

ers, and it would be very hard to see them abandon the land. From a national point of view it would spell ruination. The lack of rain in that part of the district is not alone responsible for there being no crops up there this year, for equally heavily felt is the lack of water conservation. This is another reason why it is essential to have water supplies in further numbers installed in that area, for pretty soon now the Government will have to convey water along that railway line. Had an amount of money been spent in small tanks up there it would have averted this crisis and given the farmers the opportunity to retain some of their stock. As it is, unless we have thunderstorms, it really appears that the farmers will have to remove their stock to other districts for agistment, or alternatively dispose of them. I am not unmindful of the fact that this Government have given me quite a lot of assistance in point of water supplies in my district. Five or six country conservations have been laid down in that area, but at the same time I feel that the Government should give more. It is clear that the farmers will have to go in for mixed farming, and to do that they must have water supplies. So, too, water is required by all those farmers who believe it is better to have horses than to have tractors, which means using imported fuel as against our own local product. I believe that much hay will have to be sent into these districts this year, and I trust the Minister for Lands took notice of my remark some time ago, when I asked that the Agricultural Bank should be requested to see whether it was possible to assist those with hay in the infected area so as to save the importing of chaff carrying various weeds, and of the scandalous quality which was sent up there recently. Some of the chaff sold to the farmers up there was a positive disgrace and quite unfitted to be fed to their stock. I do not know whether it was the fault of the Government, but I do know that fodder had to be supplied while the drought conditions prevailed, and the Government had to supply it in order to keep the farmers going. I hope the Minister for Water Supplies will endeavour to give some added water catchments in that area. In the building of the class of tank for which I have made application, local products can be used and, of course, local labour. We have a sufficiently

large number of men still only partially employed and who could be put on full time on those jobs up there. The dams in that area have only a few feet of water in them, whereas in a normal season they would now be full. That water shortage, I am sorry to say, extends down to Kodj-Kodjin, and I trust that one of the supplies applied for will be given to them so as to save an exodus of stock from that district this year. I believe the Minister for Agriculture is fully acquainted with the conditions prevailing up there, for I know he made a personal inspection of the district, and I believe the Minister for Lands also has a knowledge of the conditions. I trust their attitude towards the farmers will be of a sympathetic nature, and that they will use every endeavour to obtain money in order to keep the settlers on their holdings and not have them suffer as they will have to suffer if no Government assistance be given them.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.37 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 30th October, 1935.

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

CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT ACT, 1899, AMENDMENT BILL (No. 1) SELECT COMMITTEE.

Report Presented.

Hon. J. Nicholson brought up the report of the select committee.

Report received and read and ordered to be printed.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, ordered: That consideration of the report be made an order of the day for the next sitting.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT—SUPPLY BILL (No. 2).

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.41]: At the conclusion of the debate on the Supply Bill (No. 2), I stated that I had not sufficient information at hand to enable me to reply to the points raised by various members, and I promised that when the information was available, I would make a statement to the House. I now have the information.

THE PRESIDENT: The Minister may proceed.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Cornell, when speaking on the Supply Bill and dealing with Goldfields Water Supplies, said "The present Government had found very little money at all for these undertakings." He added "The Federal Government and the goldmining companies have found the money outside the reconditioning of the pipe line." Mr. Cornell is very much astray in his facts. The hon. member referred to the Norseman water scheme, the main branch of which is to cost £200,000. So far, the Commonwealth Government have not agreed to make any contribution whatsoever towards the cost. If Senator McLauchlan did say that £46,000 might be available by the Commonwealth Government for the supply of water to Norseman, the statement was based on the possibility of Northam not agreeing to the proposal to provide a sewerage scheme, in which event £27,000 would have been released. But Northam has agreed to the proposal and complied with all the requirements, so the £27,000 has disappeared from the region of possibilities. Apart from this, there was a balance of £22,000 which had not been allocated, but £4,500 of this has since been allocated towards the cost of the Geraldton sewerage scheme. The balance remaining for allocation is £17,500.

It will be seen that, out of the total grant of £125,000 by the Commonwealth Government, only £17,500 is available, and no contribution has been made towards the Norseman scheme. Hence the information given to Mr. Cornell in reply to his question in this House was absolutely correct. It is not necessary, therefore, to answer Mr. Cornell when, in his speech, he said, "I want to

know whether the money (the Norseman money) has been used for some other purpose or whether it has been withdrawn by the Federal Government." I am tempted, however, to repeat that that money had never materialised.

Mr. Cornell pointed out that the cost of the Marvel Loch scheme to date was £18,445 and said that the Marvel Loch Co. had found £6,300, the Great Western Gold Development Co. £10,000, and the Commonwealth Government £15,500, while the State Government had found nothing at all. I cannot understand Mr. Cornell's making such a statement. The position is that when works were being listed for consideration, the estimated cost of enlarging the main to provide an adequate supply for mining purposes was £25,000 and the Commonwealth agreed to contribute one half of the cost, but, after approval had been given, the Government were approached by the Great Western Gold Development Company, who indicated that they would require considerable quantities of water. After negotiations, the company accepted the terms offered by the Government. It therefore became necessary to provide for larger pipes, and the original estimate of £25,000 became £48,000. Nevertheless, the Commonwealth Government are providing only £12,500 towards the total cost. It will be seen that, so far from the State Government finding nothing at all, they are finding £35,500 while the Commonwealth are finding only £12,500.

Mr. Cornell, by a peculiar process of accountancy, resolved that money paid in advance for water by those companies was a sort of donation towards the cost of the scheme. Most people will regard it as payment for services to be rendered. The companies have to get water in return for the money they put up. Then we come to the Palmer's Find scheme which, I informed Mr. Cornell, would cost £7,000. Mr. Cornell said the Federal Government found the cash (£3,500) to carry out the works, and that this was supplemented by £3,500 from the de Bernales Company to be taken out in water supply later on. One wonders what is wrong with this. The facts are somewhat as stated by the hon. member. The total estimated cost was £7,000 and the Commonwealth Government undertook to contribute one half of that sum. Before the work was undertaken, the company interested was approached, and ultimately

agreed to pay in advance the sum of £3,000 for water to be supplied by the department. It cannot then be said that the company is contributing anything whatever towards the cost of constructing the main. It is merely paying in advance for goods to be delivered. Mr. Cornell raises the question as to who is to meet interest and sinking fund payments. It is hoped that if the mining industry in the districts referred to continues successfully to operate over a period of years, the revenue received will be sufficient to meet operating and administrative costs, plus interest and an adequate sinking fund—not to speak of the immense gain to the State by the gold production not possible without the water supplies the Government consider necessary. With regard to Mr. Cornell's criticisms of the administration of the Agricultural Bank, the Act which brought about the new control of the Bank deliberately gave the control of the staff to the Commissioners, and took them away from the Public Service Act. That was done as a result of the Royal Commissioners' recommendation, and there can be no question that the Commission had substantial grounds for their action. Those previously in control of the Bank were able to hide themselves behind the Public Service Commissioner, and say that they had not the selection of their own staff, and had to take what was given to them. The new control places the responsibility on the Commissioners. They have to shoulder it, and have nobody to hide behind. The Commissioners appreciate this, and are going to take the responsibility and exercise their own judgment, and decline to be influenced by men who have no knowledge of the position. It would be a nice state of affairs if the Commissioners, against their own view, took serious notice of what a member of Parliament said about the staff, and then tried to excuse themselves afterwards by saying that it was not their own judgment, but the judgment of some member of Parliament, upon which they acted. The Commissioners decline to submit to that conception of their responsibilities.

Nine men have been retired since the present Commissioners took control, and only one man from outside the Bank's service has been employed. Of the nine that were retired, the Commissioners arranged with the Public Service Commissioner that

employment should be found for five of them in the Public Service, and agreed to retain the men in the Bank's service for two months in order to allow the Public Service Commissioner time to place them. It is correct that two or three men approaching the retiring age have been continued in the Bank's employ. The reason is that they are on special work, and it is desired by the management that they should be allowed to complete it. The moment it is finished they will be retired. One or two of the field staff who have reached the retiring age will be retained in the service until such time as the revaluation of the Bank's assets, the dealing with applications, or the writing-down of debts is well under control. It would be inadvisable to bring new men in to be put on this class of work at this stage. Their want of knowledge and experience might possibly cause the State the loss of substantial sums of money. To suggest that the Commissioners should have kept some of the younger clerks, who have had no experience whatever of field work, and put them out in the field to do this class of work, and retire those above mentioned, is obviously unsound, and cannot be entertained. The Commissioners' annual report will be presented to Parliament during the next few days, and it should place on the position an entirely different complexion from that which was presented in the hon. member's speech to which reference is made.

