those of the non-claimant States by applying some of its motor license revenue to payment of loan servicing charges on loan funds expended on roads.

As a result of the passing of the 1941 Act, no adjustment was made in the Commission's ninth report on account of road debt charges, The Commission advised that this decision was governed by special circumstances affecting road finance, including reduced Federal road grants, declining motor taxation and the action of the Government in using part of the license fees to meet the annual charges on the road debt. Thus the State revenue has gained not only the amounts diverted under the 1941 and 1942 Acts, but also a substantial amount by reason of the Commission's recommendation and without any loss or inconvenience being suffered by any local authority.

The sum of £3,443,985 was expended in Western Australia from Loan funds on roads as at the 30th June, 1943, the charges on Consolidated Revenue in this connection being £167,307. As I have said on previous occasions, the relatively small amount involved in the Bill will make no appreciable difference so far as the State's road programme in the country districts is concerned, and I trust that the approval given on the two previous occasions will again be forthcoming this session.

For the ten years ended the 30th June, 1940, of the total of £5,406,424 expended from the petrol tax on roads, 91 per cent. was expended in districts outside the metropolitan traffic area, and of the total—for the same period—of £1,113,660 expended from General Loan Funds on roads, 97 per cent. was spent in the country districts. The credit balance of the Main Roads Contribution Trust Account at the 30th June, 1943, is £118,500. No work was carried out from these funds during the year 1941-42. For the year 1942-43 just closed, £4000 was allocated for repairs to the Perth Causeway, expenditure to the 30th June last amounting to £743. Further authorisations against the Main Roads Contribution Trust Account Funds are—

	£
Axon-street bridge	3,000
Widening Perth-Armadale road ..	29,000
	32,000

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.

House adjourned at 6.20 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 9th September, 1943.

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

QUESTIONS (5).

TAXI-CARS.

As to Licenses.

Mr. THORN asked the Premier: 1, Will he tell the House the number of taxi licenses in operation at the 31st December, 1940? 2, The number of additional taxi licenses granted since the 31st December, 1940? 3, The names and occupations of all persons now holding taxi licenses which were granted to them since the 31st December, 1940? 4, The number and names of returned soldiers who are included amongst the new taxi licenses issued since the 31st December, 1940? 5, Is he aware that no additional taxi licenses have been granted at Sydney and Melbourne during the past two years? 6, Does he not consider that if a similar policy had been adopted in this State such policy would have been in the interests of returned soldiers?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (for the Premier, replied: 1, 109. 2, 76. 3, As follows:—

No., Name, Occupation, Remarks.

3001—Hoare, John Thos.; —; returned soldier, 1914-19.
3002—Edwards, Alda; home duties.
3006—Davis, Joseph; taxi driver.
3010—Burrows, Sidney N.; taxi driver and owner; since 1923.
3030—Mildwaters, Wm. O.; taxi driver; military reject.
3040—Anderson, Roland; taxi owner; over military age.
3044—McCarthy, George; taxi driver; returned soldier, 1914-19.
3113—Estate Stephen Costen.
3119—Sprunt Bros.; taxi proprietors.
3131—Lindgren, George; soldier A.M.F.
3141—Duff, Kenneth R.; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
3155—Taylor, Clyde Allen; taxi owner and driver.
3166—Estate Stephen Costen.
3243—Fox, Joseph Emmett; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
3244—Armanasco, Joseph; taxi owner and driver.
3300—Buss, May Gertrude; home duties.
3322—Waterman, William; soldier A.M.F.; returned soldier, 1914-19.
3323—Anderson, Ruby Lilian; home duties.
3330—Mildwaters, Wm. O.; taxi driver and owner; military reject.
3332—Cain, Morris Wm.; soldier, A.I.F.
3388—Nolan, Rita Cecilia; home duties.
3421—Brown, Jeanette; taxi proprietor; husband, A.M.F.
3448—Bailey, Paul Bert; taxi owner and driver.
3553—McManus, John C.; hotel proprietor; licensed to cater for servicemen billeted at hotel.
3663—O'Sullivan, Jack; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
3670—Smith, Sydney Chas.; taxi owner and driver; licensed trans. from Kalgoorlie.
3773—Anderson, Roland; taxi owner; over military age.
3939—Saunders, Robt. E.; taxi owner and driver; returned soldier, 1914-19.
3993—Lane, Chas. Jack; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
10049—Potter, Robt. Walter; taxi owner and driver; licensed trans. from Kalgoorlie.
10088—Sullivan, Arthur John P.; taxi owner and driver; returned soldier, 1914-19, and this war.
10138—Edwards, Cyril; taxi owner and driver; cartage contractor.
10140—Flemming, Reginald; taxi owner and driver; over military age.
10141—Phillipson, Richard; taxi owner and driver; returned soldier, present war.
10160—Geneff, Michael S.; taxi owner and driver.
10162—Lambert, David; taxi owner and driver; cartage contractor.
10167—Dohnson, Tom; taxi owner and driver; returned soldier, present war.
10169—Matthews, Eric C.; taxi owner and driver; discharged unfit, A.M.F.
10193—Nolan, Denis Joseph; taxi owner and driver.
10196—Trewenack, Geoffery; taxi owner and driver; discharged unfit, A.I.F.
10197—Picton-King, Francis T.; taxi owner and driver; returned, discharged R.A.F.
10397—Peterson, Chas. A.; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
10860—Patcman, Eric W.; taxi owner and driver.
10973—White, Vincent M.; taxi proprietor; military reject.
11000—Miller, Leslie G.; taxi owner; over military age.
21091—Sager, Bernard A.; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
21100—Barbarich, George; taxi owner and driver.
21168—Vincent, Edgar W. C.; taxi owner and driver; military reject.

No., Name, Occupation, Remarks.

21260—Broms, Donald; taxi owner and driver; over military age.
21266—Duzovich, Jack; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
21269—White, Vincent M.; taxi proprietor; military reject.
21278—Stenson, John B.; taxi owner and driver; over military age.
21296—Dodd, George Henry; taxi proprietor; over military age.
21355—Firth, Raymond S.; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
21374—Taylor, John; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
21377—Menzel, Roy Wm.; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
21588—Washer, Albert E.; taxi owner and driver.
21594—Raven, Evelyn E.; taxi owner and driver; over military age.
21638—Pateman, Wm. Francis; taxi owner and driver; over military age.
21664—Evan, George; taxi owner and driver.
21668—Brims, Donald; taxi owner and driver; over military age.
21717—Ray, Henry C.; taxi owner and driver.
21766—Duzevich, Matt; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
21791—Robinson, Ellen; home duties.
21808—Penny, Norman C.; taxi owner and driver; returned soldier, present war.
21853—Irwin, Philip D. H.; taxi owner and driver.
21855—O'Callaghan, Denis; taxi owner and driver; over military age.
10208—Taylor, John; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
21901—Scherini, Dorothy M.; taxi owner and driver.
21925—Evan, George; taxi owner and driver.
31011—Hodgson, Ernest E.; taxi owner and driver; military reject.
31041—Millett, Harold; bus proprietor.
31070—Ridley, Claude Ell; taxi owner and driver; licensed trans. from Manjimup.
31075—Boyd, Donald B.; R.A.A.F.; licensed trans. from Kalgoorlie.
31083—Maisey, Basil Cooper; taxi owner and driver; returned soldier, present war.
3450—Anderson, Louis; taxi owner and driver; over military age.

Total	76
On service and returned soldiers	14
Military rejects	18
Over military age	13
Others	31
Total	76

4, No. 5, No. Any applicant for a passenger vehicle license can appeal to a court of petty sessions in accordance with section 17 of the Traffic Act if his request for such license is refused.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.

As to Extensions, etc.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What electricity extensions have been approved by Government Electricity Supply and in connection with these what work has been carried out? 2, What work remains to be done by the department in connection with approved extensions? 3, To what aggregate extent were amounts paid by settlers and others, as estimated to be needed to pay for the first year's supply and/or Sinking Fund? 4, Is he aware that

in many cases wiring and other work in anticipation of completion has been carried out by householders and settlers? 5, Is it possible to advise when any of the extensions which have been started, but not completed, will be completed and current made available?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Extensions aproved since the 1st December, 1939:—(a) Forrestfield-Maida Vale—Major portion of low tension main erected. (b) Orange Grove—Completed. (c) Nicol road, Canning Vale—Not started. (d) Riverton—Major portion of work completed. (e) Stanhope road, Walliston—Completed. (f) Pechy road, Swan View—Completed. (g) Bedfordale—Not started. (h) Wongong—Not started. (i) East and Upper Swan—Approximately half completed (j) Roleystone—Not started. (k) Pomroy road, Walliston (modified scheme)—Completed. 2, (a) Forrestfield and Maida Vale—To complete erection of low tension mains. Erect 2¾ miles of high tension line, switchgear and two transformers. (b) Orange Grove—Nil. (c) Nicol road, Canning Vale—Whole. (d) Riverton—Complete erection of transformers. (e) Stanhope road, Walliston—Nil. (f) Pechy road, Swan View—Nil. (g) Bedfordale—Whole. (h) Wongong—Whole. (i) East and Upper Swan—Erect approximately 2¾ miles of high tension line, switchgear and one transformer. Move two transformers and erect balance of low tension mains. (j) Roleystone—Whole. (k) Pomroy road, Walliston—Nil. 3, £332. 4, No. The Electricity Act Regulations provide that the department shall be notified of electrical work carried out by householders and settlers who will be supplied by approved extensions. No such advice has been received. 5, No. All available manpower is fully utilised in urgent maintenance and new work for the Allied Works Council and other bodies engaged in activities connected with the war. All available material is earmarked for the same purposes.

COAL.

As to Prices and Economic Value.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Railways: 1, What is the price of Newcastle coal per ton to the W.A. Government Railways on trucks at Fremantle for the six months ended the 31st August, 1943, large and small coal separate? 2, What is the price per ton for the local coals, i.e., Proprietary, Co-operative, Cardiff, Shotts, and Griffin, at the pit's mouth—each mine separately—for the 24 months ended the 31st August, 1943, for large and small coal? 3, What is the accepted system formula used by the railway departmental officers in regard to the economic value of Collie coal as against the imported coal used by the Railway Department?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Large coal, £2 15s. 9d.; small coal, £2 13s. 1d. 2, Large coal, per ton—Co-operative, 20s. 4d.; Proprietary, 19s. 6d.; Cardiff, 18s. 8d.; Stockton, 19s. Small coal, per ton—16s. 10d. The above prices will be subject to adjustment retrospectively to the 1st January, 1943, following on a review of costs of production which is now in progress. Griffin, from 1/3/43 to 31/3/43—Large coal, per ton—16s. 4d. Small coal, per ton—13s. 11d. From 1/4/43 to 31/8/43—Large coal, per ton—18s. 6d. Small coal, per ton—16s. 6d. 3, One ton of New South Wales coal is regarded as being equal to 1½ tons of Collie coal.

RAILWAY TRANSPORT OF GOODS.

As to Economising in Coal.

Hon. N. KEENAN asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Has he had his notice drawn to a statement appearing in "The West Australian" and the "Daily News" of the 7th September inst., dealing with the coal saving which is possible by transport economies to be effected by co-ordination by merchants in the despatch of goods by rail? 2, Is it a fact that alleged consumers' goods such as flour, are carried over long distances when a source of supply much nearer to the consumer is neglected? 3, Will he make representation to the appropriate Federal authority with a view to having steps taken to avoid this unnecessary waste of coal and also unnecessary use of railway trucks by enforcing greater co-operation amongst the suppliers of such goods?

The MINISTER replied: 1, Yes. 2, Consumers are at liberty to obtain their requirements where they please and the Commissioner of Railways, as a common carrier, cannot refuse to accept transport orders. 3, This is a matter which will be investigated.

HORSESHOES.

As to Shortage in Country Districts.

Mr. McLARTY (without notice) asked the Minister for Industrial Development: 1, Is he aware that horseshoes are unprocurable in country districts? 2, As the shortage is increasing the difficulties of transport to many farmers, will he make representations to have the necessary material made available so that the shoes can be manufactured; or have arrangements made to import shoes?

The MINISTER replied: 1, I have heard recently that horseshoes are very difficult to obtain. 2, I will have every effort made for the purpose of seeing that additional material is forthcoming so that more horseshoes may be manufactured in order to assist people in the country districts.

BILL—WOOD DISTILLATION AND CHARCOAL IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT [4.38] in moving the second reading said: It is with considerable pleasure that I bring before the House this Bill which aims to empower the Government to establish in Western Australia the wood distillation and charcoal iron and steel industry. Members will be aware that the mere introduction to Parliament of a Bill is a task or procedure presenting very little difficulty. They also know that before some Bills are introduced a tremendous amount of investigation and work must be carried out, and that certainly applies in respect to this measure. During the last three years, considerable inquiry, consultation, research and visits to Eastern Australia have been carried out to make it possible to establish in this State the industry which those who take an interest in the industries of our State, and the establishment of secondary industries here, have been hoping for a long time past would soon be commenced in Western Australia. The member for Canning, if I may be permitted to mention it, told us yesterday that heavy industries represent the basis upon which the structure of our secondary industries must be built successfully.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the Minister is in order in repeating what was mentioned during yesterday's debate on another matter.

The MINISTER OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: That is so, but I was just making a passing reference to the fact that the member for Canning yesterday provided us with this very profound information. That knowledge was well known to those interested before yesterday.

Hon. N. Keenan: But second-hand.

