister for Lands: Must we wait for a public demand before we do anything?

Mr. ABBOTT: —there would be some reason for the Government introducing such a proposal. I move about a good deal and this particular point has never been mentioned to me. If one individual has written to the Minister about the matter, that is no reason why such an amendment should be placed before Parliament. Many people are engaged in night-work and this will affect them. The City Council is a business concern and its main duty is in connection with the administration of civic affairs and the business attached thereto. In view of that, it means that practically the whole staff of the City Council will have to be available for consultation regarding the problems to be discussed. If Ministers of the Crown had to conduct the affairs of State entirely after 7 p.m., I think we would soon be confronted with a very discontented Civil Service, and there would quickly be a change. Possibly to meet the convenience of one or two people the whole staff of the City Council is to be inconvenienced, and surely that is not justifiable. Surely the City Council should be left to conduct its business in the interests of the ratepayers as a whole.

Mr. McDONALD: I do not suppose the local government system of the State will be wrecked if this clause is passed or rejected. Nevertheless it involves a principle that, to a large extent, permeates the Bill and has been apparent in much legislation that has been introduced lately. I listened this afternoon to a talk by a man from Great Britain who spoke about the library system operating in that country. Under the regional library system there, every man, woman and child can get a book free and, if he cannot get it at the local suburban library, the librarian will apply to the regional library and so on to the London library with its 3,000,000 books. That system is run by the municipalities which, together with other local government institutions there, exercise very extensive powers. That is the principle in England—the placing of power, authority, responsibility and management on to the people of the district concerned, trusting to their commonsense and civic responsibility. Here, on the other hand, we are attempting more and more to withdraw power from the people generally with a view to placing it in the centralised hands of the Government and governmental officials, however good they may be.

In this instance the Perth City Council is not even to be allowed to decide the hour at which it will meet! Even that small matter is to be determined by a centralised authority—this Parliament. Without developing this point unduly, I shall merely remark that recent British writers—for example, Arthur Bryant in his "English Saga" —have attributed the foundation of the English character largely to decentralisation, thereby training the people to accept responsibility and to exercise initiative respecting the affairs of their own district. Such writers say, rightly or wrongly, that the development of that personal self-reliance has been a fundamental attribute of the English character and enabled the people of the Old Country to meet crises that have confronted them in the past, such as that from which they have just recently emerged.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. McDONALD: Personal or occupational reasons may prevent some ratepayers from becoming members of a council that holds its sittings in the evenings, just as similar considerations may preclude many people from entering this Parliament.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Members of Parliament are paid for their services.

Mr. McDONALD: That does not assist many people who feel that they cannot undertake the economic insecurity that leaving their occupations would involve and so, on account of personal responsibilities and for occupational reasons, they are unable, even with the Parliamentary allowance, to enter the Legislature, if the electors so decided. In some municipalities it may be almost impossible to carry on the business if they are restricted to meeting in the even-

ing. I have addressed myself to this clause because it involves a far-reaching issue. We cannot contend that we are really interested in decentralisation and that we are encouraging the people to exercise responsibility in their own affairs, if we deprive a representative body such as a municipal council of the right to decide its hour of meeting.

Mr. PERKINS: I am opposed to the provisions of the Bill that tend to restrict the powers and lower the prestige of local authorities. The Government is not warranted in interfering with the affairs of local authorities as would be done by this clause. I agree almost entirely with the remarks of the member for West Perth when he said that much of the development of the spirit of self-reliance and good government in the people of the Old Country has been due to the desire to help themselves, and one opportunity open to them to take an interest in their own affairs is provided by the system of local government. To circumscribe the local authorities in the powers they may exercise will not tend to build up the self-reliance of our people or a good system of local government. I consider that the good government of the State depends largely upon the development of the system of local government.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: You are denying 90 per cent. of the people the right to serve on a municipal council.

Mr. PERKINS: I would not deny that right to anybody, but the local people should be allowed to decide for themselves at what hour their meetings shall be held. We give the councils the right to decide many more important issues than this one. There is a strong desire in the country to build up the strength of the local government system which, in this State, is already much more restricted than it is in other States. This clause would restrict the powers of local authorities still further and also lower their prestige. An active member of a local authority and a strong supporter of the Government party recently remarked that local authorities had become largely road and gutter boards. His sentiments were in favour of extending rather than decreasing the powers of local authorities, and the Minister, by proposing such a clause, is out of step with the feelings of local authorities.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Abolish plural voting and they will get more power.

Mr. PERKINS: Steps have been take to abolish plural voting.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But abolition ha not been achieved yet.

Mr. PERKINS: If members are in earne in the desire to abolish plural voting, the should be prepared to give the counci the right to decide this issue for themselve

Hon. J. C. Willcock: This Bill may b returned by the Council with the plural vo ing provisions cut out and the other prov sions left in.

Mr. PERKINS: Nearly all the munic pal councils hold their meetings in the eve ing and I cannot see the need for the claus The mere fact of including such a claus seems to be an insult to the municipalitie in that they are not to be permitted to d cide when their meetings shall be held. I op pose the clause.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Th opposition to the clause appears to be base mainly on the ground that its acceptan would constitute a taking-away of pow from municipal councils. I have an ide that some members opposing the clause o that ground will later, when some oth clauses are discussed, argue that the passin of those clauses would give too much pow to municipal councils. A close study the Bill will show that its acceptance woul give very much more power to the counci than it would take from them. I will l interested when we are discussing thos clauses to note the attitude of the membe for York. I shall be surprised if he do not oppose them on the ground that, passed, they would give the councils to much power.

Hon. N. Keenan: Wait till we come them.

Mr. Perkins: That is the answer!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As fa as I know, the only municipal council whic does not hold its meetings at night is th Perth City Council. The argument put u here against the City Council being com pelled to sit at night is that its office would be forced to work overtime. Is ther anything terrible about that? However, doubt if they work overtime to any exten

Mr. Berry: The City Council pays abou £800 a year for it now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I ver much doubt that statement. The time the officers of the City Council must l taken up now in the daytime when th

council meets; and to that extent they could not do their ordinary work during the day, and I imagine that they would have to do it overtime. If the Perth City Council met at night, the officers would have the extra time during the day to do their ordinary work. I doubt whether, on balance, there would be any more work. The only purpose the Government had in mind in including this clause in the Bill is to give a reasonable opportunity to many more ratepayers within the City of Perth to offer their services on the council. When all is said and done, those ratepayers would be entitled to more consideration than would the 12 or 16 men who sit on the council. If the council held its meetings at night, many persons could attend the meetings. Even if a man were on shift work, he might be able to arrange a change of shift with some fellow-worker.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: He should be home at night.

The Minister for Lands: What are you doing away from home, then?

Mr. Withers: Having a social evening!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think there is everything to be said in favour of the clause. I know of men who would stand for election if the meetings were held at night.

Mr. Abbott: The Minister may be right, but does he feel that that is more important than that a great many people will have to work back at night?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have already discussed that point. To the extent that the officers work overtime, no doubt they are paid appropriate overtime rates. If not, the City Council is sufficiently financial to pay penalty or appropriate rates. The Government is not attempting to do anything dreadful, as was suggested by the member for West Perth and the member for York.

Mr. DONEY: We on this side of the Chamber conceded the principle that the meeting hour should be one to suit as nearly as possible the majority of members.