There is no perceptible point in the statement that the present chairman transferred his account from the Agricultural Bank to a trading bank two days before his appointment. There was no crime in that. If, on the other hand, he had remained a client of the Bank, he would have violated the Act which he had been called upon to administer. Mr Cornell tells us that "the appointment of the Agricultural Bank Commissioners was made for purely political reasons," and he adds: "If any other political party had been in power, what would have been said by the very people who made this appointment? Hell would be let loose." When the truth is known, it will be recognised that, if the appointment was made for political reasons, the Government had a round-about way of making it. The facts are that the position was offered, in sequence, to the President of the Primary

Producers' Association, and to a member of the National Party, who is also a member of this House, before it was offered to the gentleman who occupies the office now. He would require to be a very poor type of political incendiary who would venture to start a Satanic conflagration with material lacking all the elements of combustibility.

The chairman of the Commissioners had been a farmer for several years. As a Minister in control of the Public Works Department he had been in close personal touch with the agricultural industry during his fairly long period of office. On top of that, he is a man with such gifts that it would be difficult to find any position of responsibility which he could not fill creditably. The public recognised his ability and character to such an extent that his appointment silenced criticism. Even the most powerful sections of the Press had only good words to say about it. The most serious consequence of the appointment was the loss to Cabinet—the loss of one whose knowledge, experience, and grasp of public questions proved of invaluable help in its deliberations.

Personal Explanation.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. President—

The PRESIDENT: This is quite unusual.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I desire to point out that it is unusual to make this class of statement. I claim that under Standing Order 385 I have the right to make an explanation where I have been misunderstood or misquoted.

The PRESIDENT: I would like to make this explanation, that it has been the custom for the Chief Secretary—if he has not the material at hand to reply straightaway to speeches which have been made in the House—after a Bill has been passed to receive permission from the President—and no one has objected—to reply to statements made during the debate. I take it that, if no objection is raised, with the consent of the House Mr. Cornell can now make a statement referring to where he says he has been incorrectly quoted and has been misunderstood.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I object to the consent of the House here, because Standing Order 385 says this—

A member who has spoken to a question may again be heard to explain himself in regard to

some material part of his speech which has been misquoted or misunderstood, but shall not introduce any new matter, or interrupt any member in possession of the Chamber, and no debatable matter shall be brought forward or debate arise upon such explanation.

I submit, Mr. President—

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. member resume his seat? So long as the hon. member will confine himself to the permission contained in that Standing Order, I have no objection to his speaking; but I was going to ask for the consent of the House for the hon. member to go even beyond what that Standing Order allows.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I do not want to make a speech.

The PRESIDENT: However, as the hon. member wishes merely to confine himself to the permission of the Standing Order, I call on Mr. Cornell.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I want to say that in regard to the Norseman water supply the Minister has evidently misunderstood me, or else I was not precise and explicit. Mr. Williams heard, and I heard, that the Minister for Mines, in reply to a deputation regarding the Norseman water supply, stated that the Federal Government had said, "There are £46,000 you can have for water, and £24,000 more earmarked for the Northam sewerage that you can have if the vote is against the construction of the sewerage." That is reported in the "Kalgoorlie Miner." That was all I desired to convey. The Chief Secretary has said that the Federal Government have not given the money. The other point on which I was misquoted or misunderstood is in regard to men being kept on by the Agricultural Bank who are over the retiring age, as against men in the thirties, married men with children, permanent civil servants, being put off and temporary men being kept on. The Minister inferred that these temporary men are field staff. I inferred nothing of the sort. If the Chief Secretary looks up the Public Service list, he will find that there are temporary employees in the service of the Agricultural Bank over the retiring age and that they have been, so to speak, temporarily permanent for 20 years. Another point I wanted to make is this. In my criticism of the appointment of the Chairman of the Agricultural Bank Commissioners I did not infer that anyone else had been offered the job. The Chief Secretary has said that someone else was offered the job,

but he has not said whether the offer was of the job of chairman or of the job that Mr. Clark, the second Commissioner, holds.

The Chief Secretary: Offered the position of Chairman, the same position as now occupied by the Chairman of the Agricultural Bank Commissioners.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Then that point is cleared up. The Minister did not clear it up in making his statement. He said that a member of the Primary Producers' Association and a member of the National Party who sits in this House were offered the job; but he did not say which job—whether the second Commissioner's or the Chairman's.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: At the same salary?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I did not state—as to this Mr. Cornell has evidently misunderstood me—that Senator McLachlan did not make the statement to which Mr. Cornell referred.

Hon. J. Cornell: But Mr. Munsie said it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I practically admitted that the money was available.

Hon. J. Cornell: The matter is cleared up.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Wiluna Water Board Further Loan Guarantee.

2, Pearling Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—RURAL RELIEF FUND.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 2 to 8 inclusive made by the Council, and had disagreed to No. 1 for the reason set forth in the schedule, now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

No. 1.—Clause 4, Subclause 1—Add the words "All such appointments shall be sub-

ject to the approval of Parliament" after the word "farmer" at the end of the subclause:

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's reason for disagreeing to the Council's amendment is as follows:—"The appointment of boards of this character is the responsibility of the Executive."

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

The reason given by the Assembly is sound. The amendment sent forward by this House would take out of the hands of the Government the responsibility of making important appointments.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: As I am responsible for the amendment, I desire first of all to challenge the statement that appointments of this character are the responsibility of the Executive. This is to be an entirely new department, and hitherto Parliament has reserved to itself the right of insisting that parliamentary approval should be obtained to appointments made. I can quote as instances the positions of the Commissioner of Railways and the Public Service Commissioner. If we have no right to make amendments to the Bill that we may deem desirable, I ask the common-sense question, why is the Bill here? The Bill is here so that we may make any amendments we like. The Bill cannot become an Act without our consent. We represent the taxpayers of the State, that section of the taxpayers who carry the greater burden of taxation, and it behoves us to insist on having some say in the appointment of officers who are to distribute public moneys. Sooner or later this House will have to take a definite stand. We have talked about it often enough and my candid opinion is that the public will demand that we should take a stand. The financial position of this country is such that the State's per capita indebtedness is in the vicinity of £200, to say nothing of the Federal per capita indebtedness. The financial authorities I have looked up consider that £100 per capita indebtedness is enough for any civilised community to carry. If we add the Federal per capita indebtedness, then every child coming into the world is ushered in with a debt tag around its neck of 5s. per week or £13 a year. To obviate this drift, positions such as the one we are discussing must be filled by the right people. We have heard the statement by the Chief

Secretary this afternoon as to the why and wherefore of the appointments, but he did not tell us that the chairmanship of the Bank was offered to anyone at £2,000 a year with a tenancy of seven years.

The Chief Secretary: I did.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Then I did not understand him. Reference was made by the Chief Secretary this afternoon to the appointment of the chairman of the Agricultural Bank. At the time the appointment was announced I happened to be at Busselton where there were hundreds of bowlers from all parts of the State. All were astounded when they heard of the appointment. If one met a man in the street, he said, "Who do you think has been appointed chairman of the Agricultural Bank?" He could have gone on and said, "I will give you a thousand guesses and you will never guess correctly." I am not going to refer to the character or the actions of the members of the Agricultural Bank Commission, as has been done by other members. I know the chairman and I am aware of his integrity and his desire to do the right thing. I also respect his political ability; but that does not qualify him to manage an institution such as the Agricultural Bank. In my opinion that position demanded a man of very considerable commercial and financial experience, and if there had not been a man available in Western Australia—that I refuse to believe—then the circumstances were such that the position demanded the appointment of a properly qualified person. As for the second position, I do not know to whom it was offered: it does not matter. That man should have had a thorough knowledge of wheat and sheep and of all our principal primary products, as well as the suitability of the different areas in Western Australia to enable him to discharge his duties satisfactorily. I believe there are men in the service who could have filled those positions; if not, then I ask why have they been kept in the service so long? There is something wrong somewhere. If they were retained because they were useful men in carrying out their jobs, then they should have had senior appointments offered to them. There is only one way in which a business can be built up satisfactorily and successfully, and it is to make it known to the staff right throughout that the top job is theirs if they can work up to it. That is the way a big business is built up. If