Mr. Needham: Surely not before the member for Canning supplied it!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Both Ministers in the present Government and the departmental officers who have been struggling with the problem of trying to establish the iron industry in this State were possessed of that knowledge. Because those officers were aware of the fact and, as Ministers also knew of it, there has been concentrated upon the problem of establishing the iron industry in Western Australia a tremendous amount of thought and effort during the past three years. It is believed that the establishment of this proposed industry and its subsequent operations will constitute the biggest forward step in Western Australia in regard to the laying of a solid foundation for the structure of our secondary industries.

It is well known, for instance, that the establishment of major industries of this description almost immediately brings into operation a number of other related industrial enterprises. When the Department of Industrial Development was re-organised in 1940 the consideration of the problems associated with the establishment of the iron industry was intensified, and early in 1941 a panel of experts was appointed to collect all the relevant information procurable regarding our local raw materials, smelting processes and likely markets. It was known at the time when the panel was first appointed, and it had been known for many years previously, that we had in Western Australia very large deposits of iron ore of very high quality.

Mr. Stubbs: And close to the coast, too.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: It was known, too, that we possessed substantial and suitable deposits of other raw materials, including limestone, required for the successful establishment of the iron industry. The existence of the main iron ore deposits is probably well known to every member of this

House. The largest and best quality deposit is that found on Koolan Island in the North-West. Another big deposit of high quality ore exists at Koolyanobbing in the Southern Cross area. Other deposits—about which not so much was known previously—are to be found in the Darling Ranges.

Mr. Cross: There is a big deposit at Ravensthorpe.

Mr. Sampson: The oracle has arrived!

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Deposits of limestone are extensive throughout the State, particularly along the western and south-western coasts, and the cap limestone existing there is most suitable for blast furnace use in connection with the production of iron. There are no known deposits of coking coal in Western Australia, and therefore the panel had to devote consideration to the problem of obtaining a suitable fuel. In the course of their inquiries the members of the panel investigated the possibility of using our hardwood timbers for the production of charcoal so that it might be used as fuel for the production of iron. The investigations established the fact that charcoal produced from our hardwood timbers is superior to coking coal for use in that production. In fact, where charcoal is used, the iron produced is of a higher quality than the article turned out where coking coal is used as the fuel.

Iron produced with the use of charcoal as fuel is adapted for turning out special steels of many classes, and consequently the high-grade iron produced with charcoal as fuel usually commands higher prices than ordinary iron produced with the aid of coking coal as the fuel. After the panel had ascertained this information regarding the use of charcoal in the production of iron, it became necessary for tests to be undertaken to ascertain the best method of producing charcoal from our timbers for use as fuel in connection with this proposed industry. The panel subsequently found that the wood distillation process was the best to apply to our timbers for the purpose of providing the most suitable type of charcoal. The Government made money available to the panel so that a pilot plant could be established in order to discover the yields of charcoal and by-products from our hardwood timbers under the wood distillation process. The results achieved were very satisfactory. It was found that the charcoal yield would be high in quantity and excellent in quality and that valuable by-products such as acetate and naptha, or wood alcohol, could be produced. I shall inform members more about that phase later on.

In connection with the actual smelting of the iron and the production of iron, the panel examined a number of processes already in operation in other parts of the world. The processes operating in Scandinavia, Russia and India, and the electric smelting process operating in Norway were carefully considered. Consideration was also given to the direct reduction process known as the Duffield process. It might be a point of special information to members to know that the Duffield process was developed in England by a Mr. Duffield, who formerly resided in Western Australia and whose brother holds the position of secretary to the Beverley Road Board.

After considering the various processes operating in different countries of the world, the panel decided to recommend the use of the well tried and trusted blast furnace system. It was considered that this would be far more suitable to the needs of Western Australia, especially in the early stages of our development of the iron and steel industry. The electric smelting process had to be rejected on the ground of cost. It is not yet possible to produce electric current here at a price low enough to enable it to be profitably used for the production of iron and steel. The decisions of the panel were later referred to the experts of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company for investigation and for any comments or recommendations they were prepared to make to the Government. The company freely offered the Government the services of its experts, and any advice or information that could be made available to assist us to establish the iron industry. Such advice and information were given without cost to the State.

Mr. Marshall: Will they give you any assistance to market the finished product?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I do not imagine that they will; nor could we reasonably expect them to give assistance in that direction.

Mr. Patrick: Was their assistance of value?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I will deal with that matter a little later. Finally the panel agreed upon a proposal to establish a charcoal iron industry in the South-West with a production capacity of at least 50,000 tons of charcoal iron a year. Under that proposal the ore was to be obtained from Koolan Island and transported to a port in the South-West. The timber required to enable the necessary quantities of charcoal to be produced was already available in our forest areas there. This was the considered opinion of the panel after carrying out the fullest possible investigation. The original proposal was to establish the iron industry in this State on a large scale basis, but the members of the panel realised that it would not be possible in wartime to proceed with a major undertaking of that sort, and they felt that it would be unwise to go ahead in the first instance with what would ultimately be a large scale permanent industry. So they agreed that a smaller proposal should be developed with a view to establishing and operating a plant with a maximum annual production capacity of 10,000 tons of charcoal iron.

In September of last year representatives of a committee appointed to concentrate upon the smaller proposal visited Newcastle to consult with experts of the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Those representatives spent about three weeks in Newcastle in close and constant consultation with the company's experts, presented to them all the information that had then been gathered, and placed before them the proposals. They asked the experts searchingly to investigate the whole of the information and proposals and report in writing as soon as possible. The report of Mr. J. Young, of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, was made available to the committee shortly afterwards. The report is a comprehensive one covering every phase of the proposal to establish the industry on the small scale basis I have indicated. I do not intend to read Mr. Young's report; to do so would occupy hours, but I shall indicate the main headings. If any member wishes to peruse the report, I am willing to make it available.

Mr. Marshall: Could not you lay it on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I would prefer not to table it, but I am ready to make it available to any member who wishes to study it. The main heads in Mr. Young's report are—

Introduction.
Brief description of proposal.
Raw materials and analyses of same.
Iron ore and analyses of same.
Blast furnace and auxiliaries.
Cast house.
Water supply and railway tracks.
Power.
Grades of iron.

The following schedules are attached to the report:—

Estimate of labour required with rates of pay.
Consumption of iron ore, limestone and charcoal per ton of pig iron.
Estimated cost of producing raw materials and placing in blast furnace bins.
Estimated summary of power requirements for a 25-tons per day charcoal furnace.
Estimated cost of producing one ton of foundry pig iron.

In addition to the information, advice and assistance of a technical character given to us by the experts of the Broken Hill Proprietary Co., we have, of course, had the advantage of the services of our own appropriate technical officers and have also obtained advice from other highly qualified technical men now in Western Australia.

Mr. Cross: Did you get any advice from Brasserts, Ltd., who know fifty times as much about this matter as does the Broken Hill Proprietary Co.?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I very much doubt whether that is so. Brasserts might know as much; I would not be prepared to go further than that. The working drawings for the small-scale plant to which I have referred were prepared by Mr. O. A. Taussig, who is now in this State and who is an eminent mechanical engineer with Continental experience of blast furnaces. The drawings have been checked by Mr. Butterworth, who is the engineer appointed to supervise the construction and erection of the plant.

Recognised American experts have been consulted as to the process to be adopted for the wood distillation plant and the refinery to be associated with it. The Vulcan Copper and Supply Co. of Cincinatti, U.S.A., has been approached to supply working plans for the wood distillation plant and refinery and it is to work in consultation with Dr. Othmer, who is a leading American authority on the process. The Vulcan Copper Co., has been responsible for the development of this process on a commercial scale

in America. It has agreed to supply the working plans to which I have referred and, as a result, the task of our Government in establishing the wood distillation side of the plant has, therefore, been made much easier.

I referred earlier to the pilot plant which the Government financed and established for the purpose of ascertaining the yields of charcoal, acetate and wood naphtha from our hardwood timbers. This plant was operated at the Government Laboratory by Messrs. Handley and Pearse, under the supervision of Mr. Bowley, the Government Analyst and Mineralogist. Messrs. Handley and Pearse are honours graduates in chemistry of our local University. The pilot plant used is an identical copy of plants used for similar purposes in America and Europe.

I have already mentioned that after the panel had completed its investigations covering the availability of suitable raw materials, a smaller committee was set up for the particular purpose of developing an actual proposal which could be considered by the Government and in respect of which the Government could reach a decision. The members of the panel which carried out the whole of the investigation work are Messrs. Fernie (Director of Industrial Development), Wilson (State Mining Engineer), Bowley (Government Mineralogist and Analyst), Forman (Government Geologist), Mills (Chief Mechanical Engineer, Railway Department), Gregson (Utilisation Officer of the Forests Department), Professor Bayliss, Professor of Chemistry at our University, and E. Tomlinson, Chairman of Directors of Tomlinson's, Limited. The members of the committee responsible finally for drawing up the proposals placed before the Government for its consideration were Messrs. Fernie, Reid (Under Treasurer), Wilson (State Mining Engineer), who was on the panel, and Mr. Bowley, who also was on the panel. The report of the committee was submitted to Cabinet on the 2nd November, 1942, and I propose at this stage to read the more important parts of it. They are—

Investigations into the proposal to erect a charcoal iron blast furnace have now reached a stage where it is possible to advance estimates of costs of erection and operation in support of a recommendation that the Government proceed with the installation of this project. In brief, it is proposed to erect a small blast furnace to produce up to 10,000 tons of pig-iron per year, by smelting iron ore with charcoal made from our hardwoods. In the preliminary discussions leading up to the design of a plant, the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. were very helpful in suggesting types of plant, layout and methods of operation.

Charcoal for fuel will be produced by the destructive distillation of wood in externally heated retorts. Experiments carried out under the supervision of the Government Analyst have yielded the information on which the design of the retorts has been based. In the design of this section, consideration given to the value of the volatile products driven off from the wood during distillation confirmed the opinion that a refinery to handle these products would operate ideally in conjunction with a blast furnace. To illustrate this interdependence, wood tar from the refinery may be burnt to raise steam in the main power house; after generating power, the steam exhausted from the engines may be taken back to the refinery to carry on the distillation processes. This report will, therefore, include a recommendation that a refinery be included to operate in conjunction with the blast furnace.

Products and Markets.—The main products of such an installation will be pig-iron, acetic acid and wood naphtha, in approximately the following quantities:—

Pig iron—10,000 tons per year.
Acetic acid—480 tons per year.
Wood naphtha—112,000 gallons per year.

It is considered that there would be no difficulty in disposing of these quantities of the various products. Consumption of pig-iron in Western Australia is now about 5,000 tons per year, so that about half the pig-iron would be available for export.

In this regard, I think it can be said with safety that our present consumption of iron is likely to be considerably increased after the war. Whilst we base our estimates now upon a local consumption of 5,000 tons, after the war it is safe to assume that local production will be considerably in excess of that quantity. Therefore it is probable that the whole of the pig-iron produced from this small plant will be consumed in this State. Should it become necessary to export pig-iron, it is considered there would be no difficulty in finding ready markets for it, both in the Eastern States and in countries reasonably close to Australia. In support of that statement, I repeat what I said earlier to the effect that iron produced under the charcoal production method is of a higher quality than that produced when coking coal is used as fuel. As a matter of fact, charcoal iron usually carries a premium in price of about £1 per ton above iron produced with the use of coking coal.

Iron of this high grade has never previously been produced in Australia, and

consequently there has in the past been no opportunity to estimate the possible market likely to be available. Nevertheless, Western Australian industrialists and industrialists in the other States have assured us that there will be a ready market for high-grade charcoal iron of the type we propose to produce. In any event, I think all members will agree that it would be most unwise to establish an industry for the production of iron the maximum capacity of which would be only the amount of production barely sufficient to meet local demands. If we have any faith in the future of Western Australia—as I am sure we all have—it is right and wise that we should, when establishing this industry, place it on such a basis as will enable it to produce something in excess of the actual present-day needs of our State. I now quote again from the report of the committee—

Regarding acetic acid, the estimated yield would supply three-fourths of the Australian consumption in 1938-39. This consumption has been steadily rising and since the outbreak of war acetic acid has been in short supply and severely rationed. Acetic acid has wide applications in commerce and its use for the production of cellulose acetate—

I am sure this will be interesting to the member for Canning—

—the basis of various synthetic fabrics, has made it the most important of organic acids. Wood naphtha is used as a denaturant for commercial alcohols, as a solvent and in blended fuel for internal combustion engines; it is considered that it may be used in the proposed blend fuel of petrol and ethyl alcohol. The proposed selling price of wood naphtha—1s. per gallon—is less than one-twelfth of the present market price, and it is considered that disposal will be ensured at this price.

Mr. McDonald: Are wood naphtha and acetic acid produced here now?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I think a small quantity of acetic acid is produced but, as far as I am aware, no wood naphtha or wood alcohol is produced in Australia. A site for the works has been chosen at Wundowie, 41 miles from Perth on the main Perth-Kalgoorlie railway line. At Wundowie is found one of several small iron-ore deposits which occur in our coastal hills. There is another at Coates' Siding, 43 miles from Perth, and a third at Clackline, 51 miles from Perth, which can also be drawn on for ore, if and when required. At Wundowie the works will be well situated with regard to the centre of pig-iron consumption. They will be built on Crown land immediately adjacent to a railway and only a short distance from the Goldfields Water Supply main pipe line, and will be situated centrally to a large area of Crown land from which timber will be cut for fuel. Reforestation operations will be carried on in the area concurrently with the cutting of timber for the purpose of producing charcoal iron. A suitable site exists for a small town where employees will be housed, but no provision is made in the estimate of cost for the erection of houses, other than staff houses. It is presumed that the Workers' Homes Board, or some other housing authority, will assume responsibility for the provision of the township houses.

