

# Legislative Council.

Thursday, 2nd October, 1913.

|   | Page. |
|---|-------|
| Question: Agricultural fertilisers .. .. .                          | 1481  |
| Leave of Absence .. .. .  | 1481  |
| Papers presented .. .. .  | 1481  |
| Motion: Electoral Rolls, Legislative Council .. .. .                | 1481  |
| Bills: Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage, Amendment, 2R. .. .. . | 1490  |
| Traffic, 2R. .. .. .  | 1494  |

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

## QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL FERTILISERS.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Has the attention of the Government been drawn to a statement made by Professor Paterson to the effect that Australia imports practically all the phosphate used in connection with the production of agricultural fertilisers, and that already restrictive export legislation has been adopted by two of the largest producing countries, viz., America and Norway? 2, Having in view the vital importance of a continuous supply of this valuable material, will the Government consider the advisability of offering a reward for the discovery of suitable rock phosphate in this State?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, The matter is receiving consideration.

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (for Hon. F. Connor) leave of absence granted to Hon. R. W. Pennefather for six consecutive sittings on the ground of ill-health.

On motion by Hon. R. D. McKENZIE, leave of absence granted to Hon. J. D. Connolly for six consecutive sittings of the House on the ground of urgent private business.

## PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1. Audit Act, 1904—Regulations for the collection, custody, expenditure, and management of money belonging to the State by the

Agent General in London. 2, Government Savings Bank Act—Amendment of Regulations 3 and 18. 3, Audit Act, 1904—New regulation to be No. 45a. 4, Annual report on State-aided immigration for the year ended 30th June, 1913. 5, Public Service list, 1913.

## MOTION—ELECTORAL ROLLS, LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East) moved—

*That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that instructions be given to the Chief Electoral Officer that in compiling new rolls for the Legislative Council provinces the names of all persons appearing on the existing rolls, and who are shown by the municipal or road board lists to possess the necessary qualification, be retained on the new rolls.*

He said: It is not my purpose to detain the House for more than a few moments. I think that when I have explained the circumstances hon. members will agree it is a matter which at all events deserves discussion and explanation. It may be remembered that during the debate on the Address-in-reply last session I raised the question of the rights of ratepayers under the roads boards and the municipalities to remain on the roll of the Legislative Council. The Constitution, Section 15, provides that among the qualifications for an elector of the Legislative Council is the fact that the name of such person is on the electoral list of any municipality in respect of property within the province of the annual ratable value of not less than £17, or on the electoral list of any road board district in respect of property within the province of the annual ratable value of not less than £17. It was my contention at that time that any person possessing either of these qualifications was entitled to automatic enrolment on the Legislative Council rolls and I still maintain that no matter how far that idea may have been interfered with by the Electoral Act of 1907, it is not in accordance with the spirit of the Constitution that any person who has enrolment on

the municipal or roads board roll should be excluded from the roll of the Legislative Council. It is a complete qualification, and it is the duty of the Administration to see that that complete qualification is given effect to, and that the ratepayer is enrolled. Recently a number of notices have been forwarded by the Chief Electoral Officer to persons in all parts of the State, I understand to all persons who were enrolled on the Legislative Council roll prior to the 2nd March, 1908. The Electoral Act of 1907 came into force on the 2nd March, 1908, and one material alteration it made in the provisions of the Electoral Act was that before that date names were enrolled from the municipal or road board rolls. In 1908 the names were only enrolled in response to claims forwarded to the Chief Electoral Officer. The result was that hundreds of people, particularly in the country districts, who knew their names were on the rolls, took it for granted that they would be transferred to the Legislative Council rolls as in the past, and therefore they did not take the trouble to make any further application. In the metropolitan area a house to house canvass was made by the different political parties, with the result that the rolls were largely increased in numbers, whereas in the country districts where it was practically impossible, or at all events the political parties did not make any door-to-door canvass, there was not any material increase in the number of electors for the simple reason that those who were on the rolls for roads board properties were not enrolled as they should have been. The notice which has been issued by the Chief Electoral Officer states—

A proclamation has been issued by His Excellency the Governor directing the preparation of a new roll for the above-mentioned province, which shall contain the names of all persons on the present roll who appear to me to retain their qualification. The present Electoral Act, which came into force on 2nd March, 1908, provides that, to ensure enrolment, a claim card, duly signed and completed, shall be lodged,

and as your enrolment above referred to was made prior to that date, no such card, of course, is available. I am unable, therefore, to satisfy myself as to whether or not you are eligible for transfer to the new roll.