you are going to break the heart of the staff when suitable vacancies occur you will bring about disorganisation right through the bank. The motto I have adopted successfully in life is that if the heart is sick you send for a woman, and if the stomach is sick you send for a physician. That is a very sound basis on which to build up a business. You send for the right person for the right job. We shall never get anywhere by putting square pegs into round holes. I have never yet seen anything succeed by putting the wrong man in the wrong place. This Chamber has given away too much in the past. I say it does come within the province of this Chamber, and of another place, to approve of appointments of this kind. It has been done before by Parliament and can be done again. In view of what has happened recently, it is the clear duty of the House to insist upon this amendment, and to refuse to accept the motion of the Honorary Minister.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There may be ground for considering that some appointments have not been as satisfactory as they might be, but that is beside the point. We are asked to consider whether we shall stand to our amendment or not. How far can we proceed along these lines? The Government have been returned by the electors to take charge of the administration of the affairs of the State. This Chamber is not in a position to dictate to the Government concerning their administration.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: And we cannot amend the Bill?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We cannot go to the length of enforcing the amendment that is now being pressed.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is not the prerogative of this Chamber to dictate to the Government how they shall administer the affairs of the country.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is not what we are doing.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: This Bill is only the nucleus of what is going to form one of the most important statutes ever passed by the State Legislature. In the future it will require to be amended to ensure that all our producers are put upon a sound footing. The whole success of the scheme depends upon what board is appointed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: All the more reason why Parliament should have a say in the matter.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No. The Government must appoint the best men offering. How many good men would agree to accept the position if their names were to be bandied about in Parliament before appointment? That would mean that good men would not be forthcoming.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: It would keep out politicians.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It would keep away the very men who would be wanted to administer the Act. I sympathise with the supporters of the Council's amendment, but I do not think they are going the right way about things. We must give the Government a free hand to select the best men for this important task. If we force the amendment through we shall be held responsible for anything that miscarries in the future. I view with alarm any attempt to force the position that the approval of Parliament must be sought for appointments of this kind.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Baxter's reasoning is extraordinary.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: I think he made out a better case for the amendment than I did.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Bill deals with a million and three-quarters of Federal money. The State will bear the entire cost of administration, and the remuneration of the trustees will be a charge on Consolidated Revenue. It is quite a different measure from the Agricultural Bank Act, the appointments in connection with which were made for seven years. Under this Bill the appointments may be for ever. Mr. Baxter was a member of the Government which made an excellent appointment that was subject to the approval of Parliament. I refer to Colonel Pope's appointment to the position of Commissioner of Railways. The appointments of Mr. Evans and Mr. Ellis in a similar capacity also had to receive the endorsement of Parliament. Neither House has yet withheld its consent to the nominee for the position of Commissioner of Railways, and no hardship has ever resulted from the system. If the amendment were agreed to by both Houses, it is clear that no appointment would be made that would not be likely to be endorsed by Parliament. No restriction would be placed upon the choice of men. If a candidate for the position were prepared to run the risk of getting

the approval of Parliament, there would be little doubt about his being fit for the job. I oppose the motion.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I support the motion moved by the Honorary Minister. It is the function of the Government to administer the Act. They will certainly be blamed for any maladministration. They should have the right to appoint the trustees. A principle is involved in this. If the approval of Parliament must be sought for the appointments, then it must also be sought for the dismissal of the trustees. That would not do at all. It is a matter that is within the province of the Government in the event of the trustees failing to carry out their duties. A further principle is involved. If Parliament is to assume the right to appoint new officials, where will the practice stop? What will be left for the Government to do? It is most undesirable that Parliament should take the appointment of officials out of the hands of the Government. I agree that the amendment should not be insisted upon.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The principle of asking Parliament to make such appointments is dangerous. We do not know where it might lead to. It is true that there are a few specialised posts such as that of the Public Service Commissioner and the Commissioner of Railways in respect of which Parliament has a voice in the appointments made, but if that principle were to be extended, members can imagine what position might arise. If, for instance, the appointment of the Chief Justice had to be approved by Parliament, what an invidious position the nominee of the Government would be placed in.

Hon. J. Cornell: Parliament could remove him.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Yes, but only under extraordinary circumstances. No matter how we may object to some appointments that have been made in the past, there is the proper time and place for the people to express their resentment, if they so desire. Parliament is the wrong place in which such appointments should be made. The Government have the responsibility and should bear the brunt of public disapproval if they make bad appointments.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: As one who supported the proposal that Parliament should have the right to affirm appoint-

ments to the board, I think we should insist upon the amendment. We are dealing with a special Bill, under special conditions, to deal with special cases. Complicated conditions throughout the country will have to be dealt with. The board is to consist of three members, one of whom is to be a farmer. One section of the community that did not receive adequate consideration when the measure was previously discussed consists of the traders and shopkeepers who supported the farmers throughout the period of depression. It would be wise if Parliament reserved the right indicated in the amendment so that we can be assured that all interests affected are protected in the appointments made to the board. The appointments I refer to are not on all fours with others made by the Government from time to time. Unless this measure is capably administered, the benefits of the Federal assistance will peter out long before they should terminate. It has been contended that if names of nominees are bandied about the legislative halls, suitable applicants will not come forward. On the other hand, if names are bandied about, we will at least know that those who have had the courage to submit their applications will have confidence in their qualifications to undertake the work.

Hon. L. Craig: What qualifications have members of this House to make such appointments?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: We represent the people and we have the right to see that the proper people are appointed to the board.

Hon. L. Craig: You will make appointments subject to lobbying.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: This is one of the instances in which Parliament should reserve the right of approval of appointments made. In Western Australia we have known of appointments being given as favours to political hacks, or to individuals who have been in the way. In the Old Country appointments have been made frequently in the same manner. There is nothing extraordinary in the proposal embodied in the amendment. We know of some appointments that have been made in the Federal sphere that would not be approved by Parliament.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: Name one.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: There is no necessity to do so; the names of the indi-

viduals I refer to are in the minds of the people. There is every good reason to retain the provision in the Bill.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: We should not insist upon the inclusion of these words in the Bill. No good purpose will be served by requiring such appointments to be approved by Parliament. The Government have the right to make the appointments, and they should do so. If the names of applicants have to be submitted to Parliament, it may be that some members of Parliament desire appointment. There is such a thing as lobbying, and we may be asked to vote for some particular nominee, or even to nominate. The man possessing the best qualifications may not be known to us at all. We would be asked to vote on the question of appointments without knowing anything at all about the qualifications of the applicants. Such appointments should be left in the hands of the Executive who can make the necessary inquiries and have before them information that would not be in the possession of Parliament.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I agree that we should not insist upon the inclusion of these words. I have listened with admiration to the critics of political appointments. It would appear that once an individual enters politics he has reached bedrock, and cannot be regarded as possessing any business acumen or administrative ability. I do not agree with that contention. I support the appointment of Mr. McCallum as Chairman of the Trustees of the Agricultural Bank. If the Government retain the right to appoint the members of the board under the Bill, I hope they will get men of the calibre of Mr. McCallum, who has been unduly criticised inside and outside Parliament. He has not yet had an opportunity to prove himself in his present position. He has proved himself as an administrator in his Ministerial position, and surely he can prove himself equally in the smaller task associated with the Agricultural Bank.

Hon. J. Cornell: You referred to Jack Lang the other night.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: I am not referring to him now, but if Jack Lang were in this country I would probably appoint him dictator of Western Australia, or, for that matter, of Australia itself. Since when was the government of Western Australia centred in the Legislative Council? I admit that quite a lot is done here that is approved

by a majority of members, but is certainly not approved by the people outside. That is what the objection to the Honorary Minister's motion amounts to. Some members would like to appoint individuals to suit themselves, not the Government. The Government are responsible to the people for their mistakes, and they should make the appointments.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: We should not insist upon the words being included in the clause. I admit there have been times when Governments, not necessarily Labour Governments, desired to appoint some political friend or some individual they wished to be rid of. Possibly they may be anxious to get rid of some obnoxious political opponent. In this instance it is such an important matter that I have sufficient confidence in the Government to believe that they will make proper appointments.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: The amendment made by this House does not aim at taking out of the hands of the Government the appointment of members of the board, but only gives the right to this House to object when some glaring appointment may be made. Not a day goes past but we have laid on the Table of the House by-laws made under one or another Act, and as members know, we have the right to disallow any of those by-laws. Surely it is only fitting that we should have the right to object to the appointment of a member of the proposed board. I should like to see Parliament vested with power to approve or disapprove of all appointments made by the Executive. It is a method that should be adopted for the appointment of members of all bodies handling large sums of State money.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: There is a little obscurity in regard to appointments which should be made by the Governor and should be subject to review by Parliament. For many years we have tried to tighten it up a little, but without avail. It is not that Parliament should make these appointments, but merely that Parliament should have opportunity to object to any of the appointments made by the Executive.

Hon. E. H. Angelo: Parliament is not likely to interfere unless the appointment be a very glaring one.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The appointment of the present Commissioner of Railways was submitted to the House by motion

for our approval. Why should we not have something of the sort in regard to other important appointments? I will support the Council's amendment.

Hon. W. J. MANN: If the Council's amendment were that Parliament should have the appointment of this board I would be with the Minister, but since it is only that Parliament should have the right to approve or disapprove of the appointment, I will not support the Minister. There is in the amendment no domination by Parliament, but only the right of approval. We are simply asking that the Government shall select members of the board and then ask Parliament to concur.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Suppose we say we do not concur.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Then we would send back the appointment to the Governor and ask that another appointment be made, until we got the right one—just as you yourself do in an Arbitration Court case. In this case we are applying the same tactics as you apply in the Arbitration Court.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Then under this we shall have stop-work meetings.

Hon. T. MOORE: I will support the Minister and I hope the Committee will not waste much more time over this question. People in the country are asking what has happened to this very Bill, and here we are arguing as to which authority should appoint the board. Farmers are anxiously awaiting this Bill, for they are in a worse plight than ever before, and I hope the measure will not be held up while we have a first-class wrangle over the appointment of the board. No self-respecting Government would submit to the dictation of the House in this matter. The same tactics were tried in regard to another Commission, but I hope we shall let the Bill go through and so inform the people as to where they stand.