The Minister for Works: Ratepayers!

Mr. DONEY: Those really concerned with the suitability of the hour would be the members of the council rather than the ratepayers.

The Minister for Lands: Not at all!

Mr. DONEY: It has been conceded, too, that the only recalcitrant body in the matter of hours is the Perth City Council. I suggest to the Committee that it is conceivable that all the members who are returned are those to whom the present hour of 3.30 p.m. is suitable, for the reason that in those circumstances none of those who prefer seven o'clock have been returned. I am sure if that should happen neither the Minister nor anybody else would care to tie down those who wanted to meet at 3.30 to a preposterous idea, just because the Government wanted them to meet at 7 p.m. It seems to me to be wise to wait until an election is over and then allow the council itself to decide. Those who have served on councils or local governing bodies know full well that as a general rule the greatest amity prevails amongst members, and they might well be allowed to decide for themselves after an election what hour suits them best.

The Minister for Mines: What about before the election; the choice of the ratepayers?

Mr. DONEY: I do not see that the question of the hour matters to the ratepayers. They are not concerned. They are concerned with returning men to the council. After the election, the only ones who would find any disability or benefit from meeting at 7 p.m. or 3 p.m. would be the members of the councils themselves.

Mr. READ: We are dealing with a body of citizens who give their time in an honorary capacity to the management of the affairs of the city or town They have certain obligations under their Act. They are really a committee of management to spend money provided by the ratepayers in improvements and amenities for their districts. The matter of the hour at which they meet should not be mandatory but optional, because the convenience of those doing the work should be consulted in every respect. The Perth City Council has a large revenue and a great amount of detailed work to perform. The committees of the Council give about three times as many hours to the management of affairs as are given by the council. There is the matter of inspections, and the local work which a councillor has to perform on behalf of individual ratepayers or small committees in his particular ward. That also takes up considerable time.

Under this measure, the hour of meeting would be compulsory, no matter what disability a council might be under in meeting at the specified time. Some councils might

wish to meet at night. On the other hand, where there is a scattered population and a weekly half holiday takes place on Wednesday afternoon, the men serving on the local authority might prefer to meet on the day when they go into the town. On the other hand, the members of the local governing authority might all be chosen from the inner wards. They might live round about the town, and in those circumstances might prefer to meet at night. We should not definitely lay down in any Act where they should meet or when.

Mr. HILL: It is our duty to give every consideration to those who serve as councillors. When people undertake civic responsibilities they give up a tremendous amount of time for no reward; and we should interfere with them as little as possible. The council I represent is strongly opposed to this proposal to make night meetings compulsory. The reasons are as follows:—Most and practically all meetings of committees concerned with outside work are held in the daytime. The reason for this is that these committees have to inspect works or consider applications which can only be dealt with properly after inspection. Inspection would be impossible except in daylight hours. It might be argued that inspections could be made without the formality of calling a meeting, but it would then be necessary to have a formal meeting called after 7 p.m. on some day to confirm what was actually agreed upon during the daytime. It is sometimes necessary to call a special urgent meeting of the council which could not wait until, say, 7 p.m. on the day on which it was called. Alternatively, it may be convenient to hold a meeting during the day. In the case of this council, it has proved to be most convenient to hold these short meetings about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. They can be held then with little inconvenience to councillors, who would object to coming out at 7 or 8 in the evening, thus spoiling a whole evening for a very short meeting. I am opposed to this clause, because this is a domestic matter which could be left to the gentlemen who give their time for the benefit of local people.

Mr. PERKINS: The only argument the Minister adduced in favour of the clause applied to the Perth City Council. He made no attempt to justify the clause in regard to municipalities outside Perth. Country members are entitled to object to legislation which affects country municipaliti when in reality the purpose of the Gover ment is to apply the measure only to t city area. If the Minister desired to de with the city area he could have done by a specific clause or through a separa Bill.

The Minister for Works: Would you ha supported that?

Mr. PERKINS: I do not say whether would support it or not. It is a matter f the Minister to decide how we should about the business. The Municipality York holds meetings at night, but it is co ceivable that inconvenience could be caus if special meetings were required to de with some particular matter needing inspe tions, and when it would be convenient hold a meeting in the afternoon which wou suit all the members of the council. This a matter for ratepayers and councillors their own particular areas to decide.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If w study the convenience of the Perth Cit Council, then we decide that we suppo the business section of the community against the workers in the community. it comparatively easy for a businessma so to arrange affairs as to attend meetin of the council in the daytime, but it extremely difficult for a worker to do th same thing.

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

Ayes	18
Noes	18
A tie	0

AYES.

Mr. Fox	Mr. Panton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Smith
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. Holman	Mr. Telfer
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Triat
Mr. Millington	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Needham	Mr. Withers
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Wilson
	(*Teller.*)

NOES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. North
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hill	Mr. Read
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Watts
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Seward
	(*Teller.*)

The CHAIRMAN: The voting being equal, I give my vote in favour of the ayes.

Clause thus passed.

Clause 15—agreed to.

Clause 16—Amendment of Section 170:

Mr. DONEY: This is where the arbitrary ruling in regard to times of meetings is extended to committees. I can hardly think that the Minister will be adamant with respect to committees. I move an amendment—

> That at the end of the clause the following words be added:—"unless all the members of the committee have agreed that such meeting or resumption of any meeting of the committee shall commence at some other hour."

The Committee will agree that this is an eminently reasonable proposal. Not even the ingenuity of the Minister can find anything wrong with it!

The Minister for Works: Is that a challenge?

Mr. DONEY: I do not care to challenge the Minister. I am relying upon his recognition of the decency of the proposal.

The Minister for Works: I am in favour of this amendment.

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

Clause 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Amendment of Section 180:

Mr. DONEY: This deals with quite an interesting matter, namely, that of perambulators and, of course, what they contain. I move an amendment—

> That a new paragraph be inserted as follows:—(b) by deleting from subparagraph (p) of paragraph (42) the words "or prohibiting."

Subparagraph (p) provides for regulating or prohibiting the use of perambulators in or upon the streets, ways and footways. My amendment will permit of municipalities regulating the use of perambulators in or upon the streets, ways and footways. This subparagraph must have been drawn in the days when we were not so much concerned about increasing our population as we are today.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Has any council ever prohibited perambulators?

Mr. DONEY: The right is here and I presume it is included with the intention of being carried out. We should not be so stupid as to have something like this in one of our principal laws!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On sentimental or, perhaps, humanitarian grounds it is difficult to argue against this amendment. However, the municipal authorities have had this right for years and I doubt whether we should take it from them. The member for Williams-Narrogin has not put forward evidence of abuse of this power.

Mr. Watts: None is required.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know of any municipal councils that have used it.

Hon. N. Keenan: Some might have.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I cannot imagine conditions under which they would prohibit the use of a perambulator upon a street, way or footway.

Mr. Watts: I cannot imagine any reason why they should be allowed to do so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As I said at the beginning, I cannot bring myself to oppose the amendment.

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

Clause 19—agreed to.