Raw materials—the necessary raw materials for this project have been thoroughly investigated. These are—

(a) Iron-Ore. Deposits at Wundowie and Coates' Siding have been sampled by shaft sinking and a sufficient quantity of ore of satisfactory quality has been located to indicate ensured furnace operation for a period of at least 15 years.

I might say here that the reason the Government decided to accept this small scale proposal as against the large one for the South-West is that it feels it is better to proceed carefully with the establishment of this industry instead of rushing into it in a spectacular manner, and without having had any real practical experience in the production of iron under the charcoal iron method. It would have been easy for the Government to have decided somewhat in the manner of the ideas of the member for Canning, to have established a huge iron and steel industry with all possible speed for the production of, say, 200,000 tons of iron a year. We thought, in our wisdom, it would be better for the future of the industry, and for the taxpayers and the people of the State generally, to establish the industry on a small scale basis in a steady and sure way, and use that small scale industry as the foundation upon which to build in the future a large scale iron and steel industry. The report goes on to state—

Further developmental work will be carried on in conjunction with quarrying operations. Recovery of ore will be cheap, as the ore bodies are either exposed or covered by shallow overburden, while the situation of the quarries is either at the furnace site, in the case of Wundowie, or about three miles distant for Coates' Siding ore.

(b) Timber. The Forests Department has carried out a survey of available timber suitable for charcoal production in this vicinity. Reports by the Deputy Conservator of Forests indicate that sufficient timber for at least 50 years' operation is available within a 15-mile radius of Baker's Hill. Much of this is from private property, but from Crown land alone, sufficient timber for three years operation can be obtained within three miles of the plant.

(c) Limestone. This will be obtained from the abundant supplies on the Perth coastal plain.

Estimated capital cost. Working drawings of the layout of works and details of the blast furnace, accessories and charcoal retorts are sufficiently advanced to enable construction to be commenced at once. From these drawings, the cost of the blast furnace and accessories, including charcoal retorts, condensers and storage tanks, is estimated at £95,000. In addition to this, a refinery to purify the products of wood distillation is estimated to cost £30,000 making in all a total of £125,000. The cost of £35,000 has not been taken out in detail, but it is estimated from the costs of modern American refineries. Details of such plants were not available when this report was drawn up, but they have since come to hand.

Economics. In the study of the economics of the project it has been thought desirable to compare cost of production with normal market prices in pre-war years bearing in mind that early establishment would give an initial advantage of prices which are greatly inflated by war demands. In the case of cast iron, however, it is thought that the present price will be maintained for many years, and this has been accepted as the ruling price. The estimated annual income is £101,230, made up as follows:—

	£
Pig iron, 10,000 tons at £6 17s. 6d. per ton	68,750
Acetic acid, 480 tons at £56 per ton	26,880
Wood naphtha, 112,000 gallons at 1s. per gallon	5,600

I have already mentioned that high grade charcoal iron will be produced by this industry, and that on the basis of the experience of other countries this iron will carry a premium of approximately £1 a ton above ordinary iron produced in Australia. Therefore, although we estimate our income from the sale of charcoal pig-iron on the basis of the existing average price of iron produced in other States, we still have that margin of upwards of £1 a ton which pig-iron will be capable of commanding and which, indeed, much of it will command. The price of £56 a ton for acetic acid is, as I have stated, the pre-war wholesale price, not that which existed in Australia but in America and in England. It will therefore be easy for members to realise that the cost of landing acetic acid in Australia before the war was far in excess of £56 a ton. As a matter of fact, when acetic acid was brought into Australia and made available for sale before the war it was sold, not at £56 a ton, but at practically double that figure. However, we are using, for the purpose of estimating the income to be received from the sale of acetic acid the pre-war wholesale price of £56 a ton in America and in England. The price that we have put down for wood naphtha is half of what we are likely to receive. An amount of 1s. per gallon is indeed a very low figure. In 1938-39 wood naphtha of a quality equal to that which we hope to produce, was 4s. a gallon in England. In this case, too, members will realise that the estimate has been made on a very conservative basis.

Mr. McDonald: Was not there a big demand for wood naphtha in America during prohibition?

Hon. N. Keenan: What was the Chicago price?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Al Capone had a good deal to do with its marketing and the high rates then. The report goes on to state that the estimated annual expenditure is £76,360, so that the anticipated gross profit is £24,870, or approximately 24.5 per cent.

Mr. McDonald: Does the expenditure include interest on outlay?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes. The capital ratio, that is, rates of capital cost to annual value of products, is 1.24. This compares with some of the best American practice. This is something which would be understood fairly clearly by accountants and others well versed in these terms. I am afraid I do not completely understand it myself and I guess that not many members will. I only mention the fact because it does allow of a comparison between the capital ratio expected to be achieved in connection with this industry, and the ruling capital ratio in most of the industries operating in America. The report goes on to state that the prices assumed for acetic acid and wood naphtha are considered extremely conservative, as it is realised that these products will have to compete with synthetics after the war.

Expert Advice.—The best expert advice obtainable in Australia has been obtained in respect to the production of pig-iron. The recently developed "Othmer" direct process has been selected for the recovery of direct acetic acid. This process has been

responsible for the great improvement that has taken place in respect to the wood distillation industry during the past four or five years. The value of the acetic acid produced by this process is four times that of the former product, calcium acetate, and recovery costs have been halved. The Vulcan Copper and Supply Co. of Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A. has been responsible for the development of the process on a commercial scale and the company supplies and guarantees the operation of its plant. The company has been approached to supply plans and details for the construction of a plant in Western Australia. It has been asked if it would be prepared to send out a representative to this State to supervise construction.

I might add here, as I mentioned earlier, that this company has agreed to supply all plans and details to enable the plant to be constructed, but has not been able to agree to send one of its representatives to supervise that construction. In that regard, however, fortunately for us, one of our local factories is at present building an almost identical plant for use in the power-alcohol industry now being established in Western Australia. The experience that this local factory is obtaining in the construction of that plant will stand it in good stead when it is given the work—if it is given the work, and I think it probably would be—of building a similar plant to deal with the wood distillation process to be operated at Wundowie. To continue quoting from the committee's report—

> Recommendations: The committee feels that the foregoing report presents a faithful and conservative view of the prospects of the proposed new industry. At the same time it is realised that war conditions may upset the most conservative of estimates and that the establishment of the industry at the present time will be attended with a certain amount of risk.
>
> The committee has fully considered the risk involved against the advantages to be gained from the establishment of the iron industry and recommends that the Government make available £150,000 for the complete project, and that the construction of the blast furnace and accessories be put in hand immediately.

That completes the quotations I shall read from the committee's report. That document was considered by Cabinet a short time after it was presented, and the Government agreed to go ahead with the establishment of the industry. Preliminary work has already been carried out on the site and a small number of men are already working at Wundowie. The Government has taken the first possible opportunity to approach Parliament for the purpose of obtaining the necessary legal authority to go ahead with the establishment of the industry and its subsequent operations. It is estimated that the plant will take upwards of 18 months to establish. That estimate is based upon war-time conditions regarding the availability of manpower and materials. Members will know just how difficult it is to do anything at the present juncture, and particularly how difficult it is to carry out any project on a large scale.

First of all, there is—and in the circumstances there must be—the difficulty of manpower. Secondly, there is the question of obtaining materials, particularly when they are required for the purpose of the construction of a fairly large plant. Therefore we have allowed in our estimate of the time for the completion of the plant a period of approximately 18 months. If the war should end sooner than most people anticipate, and was anticipated when the report of the committee was drawn up, and the position regarding manpower and materials should ease up, as no doubt it would, the industry could then be established more quickly and, as a result, its products would be available all the sooner for sale in this State and in other parts of Australia or any other country where the demand for them might exist. The thought might occur to some members that in view of the difficulties regarding manpower and materials it would be wise to postpone the commencement of this project until after the war, at which stage ample manpower and materials would again be available. I hope that will not be the point of view taken by members of either this House or of another place. In my opinion such an attitude would be more or less fatalistic in its make-up. Every member knows how desirable it is that we shall move ahead, once we are on safe ground, to establish every possible new industry in this State. If we do not make a commencement at once we may find that the advantages now available to us will not be there later on. We may find that the protection afforded us now will not be available later on.

In common with the Government, the members of the committee whose report I have quoted consider that we cannot too soon commence the work of establishing the industry. The sooner we start the sooner the industry will be in production, and the sooner will Western Australia be gaining

the very valuable experience that this industry will provide to enable plans to be prepared for the subsequent establishment on a large scale of the steel industry in the South-West of the State. I wish here to mention to members the fact that the Prime Minister and other appropriate Ministers of the Commonwealth Government have given the State Government an absolute assurance in writing that this industry will be treated on the basis of an important essential industry, in so far as the procurement of materials is concerned for the construction of the necessary plant.

It is not possible for the Commonwealth Government to grant complete priority because the first priorities are preserved for those industries that are producing the most essential requirements for use in connection with the war, particularly those requirements that are so urgently needed now to the north of Australia to assist the Allied Forces in the offensive they are developing against the Japanese. The Commonwealth Government, therefore, could not go so far as to give us absolute priority but, as I have already stated, it has given us a written assurance of the strongest possible character that we shall receive always a full measure of co-operation from the Munitions Department and other appropriate Commonwealth departments to assist us, as a Government, to obtain all the materials and equipment required to establish this industry as quickly as possible and to operate it at the earliest practicable date.

Mr. McDonald: Is it contemplated that the Yampi ore will be sent to the South-West or be smelted in close vicinity to the deposits?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: In connecton with the large-scale proposal, which it is believed will develop out of this small-scale proposal, it is planned at present to bring iron ore from Koolan Island to one of the South-West ports by sea in its raw state and smelt it at the site of the proposed works.

Mr. Cross: It is 66 per cent. f.e., and that is the best in the State.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes, but from the economic point of view it is not the best, because first of all it would be mined at Koolan Island, then transported by sea for a very long distance and later conveyed to the site of the proposed works.

Mr. McDonald: And it has to be conveyed in specially constructed ships.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Although the quality of the iron-ore from Koolan Island is the best in this State, and I believe in Australia, it is not, from the economic point of view, the ore to be used at this stage, and certainly not in connection with the small-scale operation, which we are establishing at a place where there is iron-ore immediately available on the site itself and where, as I have already pointed out, timber supplies are close at hand, thus obviating transport costs in connection with both iron-ore and timber.

The Premier: And there is a railway line close at hand.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes. From the standpoint of suitability and from the economic viewpoint, we could not possibly find a better site than the one we have chosen. Iron-ore is on the spot; timber supplies are there; a railway passes not far away; the main road is in close proximity; the pipeline of the Goldfields Water Supply runs within a stone's throw of the site; the market in which most of the pig-iron, when available, will be consumed is also close at hand. There are not, I imagine, many places anywhere in the world where the economics of any such proposal would be as good as they are in relation to the present proposal.

Hon. N. Keenan: Why not operate at Southern Cross?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Because the supply of timber at Southern Cross would not be sufficient and because there is no railway communication between Southern Cross and Koolyanobbing. Furthermore, the water supply would be some 40 miles distant from the latter place.

Mr. Patrick: And Southern Cross would be a long way from the coast.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Then again if we were to establish the industry there, it would be a considerable distance further from the main market than the site at Wundowie. However, the existence and value of the Koolan Island deposits have not been lost sight of. They have been, and will be, considered and it might very well be that, at a later stage in the development of the State's industries, this deposit will be used as well

as other iron deposits to which I have not referred.

Mr. Cross: Is it not limonite at Wundowie whereas it is haematite at Koolan Island?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I think the member for Canning is correct in his statement, but I remind the House that in this proposal we are only establishing the beginning of the iron industry in Western Australia. We do not want to develop in our minds a view that straightaway we are going to develop every iron-ore deposit in the State, going to develop every limestone deposit in the State, and going to attack every area of timber in the State. Western Australia will be here for hundreds of years in the future.

Mr. McDonald: We are leaving something for posterity to do.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Our task, our duty, is to establish the industry on the best and safest possible basis, and as quickly as possible and as safely as possible, and subsequently to develop it to the largest extent that is practicable based on the circumstances of the time and the prospects of the State at that time. If we concentrate upon our task and duty to establish the industry after having obtained all the expert information possible, after having carried out all the investigations and research possible, we shall have done a fairly good and wise job for ourselves, and we shall have done something upon which can be built in the future much greater industrial efforts in this State.

I come now to a brief explanation of the provisions of the measure. The Bill empowers the Minister for Industrial Development acting for and on behalf of the State Government to do all things necessary to bring about the production of charcoal and by-products by operating wood distillation processes, and also to produce charcoal iron. The Minister is also empowered to arrange for the sale of the products or for their use by the Government. Power is given to dedicate and also to acquire land for the purposes of establishing and carrying on the industry. A board of management of five is to be set up under the immediate direction of the Minister. Its members will be appointed by the Governor-in-Council on the recommendation of the Minister, and one of them is to be nominated by the workers employed in the industry. He will represent the workers. This is a new development in Western Australia and, as far as I know, a new development in Australia. Nevertheless I consider that it represents a very desirable development, because not only will it give the workers an opportunity to place their views regarding the management of the industry before those who constitute the board of management, but it will also contribute to the establishment of a much larger measure of understanding and co-operation between the workers and the board of management than would otherwise be possible. It is a development which I believe, judging by the trends we see in various countries of the world, and also judging by the talk we hear of a new order after the war, which will become more pronounced as the years go by, and will be put into actual practice along the lines which the Government has set out in the Bill.