The HONORARY MINISTER: First of all I will reply to the hon. member who raised the question whether this House has the right to insist upon its amendment. I say yes, the House has the right to insist upon its amendment, but I am wondering whether the member who asked that question really understands the implication. There are many things we can insist upon but first of all we ought to count the cost. We have had an excellent example during this discussion and on the second reading and during the Committee stage, as to what

is likely to take place, and this afternoon we have had given to us an excellent idea of just what views would be taken by some members as to any appointment made by the present Administration—they would not agree that the appointee was the best for the job.

Hon. W. J. Mann: And they might be right in that.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, but simply because the appointee bore a political colour different from that of the members who criticised him.

Hon. W. J. Mann: No.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, and I say that very definitely.

Hon. J. Cornell: All that I said was that he did not know the job.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Holmes this afternoon, supporting the idea that this House should insist upon its amendment, went out of his way to say that he did not for a moment question the integrity or the ability of the man appointed.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The political ability.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Very well, the political ability of the subject of an appointment to another board. And the hon. member used the opportunity given on this motion to imply that it was merely a political appointment, that the man appointed had not the necessary ability to carry out the job and that in consequence the Agricultural Bank is likely to suffer. As a matter of fact, if the hon. member were perfectly frank, he would have to admit that there are few men better fitted for the job than is Mr. McCallum.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: If I thought so I would say so.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member knows the qualifications required for that job and possessed by the gentleman appointed. The whole history of the appointee shows that he is capable of carrying out that job, at least equally well as any other man whom Mr. Holmes could mention. But even if a mistake had been made on that occasion, is it any reason why we should say that appointments of this kind shall be subject to the approval of this House? That is what the supporters of the Council's amendment are really saying—not that the appointments should be subject to the approval of Parliament, but that they should be subject to the approval of this House. After all, the Government are

not likely to appoint anybody who does not meet with the approval of the supporters of that Government. Consequently it becomes a question whether this Chamber, which time after time has shown antagonism to the proposals of the Government, is going to approve of the appointments made.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister must not reflect upon members of the Chamber.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I do not know whether members regard my remarks as a reflection. Are members in a position to determine whether a particular individual possesses the necessary qualifications? The Government could inquire into every phase of his experience, knowledge and ability.

Hon. T. Moore: Some member might move for a select committee on the question.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Some members might be as capable of judging as is any member of the Cabinet.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not denying that, but where does Government responsibility come in?

Hon. J. Cornell: The electors bump Governments in their turn.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member might describe it in that way. During the second reading and Committee stages statements were made in favour of the appointment of a particular individual.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Minister started off by including that official and then dropped him.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the appointments were subject to the approval of Parliament, we would have the lobbying to which reference has been made, and probably something worse. Mr. Macfarlane spoke of country storekeepers not having received a fair deal.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That is not so.

Hon. H. Seddon: He said they were entitled to consideration.

The HONORARY MINISTER: He said they had not been given the consideration to which they were entitled. That was equivalent to saying that someone should be appointed to represent the storekeepers.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: You are appointing a farmer for that reason.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Quite a large number of interests are affected, but provision is not made for each one to have a representative. The board will have great responsibilities and doubtless the Government will be very careful in the appoint-

ments they make. I hope members will not insist on the amendment. We desire to put the measure into operation as early as possible, and the longer we argue on a question of this kind, the greater will be the delay in granting relief to the farmers entitled to receive it.

Hon. T. Moore: And waiting for it.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am opposed to the Minister.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Which is nothing unusual.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I deprecate the statements regarding the Agricultural Bank Commissioners. I disagree with the criticism; they have not yet had a fair chance. I believe that Mr. McCallum has the ability to carry out the duties of his office. Had those appointments been subject to the approval of Parliament, I believe Parliament would have endorsed them. There is no desire to dictate to the Government, but approval by Parliament would probably cause the Government to be a little more cautious in making appointments. Parliament has never disapproved of the appointment of a Commissioner of Railways, which appointment is subject to its approval. If a glaring mistake were made, we should have the right to disagree with the appointments.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Mr. T. Moore spoke of the need for distributing the funds. We want the funds to be distributed by a competent authority. Mr. Craig said that the Government had to administer the Act. That is the trouble. The present Government might make appointments such as would land a succeeding Government in difficulties. The Bill is a Kathleen Mavourneen measure. Twenty years' credit is provided to start with and the appointments might continue for 20 or 30 years.

Hon. L. Craig: Subject to the approval of the Government.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: But the Government who gave the approval to-day would probably be gone to-morrow, whereas Parliament continues for ever. It is misleading to say that we are aiming at making the appointments. We are aiming at confirming the appointments, and our one object is to exert a steadying influence on the Government of the day. Mr. Parker was unfortunate in his reference to the Chief Jus-

tice. The Chief Justice must possess qualifications for his position.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The Chief Justice requires no qualifications of any sort, size or description.

Hon. J. Cornell: Of course he does.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Would you make me Chief Justice?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Three officers are directly under the control of Parliament, the Public Service Commissioner, the Auditor General and the Commissioner of Railways.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: So are the judges.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I suggest that the object of Mr. Holmes has been achieved and that he would be wise now to allow the matter to drop.

Hon. J. CORNELL: There is nothing in the Bill to say that the trustees may not be appointed forever or that they may be removed from office.

The CHAIRMAN: The Governor would have power to remove them.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Members of the Licensing Board are appointed for a definite period and members of the Lotteries Commission are appointed from year to year. We should be assured that the conditions of employment of the trustees will be set out in an agreement and that they might be removed from office.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. TUCKEY: Except as regards the two positions mentioned, no Government appointments have had to be approved by this Chamber in the past. An important principle of responsibility is involved, and therefore I support the Honorary Minister.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	..	8
Majority for					8

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. R. G. Moore
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. C. G. Elliott	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. H. Seddon

(Teller.)

NOMES

Hon. J. Cornell
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane

Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. E. H. Angelo
(Teller.)

Question thus passed; the amendment not insisted on.

Resolution reported, the report adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.*Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had agreed to Council's amendments Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9, had disagreed to Nos. 2 and 3, giving reasons, and had agreed to No. 5 subject to a further amendment, now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. E. H. Gray in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

No. 2. Clause 4:—Delete paragraph (b).

The HONORARY MINISTER: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

I move this for the reason stated by the Assembly—

The owner of a vehicle licensed to carry passengers pays a special license, and has to comply with the special insurance provisions, and therefore is entitled to protection against unfair competition.

As I pointed out previously, there has always been difficulty in proving whether a vehicle has been hired or not. Although in many cases it has been well-known that payment was made for the use of a vehicle to carry passengers, it has been almost impossible to prove that to the satisfaction of the court. Therefore it is desired to delete the words in question.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: There is another side to the picture. If we give way on this amendment, no person will be able to convey anyone at all in his truck at any time or at any place. Country people are under great disadvantage in having to travel long distances, and should be entitled to avail themselves of any opportunities of escaping that disadvantage. I do not see much force in the Assembly's argument. The unfair competition referred to cannot occur in country districts. I hope the Committee will adhere to their decision.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I hope the amendment will be insisted on. Many drivers give a lift to persons not for hire or reward, and the Assembly proposes to inflict a hardship in that respect. Twenty innocent persons are to be punished rather than that one guilty person should escape.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I hope the Committee will insist on the amendment, which was carried, emphatically, by 15 votes to seven. The succeeding amendment is consequential on this one. If these words go back into the Bill paragraph (c) then will have to come out.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The statement has been repeated that if the amendment is agreed to no one will be allowed to pick up anyone in a car.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I corrected that statement.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The amendment deals with a section which refers to vehicles having a carrier's license; in other words, vehicles carrying goods for hire or reward. It does not refer to cars. It is a fact that large numbers of trucks are used for carrying parties and all manner of subterfuges are resorted to to prevent proof being obtained that the trucks are being used for hire. With regard to trucks in the country there will be no difficulty in a person obtaining permission to carry people.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Will they be able to carry passengers with the permission of the local authorities?

Hon. J. Cornell: On special occasions.

Hon. J. Nicholson: In this case the local authority would mean the local authority itself, not the secretary; and the local authority may not be sitting at the time.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member knows that most of these matters are delegated to the secretary.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: It is ridiculous that this should apply to the goldfields, where some inhabited districts are far apart and the local authorities are a great distance away. Imagine anyone desiring to take a party from Widgiemooltha to Coolgardie or Norseman having first of all to seek permission from the local authority many miles away. This is restricting the liberties of the people. Goldfields residents often bring trucks into requisition because the taxi people charge too much. Therefore why bother about safeguarding the owners of taxi vehicles?