Clause 20—Amendment of Section 216:

Mr. WITHERS: This is a question about which I was concerned on the second reading. It provides for contracting out to private individuals. I have yet to learn that a council should be a contracting authority to contract out to private persons. Under the original Act the council could contract out to other local authorities or governmental or semi-governmental bodies, but has not been allowed in the past to contract out to private individuals. There are ratepayers with motor trucks and so on, people who pay their rates and other charges and establish themselves in towns with a view to getting a living, but are we to permit the council to become a contractor in competition with private individuals for the purpose of doing this work? I want the matter reasonably explained before I will be prepared to allow the council to contract out. I do not know what the £150 mentioned would constitute in the way of expenditure. If it means that it will cost money to purchase vehicles for the purpose of doing the work, I think it would not be possible to purchase more than one vehicle, at most,

for £150. I would like the Minister to explain what is meant.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This provision has been asked for by the Country Municipal Association. I understand there are some municipal councils in country districts that desire to have the opportunity to make contracts of this kind with the owners of land, to enable that land to be improved, mainly to assist in drainage to make land, now unsuitable, suitable for the purpose of having houses built on it. The Government was not enthusiastic about the request as put up in its bare form, and for that reason a proviso was included to the effect that where a council proposes to commit itself to an expenditure exceeding £150 the consent of the Governor-in-Council must first be obtained. We realise that a matter of this kind could be overdone to the detriment of legitimate full-time local contractors, whose livelihood depends on the work they receive within the district. With the safeguard contained in the proviso I think the proposal is in order and that the provision in the clause will not be used to any great extent, though there will be occasions when its use would be justified, and when the interests of no bona fide local contractor would be injured.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 21—New sections.

Mr. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That in lines 1 and 2 of proposed new Section 219A the words "vested in the council or" be struck out.

This amendment is moved with the intention of making it clear, beyond doubt, that any reserves that have been vested in a council cannot be made available for the purpose of building houses thereon. It is all very well to say that this measure could not, by implication, repeal other Acts. Can there be any stronger words than "any land"?

The Minister for Works: There are more words than that in the clause.

Mr. ABBOTT: The words to which I object are "any land vested in the council." After all, there are reserves other than class A reserves. I want the wording sufficiently strong that no ordinary man could have any doubt about it. It is not a question of policy with me, but I want the wording clear, though I do not know what a judge of the High Court would say—

The Minister for Lands: Neither does anybody else know what a judge of the High Court would say.

Mr. ABBOTT: I hope my amendment will be carried.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There could be considerable legal argument as to the meaning of the words "the council may erect on any land vested in the council or acquired by it for the purpose," and I am certainly not sure how a legal man would interpret that part of the clause. As I interpret it, the meaning is that the council may erect on any land vested in that body for the purpose—which is, to build houses for its employees. Quite apart, however, from the question of the interpretation, the object of the clause is to give power to councils to erect houses for the use of their own employees only. It could be that a council would desire to erect a house on land vested in it for purposes other than the erection of a dwellinghouse in the ordinary sense. For instance, it might have a recreation ground upon which there were valuable buildings, and therefore might desire to erect a house on that land in order to instal a caretaker for the protection of the property. It is desirable to remove from the clause a doubt that might easily arise if the matter were taken to a court of law. I have discussed the question with the Solicitor General who advises me that the clause is quite safe as it is, but that, if members are disinclined to accept it as it stands, the deletion of the words "the council" in the second line of the proposed new Section 219A would overcome the difficulty and safeguard the position.

Mr. DONEY: I would like some information from the Minister, particularly in view of the proviso to the proposed new section. The purpose of the clause is to provide that municipal councils may erect homes for their employees. Should the property be no longer needed for that purpose and the council have no further use for it, the area would be re-vested in the Crown. Having regard to the proviso, would the vesting order permit the sale of such houses to the council's own employees?

Mr. ABBOTT: If the Minister proposes to move in the direction he has suggested, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of proposed new Section 219A the words "the council" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That in lines 1 and 2 of the proviso the words "that no freehold estate in any such land shall be granted to any employee, and" be struck out.

There is no question arising of the sale of any such house until the council no longer has any use for the land or the house built upon it from the standpoint of the purpose for which the land was acquired. If there were a buyer he would be anxious to secure the freehold of the property, and I can see no good reason for withholding it from him. There cannot be under the parent Act any expressed power for a freehold sale, otherwise there would be no need to repeat the prohibition in the proviso. There are various ways by which land can be acquired such as by lease, purchase, compulsory resumption and possibly other means.

The Minister for Lands: What other means?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: By endowment.

Mr. DONEY: Other means escape me for the moment. I submit it is desirable that the freehold should be available in the circumstances I have outlined.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would be most unwise to agree to the amendment. Generally speaking, employees of a municipal council may be regarded as permanent employees, but no-one can say whether any such employee will remain in the service of the municipality for one or two or five years. It would be most unfortunate for a municipal council if it were to buy five houses, let them to five of its employees, and shortly afterwards those employees left the district. If the idea of the member for Williams-Narrogin were agreed to, the houses would still be theirs by legal right, and the council would then have no houses for its new employees.

Mr. Doney: Have not you already allowed that there would be no further use for them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. It is highly desirable that none of these houses should be sold. If they were sold, employees of the council today might not be employees in a year or ten years' time, and the council might then be put to the expense of building new homes for their successors. True, the council might have the money for the original home, but it should not be put to the trouble of building new houses simply because those built originally had been sold to employees, who had left the service.

Mr. Watts: When an employee has leased such a home, he will have none to go to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think a council should be under any obligation to find a home for an ex-employee.

Mr. Watts: As, under this Bill, houses may be erected for the general public, why not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think any council would be in a position to rush up houses at any time. When a council provides houses for its employees, it should be assured of retaining them for use by its employees, no matter how many changes there might be in the staff.

Mr. PERKINS: This is another matter that might well be left to the councils to decide for themselves. A permanent employee might desire to buy his home rather than have one on a rental or leasehold basis and, if the amendment is not passed, the council will be precluded from meeting the wishes of that employee. All the arguments in favour of home ownership could well be advanced, and I think a majority of members have indicated that they favour home ownership. Some employees have remained with the one municipality for 30 years or more, and surely they should be placed on a par with other citizens and allowed to own their homes if they so desire and the council is willing to provide them! The amendment is necessary if the local authority is to be given discretion. We are entitled to expect that all the arguments raised by the Minister will occur to members of the council.

Mr. DONEY: The acceptance of the amendment would not make it incumbent upon a council to grant the freehold. It would merely mean that there would be no bar to granting the freehold if the circumstances were such as to meet with the approval of the council.

Mr. WITHERS: I oppose the amendment. The Country Municipal Association desires this provision. In Bunbury we have a recreation reserve, park, showground and camping areas, and, if the

local authority built houses for its employees, it would probably be with the idea of their becoming caretakers on those areas. The very fact of homes being built there would be some safeguard against vandalism. There is no reason why such an employee should be given the freehold. A council would be scarcely likely to build houses for all its employees, though, if private enterprise cannot meet the demand, councils should be able to build houses. I think the Government should have houses in various districts for its employees.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But the Government would not sell them.

Mr. WITHERS: That is so.

Mr. READ: I agree with the Minister. These houses would be built with the people's money, on the people's property and for the workmen employed by the people. An employee might secure a better position, and the council would be in a difficult situation if the house he occupied had been sold and it was under the necessity of building another. I feel that clause would be a safeguard, in case some councillors might get sentimental and say, "Old Bill has been a great bird. He has worked for us for 20 years and we will sell him the cottage."