Since what I have to say may be regarded as critical of the work of the Chief Electoral Officer, I want to disabuse the minds of hon. members in that regard, and say that I have no fault to find with that gentleman. I think Mr. Stenberg does his work admirably, and my only protest is that the course taken by him in this instance, with a view to making a perfect roll, is contrary to the law of the land. In this paragraph he says that the present Electoral Act provides that to ensure enrolment a claim card duly completed shall be lodged, etcetera. That is not the case at all. It is a misstatement of the facts. The present Electoral Act says in effect "for a new man to secure enrolment," not "to secure enrolment on a new roll." Section 40 says, "In preparing new rolls the names of all persons who appear to be qualified shall be inserted." Surely it cannot be for a moment contended that a man whose name is on the existing roll, and whose name still appears on the roll of the roads board or municipality, does not appear to be qualified to be transferred to the new roll. The section goes on to say—

The names of all persons who, from information supplied by the Registrar General of Deaths, appear to be dead, or who, from information supplied by the Inspector General of the Insane, the Superintendent of Public Charities, and the Comptroller General of Prisons appear to be disqualified; or who appear to be otherwise disqualified . . . shall be omitted.

The only persons whose names the electoral officer is entitled to omit from the new roll are those of persons who appear to be disqualified. My contention is that when a man is on the existing roll and his qualifications are clearly stated, and the roads board list shows that he still retains that qualification, then that man does not appear to be disqualified and

therefore the Chief Electoral Officer has no right to strike him off the roll. Since this motion of mine was placed on the Notice Paper I have been informed, although the information is directly opposite to the information conveyed to me by an officer of the department a few days ago, that it is not the intention of the Chief Electoral Officer to strike off the name of any person if he finds on inquiry that that person appears on the roll of either a municipality or a roads board. If it is so, the Chief Electoral Officer had no reason to send out this notice at all, and had only the power to send out notices to a man after his name has been struck off the roll on the ground that he has lost his qualification. A great many people receiving these notices cannot, of course, be expected to read the whole of them. Seeing that they relate to the Legislative Council a good many people will say "I am on that roll as I voted at the last election." And they will not bother any more, and for that reason they will be disqualified. One of the qualifications for an elector of the Legislative Council is that he should hold a lease or license from the Crown to depasture, occupy, cultivate, or mine upon Crown lands within the province at a rental of not less than £10 per annum. Cases have come under my notice in which the Crown lessee has filled up his claim card and stated merely the number of his lease. The claim card goes back to the registrar of the district, and the registrar takes a course of action which I do not think was contemplated under this Act. He finds an applicant was the holder of a free homestead farm of 160 acres, which had not yet passed into his possession, and could not be counted as a qualification; and of conditional purchase land, of about 260 acres, for which he was paying an annual rental of £9 10s. The electoral registrar says this man is not qualified, because the qualification is £10, but as a matter of fact that man is a ratepayer to the roads board on an annual rental value of about £50. That position has arisen in a number of cases. I want to say the Electoral Department appears to be very