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: I was not here when the amendment was agreed to by this House. In recent years we have increased the license fees by a considerable amount, and it is understood that the Government should protect those who take out licenses. We must do our utmost to protect life, and I am going to support the Honorary Minister.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: When the Bill was previously before the Committee I supported the Government, and I intend to support them again.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: It is not so much the metropolitan area that I am thinking about but the country areas where vehicles are not licensed to carry passengers, but which are often called upon to convey footballers and others from one place to another. I am not going to interfere with that kind of thing. Having been given the assurance by the Honorary Minister that it will be possible for owners of trucks to obtain permission from local authorities to carry passengers I shall support the Government.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I know dozens of places on the goldfields where men are working small shows, perhaps 40 miles from a town, and the only means by which those people can get into the town is by motor truck. In such cases how could the owners of trucks apply to the local authorities for permission to carry passengers?

Hon. W. J. MANN: If this is merely to apply to the metropolitan area then my objection disappears. In the back country as we all know there are not the facilities for transport that exist in the town.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I would be prepared to see this provision confined to the metropolitan area. In the case of many country districts people would have to travel a long distance to get the permission of the local authority. I hope the Committee will insist upon the amendment.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I am astonished that members should be prepared to reverse their votes on this question. Surely they do not desire to prevent young people in the country districts from getting a little enjoyment during the week-ends. They cannot afford to hire a licensed vehicle, and all they can do is to travel by some truck. If we support the Honorary Minister we shall debar sports teams from travelling

from one township to another in the course of the week-end.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Cornell and Mr. Baxter seem to fear that we shall be debarring young people from having reasonably cheap enjoyment during their respite from work.

Hon. J. Cornell: A necessary enjoyment.

The HONORARY MINISTER: In all the circumstances detailed by hon. members, vehicles of the kind mentioned are being used illegally under the existing Act. Every vehicle used for the carriage of passengers for hire or reward must be licensed for that purpose. At the moment, people who have a carrier's license are in competition with other persons having a passenger license, and are using their vehicles illegally for the conveyance of passengers. That is one of the anomalies the Bill is endeavouring to rectify.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Recently I was driven out from Southern Cross to Marvel Loch in the grocer's delivery lorry, and came back on a carrier's lorry. A friend subsequently drove me in his car to Yellowdine and brought me back again. Did we all commit an offence? In Southern Cross there is only one taxi plying for hire, and when numbers of people want to get to some adjoining centre their only course is to engage some other vehicle, which is not licensed for the carriage of passengers.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am surprised that members representing the North should be objecting to the original amendment.

Hon. G. W. Miles: They have minds of their own. They are not shifting around the compass as some members are doing.

Hon. L. CRAIG: In the smaller towns there are no licensed vehicles available for passengers. People have no other means of conveyance than some truck which is licensed only for the carriage of goods. It is also very difficult to get into touch with the local authorities. On special occasions, such as on the occasion of cricket or football matches, trucks should be allowed to carry passengers. I would agree to the clause being restricted to the metropolitan area.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: If there is any unfair competition against the holders of passenger-carrying licenses, surely the matter can be dealt with under the existing law. If the local authority refuses to give the necessary permission, what good purpose

would be served by asking for it? There is sufficient machinery available for the prosecution of those people who are unlawfully carrying passengers for reward. Already as many people are carried free of charge in privately-owned vehicles as is the case with motor trucks, notwithstanding that the taxi driver has to pay a special fee for his license. Apparently if the owner of a goods-carrying vehicle takes a passenger along with him he can be prosecuted, but not the private motor car owner.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I support the Government.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Do you want something for the Wyndham Meat Works?

Hon. G. W. MILES: I am not like other members who were returned to Parliament to support the Government and then ratted on them. I vote as I think fit.

Hon. J. Cornell: You have a Government conscience!

Hon. W. J. Mann: No conscience at all!

Hon. G. W. MILES: As to the arguments that have been advanced by country members, if they had agreed to the clause remaining in the Bill, its application could have been confined to the metropolitan area.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Why did you not help us?

Hon. J. Nicholson: That may be obtained at a conference.

Hon. G. W. MILES: A conference will mean more waste of time. I do not think any local governing body in the outback areas would prosecute the owner of a truck merely because he gave a few men a lift to a football match or a cricket match.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	15
Majority against	6

AYES.	
Hon. J. M. Draw	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. E. H. Angelo
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller.)
NAVES.	
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. L. B. Polton	Hon. R. G. Moore
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. L. Craik	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. C. G. Elliott	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. F. H. Hall	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived; the Council's amendment insisted on.

No. 3.—Delete paragraph (c).

The HONORARY MINISTER: This is consequential upon the previous amendment and in view of the decision of the Committee will have to be insisted upon. I move—

That the amendment be insisted on.

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

No. 5.—Clause 15:—Insert the words "or traffic inspector" after the word "station" in line 18.

Assembly's amendment to the Council's amendment:—

(a) by inserting after the words "or traffic inspector" (inserted by the Legislative Council) the words "of the district of the nearest local authority," and

(b) by adding the following words: "and insert 'or such traffic inspector' after the word 'officer' in line 20."

The HONORARY MINISTER: Members will agree that the Assembly's amendments are necessary. I move—

That the amendments made by the Assembly to the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Assembly's amendments to the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

BILL—ELECTORAL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [8.24]: The remarks of the Minister in moving the second reading of the Bill indicated the scope intended to be covered. The Bill purports to be the embodiment of the investigation and recommendations of the Joint Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Electoral Act. When the committee, which was subsequently converted into a Royal Commission, was appointed, I for one had no idea it was intended to amend the Constitution or to alter the franchise in connection with this Chamber to the extent that the Bill proposes. I doubt if such alterations were intended in the terms under which the Commission was appointed and certainly I am quite convinced that this House had no intention that there should be any tampering with the Constitution regarding the qualifications of electors for the Legisla-

tive Council. Nevertheless, we find the Bill seeks to effect alterations regarding the qualification of electors for the Council and will materially alter the character of the franchise and thereby, in my opinion, the constitution of the House. Quite apart from the abolition of the provision that exists in the Constitution Act whereby persons who are in receipt of charity are prevented from voting for either House, there is the suggested deletion of one qualification whereby a person can become an elector. I refer to the qualification of being a ratepayer. I cannot understand why the committee could agree to the deletion of that charity provision as a disqualification for electors for this House, which, of course, is based on a property franchise. The whole government of a country naturally depends upon its franchise and for many years the prevailing idea in Australia has been in favour of an adult franchise. Other countries have had experience under dictatorships and autocratic governments and naturally men's thoughts have turned in the direction of what seemed to be the ideal of entrusting the government of a country to the adult population. To-day many people are wondering whether that ideal has fulfilled all that was expected of it. In some countries the system of parliamentary government has been set aside and dictatorships established. There has been considerable discussion amongst students, of the trend of governments and policies as to whether the extension of the franchise to the adult population has brought the benefits expected to follow from the adoption of that principle. In a Parliament elected by the whole of the adult population the vote of the waster who lives on the community has exactly the same value as that of the man who has endeavoured to assist society. In those circumstances, one cannot help realising that such a condition must have some effect on the Parliament so elected. When a man who lives from day to day, with no thought of the future, can have the same effect on the result of an election as the man who is conserving his energies and making provision for those dependent upon him, again, I say, the result may very materially affect the character of representation and, therefore, of the government of the country. One would have thought, seeing that the committee busied themselves in

interfering with the franchise of this House, that they would have brought critical examination to bear on the franchise of another place, with a view to ascertaining if they could not also effect certain improvements with regard to that franchise. For instance, one would have thought that they could have found considerable scope for their energies in finding some way to establish an educational franchise, or an educational standard upon which the franchise might be based. One of the strongest criticism of government in the past has been the statement that there should be no taxation without representation. The present position in Australia seems to me to be that we have representation without taxation in many instances. This is largely due to the subtle appeals made to the electors by way of concessions, whereby they escape the financial responsibilities associated with citizenship. As I say, I think the Commission, since they went into the question of qualifications of the franchise, might have taken these matters into consideration when making their report. I think they also might have explained why they agreed to the deletion of the provision whereby a man in receipt of charity was disqualified but is now qualified to be an elector for this House, which is an infringement of the property qualification.

Hon. J. CORNELL: They had none of those cases for either the Assembly or the Council; they do not exist.