Mr. LESLIE: There is one point which I do not know whether members opposite have noted. If we pass the clause, it will be an interference with the right of an individual who might happen to be an employee of a council.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: No. It is giving him a right.

Mr. LESLIE: One or more houses may be built by a council, but the employees of the council could not purchase them. They could not obtain a freehold estate because of the fact that they were employees of the council. A man may have worked for many years for a council and perhaps have occupied one of two or three cottages built by the council. One of those cottages might become vacant by reason of the fact that an employee had died or was dismissed. One of the remaining employees might desire to purchase the house. The only way he could effect his object would be to resign his job, buy the house, and then trust to luck to get his job back from the council.

The Minister for Lands: You have a great imagination!

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. WITHERS: I suggest that the proviso to proposed new Section 219A be amended by striking out in lines 5 and 6 the words "out of the ordinary revenue of the council or otherwise." I do not like the idea of using revenue for the purpose of building houses. I would like to hear from the Minister on the point.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no strong feeling in the matter. I agree that it would be preferable on most occasions if not all, to finance the purchase of land and the building of houses thereon from loan. If members feel it would be preferable to leave the councils without any discretion on the point, I would not oppose the suggested amendment.

Mr. WITHERS: I move an amendment—

That in lines 5 and 6 the words "out of the ordinary revenue of the council or otherwise" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That in lines 4 to 6 of Subsection (5) of proposed new Section 219B the words "may subject in every case to the approval of the Minister, be expended out of the ordinary revenue of the council or otherwise" be struck out and the words "shall be expended" inserted in lieu.

I take it the Minister will not oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: In consequence of these amendments, the proposed new section will have to be recast, because paragraph (a) of Subsection (6) of the proposed new section provides that the rent and profits derived by the council from the leasing of houses under the section shall be part of the ordinary revenue of the council and may be used as such. Subparagraph (ii) of the same paragraph provides that where the house was erected with loan moneys the net proceeds shall be used and applied for payment of interest and sinking fund contributions or otherwise for the redemption of the loan from which such moneys were taken. I suggest that this latter provision must now be made to apply.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, it would be necessary to make additional amendments to the clause as suggested, and

I give the Committee the assurance that the amendments will be effected when the Bill is in Committee in another place.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 22—New Section:

Mr. DONEY: I am dubious of the eagerness of municipalities to accept this responsibility. I do not know whether it is strictly necessary, and would like the opinion of the Minister. He will find by reference to the parent Act that Section 235 provides that subject to the provisions of the Public Works Act, 1902, the council of every municipality shall have the care, control and management of all public places, streets, roads, ways, bridges, culverts, ferries and jetties within the municipal district. All that should be necessary would be for the Government to declare that jetties of the type referred to in the clause under review were within a municipal district. Quite apart from that, the Minister might tell us what gave rise to this requirement by the Government.

Again, if a jetty is in disrepair, I would like to know whether the Government will put it in repair before handing it over to a municipality. If not, the municipality will get nothing whatever except a good deal of trouble and annoyance. I suppose it can be assumed that when the Government does declare such a jetty to be within a municipal district it no longer has any earning value, and therefore is no longer of any use to the Government. The Government will only pass it over when it is in a derelict condition and is somewhat of a nuisance. I daresay there are many derelict jetties around the coast; but such a jetty as a gift to the municipality and as something to be placed under its care, control and management, is likely to be rather a burden, unless accompanied by an understanding that the Government will see the jetty put in repair or be responsible for money subsequently expended by the council for that purpose.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The proposed new section is the same as Section 167 of the Road Districts Act. Some doubt has arisen over the years whether certain jetties are so situated as to enable a particular local authority to expend its funds upon them. I think this applies much more within the metropolitan area than in country districts. There is, of course, a general tendency on the part of local authorities to neglect to maintain jetties and there are some very bad examples of that in the metropolitan area. I remember that a few months ago representatives of one municipal council down here invited me to inspect the dangerous condition of a river jetty. I did so, and the representatives of the council urged that the Government should provide the money necessary to make the jetty safe. The jetty was unsafe because two of the decking planks had been burnt by some picnic party, and the jetty had been allowed to remain in that condition for months. I thought it was a grave reflection on the local authority that it had not exhibited sufficient initiative to put two decking planks in the jetty. It had not done so, but sought to induce the Government to shoulder the cost of a few pounds.

Hon. N. Keenan: No rent was collected for that jetty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No rent was collected for the jetty by the Government or the local authority, but the jetty was used mostly by local residents entirely for recreational and pleasure purposes. This clause is one the Committee would be wise to accept. The Government is carrying out negotiations with local authorities to try to arrange a basis of agreement regarding the putting into reasonable condition of a number of jetties, and it is probable an agreement will be reached under which the Government will carry a proportion of the cost now required and the local authorities will also carry a proportion. The question of future maintenance will be one to be worked out on a proportionate basis. The jetties within the districts of municipal councils which are used by local people——

Hon. N. Keenan: A lot are used by tourists.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope the member for Nedlands will not become impatient about this matter. I am referring at the moment to those jetties which are used almost entirely by local people for pleasure and recreational purposes, and if some authority is not obtained to bring about a position under which local authorities will shoulder some responsibility, the Government will certainly not be prepared to shoulder all the responsibility.

Mr. HILL: I am rather doubtful about the correct wording of this clause. I agree that provision should be made for local governing bodies to take over some of our

jetties. I am interested in two jetties in Princess Royal Harbour. Had the Albany Harbour Board Act been proclaimed, both of those jetties would have come under the control of the Albany Harbour Board. The town jetty has always been under the control of the Railway Department. I have here the figures concerning it. The capital cost was £119,077. The earnings in 1938 were £9,672, and the interest was £4,561 showing a net profit of over £5,000 in 1938. At present we have oil tanks there; and if a ship berths with a million gallons of oil the department collects £1,200 for the filling of a one-million-gallon tank. The jetty has two berths 400 ft. long capable of berthing a cruiser of the "Sydney" type. They were built for commercial purposes, and there is another part of the jetty suitable for motor boats. But the Railway Department has alowed the jetty to get into a dangerous condition, and it is of no further use to the department; so it wants to pass the jetty to the municipality.

I am not in favour of the municipality maintaining that jetty. As it is needed for shipping purposes, it is the responsibility of the Government to maintain it. On Monday night there was a discussion as to whether the council should take it over. On the other side of the harbour a jetty was built many years ago for tourist purposes. The Americans put that jetty into a reasonable state of repair for use as a flying boat base. That jetty could be administered by the local authority under the arrangements outlined by the Minister. If this clause is passed can the Government turn around to the Albany Municipal Council and say, "There is your town jetty; you have to maintain and control it"?

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I also would like an expression from the Minister in this regard. Geraldton is situated somewhat similarly to Albany. When the new harbour was built the railway jetty fell into disuse. If, under this clause, the Governor directed that the jetty should be under the control and management of the local authority the council would be responsible for keeping it in safe condition. The council does not want to be saddled with the burden of a jetty that is probably 1,200 ft. long. A local authority cannot control and manage anything unless it does so in a safe way. The jetty cannot be left because it will b a danger to shipping.

Mr. Doney: Maintenance here devolve upon the Government.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I agree wit the member for Albany in regard to th mandatory nature of the wording of th clause. It does not say that the Govern ment is going to maintain the jetties or d anything about them. I do not know wha the Government's intention is. The muni cipal councils will have a tremendous lia bility unloaded on to them if they are tol that they have to look after the jetties.