The board will manage and control the whole of the works, plant and undertakings to be established, and also the business activities associated therewith. Among other defined powers it will be charged with the responsibility of appointing and dismissing staff, including wages employees; but it will have the legal right to delegate to any member of the salaried staff the authority to employ and dismiss wages employees. The members of the board will hold office during the pleasure of the Governor, and therefore will not be appointed as members of the board for any set period.

The funds required for the establishment and operation of the industry will be made up of money appropriated by Parliament from time to time, money borrowed by the Minister from the Treasurer, and from income derived from the actual operation of the industry and the subsequent sale of its products. The proposed industry is being established under the special Act which will come into existence when this Bill is passed by Parliament. The industry will not be brought directly under the provisions of the State Trading Concerns Act, although the provisions of that Act dealing with the financial administration of State industries have been included in this Bill. The clauses in question are Nos. 20 to 32, inclusive.

It is considered that the proposed industry requires legislation of a more elastic and flexible type than that contained in the State Trading Concerns Act, especially as the in-

dustry in its earlier stages will be of an experimental nature so far as Western Australia is concerned. The State Trading Concerns Act may be reasonably appropriate, and operate reasonably well, in respect of established activities; but, when we are starting off from scratch to establish an entirely new industry, it is considered that we require an Act of Parliament which will allow of the greatest flexibility, so that the problems of this new industry, particularly in regard to its development to the production stage, may not be hampered. We think it well to apply to this proposed new industry provisions which are appropriate rather than provisions which are cast-iron and which in their application might have seriously harmful effects upon the development of the project.

Mr. Sampson: Where will the blast furnace be established?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has given that information.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: As repetition is not permitted I am, to my regret, unable to give to the member for Swan the information he seeks; but I shall be glad to give it to him after the tea adjournment. There is much more that could be said in connection with a proposal of this character. I feel, however, that members have been given a fairly comprehensive explanation of the history leading up to the commencement, in a preliminary way, of the work associated with the establishment of this industry.

All that it is now necessary for me to do is to pay a very well deserved compliment to the officers of the Government who have been associated with either the panel or the subsequent committee which drew up this small-scale proposal; to the representatives of private industry who were associated with the panel or who gave to the Department of Industrial Development and to the Government useful and valuable information regarding various phases of the proposal; to the Broken Hill Proprietary Company management for its action in making the services of its appropriate experts available; to those experts for the able information and advice and service which they gave to the State in connection with the matter; and to every other person, either in this State or in the other States who in any way has assisted the Government of Western Australia to develop this proposal to the stage it has now reached. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Perkins, debate adjourned.

BILL—PUBLIC AUTHORITIES (POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

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

BILL—PUBLIC AUTHORITIES (RETIREMENT OF MEMBERS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 7th September.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [5.52]: The rather complicated position that has developed in regard to road board elections is such that a Bill of this nature is needed to correct it. Most members know, I take it, that the usual procedure is for one-third of a road board's total of members to retire every three years. That is known as the rotation system, and has been found over the years a very desirable method of dealing with elections. The effect, of course, is that there are always two-thirds of the members left on the board who are tried and experienced men, and very well able to serve as guides and counsellors to such new members as may come upon the board in lieu of those who went to the poll. Anyone can see that this is a sound method which it is highly necessary to maintain; but members interested in road board matters will be aware that because 115 of the 127 road boards took advantage of their statutory right to postpone elections whilst the remaining 12 did not, a rather involved situation has arisen, and the rotation system, which we are all anxious to maintain, has been practically destroyed. That system, of course, essentially must be restored; and to restore it is the purpose of the Bill we are now discussing.

Assuming that the Bill passes as drafted, and assuming also that no further war upsets occur, elections from now on will be held annually, and the first of them will take place in 1944, and again in 1945-46 and from then onwards. In 1944 and from then

onwards, all members will be returned for the usual term of three years, by that means observing the order and object of the old rotation method. I do not think it is necessary or desirable that I should repeat the information already given by the Minister involving the years from 1940 onwards, because the hon. gentleman gave that information in his second reading speech very amply and clearly, and I have an impression that if I were to endeavour to follow suit and bring those same figures into the debate, I might only confuse the situation. The Minister's views find very ready acceptance with me, and I have ascertained that they find acceptance with the Road Boards Association and a very big majority of the road boards. For those reasons, I have pleasure in intimating that I will vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—ELECTORAL (WAR TIME).

As to Instruction to Committee.

Order of the Day read for the consideration of the Bill in Committee.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [6.4]: Before the Bill goes into Committee I desire to move the following motion standing in my name on the notice paper:—

That it be an instruction to the Committee on the Electoral (War Time) Bill that it have leave to consider amendments to extend to members of the Forces the franchise for the Legislative Council.

The object of moving that motion is to enable the Committee, notwithstanding the fact that no provision was in the measure at the second reading relating to the franchise for the Legislative Council, to insert in the Bill in the course of the Committee proceedings such provisions as will enable members of the Forces, who are serving with their units in any part of Australia or in any part of the portion of the South-West Pacific zone which may be proclaimed from time to time under the provisions of Section 4 of the Commonwealth Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Act, 1943, to vote in respect of any election held for the Legislative Council. I do not think it can be a matter of serious dispute that members of the Forces should have this right. It was included in the Bill of 1941, which was brought down in this House for the purpose of dealing with exactly the same position as this Bill deals with. Indeed, in speaking of the provisions which appeared in the 1941 Bill, the Minister in charge said it was obvious that soldiers—I think he used the term "soldiers"—who were absent from Western Australia under conditions which were of service to the whole of Australia were entitled to the exercise of the franchise in respect of the other Chamber.

The Bill of 1941 went only to the extent of providing that those already enrolled should have that right. If the instruction I am asking for is given to the Committee, it is my intention at the Committee stage to bring forward amendments which will not only cover the case of members of the Forces who are on the roll at present, but also provide for those who have claims to be put on the roll to vote in respect of the elections and set out the nature and extent of their claims. If their claims are in order, their votes will count as effectively as if they had been on the roll. That is the necessary extension that must be given effect to in order to make the granting of this well-deserved privilege a complete grant. To send this Bill out without making the provision I am now suggesting would be to send out a half-baked measure. It is of just as much importance, or relatively of as much importance, to the members of the Forces to elect members of another place as to have the right to elect members of this House. It is absurd to imagine that their interests would be properly protected by their having the privilege only in respect of one House of the Legislature. I hope there will be no question about this leave being given and the matter then being considered on its merits when I propose in due and proper course the amendments now on the notice paper in my name.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am sorry I must oppose the motion. I have given notice today of my intention to bring down a Bill later on to give soldiers the opportunity to vote for the Legislative Council. On each occasion, when the life of Parliament has been extended, two sepa-

rate Bills have been introduced. We thought it would be wise on this occasion to deal with the Legislative Assembly in one Bill and with the Legislative Council in another Bill.

Hon. N. Keenan: Why?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It will save any constitutional difficulties. Since provision has been made to deal with the position as it affects the Legislative Council, I do not know whether the hon. member will now desire to proceed with his motion. I realise there is no question of his good intentions in seeking to give soldiers a vote for the Legislative Council, but the Government has given consideration to the matter for quite a while. A Bill has been prepared and I have intimated my intention to introduce it. For the hon. member's desire to be given effect to, would be to duplicate the provision.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): I am glad to hear from the Minister that it is the intention of the Government to arrange for soldiers to be able to exercise the franchise for the Legislative Council. The Minister was good enough to tell me a day or so ago of his intention to bring down such a Bill, although the information was conveyed to me after notice had been given of the intention of the member for Nedlands to move for the amendment of the present Bill by way of giving the franchise for the election of the Legislative Council. We all agree that the franchise for the Legislative Council should be enjoyed by the soldiers, but I cannot understand why two separate Bills are necessary.

Mr. Watts: I can.

The Minister for Mines: We have as much right to have two separate Bills in regard to this matter as in regard to the postponement of elections.

Mr. McDONALD: That is rather extraordinary. I do not know why that should be the case. The postponement was something anomalous, unusual, something extraordinary.

The Minister for Mines: So is this.

Mr. McDONALD: The postponement was something brought about by the war, but this is following a branch of law already dealt with in the principal Act—the Electoral Act. The foundation of the exercise of the franchise in this State is the Electoral Act, which applies to Parliament as a whole; that is, to both Houses of Parliament. No electoral law in any country of the world has one Act for one Chamber and a separate Act for another Chamber, and the Constitution Act of this State deals with both the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. There are no separate Constitution Acts, one for the Legislative Council and one for the Legislative Assembly.

The Minister for Justice: I think there are. The Legislative Assembly is dealt with under the Electoral Act and the Legislative Council under the Constitution Act.

Mr. McDONALD: The Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly are both dealt with constitutionally in the one Act; that is, the Constitution Act.

The Minister for Justice: Reference to the Assembly has been taken out of the Constitution Act.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.44 p.m.

Mr. McDONALD: The franchise for Parliament is conferred by the Constitution Act. That is the source of the right to vote for Parliament, both for the Legislative Council and for the Legislative Assembly. The Constitution Act deals with both Chambers that compose the Parliament of the State. The machinery for voting is covered by the Electoral Act, which again deals with the machinery for voting both for the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. Therefore, when it comes to conferring the right to vote, or the machinery for the right to vote, there are not separate Acts for the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly. As the Bill now before the House deals with the electoral law—that is the machinery of voting—and perhaps to some extent it confers additional constitutional rights by giving soldiers under the age of 21 years a vote, I can see no reason why both Houses should not be dealt with in the one Act. In fact, the Government adopted that principle when it brought down a similar Bill in 1941.

Mr. Watts: That is so.

Mr. McDONALD: The Bill then introduced to give the soldiers a vote dealt with the franchise for both Houses of Parliament, which appears to me to be the correct course. I cannot see any reason for separating these things and putting them into two Bills when they are essentially matters coming under one head, namely, the Parliamen-

tary franchise and the method of its exercise.

Mr. Cross: Would you give every soldier a vote for the Council?

Mr. McDONALD: I would not propose to do that.

Mr. Cross: Why not?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. McDONALD: Because I think that is essentially a matter to be determined by the people. Any fundamental alteration of their constitutional rights in relation to their Parliamentary privileges should be decided by the people and not by a majority of one man in each House, possibly, to make a constitutional majority.

The Premier: The franchise was not decided by the people in the first instance.

Mr. McDONALD: It may not have been, because it was a great advance on the rights previously enjoyed by them. It was conferred by the Imperial Parliament in response to requests by the people of Western Australia who agitated for responsible Government and sent representatives to England to confer with the Government of Great Britain as to the form of the enabling Act to be passed by the Imperial Parliament. The Imperial Parliament acceded to the requests of the representatives of this State and passed the enabling Act through the British Parliament, and it became the substance of the Constitution Act as passed in this State.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member is getting away from the motion.

Mr. McDONALD: I will say no more on the point, except just this, that when it comes to altering the constitutional rights of the people in relation to Parliamentary Government, it must be done, in the case of the Commonwealth Parliament, by a referendum of the people and, although we have no such expressed provision here, it should, to my mind, be equally obligatory to consult the people before taking away or altering their State constitutional rights. Therefore, according to precedent, according to commonsense and according, as far as I can see, to every valid reason, matters relating to the same thing should be incorporated in the same Bill.

No cause or justification has been shown for separating the soldiers' franchise for the Legislative Assembly and putting it in a separate Bill from the soldiers' franchise for the Legislative Council. If we are to embark further on that principle I do not know where we will end, because we might have a series of collateral Bills dealing with all sorts of things in all sorts of districts. Because of the precedent established by the Government by its Bill of 1941, and because of the existing legislation dealing with the franchise, I submit that no case has been made out for separate Bills for the two Chambers. On the other hand, every reason exists to follow the Government's previous precedent, and our present legislation, for keeping our electoral law in one Act and incorporating the votes for both Chambers in one Act. If any reason existed for two separate Bills, one for the Legislative Assembly and one for the Legislative Council, in connection with the life of Parliament, I do not know what it was. There seems no reason why, when the causes were the same, that is, the state of war and the national emergency, the matters could not have been dealt with in the one statute.

The Minister for Justice interjected.

Mr. McDONALD: If something on a previous occasion slipped through the House without proper consideration, we should not repeat a precedent which seems to be so foreign to good sense and convenience and justified by no reason that I can find. I submit that the House would be wise and would attract the confidence of the people if it acceded to the motion and dealt with the one matter in one piece of legislation in the manner proposed by the hon. member.

THE PREMIER: I am surprised at the new-found enthusiasm of the Leader of the National Party in regard to a principle about which he and his supporters have never shown any anxiety—the principle of the referendum. When speaking of changing our constitutional laws, we have to take the law as it stands. The law of this State is not similar to that of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth law provides that the Constitution may be altered in one way only as set out in Section 128, but the law of Western Australia is entirely different. Here Parliament is supreme, and any measure passed by both Houses by an absolute majority—I am referring to constitutional changes—becomes a law and the Constitution is altered accordingly. The two cases are not analagous. The hon. member could not argue in a court of law that the State law ought to be the same as the Common-

wealth and that, if it is not, it is out of joint.