Hon. H. SEDDON: It will be possible for a man to be elected for this House by electors in receipt of charity.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have one or two at the Old Men's Home.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The results of the amendments are, in my opinion, to bring the franchise for this House closer to that for the Assembly, and I cannot see but that the position of this House would be materially weakened and its usefulness impaired if we allowed that to be accomplished. The Labour Party are quite frank in their objective in regard to the Legislative Council. For many years they have been endeavouring to bring about the abolition of the Council by a reduction of the qualification to household franchise. It is interesting to note that while the ratepayer qualification, which after all, is determined by a definite authority, has been deleted the household qualification has been retained and also expanded to cover cases which in the past have

been doubtful cases of those persons dwelling in flats. If the House after due consideration is of opinion that the time has arrived when the qualifications for this Chamber should be revised, well and good. I am certainly not of that opinion, and I do not know that we have any evidence of a strong demand in the direction of altering our franchise. The record of this House in the past has been on the whole that of supporting the principles which are implied in the bi-cameral system, so I fail to see what cause there is for an alteration of our qualification. Might I now be permitted to comment on what is more or less recognised as obvious, and make a few remarks on our parliamentary system in Western Australia? As all scholars are taught under the comprehensive and very expensive educational system of which we are so proud, we have in Western Australia the bi-cameral system of representative government. Both Houses are elected. It was not always the case: there was a time when the Legislative Council was the only governing House in Western Australia, and that House consisted of nominated members. Later the House became elective, and it should be remembered that the Legislative Assembly was created as the result of the decision of the Legislative Council of Western Australia to adopt the bi-cameral system. And when the franchise of the Assembly was established, it was established on the basis of adult franchise, and the powers which this House gave the Assembly were the powers which are given in most British Constitutions. They were given the right to elect the Ministers. They were given more electorates than the Council have and, of course, while we have only one Minister the Cabinet was elected from the Assembly and the policy of the government directed from that place. The activities of the Council are very much restricted. While we have very wide powers of criticism and are intended to exercise the functions of review, the initiation of legislation is almost entirely in the hands of the Assembly. As I say, the franchise of the Assembly gives to all British citizens, so long as they remain respectable, and provided they are not dependent on charity, the right to vote and exercise their vote in determining the representation of that House. But the franchise of this

House is based on the property qualification and that of a particular kind, namely land ownership. This House has been placed in a very strong position. Subject to the electors, it is master of its own destiny. Land ownership was deliberately chosen as the basis of the qualifications for this House. After all, those who live and work on the land and whose whole existence is associated with the land are those who have to carry on in the future and bear the burdens associated with the citizenship of this country. Taxation falls directly on the man on the land, and the mistakes of Governments and the misjudgments eventually fall back on the man earning his livelihood on the land and all of whose interests are locked up in the land. Naturally, therefore, in this House we are given the privilege of reviewing and criticising the Government, since we are appointed from that section of the people who are today bearing the burdens of citizenship. This Legislative Council is superior to the Legislative Councils in the Eastern States, which are purely nominee Houses. This is an elected House and therefore it is responsible to the electors who return members to it. So it constitutes a safeguard against a Government which may have been returned on a sudden wave of popular feeling, and it provides the means whereby a deeply felt need can be accomplished in a comparatively short space of time by the fact that every two years one-third of its members have to face the electors. It has to provide means of examining proposed party legislation and exposing abuses, and as long as the Council franchise is preserved we can ensure that the principles underlying the bi-cameral system will have their best chance of functioning. But the closer we bring our franchise into line with that of the Legislative Assembly the more closely shall we obtain to being a replica of that House, and the more closely we shall bring about a position where the usefulness of legislation will be impaired. This House will then no longer be necessary, and the State will then return to the unicameral system.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: What about the Senate?

Hon. H. SEDDON: The objections to the Federal Constitution were that while the House of Representatives was intended to carry out the usual process of govern-

ment by party, the intention was that the Senate should be composed of representatives of the interests of the States at large. That unfortunately has not materialised. As a matter of fact, in the State's representation in the Senate we frequently find lack of balance, and the party division operating. The Labour Party's objective is quite plain, namely, to bring about household franchise for this House. This we can recognise in the attempt to reduce our franchise, although I find there is no definite demand for an alteration of the qualifications of the Council. I am very much opposed to any alteration of those qualifications. The Bill should have been confined to the purpose of providing machinery for the conduct of elections, and for the effective handling of the claims for enrolment. There are in the Bill provisions which are entirely apart from either of those objects. My remarks have more to do with the criticising of certain amendments which have been introduced into the Bill, because some of them, it appears to me, will not conduce to the more effective handling of elections and of enrolments. There has been no other amendment of the Electoral Act in regard to the facilitating of the handling of claims by the department. There is really no other department whose efficiency is more important to the public in the safeguarding of their rights of self-government, and no other department whose officers are working under less efficient conditions than our Electoral Department. Members who have read the evidence given before the Commission will recognise certain statements made by Mr. Gordon before that Commission, to show how he has attempted to facilitate the work and to bring about better conditions, so as to carry out that work more effectively. In answer to one question as to determining the qualifications of claimants for enrolment, Mr. Gordon said—

I think it may not be possible to check qualifications immediately prior to elections, but between elections we make many thousands of searches at the Titles Office.

In another place he says that the only way in which one could check would be by not allowing the applicant on the roll until his claim card had been checked. I think I can say there is no other department which is so seriously handicapped in carrying out its work in the checking of claim cards, and more particularly in the checking of claims

for the Legislative Council immediately before elections. My remarks apply particularly to the country. In my opinion there should be an electoral registrar for each province at least whose sole duty would be to attend to the rolls, keep them clean and carry out the duties of the Electoral Department. I think that is an absolute necessity, because the amount of work involved in checking claims cannot be accomplished in the way in which it is being attempted at the present time.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The position to-day is farcical and will be under the new Bill also, unless money is provided.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is true. We have the spectacle of officers performing other important duties being charged with the responsibilities of electoral registrars, and we can realise how their electoral work has to suffer in view of the daily routine demanded of them by their other duties. The original intention, as we find in the old Act, was that the roll should be revised at least annually. As a matter of fact the Assembly roll receives special attention immediately before an election, but the Legislative Council roll receives nothing like the attention it should get on account of the number of qualifications for the Council and the amount of work involved in checking the enrolments. My experience has been that the Legislative Council roll is compiled more through the activities of electoral agents of the candidates than by any activities of the department. The Council roll is usually less correct immediately before Council elections than at any other time. As Mr. Gordon stated in his evidence, while it is not always possible to check enrolments immediately preceding an election, large numbers of names are removed from the roll in the intervening periods. That has been our experience. Time and again we have found rolls loaded up with names which would not stand much investigation; yet those names have been allowed to go on the rolls and the persons have been permitted to vote, while after the election numbers of them have been removed until the next election was imminent, and then they were put on the roll again. That is a state of affairs which this House should do its best to remedy. It can only be remedied by making provision in the Bill that a full-time electoral registrar shall be appointed for each province, and that his time shall

be entirely devoted to the work of the department.

Hon. J. J. Holmes interjected.

Hon. H. SEDDON: It is necessary that there should be an adequate test of the enrolments. When the Bill was introduced in another place it contained a provision whereby only those freehold or leasehold electors who had a registered freehold or leasehold could qualify for enrolment, but the word "registered" was removed in the course of the passage of the Bill through another place. Consequently, that check, which would have been very effective, is no longer available. Hence we find ourselves in the position that a person might make a claim that he is a freeholder or leaseholder and there is no machinery to prevent the electoral registrar being inundated with hundreds of cards, or being enabled to effect a quick and accurate determination as to whether the claimants are qualified or not. Under the old Act claims had to mature for a certain number of days. The provision in this measure is that claims are subject to scrutiny by the registrar but the names may be immediately enrolled. It is very much more difficult to get a name off the roll than to get one on. It appears that that difficulty will be considerably increased under this measure. In fact I am inclined to wonder whether the time limit provided in the Bill will be sufficient to enable the department to carry out the investigations proposed before the election takes place.

Hon. J. Cornell: It will be all right for the Assembly, but no good for the Council.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I am inclined to think that the provisions governing the Legislative Council enrolments have not received anything like the adequate consideration to which they were entitled by the Royal Commission. I could give instances of electors on my own roll who had been dead for over two years previous to my election in 1934.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Did they vote?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Their names are still on the roll.

Hon. J. Cornell: They might get up when the next election occurs.

Hon. G. W. Miles: A man died last week, and his name was taken off the roll next morning.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The ones I refer to are still on the roll. I know a man who

held a qualification on the goldfields and who had left the State for three years—I knew of my own knowledge that he had executed a transfer of his property before leaving—and that man's name is still on the roll. There are quite a number of instances of duplicate householder enrolments. The revision of the Legislative Council roll is not receiving anything like the attention to which it is entitled.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: His name might not be on the roll next time.

Hon. H. SEDDON: It is there at present. Consequently the purity of the election must suffer. Another alteration has been introduced in the Assembly, in that in the definition of a freehold elector has been included a person who holds chattel rights. This would permit of a person squatting on a mining lease to enrol; it would allow a man squatting on Crown lands to enrol. I have a vivid recollection of certain names which were placed on the North-East Province roll some three years ago immediately previous to an election. Those persons were living on Crown lands. The departmental information was to the effect that they were on Crown lands. The attention of the Government was drawn to the position, and the result was that while those people found themselves faced with a big bill to pay for the rent of the land they were occupying nothing was done to remove the names from the roll. The extension of the privilege of the right to enrolment as a freeholder to a person with chattel rights in a house will result in a man paying 10s. a year having the right to enrol. A man who is paying £9 a year to the Crown will not be qualified to enrol as voter for this House. A person who has a business lease valued at £16 a year would not have the right to enrol, and yet a person paying 10s. a year could be enrolled.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: In what clause does that appear?