anxious to get everybody on the rolls who is entitled to be there. I am not going to deny that it would be better if every person on the roll sent in a card, that it would be more convenient for the department; but when it is decided that there is to be a card for every elector that decision must be arrived at by Parliament, and not by the Chief Electoral Officer. The Act only demands that new names shall be enrolled in response to claims, and even to that extent I think it overrides the Constitution when it shuts out the duly enrolled ratepayer on the municipal or roads board list. I am convinced, on going through the Act, that there is no power in the Act for the Chief Electoral Officer to send out notices to all the people whose names are in the existing roll and confirmed by the electoral list of a municipality or roads board. I am as earnestly desirous as the Chief Electoral Officer that our rolls should be pure, but I think it is still more important that they should be complete, and I would rather see the names of a few dead men on the roll than that hundreds of duly qualified electors should be left off it. I hope that some explanation of this matter will be given so that some assurance can go to the electors as to what it is really necessary for them to do, and I hope that instructions will be issued to the Chief Electoral Officer which will prohibit him striking out the names of people who are on the present roll and whose qualifications are in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution. I move the motion standing in my name.

Hon. E. M. CLARKE (South-West): In seconding the motion I am willing to admit that Mr. Stenberg is trying to purge the rolls and bring them up to date. It is very evident, however, that there is something radically wrong. On two occasions I have filled up cards myself and sent them along. It is very annoying that on every occasion one should have to make a fresh application in order to be quite sure that he will be on the roll. It is only twelve months since a case came under my notice of a man who filled in his card and sent it in

right enough, but who, two or three weeks afterwards, was served with another notice. In the interval he had removed his residence to some other spot and he was challenged again. It appears to me that it is done in an indiscriminate way. In making inquiries in Bunbury I have found that some people have been on the roll for years without their names being challenged at any time. It seems that just here and there a few electors are singled out. To say the least it is annoying to have to fill in a card unless it is for some good and specific purpose. It appears to me that if one neglected to fill in a card and return it, the chances are that his name would be erased from the roll. What can be the object of it all? Under the Municipalities Act, when compiling the roll they can always strike off the names of those who have died or gone away beyond the district. Of course, it is unreasonable to think that Mr. Stenberg should know all these people, but at the same time I fully endorse what Mr. Colebatch has said. Until such time as it comes to the knowledge of the Electoral Department that a person is no longer qualified as an elector I think his name should be left on the roll. It is unwise to challenge well-known people without occasion. It is wrong and most exasperating to be called upon to fill in these cards when one knows that his name is already on the municipal and roads board rolls. In such circumstances an elector should not be pestered with these cards; such a thing should not be. I give credit to Mr. Stenberg for trying to do what is correct, but I think something is wrong, and I hope it will be seen into so that every person on the roll shall remain there until such time as it is officially known that he no longer holds the necessary qualification.

Hon. J. CORNELL (South): Mr. Colebatch and I were in agreement in connection with this matter on the Address-in-reply. I do not desire to appear to be in any way critical of the Chief Electoral Officer, but as one who has recently been through an election I have nothing to say in favour of the compil-

ing of the Legislative Council rolls, I think that every ratepayer in a municipality or a roads board district should, as the Constitution provides, have his name automatically transferred to the Council rolls. But there is the question of rating, and the question of the compilation of municipal rolls. One municipality which I have the honour to represent carried by resolution the valuation of the previous year, with the result that some who were on the roll rated at £3 and £5 had in the meantime erected dwellings which brought them up to probably very near to the amount laid down by the Act, namely, £17 annual value. If the object of the Chief Electoral Officer is to send out cards, as was done last year, to every elector on the roll, and, if in the event of an elector not returning that card, his name will be struck off the roll, well, I condemn it in its entirety. I know as far as the South Province roll was concerned—and I think I can speak also for Mr. Ardagh in the North-East Province—that had it not been for the efforts of the two political parties in both of these provinces some 700 or 800 names would have been left off the rolls. It was only the efforts of the two political parties that produced such good rolls in the North-East and the South Provinces. I think it should not be the work of political parties to frame a good roll; the Government or the responsible officers should take every possible means to compile a roll as up to date as possible. I would like to say a word on the compilation of the last roll and to say that in my humble opinion the district registrar was hampered too much from Perth. From my personal experience one or two of the finest electoral officers in the State engaged on the compilation of the rolls of the South Province and the North-East Province did not on the last occasion put the heart into the work which they had previously done. Had more power been given to these gentlemen, the power they had enjoyed in the past, the efforts put forward by the two political parties would not have been necessary. I know there are great difficulties