Mr. McDonald: I did not suggest that.

The PREMIER: There may be a moral obligation and a statutory obligation to give confidence in the law in the matter of constitutional changes. I would like a referendum to be taken of the people of Western Australia on the subject of constitutional changes but, if we asked the other Chamber to pass a measure to make that possible, it would refuse. Yet the hon. member inferred that the Constitution ought not to be changed without a referendum being taken.

Mr. McDonald: I was merely contending that these two things should be included in one Bill.

The PREMIER: What was said regarding the redistribution of seats, which represented an important change in the Constitution? We had a Bill providing for a change in the boundaries of the Assembly districts and the Council provinces, and the Council said in effect, "Deal with the redistribution of seats for your own House, but do not interfere with us or in what we desire regarding a redistribution of Council seats." We had a redistribution of seats for the Assembly 10 or 12 years ago, but the Council seats were not interfered with. The distribution of votes for Legislative Council seats is shockingly inconsistent. There are well over 40,000—probably 50,000—electors on the metropolitan rolls.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the Premier intends to connect those remarks with the motion.

The PREMIER: Yes, I am pointing out an important phase of our Constitution, one affecting the constitution of the two Houses, the subject of which has been brought up by the hon. member.

Hon. N. Keenan: You know that there are four times as many electors in Nedlands as——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The PREMIER: According to the hon. member we cannot do anything in the matter of giving votes to soldiers unless we apply it to both Houses. That attitude has neither been suggested nor adopted before, except in the Bill that was last before us. All the things that go to make up the method of constituting the Houses are dealt with separately.

Mr. Watts: Why did you make an exception in 1941?

The PREMIER: Why was an exception made in 1942? The latest expression of Parliament, enacted by statute, is statute law, not something that was done previously. There may not be much enthusiasm about the matter of soldiers' votes. It may be that if we deal with the franchise of both Houses, we shall have less opportunity of getting the measure passed than if we dealt with the two franchises separately.

Mr. Watts: We might agree with that.

The PREMIER: Members know that the Council adopts a highly conservative attitude on the question of extending the franchise. I do not think the Council can possibly object to allowing a vote for this House to soldiers if they are out of the State, but when it comes to the Council's own privilege and the Council's own secured position, the Chamber has never shown any enthusiasm in the direction of liberalising the franchise. This House on five or six occasions passed legislation to liberalise the franchise of the Upper House, and the proposals were immediately thrown out when they reached the other Chamber. Now, the same thing may occur in regard to the soldiers' vote. Knowing the attitude of another place, we are not prepared to have the whole principle of allowing soldiers' voting to be jeopardised for no other reason than that the Legislative Council may have some objection to liberalisation such as it has displayed in the past.

Mr. McDonald: It is not asked to liberalise its own franchise.

The PREMIER: I shall not disclose on this Bill the proposals of another Bill of which notice was given today. I may say, however, that the forthcoming Bill proposes to liberalise the provisions in regard to votes of soldiers. We are not anxious to tie up the democratic House and its franchise with the very restricted franchise for the Upper House. If this means a necessity for segregating the positions of the two Houses, still I do not wish the whole proposal of the present Bill to be jeopardised in effecting the segregation. I hope the member for West Perth will maintain the attitude he previously indicated regarding this Bill.

Hon. N. Keenan: Mr. Speaker——

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nedlands is not in order in speaking twice.

Hon. N. Keenan: May I ask whether this motion is subject to the ordinary rules applicable to private members' motions?

Mr. SPEAKER: I suggest that if the hon. member looks at Standing Order No. 122, he will find that the matter is provided for.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	17
Noes	..	..	..	21
Majority against	..			4

AYES.

Mr. Berry	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Warner
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Watts
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Willmott
Mr. North	Mr. Doney
Mr. Patrick	*(Teller.)*

NOES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Cross	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Fox	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Graham	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Triat
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Withers
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Needham	*(Teller.)*

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Abbott	Mr. Holman
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Wise
Mr. Mann	Mr. Raphael
Mr. J. H. Smith	Mr. Leahy
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. W. Hegney

Question thus negatived.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Definitions:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have been asked to move to amend the definition of a person on active service. I have received the following communication on the subject from the Crown Solicitor:—

A person is on active service immediately he becomes enlisted or enrolled as a member of the Defence Forces of the Commonwealth. The nature of the service or the place where it is rendered does not determine the question. It is immaterial that the individual is not actually at the fighting front. He is on active service even though he is at Staff Headquarters hundreds of miles from the fighting theatre. It is of no consequence that the service consists of menial duties; a cook and a Bren gunner are both on active service.

The definition of "active service" in the Defence Act has been extended by the Commonwealth Security (Military Forces) Regulations, Statutory Rules, 1941, No. 1, as amended. There you will see in Clause 14 that the definition is now so wide that—

(a) as long as a person is attached to or forms part of a force which is declared by the Governor General to be on active service, he is for all purposes on active service.

(b) Whenever a person is serving in an area in respect of which the Governor General makes a declaration, all persons subject to military law within that area are deemed to be on active service.

With respect to paragraph (a), it will be noticed that a person who is "attached to" a force is on active service equally with a member of that particular force. This phrase brings all the auxiliaries within the meaning of the term. A.W.A.S., W.A.A.A.F., nurses, etc., are therefore considered to be on active service.

With respect to paragraph (b) a declaration has been made by the Governor General and published in the *Commonwealth Gazette* of the 15th April, 1942, that all persons subject to military law anywhere in the Commonwealth of Australia or its territories are on active service.

As a matter of interest, there is a number of decisions which indicate how wide the term "active service" was even before the amendment referred to came into being. The term "active service" was defined by the High Court in the case of Ramaciotti and the Federal Commissioner of Taxation, C.L.R. 29, page 49. That case relates to the last war and in a unanimous decision the High Court held that an officer of the military forces who had been mobilised for duty in 1915 and who at all times remained in Australia on home service was on "active service." The whole of his service was performed within Australia and he claimed the benefit of certain provisions of the Income Tax Act on the grounds that at all times he had been on active service within the meaning of the Income Tax Act.

More recently a decision was given by the Western Australian Supreme Court on a meaning of the term "active service." I refer to Thompson v. Rutherford, 43 W.A.L.R., page 67.

In that case the meaning of the term "active service" as used in the Franchise Act of 1916 was in question. One of the parties was a member of the R.A.A.F., who was posted to training duties at Geraldton. He had never left Australia and it was quite likely that he never would because apparently he had a special flair for training pilots. He claimed enrolment for the Geraldton district although he was at that time enrolled as an elector for Claremont. The court decided that he was governed by the provisions of the Franchise Act and that he was on active service. At page 71 of the report above referred to, Mr. Justice Wolff points out the fallacy in the argument that "active service" could only begin when the soldier embarks for a theatre of war or was engaged in actual hostilities against the enemy.

The significance of Thompson's case, of course, arises from the fact that the main question before the court was the meaning of the term "active service" as used in an Electoral Act—the Franchise Act was definitely an Electoral Act. The Supreme Court judge had no hesitation in finding that active service in such an Electoral Act was not restricted to actual hostilities against the enemy but covered the whole of a man's service from the time of enlistment or enrolment.

In England also recent decisions have been given which are very much in line with the two cases referred to. In the case of Spark, Weekly Notes, 2nd August, 1941, page 178, the term "active military service" was considered by the English court. In that instance a soldier was in a military camp in England and was killed by a bomb. The court held that he was definitely on "active military service" although he was not at an actual theatre of war at the time he was killed and, in fact, had never left England.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I suggest the opinion just read out by the Minister for Justice leaves the matter extremely open because, on the definition to which he referred, a clerk in the Swan Barracks would have the same rights as a soldier who is offering his life for the defence of his country. Ramaciotti's case was a decision by a single judge; true, the Full Court was sitting, but the only judgment delivered was that of the Chief Justice. That decision, however, was based on a statute which gave a certain right to those who volunteered. Only volunteers were on active service then. The gentleman concerned, Colonel Ramaciotti, was in command of a camp in Australia. He sustained his case on the ground that he was at all times willing and anxious to leave Australia and had volunteered to do so. He was, however, retained in Australia just as the flier whom the Minister referred to was retained. In the course of his second reading speech, the Minister never varied in his expression; he always said the Bill was designed to give certain privileges to the Fighting Forces.

The Minister for Justice: All the soldiers are practically fighting; they may be sent anywhere.

Hon. N. KEENAN: My desire, and I think it is the desire of most members, is to confer this privilege on members of the Fighting Forces.

The Minister for Justice: Members of the Forces.

The Premier: We are not intending to put in the Bill the opinion that the Minister for Justice read; that was read merely for the information of members.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Let me remind the Premier what the Bill says—

"Member of the Forces" means a person who is or has been a member of the Defence Force of the Commonwealth . . .

Even that is not sufficient, because the definition goes on to say—

and who is or has been on active service during the present war.

Will the Minister look at the definition and state whether it refers to a member of the Defence Force who is or has been on active service?

The Premier: The Minister did not move an amendment.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The expression "active service" unfortunately has no definite meaning, as I endeavoured to explain—very inadequately—a little earlier. It would undoubtedly cover every person in uniform. Every clerk in the Swan Barracks under 21 years of age—in fact, every person, male or female, in uniform—would be entitled to vote.

Mr. Tonkin: How many clerks are there in the Swan Barracks?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Of both sexes?

Mr. Tonkin: Yes.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I would not have the impertinence to say. I do not think the member for North-East Fremantle knows, either.

Mr. Tonkin: There are very few of the male sex, anyhow.

Hon. N. KEENAN: We want to give a privilege to the Fighting Forces but, if we pass this Bill and leave the definition in its present form, we shall be going a long way beyond that and to a distance I do not want to travel unless I am compelled to do so by being in a minority. My suggestion is that the definition be limited to a member of the Fighting Forces.

The Premier: Would you say that General Blamey was a member of the Fighting Forces?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Of course! He has been in New Guinea.

The Premier: Not fighting there.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Has he not?

The Premier: Well, with his brain, I suppose.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I presume that when he was there he took an active part in directing operations. This phrase is so indefinite that to agree to it will mean conferring this privilege on a class far wider and

less deserving of it than the class upon which we intend to confer it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think that some members, and particularly the member for Nedlands, are inclined to mix up the definition of active service as applied to this war and as applied to the last war. There is no analogy between active service in respect of the two wars. I have been looking up the Repatriation Act as it applied to the last war, and it is evident from that that it was simple to secure a definition of a soldier or a member of the Forces. But that war took place 12,000 miles away from Australia, and there was not much difficulty in getting some definition of active service. Ever since the last war there has been a discussion between men who were in uniform as to who can be termed a returned soldier. Anybody who had been three miles outside of Australia was classed as a returned soldier but a man who had served in Britain but was not three miles outside of the British Isles was not a returned soldier. It did not matter how long he had been in the Forces—he was not a returned soldier.

Mr. Seward: Everybody who is in uniform is not looked upon as a returned soldier today.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Returned Soldiers' League has not decided the point of eligibility, and until that is done I cannot argue along those lines. We saw a picture tonight of burns received by soldiers. Where were those burns sustained? In Darwin!

Mr. Doney: Darwin could be included for that matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If that is so, why not Broome and Port Hedland?

Mr. Seward: Of course!

Mr. Doney: But not places further south.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Why not? The bombs may drop further south before the next election—a long way further south. This is an all-in war, yet members want "active service" defined. It is difficult to do that because every man and woman who has enlisted and is in uniform may be sent to a bombed area at any time. There are men in the Air Force who may not have been outside the three-mile limit, but next week they may be in New Guinea. The war is right at our back door: that is the trouble. I hope there will be no further attempt to define "active service."

Hon. N. KEENAN: I think the definition that would meet the view of the Minister for Mines would be one including all who have served in any area which has been subject to or is at any time subject to enemy action. It is no good speaking of people being liable to bombing. I am just as liable to be bombed as any soldier, but by no stretch of imagination can I be said to be on active service.

The Minister for Mines: There are 13,000 men and women in the A.R.P. who would be on active service in the event of an air-raid.

Hon. N. KEENAN: And I daresay large numbers of civilians who should be in shelters would come within the definition. The Minister's views should be met if we extended the definition to embrace those who have served in any area which has been or is the subject of enemy action.

Mr. Fox: A soldier 18 years of age would get a vote if he were serving in Sydney.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is so. The present definition is too wide and provides no qualification whatever.

Mr. CROSS: I cannot understand the quibble of the member for Nedlands, because there is no relationship between the conditions of this war and of the last war. There are men on what could be termed active service in the metropolitan area who have never been away. Some of those men in civil life earned from £18 to £20 a week but, because they were of military age, they were conscripted and forced to give up businesses or lucrative occupations and go to work for some pounds a week less than they previously earned. Why should they not have civil rights? The military authorities have the power to send these men anywhere inside or outside of Australia. We should not deprive them of their civil rights. Does the Opposition want to do that? I have never heard such quibbling in all my life. Every man who has donned the uniform should have the right to vote, and no civilian should attempt to stop him. I am not afraid of the soldier's vote, but I think Opposition members are.

Mr. SEWARD: I am not so much afraid of the soldier's vote as I am of the hon member who has just resumed his seat. It is surprising to hear arguments in favour of everyone who gets into uniform being given the right to vote. I can remember many debates at the R.S.L. after the last war in an endeavour to see that only those men who went on actual active service should

get the franchise and not those who remained in Australia. We have about a column and a half of motions dealing with the qualifications necessary to say who will be eligible for membership of the R.S.L. These will be brought forward at the conference in a few weeks time.