Mr. Watts: Management and control in volve upkeep.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Of course The municipal council may be saddled wit the responsibility for maintaining the pre sent jetty. I can imagine no other inter pretation of this, unless the Minister ca give us some assurance as to what the claus means and how it is proposed to be oper ated.

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:— "Provided that this provision shall no apply to jetties which form part of an recognised port in the State, nor unless an such jetty is put in usable and safe cond tion."

When I read this clause I had i mind the Albany town jetty. To pu that jetty under the control of the muni cipality would impose a burden on th council that it could not possibly carry That jetty is in an almost dangerous con dition now. If the jetty were put under th control of the council and an accident hap pened on it the council would be liable. It upkeep would be beyond the capacity of th council. I agree that where a few plank are allowed to be burnt and the local author ity has not sufficient interest in the jett to repair it, the authority might be com pelled to get rid of it.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I would like th Minister to give an explanation in connec tion with the point I raised; otherwise will move an amendment prior to this on

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am afrai the member for Geraldton has missed hi chance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I migh be able to clear up the position to the satis faction of all members. The main reaso

for an amendment of this kind being in the Bill is that there is considerable doubt as to whether certain jetties are within the municipal district.

Mr. Watts: That is the water-front problem.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. I do not like the amendment put forward by the member for Pingelly. I can see from the points raised that there might be some danger in the second part of this clause and, if members are worried I would prefer that the member for Pingelly should withdraw his amendment and allow someone to move to strike out all the words after the word "district" in line 3 of the proposed new section.

Mr. Doney: It would then be appropriate to the requirements of Section 235.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That would not impose any special liability on a local authority, but would give the local authority a discretionary right to expend its funds upon the structure. I think the amendment I have suggested would be preferable to that moved by the member for Pingelly. His amendment may not cover all the structures necessary to be covered to achieve the purpose he has in mind.

Mr. WATTS: I think the Minister has the right intention and I am glad he sees some reason for the discussion that has taken place. The problem regarding jetties, to which the member for Geraldton and the member for Albany have referred, will not be solved by the suggestion of the Minister, because we have still to view the matter in relation to Section 235. Hitherto jetties such as those at Geraldton and at Albany have not, it appears, been within the districts of the municipalities concerned. They have been out in the ocean, and I do not think the municipalities claim jurisdiction, nor are they entitled to, as I understand the position. If it is said that because the approach to a jetty is in the municipal district, the jetty shall be deemed to be within the district, that is what this clause would mean, even with the amendment suggested by the Minister, and then immediately the provision of Section 235 applies and the local authority has the control and management, just as this clause would give it, of the jetty which comes within that district.

The Minister for Works: Section 236 goes on to state, "the council may."

Mr. WATTS: I am aware of that, but have been going further in my mind on the lines discussed by the member for Geraldton and myself by way of interjection. That was that the use of the words "control and management," which are in both the Act and the Bill, involves some responsibility for upkeep, and the use of the word "may" in the subsequent section of the Act does not allow the council morally—even if it does from a legal point of view—to let the jetty fall into a state of disrepair.

The Minister for Works: If the amendment I suggested is carried, there will be nothing in the Bill about "care and management."

Mr. WATTS: I do not quite see the distinction, because there is an obligation. Though it may not be a legal obligation, there is an obligation to maintain in safe condition a jetty that is thrown upon the council by law. That brings me to the amendment of the member for Pingelly, who seeks to clear up the position by saying that if the jetty is part of a recognised harbour it shall be excluded and, if it is not part of a recognised harbour, it shall be put in a safe state so that the municipality may then be expected to look after it. I am not complaining about the small river jetties or landing places. I think it is reasonable to hold that a municipal council should take some interest in them, but that before the obligation is imposed on the council they should be in a safe condition or should be abolished. As to those that are part of a recognised port, I think they are not the responsibility of the local authorities. They have produced large revenue in the past and that has not gone to the local authority. They should either be used or removed, and if they are to continue to be revenue producers they should be maintained by those who receive the revenue which, in the case of Albany, means the Railway Department, which has not made a very good job of that jetty over the years. I suggest that the Minister either accepts an amendment such as that before the Committee or, alternatively, moves an amendment of his own that will deal with these problems.

Hon. N. KEENAN: This is a dangerous clause and I ask the Minister to reconsider it as a whole. It is obvious that if the jetties in the river, with which I am concerned,

are handed over to the local bodies, they have no right to shut them down. The jetty at Attadale is quite dangerous, but if the road board there were given authority to remove it there would be objection.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It would cost a lot of money to remove it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I think the timber would be worth more than the cost of removal. I ask the Minister to reconsider the whole clause.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have no objection to the clause being postponed for further consideration.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

On motion by Hon. N. Keenan, clause postponed.

Mr. HILL: A matter closely associaed with jetties is that of land adjoining the foreshore at a port. Along the foreshore at Albany there is some land under the control of the Railway Department and in front of that land is a beach. Some years ago it became a nuisance, but the Railway Department said it was no concern of theirs.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the member for Albany is dealing with a matter connected with Clause 22, which has been postponed. He can discuss it when the clause again comes up for consideration.

Clauses 23 and 24—agreed to.

Clause 25—Amendment of Section 311:

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That all the words after "Act" in line 4 of proposed new Subsection (5) be struck out with a view to inserting the following words in lieu: "The council shall not refuse its consent to the erection of any building intended to be used as a dwelling-house for the reason only that the external walls of such building are to be constructed wholly of wood, or partly of wood and partly of some fire-resisting material, provided that the design of such building is of such a nature as to be in conformity with the general standard of design of neighbouring dwelling-houses."

This is the clause that deals with the erection of wooden houses in brick areas. I am of opinion that it should not be put to the vote until the Minister explains the several possibilities latent in it. Many municipal councils have particularly well-built and kept towns, of which they are proud, and they are jealous of their brick areas. Such councils would regard the clause as it stands as bureaucracy at its worst. It is submitted under the guise of a war-caused measure and conveys the impression that the results of it will vanish with the return of normality. Whatever happens to a brick area as a result of the intrusion of other than brick buildings will remain for all time, and a brick area spoilt today is spoilt for ever. There would appear to be ample ground for forecasting strong opposition by municipalities to this provision. I think the Minister said that the clause gave municipalities certain powers, but, as I see it, it gives them no powers whatever but, on the contrary, divests them of what they have, and the discretion they have held in the matter passes to the Minister's department. In my opinion, the Minister's explanation of this provision led members to think that councils would have the right to veto any design for wooden or other houses intended to be erected in a brick area but, as I see it, they will have no right other than to submit objections and there will be no obligation upon the Minister or anyone acting for him to alter the plans. I admit that some wooden houses are good to look at and to live in, but the municipal councils themselves should be the authorities to decide such a point. If wooden houses are to be of the type I mentioned, I would not object to their inclusion in a brick area.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I would have preferred the whole clause to be deleted from the Bill. Failing that, I am inclined to support the amendment. I do not think it altogether right that we should say to local governing bodies that they shall allow buildings other than those of brick to be erected in places set aside as brick areas. Besides interfering with the authority of municipal bodies, we shall be doing an injury to many ratepayers who have already invested their life's savings in the erection of brick houses. If in such areas wooden buildings are to be constructed, naturally the value of brick buildings will decline. From that standpoint I can see something in the amendment, in that it requires the wooden buildings to be erected to conform to the requirements of the area where they are to be constructed. I realise that many people cannot afford to build brick houses at this stage, and also I appreciate the dangerous position regarding the housing shortage. The clause, however, will not tend to ease the housing shortage, the real cause of which has been the absence of manpower

Our manhood could not be away defending us against aggressor nations and at the same time be building houses here. This clause will not hasten the building of houses by one day. We will still have to wait the provision of manpower and materials necessary.