Hon. H. SEDDON: Clause 18, paragraph (b), subparagraph (i). A provision which was proposed in another place whereby the electoral registrar should have supplied to him a list of the transfers recorded in the Titles Office every month was turned down. That would have been of valuable assistance to the registrars in country districts, as it would have enabled them to trace sales of property that had taken place in the dis-

trict and to remove from the roll freeholders who were no longer qualified. As I said, that provision was turned down. The same thing applies to an equitable freeholder, who would be entitled under the Bill, as originally proposed, to enrol, provided a caveat was registered. At present anyone can claim to be an equitable freeholder and there are no means to check it. In the circumstances I consider that the Government were very ill-advised in turning down the proposed amendment. I understand the objection raised was that it would involve a certain amount of cost to obtain a list from the Titles Office on account of the large number of transactions involved. I have looked up the report of the Registrar of Titles which shows that in the year 1929 the largest number of transfers on record was dealt with, totalling some 14,900 for the year. Those transactions, of course, covered the transfers of land all over the State, the greater proportion of them being in the metropolitan area. Again I say that the whole of the transactions referring to country provinces could have been supplied to the electoral registrars and would have indicated the change of ownership and enabled them to clean up their rolls by removing the names of persons who were no longer qualified. The ratepayer qualification has been dropped. A householder and a ratepayer can be enrolled if they have premises of an annual value of £17. Under the old Act annual value was determined on a very old legal ruling. The clear annual value was determined after deducting rates and taxes. The definition of clear annual value contained in this Bill sets an actual rent of £17 as the qualification, and therefore to that extent has reduced the qualification governing the enrolment of householder, which has been retained in the Bill, while the ratepayer's qualification has been deleted. We have a definite authority issuing returns when a man is enrolled as a ratepayer. By referring to the roll of the local authority, it is possible to see the value at which the local authority has assessed the property and thus one can immediately determine whether the ratepayer is entitled to be on the roll. The elimination of the ratepayer qualification, therefore, removes that safeguard, while the householder retains his qualification. That qualification is very difficult to deal with when determining the value of premises. I under-

stand that the reason given for the deletion of the ratepayer qualification was that the Electoral Department experienced great difficulty in dealing with names wrongfully on the ratepayers' roll. I should like to point out that the ratepayers' rolls are revised every year in accordance with the Municipal Corporations Act and the Road Districts Act, which statutes are very definite as to the method in which the rolls are to be revised. Seeing that the rolls have to be reprinted and are subject to inspection every year at stated times, it is obvious that there is a far better chance of those rolls being kept clean and up-to-date than a roll that is revised just previous to an election. I am prepared to say that taking roll by roll, as is done in my district, the local authority rolls compare favourably with the Legislative Council rolls as regards the people whose names are put on them. There is no reason why, if the electoral registrar is dissatisfied, he should not get into communication with the local authorities and call their attention to the matter. The fact that the rolls have to be revised every year, joined with the fact of a complaint coming from such an authoritative quarter, would have a strong effect if there was anything seriously wrong with the rolls. Another point arises in connection with the ratepayer qualification. While that qualification remained, the man who had a shop, a workshop, or an office was enabled to enrol for those premises providing they had an annual value of £17. The removal of that qualification prevents such a man from enrolling, because, unfortunately, many of those tenancies are not leaseholds but weekly tenancies. The weekly tenant would be prevented from enrolling, and yet a man who had a shack could enrol without fear of challenge under the broad definition existing with regard to annual value.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Such a man can enrol even if he does not pay his rent.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Yes. In the Acts governing local authorities there are sections laying down the means whereby annual value shall be determined. It is determined by the valuator of the local authority. Therefore I contend that it would be a far fairer valuation than the one placed on his property by the owner. I have on my roll now 160-odd electors as householders, and the names of those 160 persons appear on the local authority's roll. In every case they

are below the £17 annual value. Some of them are as low as £8.

Hon. J. Cornell: Do the people own the properties, or rent them?

Hon. H. SEDDON: They are on the roll as householders.

Hon. C. B. Williams: They may be paying the equivalent in rent.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The local authority does not value the property at £17. The man himself does. If one attempted to object to that, the position would be this: the man would get up in court and say, "This place is worth 7s. 6d. per week to me. Bill Smith is prepared to pay me 8s. a week for it as from to-morrow. Consequently the place is worth £17 a year." Thus one would not have a dog's chance in objecting. If the local authority valuation were accepted, the question would be determined once for all. Having regard to these matters, and to the people who would be disqualified, I hope the House will restore the ratepayer qualification as it was before, retaining it as one qualification for voting for this Chamber. As regards the definition of "clear annual value," I hope that before we finish with the Bill we shall have a plain definition of that term, and a definite authority to which reference can be made, the Electoral Officer thus being enabled immediately a claim comes in to refer it to a list of valuations and thus be in a position at once to accept or reject the claim on that authority. Having regard to these matters, I think the House would be well advised to consider carefully the amendments proposed in the Bill. In the interests of the efficient working of the electoral law we should ensure that there is at any rate one full-time electoral officer in each Province. That will, I hope, be included among the amendments in the Bill. Now I wish to refer briefly to the question of enrolments, and how the system operates at election time. I do not like the time interval fixed by the Bill between the date the roll closes—that is, the issue of the writ—and nomination day, because I do not think it will give the electoral registrar sufficient time to check up the rolls with anything like efficiency. It means that crude claims can get on the roll, and I do not see how they are to be got off in time for the election. In other words, all the people on the roll will vote. Once nominations are closed, postal votes can be taken. In fact, in outlying Provinces it is

often necessary that electors should vote as soon as possible after nomination day, in order to get their votes in in time. Why should we run the risk of unqualified persons getting on the roll? When scrutinising postal votes, one has to deal with hundreds of votes.

Hon. J. Cornell: For 20 years a roll has been *prima facie* evidence of a man's right to vote, and it is still *prima facie* evidence. Once a man is on the roll—

Hon. H. SEDDON: —I do not see how one can get him off. I fail to see how, under the new provisions of the Bill, it will be possible to get the roll out in time for the election if all those cards are to be reviewed by the Chief Electoral Officer. That is a matter which needs to be gone into carefully.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is all right as far as the Assembly is concerned.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Exactly. The whole Bill appears to me likely to work a great deal better than the existing Act as regards the Assembly. The provision as to compulsory voting will make the matter easier as far as absent votes are concerned. In the case of the Council, however, the measure would work detrimentally.

Hon. J. Cornell: There could not be compulsory voting for the Council unless there was compulsory enrolment.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Exactly, and that is a most difficult job. I note that provision is made for voting outside electorates. That is a distinct improvement. I have referred to the difficulty associated with enrolments, and to the position in which the electoral registrar finds himself when he has a lot of cards flung in on him at the last minute. The onus is on the officer; and while the Act says he shall do certain things, one cannot be sure that he will always do them. Often it is impossible for him to do all those things, because of other duties. So the electoral roll suffers.

Member: Sometimes it suffers because the electoral officer is lazy.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I do not say that. I know that the duties imposed on the electoral registrar are such as to make it impossible for him to have either the time or the machinery or the funds to do the work of checking, as it should be done. If the Chief Electoral Officer has about 10,000 cards shot into him—and it is quite pos-

sible he will have—immediately prior to an election, what earthly chance has he of going through those names, checking them adequately, and at the same time arranging to get the roll out for an approaching election? We know that even now there is difficulty in getting out the rolls after they close. Every day is of material importance. If the cards have to be dealt with and the rolls revised and rechecked, it will lead to abuses in connection with elections. As to objections, it appears to me that under the Bill the position will be even more hopeless than it is now. The time limit between the closing of the rolls and nomination day renders it almost impossible for an elector to make objections to people who he knows are on the roll and should be taken off. He cannot get it done. If an attempt were made to do it, the rolls would be delayed. Therefore the names have to go on the roll. So I hope that the suggestion which has been made to enable the officers to be supplied with lists and information enabling them to make a check on the spot will be adopted. Thereby the Bill would be materially improved, the work of the officers would be facilitated, and the rolls would be all the cleaner. Let me say, too, that an electoral registrar should be appointed to give his whole time to the work, and that he should be held personally responsible for seeing that the work is done. I am in favour not only of providing for a full-time officer but also of insisting that the work shall be carried out.

Hon. J. Cornell: That officer should be on the same footing as the New South Wales Auditor General under the New South Wales Act.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The main thing is the objective of most members, and the objective of the Chief Electoral Officer—to ensure that the rolls are kept clean, and to ensure that claims can be dealt with promptly and effectively. I support the Bill because I believe that eventually it will result in cleaner rolls and thus in cleaner representation and sounder government. The right of the franchise is one of the most valuable privileges the citizen has, and the question of expense should be entirely subordinated to the efficient preservation and carrying-out of that right. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill, and I hope to place on the

Notice Paper certain amendments which I trust the House will assist me in having included in the measure.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Macfarlane, debate adjourned.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October.