Mr. Cross: The conditions are different.

Mr. SEWARD: The R.S.L. is not going to admit everyone.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not want the member for Pingelly to drift too far along the line of what the R.S.L. or any other organisation is doing. I have allowed a fair amount of latitude.

Mr. SEWARD: I will say no more on that point. Civilians under 21 are not eligible for a vote, but it has been pointed out that people of that age are in the Fighting Forces. The Minister for the Army has said that they are not to go to the fighting areas. They are considered to be not sufficiently matured to undergo those dangers. Yet some members are agreeable to say that they should be eligible for the vote. Hardly any one of them would know anything about it. I had a letter from a 21-year-old soldier in Darwin, who is perfectly entitled to vote, asking me how to vote at the last Federal election. The vote should be something to be prized and not treated as valueless. Men who have gone oversea and been on active service have earned the right to vote.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Members of the Forces entitled to vote:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in lines 3 and 4 in Subclause (1) the words "during the present war and for a period of twelve months thereafter" be struck out.

I have given notice of an amendment to amend the last clause so as to end its operations at the 31st December, 1944. This amendment is not brought up in any spirit of antagonism to the provisions of the Bill, but I can remember the grave difficulty we experienced in reaching a reasonable definition of what was meant by "the cessation of hostilities" when considering the Commonwealth Powers Bill. A great deal of legal argument took place as to whether it was the armistice, or the peace treaty, and if so, whether the signature or the ratification terminated the hostilities. It was also said that a period of years could elapse between the actual stoppage of fighting and the ratification of the peace treaty which would mean the actual cessation of hostilities.

The Select Committee appointed finally put in a special definition to clear up the matter. The expression, "for a period of 12 months after the war," is open to objection because we do not know how long it will be, or when it will commence. I suggest that this Bill and the other Bill of which the Minister gave notice this evening, are required only for the period of the next 15 or 16 months. In that time the biennial elections—recently postponed—of the Legislative Council will be held, and so will the general elections for this House. Then, as in the case of all other continuance measures, we can, if it is considered necessary, continue the Bill for a further period. For these reasons I suggest that if the Bill becomes an Act it should have its life terminated at the 31st December, 1944, unless Parliament, as it has done with many other measures, decides to continue it. By that means we will have no need to decide when the period of 12 months after the war is ended.

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

Ayes	17
Noes	20
Majority against ..	3

AYES.	
Mr. Berry	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Warner
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Watts
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Willmott
Mr. North	Mr. Doney
Mr. Patrick	*(Teller.)*

NOES.	
Mr. Collier	Mr. Panton
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Fox	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Graham	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Triat
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Needham	Mr. Withers
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Cross
	(Teller.)

PAIRS.	
AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Abbott	Mr. Holman
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Wise
Mr. Mann	Mr. Raphael
Mr. J. H. Smith	Mr. Leahy
Mr. Stubbs	Mr. W. Hegney

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That at the end of Subclause 1 the following words be added:—"but notwithstanding

the provisions of this Act or the provisions of any other Act, a qualified member of the Forces shall not be entitled to vote at any election as an elector of any other district.''

The Bill provides for a member of the Forces to vote in the district in which he was ordinarily resident at the time of his enlistment. The amendment is intended to make that provision more certain. Without the amendment it would be possible for members of the Forces, who are under the normal age and therefore are not provided for in the provisions of the Electoral Act, to claim to vote in any district. I consider it essential that there should be no possibility of a soldier voting for any district other than the one in which he resided at the time of his enlistment. The amendment will make perfectly clear what I think is the intention of the Government.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The requisite provision already appears in the Bill and the amendment is therefore redundant. Clause 22 provides that a soldier may not vote for more than one district.

The Minister for Works: And the clause contains a penalty for infringement.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so.

Mr. WATTS: A soldier would not be obliged to vote in the district in which he was ordinarily resident; he might claim a vote for any other district. Therefore the amendment is not redundant. Notwithstanding the opinion of the member for Canning, I prefer all soldiers who enlisted in my district to vote in that district. I contend that it is essential there should not be any choice as to the district in which they vote.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If the amendment is passed, a soldier will not be able to vote in any other district.

Mr. Watts: That is only right and proper.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I still maintain that the amendment is unnecessary. The soldier should not be restricted and we have no intention of restricting him.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That all the words after ''Forces'' in line 1 of paragraph (a) of Subclause 2 be struck out with a view to inserting other words.

The Bill provides that a member of the Forces means one, whether under or over the age of 21, who is serving within Australia or within the proclaimed portion of the South-Western Pacific Zone. The intention of my amendment is to follow exactly the provisions of the Commonwealth law which operated during the recent Federal elections. That law entitles every member of the Forces under the age of 21 years and serving within Australia, and who has served outside Australia or is now serving outside Australia within the South-western Pacific Zone, to vote at elections. If he does not come within either of those two categories, he must be 21 years of age to vote, as is the normal State law of many years' standing. I hold that there is sound reason for granting the franchise to such soldiers under 21 years of age as have seen actual fighting service. The vote is something that ought to be prized, though unfortunately during recent years there has been a tendency to regard it as of slighter value than many of us esteem it to be. Normally, persons under 21 years of age should not be invited to have the franchise, but because those whom we wish to bring under the provision are under 21 years and have served actively in the war and therefore are entitled to greater consideration than we ourselves, I am quite prepared to join with the Commonwealth Parliament and make a special exception in their favour, giving them the right to exercise what should be the highly prized franchise because of the services they have rendered to the citizens of this country.

But as regards those under 21 years of age who have not seen active service, no need whatever exists for altering the normal procedure. Taking the normal young man—or, for that matter, the normal young woman—we find that by the time he reaches the age of 18 years he is just beginning to take some interest in public affairs, in civic and other matters. Prior to that time he has given them no consideration whatever, except in the rarest cases. But from the age of 18 onwards he gets a latch-key to the front door and other privileges, and he begins to take his own views of life and to form his own judgments as to what he shall do when the prized franchise is accorded to him. Young men and young women who have enlisted at the age of 18 years and have been removed to camps away from home influences and amenities are equipped when less than 21 years of age to exercise the franchise except in the special case

which I mentioned in the first place, and for which I gave generally accepted reasons. My son who is just on 18 years of age is about to enter one of the Services. I have no hesitation in saying that although he has been more in contact with the public life of the State than falls to the lot of most lads of similar age, he is not qualified now to exercise the franchise in the same way as he will be after the lapse of another two or three years. It would be far better for the young people, and indeed for all of us, to allow the existing system to remain. That is a more important consideration than perhaps some people realise.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I must strenuously oppose this amendment. It attacks the crux of the Bill. The Government is most anxious to give a vote to everyone in accordance with the Commonwealth Defence (Citizen Military Forces) Act and the corresponding Act dealing with the recent Federal Election. Those young people run very great risks of death and of severe injury, and have had to submit to many drastic inconveniences. They have not remained in Perth; they have no say as regards the place to which they may be sent; it may be Darwin, or the west coast of this State, or Queensland, where the dangers are very great. Thus there is no discrimination possible as to "active service" These young people under 21 are on a par with adults; and if they take the same risks and put up with the same inconveniences, they surely have sufficient intelligence to be trusted with the vote. I remind members that there are youths of 17, 18 and 19 years of age attending our schools and universities who have much more knowledge than have many members of this Chamber.

Mr. Doney: I would not like to admit that.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Consider the wonderful progress that has been made in Russia, where youths of 18 years may vote.

Mr. Watts: It is one-way voting in Russia.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The same remark applies to Turkey. Consider the strides that country has made.

Mr. Watts: But those countries are not democracies.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They are democratic in their methods. There was an outcry when it was proposed to give votes to women.

Mr. Watts: No sensible person in this country would object to women voting.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I can remember when the suffragettes were gaoled.

Mr. Patrick: In Australia?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, in the Old Country. New Zealand also has given its youths a vote.

Mr. Watts: At what age do you consider a person is fit to vote?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I think 18 years is a reasonable age. I know young men who have passed their accountancy examinations at 18 years of age; surely they have sufficient intelligence to vote. As the Premier has just prompted me, if under the law these young men are called up to fight, they should have the right to vote. As I have said, these young men are risking their lives; they are fighting for every member of this House; they are fighting for freedom.

The Premier: Numbers of them have been wounded or maimed.

Mr. Cross: Pitt was Prime Minister of England at 21.

Mr. McDonald: No, 25.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: He was one of the most capable Prime Ministers England has had. I know of young men who have passed through a medical course at 21 years of age; no doubt my legal friends opposite know of young men who have passed their law examinations at that age.

Mr. WATTS: Will the Minister consider one or two other aspects of the matters he has raised? For example, will he bring down legislation to amend the existing law relating to infants, an infant now being a person under 21 years of age?

The Premier: A soldier can make a will whilst he is under 21 years of age.

Mr. WATTS: But there is statute law dealing with that point. As the law now stands, a person under 21 years of age is an infant, whether on active service or not. A youth under 21 years of age on active service is an infant and may be brought under the guardianship laws of our State. I have never heard such unutterable nonsense talked by a Minister of the Crown as I have just heard from the Minister in charge of the Bill. He is not satisfied with advancing arguments; he calls our intelligence into question. I ask him, to be consistent, to give to all the young people under 21 years of age whom he considers to be so

highly suitable to conduct their own affairs and the affairs of State, the right to cast a vote, and thus clear them from the stigma of infancy.

The Minister for Justice: But we are dealing with the electoral law.

Mr. WATTS: The fact remains that the Minister must be reasonably consistent in these matters. He cannot call into question the bona fides of my argument and then refuse to consider the question of consistency in regard to the general law.

The Minister for Justice: The Chairman would not allow me to discuss that.

Mr. WATTS: I think the Chairman will agree that if persons under 21 years of age are suitable to exercise the franchise under this Bill they are suitable to be released from the provisions which have held them down—and to which I do not object up to date—owing to the fact that they are under 21 years of age. If the Minister wants to justify the argument he advanced in regard to this proposal, as against the ones I advanced, he must be consistent and agree that all the restrictions imposed on people because they are under 21 years of age should be wiped out.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I could quite understand the opposition of those who are objecting to this provision if they said straight out that they were entirely opposed to anyone under 21 years of age having the right to exercise the vote, but so far that attitude has not been apparent. The member for Murray-Wellington was inconsistent in the speech he contributed to the second reading debate on this very question. In one breath he said that a young fellow under 21 had no rights under the law, but before he sat down he said that such a person who went oversea to fight should receive consideration. I wonder whether the man who has been oversea has gained anything in intelligence between the time he left Australia and the time he returned.

Mr. McLarty: He would have gained experience.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I admit that, but I venture to say that experience alone should not be sufficient to give him the right to exercise a vote at election time whereas his mate who did not have the opportunity to go oversea is deprived of that right. I will candidly admit that I am not enamoured of the idea of people under 21 exercising the franchise. There are many people over 21 who are not altogether capable of intelligently exercising the franchise. But this measure endeavours to ensure that Western Australian members of the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth should have the right to determine who shall represent them in the Parliament of this State.

It appears to have been forgotten that thousands of young men in the Armed Forces under 21 years of age were willing to go oversea but global strategy prevented their being sent away. It is unjust—in fact it is a reflection on much of the young manhood of Australia—to say that because they did not go oversea they have no right to a vote at the forthcoming election. Let us be quite honest and frank with ourselves and those people with whom we are now dealing, and say that none under 21 shall have a vote. The distinction between those who have been oversea and those who have not is unjust. The other argument used in support of the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition that, because an amendment was secured to a measure passed by the Commonwealth Parliament, the same distinction should be made here has very little force. We should look at the principle as it stands. Should the members of the Forces have an opportunity to vote? If so, at what age should they be able to vote? Let us make that age applicable to all, always remembering that thousands were willing to serve oversea but did not have the opportunity.

Mr. McDONALD: There is something to be said for the view expressed by the member for Perth, namely, that logically as a matter of principle the vote should be given either to all members of the Forces under 21 or to none. But I think the reason some of us are prepared to support the amendments moved by the Leader of the Opposition is that the inroad on the principle of 21 years as the qualifying age for voting was made by the Commonwealth Parliament and, rightly or wrongly, that Parliament made an inroad so far as members of the Forces were concerned who had served oversea. To some extent the Commonwealth Parliament, therefore, created a precedent or at all events disposed men who had served oversea to feel they had earned the right to vote for the Parliament of the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Justice: That was against the wish of the Government.

Mr. McDONALD: The Government, of course, wanted to extend it to all members

of the Forces under 21. The compromise was to the effect that the extension should be confined to those under 21 who had served oversea. There are some who have been prepared to go so far in departing from the principle of 21 as the qualifying age as to follow the precedent which, rightly or wrongly, has been so recently set and acted upon by the Commonwealth Parliament. I confess I should like to support the Bill without any reservations. I appreciate that it would be much easier and the more popular course if I were to say, "I am in advance of the times. I am an innovator. I do not belong to the section that can see nothing new." That would be the pleasant way and I would be like the Russians, who are breaking new ground. But there is more to it than that. One must decide whether, although it may be popular, it is right, or in the interests of good government or will make for wise administration. When I ask myself those questions, I hesitate about giving the vote to soldiers who are under 21 years of age.