Mr. ABBOTT: The clause might well be re-cast by the Minister because the Act specifically provides in Section 311 that no houses other than brick dwellings shall be erected, and further that if a house is so erected in contravention of the Act, it shall be removed. There is a proviso that the council may grant a license. The license may provide that it shall remain for a specific period only. I understand that a council customarily allows one year and then may order removal. The Bill goes only so far as to say that, for a specific period, such houses may be in existence.

Mr. Doney: That cannot possibly be the meaning. A house could not vanish when the proclamation was revoked.

Mr. ABBOTT: No, but an order might be given to remove it.

Mr. Doney: You do not think that would happen, do you?

Mr. ABBOTT: People who otherwise might build houses would not do so if there was lack of security of time. It is not altogether good that the Minister should be able to declare, irrespective of the feelings of the council, what shall be a brick area.

Mr. Doney: My amendment would leave the decision with the council.

Mr. ABBOTT: I would prefer to see the clause deleted, failing which I shall support the amendment.

Mr. LESLIE: I do not like the provision in the Act because it leaves the matter entirely in the hands of the council. Anyone is definitely denied the right of erecting a building which is not of brick, but there is a proviso that the council may lift the restriction for such time and under such conditions as may be specified.

The Minister for Works: I have no objection to the amendment.

Mr. LESLIE: I have given notice of an amendment to the amendment that I should like to see adopted. The decison is entirely in the hands of the council and leaves the intending builder out in the cold.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will be able to move his proposed amendment if the amendment now before the Chamber is approved.

The Minister for Works: The right of appeal is automatic under Section 298.

Mr. McDONALD: I do not like the provision in the Bill, or the amendment, or the existing provision in the Act. Section 311 provides that no building, except in brick, shall be erected inside a municipal district unless the council gives a written license under such conditions and for such time as may be specified. Thus for each individual case, on application being made by the proposed owner, the council must issue a special permit. It would be preferable to give the council wider authority by providing generally in respect of the whole or part of the district that houses may be erected otherwise than in brick. The Bill proposes to allow the Minister to decide whether an area shall be brick or not, and he need have no regard for the opinion of the council or the people. To approve of that would be to take too much power from the local authority. The amendment provides for virtually the same position as does the Bill but, instead of the power being in the hands of the Minister, it will be in the hands of the proposed building owner. Any man who owned a block could say that he proposed to build a house, and the council could not refuse its consent for the reason only that the external walls were to be constructed of wood.

The Minister for Works: The word "only" in the amendment should meet your objection.

Mr. McDONALD: No; assuming that the building conforms to the general standard of design, the decision whether it will be brick or not would rest, not with the council or the Minister, but with the owner of the land. To approve of that would be to transfer too much power to the owner of the land.

The Minister for Works: I think you are misinterpreting the amendment.

Mr. McDONALD: I shall be surprised if I am. The original section provides that no building shall be erected in any municipal district the external walls of which shall be wholly or in part of wood, and so on. That is a prohibition. Then the amendment will go on to say that the council shall not refuse its consent to the erection of any building to be used as a dwelling-

house for the reason only that the external walls of such building are to be constructed wholly of wood, or partly of wood and partly of some fire resisting material.

Mr. Doney: What about reasons beyond that?

Mr. McDONALD: There may be no other legitimate reason.

Mr. Doney: In which case the council would not withhold its consent.

Mr. McDONALD: The whole idea of the section is based upon the construction of the walls either of wood or of brick. The amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin will take away all discretion and all authority from the council, and of course the Minister will have no authority either. That is going to the other extreme and I hope the Minister will look into the question again. My own view is that it would be better to widen the existing Section 311 by giving a general power and discretion to the municipal authority to allow areas for the construction of wooden buildings, if it thinks fit.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I would like the Minister to read the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin with some care, because it appears to me to be perfectly clear that it takes away from the council the only matter in dispute, that is, the right of the council to prevent the erection of wooden buildings in what is commonly spoken of as a brick area. It is beyond all doubt that the landowner could not be refused an application on the ground that the intended walls of the building consisted wholly of wood, or partly of wood and partly of some other material. The amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin might read this way: The council may give its consent.

The Minister for Works: You have been reading my private letters!

Hon. N. KEENAN: If the Minister intends to move that amendment I shall be pleased to resume my seat.

Mr. SHEARN: The discussion on this amendment discloses the practice that prevails today. I suppose a local authority has no matter more difficult to control than the one now under discussion. I support the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin because I think it expresses the practical attitude to this important matter. I would prefer to see the word "only" in line 5 of the amendment struck out, as I think it would clarify the position. Th fears expressed by the member for Wes Perth and the member for Nedlands ar well founded as far as they go. There ar numerous districts in the metropolitan are where it has been found impracticable t finance a brick area. We would thus b placed in the position of not being able t erect dwellings which are so sadly neede today and which will be needed in th future. My experience, perhaps relativel small, leads me to the conclusion that th amendment, if carried, would be of grea assistance to local authorities. It will hel to solve many of their difficulties and there fore I hope that it will be agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It i somewhat remarkable that I had noted a amendment on the lines suggested by th member for Nedlands. Personally, I thin the amendment is quite safe as it stands but the fact that the member for Wes Perth and the member for Nedlands ar both of the opinion that it is not seems t establish the necessity to try to make th amendment still clearer. I would ask th member for Williams-Narrogin to agree t amend his amendment by inserting th words "may give" in place of the word "shall not refuse" and strike out the word "for the reason only that" and substitut the word "if". The words proposed to b added would then read—

> The council may give its consent to th erection of any building intended to be use as a dwellinghouse if the external walls . .

I think that would put the whole matte beyond doubt.

Mr. WATTS: I am not going to objec to the Minister's suggestion, because I an not averse to leaving more discretion in th hands of municipal councils; but I woul understand the position of the member fo Williams-Narrogin as being this: The Minis ter's proposal in the Bill virtually takes al control from the municipal council. If th Governor made a proclamation that in an district it shall be lawful to use wood, an regulations of the council repugnant to tha would be invalid. In consequence it ap peared to me that the objective was to com pel the council to give consent to the erec tion of wooden dwellings. Following tha line of argument, it would be obvious tha the member for Williams-Narrogin wa endeavouring to soften the blow by ensurin

that some attention should be paid to the design and appearance of such dwellings if they were to be erected in proximity to brick dwellings. But he did not consider it to be wise to go too far away from the compulsory aspect of the matter, so he provided that the council should not refuse solely on the ground that the dwelling was to be erected of wood.