HON. R. G. MOORE (North-East) [9.15]: It is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill and I do so not because I feel I am compelled to support it. Ever since I have been in this House I have objected to this legislation because I never considered that it made for equality of sacrifice. I set out my reasons at the outset and never missed an opportunity to do so afterwards. I realise that when the Bill was first introduced the Government of the day were faced with a position demanding that something should be done to keep the country solvent; but I have always been of the opinion that the measure was not introduced in the proper way. There is no doubt in my mind that the Bill did inflict a hardship upon a certain section of the community while other sections were never interfered with at all. That being so, I cannot see that it made for equality of sacrifice, which was supposed to be the purpose for which the Bill was introduced. For that reason I opposed the Bill in the first place. I supported it subsequently because it was amended and it became a little better than it was originally. Now I am glad to see that it is to go out. With some hon. members who have spoken I agree that we have not yet turned the corner and that but for the goldmining industry we would be in a very bad position to-day. At the same time it is necessary to bring in something that circumstances may have made necessary, and I hope it will be a measure that will demand the same sacrifice from all people. So that the person on £10 or £20 a week as an employee of the Government will be on the same footing as a person earning the same amount in any other way. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South) [9.18]: I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill. I was opposed

to it in the first place many years ago, and have been opposed to it all along; that is to say, opposed to the principle of the reduction of salaries and wages. I claim that it has had a greater effect in prolonging the depression than anything ever done by any Government in Australia. It is hardly necessary to draw attention to the fact that all those Governments that had anything to do with the supposed Premiers' Plan promptly got the sack when next they faced the electors, and they got the sack, too, in no uncertain manner. The Federal Labour Government that were responsible were rejected at the elections that followed because the people would not entertain the Plan. The same thing happened in Victoria where two appeals were made to the people, and we know what happened to the Government of Western Australia that introduced this legislation; also the Labour Government of South Australia went out, and likewise the National Governments in Tasmania and Queensland. All this proves that the people of Australia had nothing in common with those representing them in Parliament at the time the Premiers' Plan was submitted for the purpose of reducing the standard of living in Australia. Coming nearer home I can refer also to a couple of my friends from the goldfields who had a very close call when they stood for election. They have occasion to remember that their previous majority dwindled very considerably, and that they just managed to scrape home. So I take it that the goldfields electors would have nothing to do with this so-called Premiers' Plan, and intimated to the candidates that in future they would have to watch their P's. and Q's. This legislation, introduced by the Mitchell Government, was too ridiculous for words. Its only effect was to reduce the standard of living. It has been a long time in going out, but we have the satisfaction of knowing now that it is to go out, and the credit is due to the present Government. I was elected to this Parliament at a salary of £600 a year, and I never stopped raising my voice against the reduction of that amount. If the present Government had not taken the course they are now following, they would have deserved the same fate that was accorded to the Mitchell Government who introduced the obnoxious legislation.

Hon. H. Seddon: And if they do lose their seats at the next election, what then?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: There is no chance of that, but if they had re-enacted this legislation, undoubtedly they would have lost the number of their mess, just as the previous Government lost theirs. I do not agree with the Chairman of Committees slinging his arms around and declaring that some of the civil servants were having their restorations based on a different method. I have made inquiries but have not found that any member of Parliament has given back any portion of the increase he received at the beginning of the year. There are not too many heroes in this House, although some members have declared themselves opposed to the Bill. Not too many, however, will give back the small increase they have already had. They might quietly give it to the poor, which of course I hope they will do. I claim that I have earned every penny of my salary. I live in a district travelling over which is very expensive, and I contend that Mr. Cornell's arguments do not apply. The cost of living in that part of the State is just as high to-day as it was when this obnoxious legislation was introduced. If it were possible to insert a retrospective clause in the Bill to enable me to get back what I have lost since the Act has been in force, I would submit it to the House. I support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [9.24]: I crave a few minutes to offer some remarks on the Bill under consideration. During the discussion on the emergency legislation when it was first introduced, equality of sacrifice was frequently mentioned. I do not intend to raise any objection to the Government bringing in the Bill now before us to restore cuts which were made, but I am taking the opportunity of asking that that equality of sacrifice of which we have heard so much shall be taken into consideration by the Government, as far as it can be made to apply to every section. I have received a letter from the Murchison branch of the Pastoralists' Association, and I am going to ask the House to bear with me while I read it. My object is to show that the pastoralists in that part of the State are having an exceedingly bad time. I cannot speak too strongly about this matter because I consider it is up to the Government to take some action to meet those people in the trying circumstances that are facing them. It

is well known to most of us that the Murchison has experienced a serious lack of rain, and that the pastoralists there are deserving of the utmost sympathy. I understand from the Secretary of the Pastoralists' Association that he has seen the Minister for Railways and the Chief Secretary on this subject. One finds it rather difficult to move in a matter of this kind because members are not permitted to interview the Commissioner of Railways. Consequently I am taking this opportunity of doing what I consider to be my duty by bringing the matter under the notice of the Government. The letter I have received reads as follows—

The PRESIDENT: Does the hon. member propose to connect the letter with the Bill before the House?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: In my opening remarks I said that when this emergency legislation was first introduced we heard a good deal about equality of sacrifice. Now the Government propose to restore the cuts in salaries made when the legislation was first introduced. I want to know whether the position of the Murchison pastoralists is not apropos of the Bill before the House, bearing in mind all that was said about equality of sacrifice. I agree entirely with the views expressed by members in connection with this measure, and I do not think we can get back to the original state of affairs by restoring salaries. What the Government propose to do by means of the Bill before us, should apply to all sections of the community. If I am in order I should like to read the letter that I received, to show that the pastoralists of the Murchison are entitled to as much consideration as it is now proposed to give to other sections of the community.

The Honorary Minister: You are going the wrong way about it.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: It seems to me that whatever method one takes is the wrong method. With the permission of the House I should like to read the letter.

Hon. C. B. Williams: On a point of order, the letter the hon. member proposes to read has nothing to do with the Bill before us, and neither has the Bill anything to do with the position in the Murchison or the cattle there; it has to do with human beings.

The PRESIDENT: I am afraid the hon. member is going beyond the scope of the Bill.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I have no wish to disagree with your ruling, Sir, but I do say with all due respect that an easement is being given to a large section of the community. The Murchison people have for some time been endeavouring to get railway freights reduced, and they have been unable to do so, the Government declaring that the state of the finances will not permit the reduction to be made. Surely it is not out of order to mention that.

The PRESIDENT: There can be no objection to the hon. member incidentally mentioning that matter, but I do not think it will be appropriate for him to go into the question of railway freights as fully as he seems desirous of doing.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: So much time has been taken up in opposing my desires that if I had been left alone I would have concluded my remarks before this.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think the hon. member has any cause for complaint since he has already succeeded in making his point fairly clear.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I can hand the letter to the Minister and he can reply now or later on. I want to show the Murchison people that I have taken action.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have you not been a long time taking it?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: If the hon. member continues to interrupt, I shall be much longer. I should like to know whether I have the floor or not. It is inconsistent for the Government to give relief to one section of the community and deny it to others who are genuinely in need of it, but cannot get it. I fail to see why I cannot give the information in my possession. I feel inclined to stand up here and go on talking till further orders.

The PRESIDENT: I was only endeavouring to prevent interjections that were interfering with the hon. member's speech.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The matter appears to have been under consideration for some months. Adequate redress and consideration have not been given to these people who so much deserve it. If members knew the facts, I am sure they would decide that assistance should be given to them.

Things are very serious up there, and they have not received the consideration that the long-distance stock freights require to be given. We have heard a great deal about turning the mythical corner. If we have turned the corner, I see no reason why some easement should not be given to the particular section of the community whose cause I am espousing. I have no objection to its being given to other people. I am as anxious as anyone else that all concerned should receive assistance.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Are you not putting a spoke in their wheel?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Certainly not. I am anxious that everyone who is deserving of consideration at the hands of the Government should receive it. I hope the Government will see their way clear to making this reinstatement. The people concerned have not many members of Parliament to voice their needs. I have tried my best to do so on their behalf. I hope when the Minister replies he will be good enough to touch briefly on the question of why the Government have not seen fit to give these people the necessary relief. I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.34 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 30th October, 1935.

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

QUESTION—NOXIOUS WEEDS, SKELETON WEED.

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Has the appearance in this State of the skeleton weed been reported to his department? 2, If so, what action was taken by his department? 3, If the skeleton weed has not yet made its appearance, what is being done to prevent its introduction? 4, Are any educational methods being employed by his department to enable farmers and others to identify this weed and to understand its dangers? 5, If so, what are those methods?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, Its possible introduction has been reported to the department in a few instances. 2, These were investigated, but fortunately its introduction has never been verified. 3, As close a watch as is practicable is being kept on all seed introductions. 4, Yes. 5, Descriptive illustrated articles on the weed and its dangerous character have been widely circulated through the agricultural, city and country Press. Further, the departmental field officers are keeping a close watch for its appearance and warning farmers of its dangerous character.

QUESTION—METROPOLITAN SEWERAGE WORKS.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Acting Minister for Works: 1, What was the capital