The exercise of the franchise is not merely a privilege; it is a responsibility, and grave and heavy obligations are laid upon every individual in a democratic country. As Lord Baldwin remarked, Democracy is the hardest of all forms of government to carry out because it can function properly only if every individual possesses a sense of responsibility and has the requisite ability to discharge his individual functions, which are, generally speaking, as great, powerful and responsible as are those of the King, the Prime Minister or any other person in the community. It is not like an award or a privilege granted for services rendered, just as we would grant a medal in recognition of participation in a war. The question to be decided is whether these young people are qualified by experience in life, age and knowledge to shoulder the heavy responsibility involved in the exersise of the franchise. Under the provisions of the Bill we are asked to say that any boy or girl who is aged 18 years and one day puts on a uniform, is qualified to exercise the franchise whereas that was not the position two days before.

Mr. Fox: That applies under the Federal Act.

Mr. McDONALD: It does, but here we are to say that Jane who puts on a uniform is entitled to vote, whereas her twin sister Mary who does not put on a uniform shall not be entitled to that privilege. What addition to ability, experience and responsibility is involved in the putting on of a uniform, although we may admire to the fullest extent possible the devotion to duty and to the cause of democracy that induces that young person to enter the Forces.

Mr. Rodoreda: The same position arises in connection with the owning of property which enables the Legislative Council franchise to be exercised.

Mr. McDONALD: That is quite another matter. I would like to deal with that point but I am afraid the Chairman would not permit it.

Mr. Withers: In that case you gauge the intelligence of the individual by property values.

Mr. McDONALD: The principle involved may or may not be a bad one, but I suggest that members on the Government side are merely drawing a red herring across the trail. The passage of the Bill will mean a departure from the principle obtaining throughout British countries, apart from New Zealand and now in Australia by virtue of the legislation passed quite recently. That principle is that the vote can be exercised only by individuals who are 21 years of age, which is the disposing age, on attaining which the youth can exercise the full responsibility of an adult. We are asked to depart from that general age limit merely because a boy or girl performs the highly creditable act of putting on the uniform of his or her country. In the course of his reply to the second reading debate the Minister made use of phrases mentioned by the member for Nedlands such as "those who fight should vote" and "those that risk death should vote." The Prime Minister said that this country is no longer in danger of invasion apart from possible sporadic raids. If that is so, then the civilians are in just as much danger from bombing as may be the soldiers.

The Premier: That is not so.

Mr. McDONALD: Of course, they are.

The Premier: I would sooner be in a trench than manning an ack-ack gun!

Mr. McDONALD: Who mans the ack-ack guns?

The Premier: Soldiers.

Mr. McDONALD: They are manned by members of the Volunteer Defence Corps!

Mr. Fox: Only for a period.

Mr. McDONALD: Does this legislation cover members of the V.D.C.? I am not certain on that point.

The Minister for Mines: The V.D.C. is a military establishment.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest to the member for West Perth that he would make much better progress if he addressed the Chair and refrained from taking notice of interjections.

The Minister for Justice: The members of the V.D.C. would not be under 21 years of age.

Mr. McDONALD: The Bill is highly discriminatory. The Minister suggested that if we differentiated between the soldiers under 21 years of age who went oversea and those who remained in Australia, we would be discriminating. The Bill is nothing but discriminatory. Today our young men are not their own masters, but are servants of the Manpower Board. Boys 18 or 20 years of age who are working on farms are not allowed to enlist in the Army although many of them have appealed to tribunals for permission to enlist. The same applies to young men in munition factories, and other workshops. Those lads will not be entitled to a vote.

The Minister for Justice: We would not object if you brought down legislation to give them a vote.

Mr. McDONALD: The Minister must see that the Bill is highly discriminatory! If he likes to test the position, let him provide votes for all who are under 21 years of age and try it out. What is the age to be? There are lads in the Air Training Corps who are preparing for the future. There are Boy Scouts and Girl Guides who are doing admirable work in the national cause. But if we want to test this out, then let us have a logical Bill; one to say, if the Government thinks fit, that any boy or girl of 16, 17 or 18 years of age shall be entitled to vote. Then we will have an issue and can make a decision. I think it is hard enough to carry out one's responsibilities today, and will be in the future, at the age of 21, let alone at 18. After all, what does it mean to have a vote? It means that these boys would have as much power at the ballot-box as has the Premier, with all his experience, for the disposing of the fortunes, lives, property and earnings of their fellow citizens. These boys and girls who have no power to sign away a £5 block of land under the laws of the country, because they are not 21, are to be enabled to decide the most intricate and important questions of national policy. I confess that I would hesitate about these things. Let us look at Russia, which is in a different position. We all admire the immense effort she has made.

The Minister for Justice: Russia has made wonderful progress.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. I have a copy of the Russian Constitution, and Article 141 states—

> Candidates are nominated for election according to electoral areas. The right to nominate candidates is secured to public organisations and societies of toilers: Communist Party organisations, trade unions, co-operatives, youth organisations and cultural societies.

All these bodies are in sympathy with and authorised by the Communist Government. No other society or organisation has the right to nominate a member of Parliament. The result is that they all belong to one party, so that when it comes to the vote it is a simple thing, but in our country it is of vast importance and a great responsibility.

Mr. Tonkin: Is that Constitution authentic?

Mr. McDONALD: It was bought in a bookstall in Forrest-place, Perth, and is called "Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the U.S.S.R. Adopted at the Eighth Congress of the Soviets of the U.S.S.R. on 5th December, 1936." It is issued by "The Worker Trustees (40-hour week)."

Mr. Tonkin: Does the hon. member guarantee its authenticity?

Mr. McDONALD: I cannot do that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not want the member for West Perth to go further than make comparisons in support of his arguments. I will not permit a discussion on the Constitution of Russia.

Mr. Tonkin: I am surprised at a lawyer so readily accepting a thing like that.

Mr. McDONALD: I will take the earliest opportunity to check Article 141. I believe it is quite genuine. This is a fundamental question. The Bill is a wartime measure and deals with a vital principle that can only be approached with a sense of great responsibility. It is easy to be sentimental in wartime, and I speak as one who has had 13 years' experience with soldiers. I do not believe that they are really concerned about politics. Life in the camps is

like life in a little organism. The outside world goes by. They are simply concerned with the domestic affairs of their own unit. There has been no demand for this, as far as I can see. There is no occasion to change the law radically in this case. The Committee would be wise to accept the reasonable amendments of the Leader of the Opposition which, with some degree of uniformity, follow the example recently set by the Commonwealth Government.

The PREMIER: I support the Bill as it stands in regard to the age classification. We are dealing with it purely from the soldier's standpoint. He is entirely different from the civilian, and we are treating him in a different way. Under the Defence Act, he is a man at 18. He must accept all responsibilities and go wherever sent. He may lose his life in his country's cause, be wounded or contract disease. He must obey the orders of superior officers.

The Minister for Mines: He loses his name and gets a number.

The PREMIER: That may be so. He has all the responsibilities of a soldier. Whether he is 19 years old, or a colonel of 49, he must do as he is told. But civilians are treated differently until they attain the age of 21. I would be prepared to argue with the member for West Perth the desirability of giving everyone of 18 years of age the right to vote, but that is not the point here. Because a man is a soldier and assumes the duties of manhood, he should have the right to say what policy is to be adopted in dealing with his life. There are differences in the responsibilities of people under and over the age of 18.

The Leader of the Opposition would have us believe that everyone under 21 years of age is an infant. When he was speaking, I pointed out that a soldier is treated differently from a civilian of the same age in regard to the disposal of his property at death before 21. Many lieutenants in the Army are not yet 21. They may have accumulated deferred pay to the extent of £100, £200 or even £300. Because they are soldiers, they have an absolute right to dispose of that property, as against what other infants can do. In our courts people under 18 are treated quite differently from those over 18. A soldier at 18 years of age is a man and has to accept full responsibility. If a man stationed at Exmouth Gulf happened to be wounded by a falling bomb, he would not have been wounded while in an operational area.

Mr. Patrick: What about the thousands in England who were bombed?

The PREMIER: They were not compelled to go into the firing line and accept risks to which soldiers are exposed.

Mr. Patrick: People working in munition factories in England did not stop work during raids.

The PREMIER: Spotters were stationed on the factory roofs and, when it was thought enemy planes might head that way, the workers knocked off. I would be prepared to give the full right of citizenship at the age of 18, now that we have universal education. However, we are dealing with soldiers, and it would be shocking to say to a man who had been wounded, "No, you are not 21 and therefore may not vote."

Mr. Seward: The amendment does not say that; such a man would have a vote.

The PREMIER: I am not sure of that. We want to provide that any soldier under the orders of the Government is doing a man's job and should have the right to vote. If any distinction is to be drawn between a soldier of 18 and a soldier of 50, we should perhaps, on the score of danger, be more generous to the younger man.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Action by returning officer:

Mr. WATTS: The amendment of which I have given notice coincides with one in the name of the Minister. I move an amendment—

That in line 7 the words "prescribed declaration" be struck out and the words "declaration set out in the First Schedule to this Act" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 9—Action by commanding officer:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (c) after the word "days" the following words be inserted:—"not being later than the date fixed by the writ for the polling."

The Minister for Justice: I agree.

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

Clause 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Manner of voting:

Mr. WATTS: This is another instance in which we agree on inserting a form of declaration in the Bill. I am glad the Gov-

ernment has yielded on this point, which I raised on the second reading. I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of paragraph (a) of Subclause (1) the words "prescribed form of declaration" be struck out, and the words "form of declaration referred to in Section 8 of this Act" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 12—Transmission of ballot papers by commanding officer:

Mr. McDONALD: Members will have in mind that by preceding clauses the commanding officer of a unit appoints one or more subordinate officers to receive the votes of the members of the unit who vote under this measure. The vote is taken, and the ballot papers received from the voters are returned to commanding officers by the several officers in the field; and by the clause now before the Committee the commanding officer forthwith transmits to the returning officer in the area all the ballot papers received under the conditions previously mentioned. Then the clause goes on to say—

All such envelopes received by the returning officer prior to eight o'clock on the afternoon (reckoned according to the standard or legal time of the country or place in which he is) shall be placed in a sealed parcel or other similar receptacle.

The returning officer of the area sends all the ballot papers to the Chief Electoral Officer for Western Australia, who then counts the ballot papers in the ordinary way and notifies the result to the district returning officer. Under the Commonwealth Act the ballot papers are counted in the field, at all events as far as first preferences are concerned in the case of the Senate. The results are then reported to the civilian officer in charge of State elections. Under the Bill, the ballot papers, instead of being counted in the field by the returning officer for each area, are all sent to be counted by the Chief Electoral Officer in Perth.

If the amendment I have on the notice paper is agreed to I shall then proceed to move further amendments which will involve the ballot papers being counted in the field by the field returning officer, instead of being sent to Perth to be counted here by the Chief Electoral Officer. I realise the difficulty which may arise as mentioned in the Prime Minister's letter to the Minister for Justice. It was suggested that we might abandon counting in the field in favour of having all the ballot papers sent to Perth. The Prime Minister intimated that our proposal cast too much work on officers in the field, which was inadvisable. I do not think he refused to us this privilege.

The Premier: We asked people for a favour, and they said, "No; we cannot do it."

Mr. McDONALD: It is difficult to see why the Prime Minister should not grant to the people of this State a similar procedure to that which he adopted. It may be more expeditious and safer to count in the field than to allow the ballot papers to be sent, over thousands of miles, to the Chief Electoral Officer in Perth. The ballot papers might be lost or destroyed in transit. If they are counted in the field, that danger is obviated. I move an amendment—

That in lines 7 to 11 the following words be struck out:—"All such envelopes received by the returning officer prior to eight o'clock of the afternoon (reckoned according to the standard or legal time of the country or place in which he is) shall be placed in a sealed parcel or other similar receptacle."

The PREMIER: The Government was anxious to adopt the procedure suggested by the member for West Perth. In fact, we went into the matter a couple of months ago. I interviewed the Prime Minister in June last, and he told me that the suggested procedure would involve a very great deal of work and might disorganise the Army. If the soldiers were all in one locality there might not be so much difficulty; but the trouble is that there are a few soldiers here and a few soldiers there, and it would not be right to ask the returning officer to proceed to count the votes and telegraph the result of the count to the Chief Electoral Officer. If some ballot papers should be lost in transit, that is a matter which could not be helped. A further difficulty would arise, because the preferential votes would not be counted.

Mr. McDonald: Under the Commonwealth system they were counted for the House of Representatives.

The PREMIER: We have to accept the Prime Minister's decision in this matter. I would not be a party to passing legislation to force people to do work for the State who are not citizens of the State. By passing the amendment we would be asking persons over whom we have no control whatever to do this work for us. The amend-

ment is impracticable and should not be accepted by the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Before putting the question, I would point out to the member for West Perth and to the Minister that, if the amendment is carried, the object of the Minister to insert words in the clause will be defeated, because under the Standing Orders he could not move the amendment. It was intended to suggest to the member for West Perth that he might withdraw his amendment and substitute another which would stop at the word "afternoon" in line 39.

Mr. McDONALD: I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the reasons given by the Premier: but, at the same time, I think the Prime Minister would accede to the wishes of this Parliament if they were definitely expressed. In my opinion, the Prime Minister would immediately recognise a duty to implement the desires of a State Legislature in regard to such an important matter as the franchise. I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. McDONALD: I move an amendment—

That in lines 7 and 8 the words "all such envelopes received by the returning officer prior to 8 o'clock on the afternoon" be struck out.