I am convinced that that did not put into the hands of the owner the right to say what sort of dwelling he would build, because in respect of every other aspect of the dwelling, and in respect of its design also, the council would have been the determining factor. It would only have been unable to prevent a man from building a house in wood or in wood and some fire-resisting material such as asbestos. There is nothing wrong with a wood and asbestos house, with one proviso: That it is made to look a decent dwelling. Doubtless members have seen either the actual buildings being erected by the Workers' Homes Board, or photographs of them. I have no hesitation in saying that many of those buildings would grace any street in any town of Western Australia, and people should not be prevented from erecting them simply because the walls happen to be made of wood and asbestos in whole or in part. I know, too, that this design question has been considered by other local authorities ever since the Road Districts Act was amended to enable road boards to declare an area in which houses of a certain value and approved design only could be erected.

I know one or two substantial country areas where there are no brick buildings. But this question of value and design has been adhered to by the local authority and it is able to prevent any house which is not of good appearance and design from being erected in its streets. But, as the Bill stood, it seemed to me that all the Governor did was to declare that one could build a house of wood and then the type of house built was entirely one's own business so far as design and appearance were concerned. So it appeared to me quite opposite to the view expressed by the member for Nedlands and the member for West Perth, that as the Bill stood the owner was the man who could dictate to the council, because he merely had to get a proclamation from the Governor negativing all the council regulations in the matter, and he could build any kind of wooden structure he liked. The amendment by the member for Williams-Narrogin was to ensure that the design and appearance would be taken much more into consideration and the matter left entirely in the hands of the municipal council. While I do not object if the member for Williams-Narrogin desires to accept the Minister's suggestion, I would have been perfectly satisfied with the amendment on the notice paper.

Mr. McDONALD: The Minister's suggested amendment entirely meets the difficulty which was seen by the member for Nedlands and myself. With that amendment, I am perfectly happy and anxious to support the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. NORTH: I suggest there is a slight drawback in the amendment as against the original clause in the matter of the reference to buildings partly of wood and partly of some other material. Buildings consisting of slabs of concrete and steel girders and with no wood showing at all, are being offered cheaply to the public. The amendment would provide that a building could not in some places be erected without wood.

Mr. DONEY: It is a blessing to realise that for the first time for many months, after quite a long discussion, we are a very happy family! I accept the changed wording suggested by the Minister. While not admitting that the wording of my amendment was faulty I think the Minister's suggestion adds clarity and it does not change the meaning of my amendment in any way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There might be something in the comment of the member for Claremont, and I will have investigations made to see whether anything can be done to meet the point he has suggested.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

Mr. DONEY: I move—

That the words proposed to be inserted be inserted.

Mr. LESLIE: I am still going to move my amendment on this amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member's amendment comes later.

Amendment (to insert words) put and passed.

Mr. LESLIE: I was surprised to see the Minister accept so readily the last amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must not reflect on the Minister in the amendment he intends to move.

Mr. LESLIE: A council may decide that wood, or material other than brick, cannot be in conformity with the general standard of brick.

The Minister for Education: You will not get a council like that until you abolish plural voting.

Mr. Watts: You will get worse.

Mr. LESLIE: Individual members of the ward may not depart from brick, and may refuse anything other than a brick design. Here we give the individual the right of appeal to the Minister. This clause will establish a position whereby the council will be satisfied and the Government's wishes, to a large degree, met. At the same time the intending builder can never feel that he has been unjustly treated. I move an amendment—

> That at the end of proposed new Subsection (5), as amended, the following words be added:—"and if the council refuses to consent to the erection of such building on the ground that the general standard of design is not in conformity with the neighbouring dwelling houses, the person aggrieved by such decision may appeal to the Minister who may in his discretion allow such appeal and consent to the erection of such building."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am in sympathy with the principle of this amendment, but the Solicitor-General advises that the power which the member for Mt. Marshall wishes to give to the Minister is already included in Section 298 of the Act. The relevant portions of the Solicitor-General's advice in this matter are: Sections 311 and 336 do not in any way over-ride the provisions of the Act. Section 298: If when plans and specifications have been submitted to the council, the council disapproves of them, the person concerned can appeal to the Minister against the council's decision. Unless the Committee desires to make doubly sure, the member for Mt. Marshall might consider withdrawing his amendment.

Mr. LESLIE: If the Minister is satisfied that the point is covered I am quite willing to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 26—New section:

Mr. DONEY: I appeal to the Committee to vote against this clause. It deals with general, which means uniform, building regulations. It aims at lessening substantially the powers, authority, responsibility and importance of municipal councils. In matters of this kind it would be wiser to increase their powers. Members will admit that their capacity for usefulness is almost unlimited, and it should be cultivated. Instead of permitting them to continue as local governing bodies the Committee would, by passing such a clause as this, reduce them to the status of local agents of the Government. At present the municipalities have the power to make by-laws on every conceivable aspect of urban activity, including building. It is now proposed to take away the power to which I have referred and replace it by uniform by-laws drawn up by the Government. I would not object to this being done by the appropriate department. There is much to be said for uniform by-laws provided they are applied to towns with uniform conditions, but conditions vary widely in different towns.

There would be sharp variations between building practice and needs in towns on the Goldfields and those on the coast, or between those in the North-West and those in the South-West of the State. I do not think any uniform by-laws could accommodate all those fluctuations. The Minister provides in the Bill for making adjustments as discrepancies occur, but so many discrepancies would crop up that it would not be long before there would be just as big a disparity between the building by-laws of the different towns as already exists. I believe this measure was asked for only by the metropolitan local governing bodies and, if that is so, uniform by-laws might be applied to them, but should not be applied outside the metropolitan area.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This clause aims at assisting local governing authorities, and the by-laws referred to in it will be drawn up by the best experts in the

State and applied with absolute uniformity. If the clause consisted only of Subclauses (1) and (2), the argument of the member for Williams-Narrogin would be unanswerable, but there is also Subclause (3) which gives power to modify the uniform building by-laws where modification is desirable to meet local conditions. With that safeguard, I do not think there is any danger in the clause, and it contains a great deal of benefit which would be made available in the issuance of these by-laws devised by experts and modified, where necessary, to meet local conditions.

Mr. McDONALD: Without entering on a discussion as to how far uniform by-laws should be imposed on all the municipalities in the State, I am going to submit an amendment to except from the operation of this clause the district of the municipality of Perth which, however good the Minister's "uniform" might be, does not want to wear it, even if it is designed by the best experts assembled for the purpose.

The Minister for Works: They would not.