confronting the Chief Electoral Officer and his staff in the compilation of a roll, but I do hope that on this occasion the elector is not going to be bombarded with the amount of literature which was sent to him on the compilation of the last roll. Instead of simplifying his work it intensified it, and he did not know where he stood. Persons who omitted to send in their election cards as per instructions were struck off the rolls. We can sympathise with the desire for the compilation of pure rolls, and I say let every qualified elector be on the roll. I support the motion because it goes some of the way, and I hope that any remarks I have offered will not be taken as antagonistic towards those responsible for the compilation of the rolls, but rather as the frank opinion of one interested in the compilation of the last roll and elected on that roll. I was not satisfied with that roll because I thought many more names could have been on it.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West): It should be the desire of the Electoral Department to obtain as perfect a roll as possible. I am convinced that if the procedure quoted by Mr. Colebatch is carried into execution the result will be the disfranchisement of hundreds of people in each province. It is quite clear from Sections 37, 40 and 41 of the Electoral Act that there is sufficient legislation to enable new rolls to be prepared without cancelling the whole of the existing rolls and neglecting to utilise the material contained therein. Under Section 37 a new roll for either province or electorate should be prepared under the supervision of the Chief Electoral Officer when ever directed by proclamation. The proclamation has been published declaring that new rolls shall be prepared and brought into operation in connection with these provinces. In my humble opinion the time to publish that proclamation was immediately after the last Legislative Council elections. It would then have enabled rolls to be prepared some twelve months before the next election, and if large numbers of people had been disfranchised they would have been given reasonable opportunity to get on the sup-

plementary rolls. But as this proclamation has been published in October, only a few months preceding the election, and as the rolls probably will not be printed until close on the election, hundreds of qualified persons will be left off the rolls, and consequently little or no opportunity will be afforded them to put in their claims for inclusion in the supplementary rolls. That should not be the policy of the department. The proper policy for the department is to try to put every qualified person on the roll so that when we get one-third of the members of this House returned to serve the public they shall be as near a true reflex of the constituencies as possible. That result is not likely to be achieved if hundreds of people are disfranchised. It has been quite correctly pointed out by Mr. Colebatch, and I do not think the legislation leaves any room for doubt, that in the preparation of new rolls the names of all persons who appear to be qualified shall be inserted. The Chief Electoral Officer in his circular says this—

The present Electoral Act, which came into force on the 2nd March, 1908, provides that to insure enrolment a claim card duly signed and completed shall be lodged, and as your enrolment above referred to was made prior to that date no such card, of course, is available.

Mr. Colebatch has correctly said that a claim card is only necessary in order to put persons on the roll who are not there at present. But it is the next clause in the circular to which I would specially draw attention. It is in particularly large type and reads as follows:—

I am unable therefore to satisfy myself as to whether or not you are eligible for transfer to the new roll.

I am now going to make a statement which, after all, is merely a matter of opinion, but which I think is so near to truth that I ought not to refrain from saying it. Mr. Stenberg says he is unable to satisfy himself as to whether or not the person is eligible for transference. It is quite obvious that Mr. Stenberg and his subordinates have not taken any trouble at all to satisfy themselves as to

whether these people are eligible, because thousands of these cards have gone out. The truth is, that to save themselves the trouble of satisfying themselves as to the eligibility of these persons, the departmental officers have sent forth this circular throughout the length and breadth of the State. The fact of the matter is that they have never tried to satisfy themselves and instead of the officials assuming the responsibility they should assume, they are casting upon the public the obligation of sending in these cards. It is true, and the hon. Mr. Cornell has correctly stated my view, that if the department deluges the public with a lot of this literature they get so heartily sick and tired of it that they will not send in claims at all.