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That in line 8, after the word "afternoon," the words "of the third day after the date fixed by the writ for polling" be inserted.

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

Clause 13—Action by returning officer upon receipt of ballot papers:

The CHAIRMAN: The member for West Perth has an amendment on the notice paper.

Mr. McDONALD: This and subsequent amendments are consequential. In view of the decision of the Committee on my previous amendment, I do not propose to move these others.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14—Scrutiny:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 the words "ballot box" be struck out, and the words "sealed parcel" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 15—agreed to.

Clause 16—Voting by members of Forces within Australia:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That in line 9 of paragraph (d) of the proviso, after the word "day," the words "after the date" be inserted.

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

Clause 17—Voting by discharged members of the Forces:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of Subclause (2) the words "in accordance with the prescribed form and manner" be struck out and the words "on the form prescribed in the Second Schedule of this Act and in the prescribed manner" inserted in lieu.

This is a consequential amendment.

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

Clause 18—agreed to.

Clause 19—Voting by unenrolled discharged soldiers within Western Australia:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in lines 4 and 5 the words "the prescribed form of declaration" be struck out and the words "a declaration in the form set out in the Third Schedule to this Act" inserted in lieu.

This is a similar amendment to the previous one.

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

Clause 20—Form of certificates and ballot papers:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 the word "declarations" be struck out.

This word is now unnecessary.

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

Clause 21—agreed to.

Clause 22—One vote only to be recorded:

Mr. DONEY: I move—

That a new subclause be added as follows:—"(4) Any person who, in any military establishment, addresses any meeting or canvasses any member of the Forces with a view to influencing the vote of any elector or electors shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to imprisonment for not less than three months nor more than six months."

The Premier: What awful crime is this?

Mr. DONEY: I will take a few minutes to outline the nature of the crime that may ensue if this amendment is not proceeded with.

The Minister for Works: We have been doing it for years.

Mr. DONEY: I do not think we have had too many wars! This is a highly necessary piece of discipline and, as members can see, is designed to apply to Parliamentary members of all parties and to all outside members of those parties, whether inside or outside a camp. Members who know anything at all of what happened at camps during the course of the last election should know that it is not desirable to have those proceedings repeated.

The Premier: At the recent election?

Mr. DONEY: Yes. During that election, political touts made the camps a hunting ground for votes and were quite properly regarded by the soldiers, and certainly by O.Cs. of units, as nuisances of a pretty low order. I do not wonder at that, for those visits were made when soldiers had other work to do or were engaged in some pastime. These people moved along from place to place and gave not just a digest of their party policies, but provided their listeners with a string of lies, exaggerations and persuasive promises. Surely the Minister would not stand for some of the happenings that took place in camps during the recent Federal elections.

The Premier: I have not heard about those happenings.

Mr. DONEY: I certainly have, otherwise I would not have moved the amendment. If we agree to this addition to the Bill, canvassing and the despatch of pamphlets may still be done through the post. I certainly think it desirable to shut down on what happened in the military camps during the recent elections.

The Premier: I did not know that people were allowed to enter military camps except on visiting days.

[*Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.*]

Mr. DONEY: The amendment refers not only to civilians but also to men within the camps who can become just as much of a nuisance as have outsiders. Such interference with the course of military training has a subversive effect. Lads in camp are usually friendly but, when they are pestered by political canvassers, even though they be soldiers themselves, arguments arise and fights have followed, which is certainly subversive of discipline. The amendment is proper in every respect. The penal provision may be regarded as heavy, but some of those responsible for what happened during the recent elections could very well receive heavier punishment.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The amendment embodies a very poor principle and its effect would be to take away from our people the very liberty for which democracy is now fighting.

Mr. Doney: The liberty to be pestered by political canvassers is a damn poor liberty.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I regard the amendment as an insult to our soldiers.

Mr. Doney: Surely the Minister is joking.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I cannot conceive that the member for Williams-Narrogin is serious in his amendment, which would deprive men in camp of the right to discuss political matters among themselves.

Mr. Doney: They will still be able to express their views.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The amendment will deprive them of that right. Certainly the amendment is no compliment to soldiers themselves. I oppose the amendment on the ground that it seeks to take from the soldiers the very liberty for which they are fighting.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The amendment is the most extraordinary proposition I have ever heard.

Mr. Seward: That applies to the whole Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The amendment not only refers to persons addressing meetings but to canvassing any member of the Forces. That means to say that if one of my boys who is in New Guinea and, I presume, would like to see his father re-elected, were to ask one of his pals to vote for me, he would run the risk of imprisonment. That is what the amendment means.

Mr. Doney: You know the definition of the word "canvass."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If an individual asks another to vote for a certain person he is canvassing.

The Minister for Labour: The amendment specifically says "canvasses any member of the Forces."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is a ridiculous proposition.

The PREMIER: We have men in New Guinea, Queensland, Darwin, and other

places. What right have we to make a law in regard to people at Darwin?

Mr. Doney: We are doing it here.

The PREMIER: Yes, but we have no power——

Mr. Doney: It does not apply in that case.

The PREMIER: We have six times as many people in the Eastern States as here where the law would apply.

Mr. Doney: We could overcome that difficulty.

The PREMIER: We cannot overcome the difficulty of making a law to apply outside the territory of Western Australia.

Mr. Doney: Of course we can.

The PREMIER: It means that anyone could do what he liked outside of Western Australia, but not inside. A different set of circumstances would apply in different places to the same election. The amendment is impracticable, and I do not propose to put on the Statute Book legislation that cannot be enforced. This amendment would apply to only a few people in Western Australia. It is not necessary.

Mr. STYANTS: When I first glanced at the amendment I thought it was intended to apply to candidates or their canvassers going into a military camp. I was then prepared to consider supporting it. On a more careful reading I find it is intended to apply to soldiers already inside the camp because it says, "any person." Although the soldier lost his last vestige of freedom when he went into the army he is still regarded as a person. Under this amendment if half-a-dozen men in a camp decide to discuss politics to overcome the monotony of an outback area, and an officer or N.C.O. gets a little heated over the argument and informs on one of his tent-mates, the soldier will be liable to three months imprisonment because he endeavoured to canvass a vote. It could easily be interpreted to have that meaning. That is ridiculous! All sorts of promises have been made to the men in uniform. They have been told that they will have a new order, better housing and improved working conditions. These things will be given by legislation and there is no reason why the soldiers should not discuss them. I intend to vote against the amendment.

Mr. WATTS: I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out the word "person" in line 1, with a view to inserting the words "candidate or any political agent or canvasser of his."

The matter is one of considerable importance.

Mr. Fox: You cannot get in to do it.

Mr. WATTS: The situation is not so easy as the member for South Fremantle seems to imagine. It is undesirable that there should be visits by candidates or their political agents to military establishments where men are under military control and where, in many cases, Western Australians are mixed up with men from other States. It is also preferable that the soldiers should have the opportunity to peruse the literature that may be distributed to them either by friends within the camp or by the post from the candidates themselves, than that they should be pestered by importunate people who are all too prevalent at election time. I am in sympathy with the objection raised by the Premier as to enforcing our laws in some other State. Yet it would be better to declare the practice to be illegal and hope that the commanding officers in other States would assist in upholding it, than to have no law at all. I was also impressed with the view expressed by the member for Kalgoorlie. The amendment moved by the member for Williams-Narrogin might involve what he mentioned, and for that reason I am suggesting my amendment.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There should be no restriction. Surely a soldier has some intellect. We should not endeavour to control him in every way. The Leader of the Opposition insinuates that the soldier is not mentally capable.

Mr. Watts: You can cut out that argument; it is a stupid one indeed!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: He is as intellectual as the average citizen. I oppose any restrictions of this kind.

Mr. TONKIN: I do not think the Leader of the Opposition really wants this amendment carried. The member for Williams-Narrogin got himself into a hopeless tangle, and the Leader of the Opposition, as all good leaders are expected to do, came to his assistance and made a valiant attempt to extricate him. If, as stated by the member for West Perth, voting is an obligation to be exercised with the greatest care, surely one cannot do that without having some information! If we prevent soldiers from knowing anything about the issues, what is the use of giving them a vote? How could

they cast an intelligent vote if they are precluded from learning anything about the issues? One may say as much as one likes over the air and there would be no bar against the soldiers listening in. This being so, why should not one speak to them on the spot?

Mr. DONEY: The member for North-East Fremantle seems to have the idea that no soldier is capable, without outside assistance, of coming to a decision, despite the fact that all the necessary information might have been sent to him through the post. During the 1914-18 war, our soldiers in France had a vote and came to a decision without assistance from candidates or their agents, and nobody can say they did not cast a sensible vote.

The Minister for Mines: To what vote are you referring?

Mr. DONEY: The referendum.

The Minister for Mines: What about the Federal election?

Mr. DONEY: I am not speaking of that. The member for Kalgoorlie being a soldier apparently sees some wisdom in my views. What soldier in his senses would seek relief from boredom by listening to political fare fed to him? It is about the last thing he would want.

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

Ayes	12
Noes	21
Majority against ..	9

AYES.

Mr. Boyle	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hill	Mr. Seward
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Warner
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Watts
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Patrick	Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES

Mr. Berry	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Cross	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Fox	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Graham	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Styants
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Triat
Mr. Millington	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Needham	Mr. Wilson
Mr. North	

(Teller.)

Amendment on amendment thus negatived.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 23—Voting by members of Civil Constructional Corps:

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That in lines 6 and 7 in the proviso the words "and by any person designated by him" be struck out.

I do not recognise the need for those words. When works were performed by the Main Roads Board in various parts of the State and there was difficulty in giving the workers concerned an opportunity to vote, I got the foremen appointed electoral officers. The work should not be relegated to just any man. The job might be claimed by a man with a strong interest in politics.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am sorry to be challenged by this amendment again. A responsible person would have a sufficient sense of the fitness of things to appoint an equally responsible person to act on his behalf. The responsible person in question would be in a position analogous to that of a non-commissioned officer. I might suggest that a paymaster, for instance, would be a thoroughly capable person.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause the following proviso be added: "Provided further that, in lieu of filling in a declaration in the form prescribed by Section 11 of this Act a person entitled by the provisions of this section to vote in accordance with the provisions of this Act shall fill in a declaration in the form set out in the Fourth Schedule to this Act."

It is quite proper to allow members of the Construction Council to participate in the special arrangements for voting by soldiers.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I agree to the amendment.

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

Clauses 24 and 25—agreed to.

Clause 26—Validity of election not to be challenged:

Mr. PATRICK: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 after the words "ballot papers" the words "coming from a place outside Western Australia" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

[*Mr. Marshall resumed the Chair.*]

Mr. PATRICK: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause the following proviso be added:—"Provided that the validity for any election may be disputed on the ground that any ballot papers have been removed or destroyed fraudulently or under such circumstances that there is reasonable ground for the belief that such removal or destruction

was fraudulent during the course of their transmission to a returning officer or the Chief Electoral Officer.''

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not oppose the amendment.

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

Clauses 27 to 29—agreed to.

Clause 30—Reinstatement on the roll of names of members of the Forces:

On motions by Mr. Doney, clause amended by inserting after the word "Forces" in line 2 the words "or person employed under the authority or direction of the Allied Works Council"; by striking out in line 4 the words "such member" and inserting in lieu the words "or employment under the authority or direction of the Allied Works Council such member or person" and by inserting after the word "member" in line 6 the words "or person."

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 31 and 32—agreed to.

New Clause:

Mr. DONEY: I move—

That a new clause be inserted after Clause 23 as follows:—23A. Notwithstanding anything contained in this or any other Act any resident engineer, personnel officer, supervisor, foreman, member of the Civil Constructional Corps, or other person employed under the authority or direction of the Allied Works Council who is a British subject not under the age of twenty-one years and not subject to any of the disqualifications set out in section eighteen of the principal Act, shall be entitled to vote at any election as an elector of the district in which he was ordinarily resident immediately prior to the commencement of his employment under the authority or direction of the Allied Works Council and in respect of which he was then enrolled but shall not be entitled to vote at any election as an elector of any other district.

Members of the Civil Construction Corps are engaged in work that is linked up with our defence requirements. They must move at short notice from one place to another and from one electorate to another. It would plainly be improper—as a matter of fact it would be stupid—to require them to be constantly changing their registration from one electorate to another, as they must do under the principal Act. For those reasons it has been thought desirable to put them, for electoral purposes, upon the same basis in this Bill as are soldiers of the Forces. I believe the Minister is kindly disposed towards the new clause, so will say no more about it.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.7 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 14th September, 1943.

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

BILL—PENSIONERS (RATES EXEMPTION) ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [4.36]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East): I would like to draw the attention of the House—if it has not already been done—to the anomalous position which arises from the operation of this legislation. When the Act was passed in the Legislative Assembly in 1922, I think most of us were under the impression that it was definitely designed to provide for exemption from the payment of rates. However, it does nothing of the sort. It merely provides for a postponement of the payment of rates, and, at times, people who have contributed very materially to the erection of a home occupied by an old-age pensioner find on the death of the pensioner that there is an accumulation of unpaid road board or municipal rates which, in many instances, amount to quite a considerable sum.

I am sorry it is not possible to amend the Bill, but I nevertheless draw the attention of the Government to the anomaly that exists. It is entirely wrong. The measure is not an exemption Bill and should be called a postponement Bill. I know of cases in which sums amounting to £30, £40 and £50 have accumulated in respect of water rates, road board rates and land tax. If we are going to be generous—and I think