Mr. McDONALD: There is no virtue in uniformity, as such, and I see no reason why either men or by-laws should all be forced into the same mould. The Municipality of Perth is infinitely the largest in the State, as regards population, building and other features, and its problems in relation to buildings and other factors, such as regulations and so on, are peculiar to the metropolis and might well be left to the knowledge and experience of the expert officers of the municipality. I do not think we should endeavour to force on municipalities an obligation to come under a uniform system, even though there is a dispensing power in the hands of the Governor or the Minister by which the municipality may, upon application, obtain absolution from some features of the uniform design. I move an amendment—

That a new subsection be added to proposed new section 338A as follows:—"(4) Provided that the provisions of this section shall not apply in the case of the district of the municipality of Perth."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I oppose this amendment because, if there is one municipality where by-laws of the kind proposed should be applied, it is that of Perth.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I support the proposal of the member for Williams-Narrogin, that the whole clause be deleted. If the amendment had been carried, I would still have made the same suggestion, because I think the argument put forward is unanswerable. The object of this clause is to obtain uniformity, which could only be done by imposing foreign conditions on many localities. What would be the result if Busselton and Kalgoorlie attempted to have the same by-laws? Busselton is a small place, and it could not carry out by-laws that could easily be put into force in a place like Kalgoorlie. If any recognition were given to this fact by the department in the interests of Busselton, the uniformity of the by-laws would no longer exist. The result would be that we would revert to the position we are in today, except that a number of officials in the Public Works Department, men who are quite well-meaning but with a very limited knowledge of local matters, would dictate to a local governing body that had a full knowledge of the facts and could quite capably deal with the situation. It would mean that well-meaning public officials would have a finger in the pie.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The proposed standard building by-laws would be prepared by the W.A. Institute of Architects in consultation with the Local Government Association. Many such consultations were held before the war, as a result of which a standard was agreed upon. Thus, the suggestion that officers of the Public Works Department would have a finger in the pie and that local authorities would not be consulted, is wide of the mark.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 27—Amendment of Section 355:

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That in the proviso to proposed new subsection (2) the words "the Minister shall not approve of such proposal without first giving to the council of such other municipality or to such road board or to such local authority as the case may require an opportunity to state its objections (if any) to the said proposal and giving due consideration

to such objections'' be struck out and the following words inserted in lieu:—''the following provisions shall apply:—

(a) Unless such other municipal council or road board or local authority agrees to the council's proposal, the Minister shall cause a poll to be taken of persons who are resident within the district of such other municipality or road board or local authority, as the case may be, and qualified to vote at an election of members of the Legislative Assembly on the proposal that the council be permitted to exercise the said power upon or in relation to the said land.

(b) Such poll shall be taken on such day, being a Saturday, as the Minister shall determine and shall be held between the hours of eight o'clock in the morning and eight o'clock in the evening.

(c) It shall be the duty of every person entitled to vote at the taking of such poll to cast his vote.

(d) The costs and expenses of the taking of such poll shall be borne equally by the council seeking to exercise the said power and the council or road board or local authority, as the case may be, within whose district the said land is situate.

(e) The poll shall be taken and the result thereof ascertained in the prescribed manner and under the supervision of the Chief Electoral Officer.

(f) The Governor may make regulations prescribing all matters which by this section are required or permitted to be prescribed or which it may be necessary or convenient to prescribe for giving effect to this section.

(g) If at the taking of the poll the proposal is not carried the Minister shall not consent to such proposal.

(h) If at the taking of the poll the proposal is carried the Minister may, in his discretion, approve or reject the proposal.''

I have no objection to the main principle involved, which is that a municipality may go beyond its own boundary in order to secure land that may be necessary for the purposes of a municipal utility, although it can easily be seen that there could be many irritating consequences if that right were indulged in too frequently. There ought to be a proviso that such a course should not be pursued unless there were no suitable land within the municipality itself, and there should be a further proviso that the neighbouring local governing body raises no objection. I make that point because I understand that Bunbury is intimately connected with the reasons for the inclusion of this provision. I am informed that one has to go pretty well close up to Picton before the municipal boundary at Bunbury is reached.

Assuming that this provision is agreed to, I am wondering whether the Minister would assure himself that no land was available that would be suitable for an abattoir, particularly within the Bunbury municipal area. It is well known—there is no reason why this should not be mentioned—that considerable friction exists between the two local governing bodies at Bunbury owing to one body desiring to take unto itself some land belonging to the other body. I express no opinion regarding the contending viewpoints, but I consider it unwise for this Committee to do anything to intensify that friction by amending the law, which may place one of the contending parties in a disadvantageous position.

The Minister for Lands: It would give Bunbury a pain.

Mr. Watts: It has that already.

Mr. DONEY: And is likely to have it for quite a while longer. I must hope for the best. My judgment may be wrong, but I have at least a 50 per cent. chance of being right. As it stands, the only right that the Bunbury Roard Board has, so far as I can see, is that it can object and give reasons for its objection. That is not sufficient. I urge nothing at all against the Minister in this respect, but the Government could be just as easily on the side of force as against justice, as any other body could be.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I oppose the amendment. The clause proposes to give power whereby a council may, with the approval of the Minister, establish a pound or abattoir outside of its own district. The clause then proceeds to state that the Minister shall not approve of the proposal without first giving the adjoining authority, if it objects, an opportunity to state its case. The amendment aims at making it necessary to take a poll of persons over 21 years whose names are on the Assembly roll in the district in which the pound or abattoir is to be established. This is an extreme proposal. The hon. member expressed his faith in the Minister to do the right thing by every application,

and I express my faith in every future Minister for Works in the same way.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I support the amendment, although I suggest that the area in which the poll shall be taken be limited. If it is proposed to open a new hotel, which is something more pleasant in a neighbourhood than abattoirs would be, a poll is taken within a fiixed radius of the proposed site.

The Minister for Lands: You mean that a petition has to be presented.

Hon. N. KEENAN: It amounts to the same thing; a petition signed by the people favouring it. If it were made contingent upon the district being canvassed and a majority then favoured the establishment of abattoirs, by all means let the place be established. There is nothing more objectionable than abattoirs. A sanitary site is much preferable. If one were unfortunate enough to live on the lee side of abattoirs, one would find that miasma is spread over about five miles. Yet it is proposed that, if the Minister so decides, such a place may be establised in a district against the wishes of the local authority and of the people. That is a most autocratic proposal. The Minister could over-ride and inflict upon the inhabitants of a district a most unpleasant experience. The amendment might well be amended to provide for a petition signed by those living within a certain radius of the proposed site.

Mr. WATTS: I thought the Minister would immediately express approval of the principle contained in the amendment. Bearing in mind the matters mentioned by the member for Nedlands, the people most concerned would be those living in the vicinity.

Mr. Doney: Of the smell?

Mr. WATTS: Of the matter referred to by the member for Nedlands. The people to decide the question are the electors of the area, and I felt sure the Minister would offer no objection to their deciding it. There is no restricted franchise here; a straightout vote of those entitled to vote for the Assembly is proposed. I have always been suspicious of this ultra democracy; I thought there was a little autocrat hanging around and lo! we have located him. The Minister prefers the undoubted autocratic right of saying "yea" or "nay" to such proposal without the free and enlightened Assembly electors of the district being able to say him nay. I am disappointed and surprised. This was the one occasion when I imagined there would be the utmost unanimity between the member for Williams-Narrogin and the Minister.

The Minister for Works: I am glad that you are not sad about it.

Mr. WATTS: One tries to keep a cheerful outlook, although at times it is extremely vexing to have to do so.

The Minister for Lands: Under that scheme, do you think you would ever get abattoirs established?

Mr. WATTS: I do not know and am not concerned because, if such a place were not desirable, it should not be put there. The one at Midland Junction does not attract me when I wander in the vicinity, and I believe that is a superior type of its kind. If there is not room for it in a district where the people can make their complaints to the local authority, it should not be foisted upon an adjoining district unless its people are prepared to say that it should be there. If the people agree, the Minister should agree, although the amendment would give him power to approve or reject the proposal. I would be prepared to strike out that reference.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 28 to 44—agreed to.

Progress reported.

BILL—SOUTH-WEST STATE POWER SCHEME.

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Received from the Council and, on motion by Mr. Smith, read a first time.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.