Hon. E. M. Clarke : No, they put them in the wastepaper basket.

Hon. M. L. MOSS : If I were to be a candidate at the next election, which it is not my intention to be, I should, in the face of a circular like this, deem it my duty to put persons on in West Province to get these cards signed, and the cost would be something in the vicinity of £200 or £300.

Hon. J. Cornell : A lot of people would still be left off.

Hon. M. L. MOSS : Yes, the general public are not concerned until election day and then they find they are off the roll. That is not a fair position to put prospective candidates in. This department should do what the Federal Department does. According to the Federal law it is compulsory for a person to enrol himself, and cards are taken round from house to house—not sent through the post—and an officer attends at the person's residence within a few days, demanding the return of the cards properly filled up. If we had a system like that there would be no hardship in sending out the cards for the public to fill in, but as an old campaigner I consider that to send out these cards and trust to the people filling them in means that hundreds of people in every district will be disfranchised. This is a matter in which the Minister charged

with the administration of the Act should prevent Mr. Stenberg from carrying out the policy he has laid down in these circulars. Obviously the intention of Parliament is that once an elector is on the roll he is entitled to be automatically transferred to the new roll unless after due inquiry the department is satisfied that the person concerned does not possess the qualification. I do not believe that the statement contained in the circular is true. The officials should make efforts to satisfy themselves. If this debate is adjourned I would like to ask the Minister if he will make special application to Mr. Stenberg, so that he can inform the House and the public at large what steps have been taken which justify the statement in this circular that he has been unable to satisfy himself. Speaking for myself, I have had one of these circulars sent to me. What I would like to know is what efforts did Mr. Stenberg or his subordinates make to ascertain whether I possessed the qualification. The qualification in respect of which I am registered I have possessed for many years. I am inclined to think that the whole of the roll is taken on one basis, and that the sending out of these circulars is a gross violation of the sections which have been quoted by the hon. Mr. Colebatch and re-quoted by me. We hear a good deal about the restricted franchise for this House, but this action will tend to still further restrict it, and to prevent people who are justly entitled to vote for this House from exercising their right. The Government I am sure do not want to do that, and Mr. Stenberg should be thwarted in his attempt to make light the work which should rest on him and his staff by throwing on the public an obligation which Parliament never intended should be thrust upon them.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) : I have very much pleasure in supporting the motion brought forward by the hon. Mr. Colebatch. It seems to me that the whole process might to a large extent be very much simplified. In the first place the rolls should

be made up by taking the names of those persons who are qualified from the municipal councils and road boards lists. There is very little difficulty in finding out whether these are correct because the local authorities can say whether the people concerned should be on the rolls or not, and if this course were adopted it would save a great deal of trouble. In the next place, all applications, whether made personally or by letter, should be in respect of the person who requires it. Instead of worrying and bothering themselves in this way, the Chief Electoral Officer, the registrars, and the rest of the officers should be free to receive these applications and to register them. I do not take it to be a part of their duty to hunt up people and find out whether they are on the roll. The question is—are they on the roll? If their names are on the municipal or road boards rate lists and they still hold the qualification their names should remain. If other people apply and prove that they are qualified their names should be put on and they should remain on until objected to, and in the event of their being objected to, and of their exercising the vote without possessing the qualification, there should be a good strong penalty. I have no sympathy with a man who will not take the trouble to register for his vote. We hear a great deal about one man in a district putting on 200 names and someone else putting on 300 names. After all, these people do not care whether they are on the roll or not. I remember a case in connection with the Federal elections in which several men and women stated that they did not understand the questions, and that they had not given them the slightest consideration and they asked what was the use of putting their names on the roll. Taking the questions submitted at the last Federal election, how many men, let alone women, understood them? I say a very small proportion of them.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: More women than men I think.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: At the same time a large proportion did not.

To carry out my intention the vote should be a privilege and should not be compulsory unless it is the policy of the country to force everyone to vote. If it is optional, as it is in this State, the department should simply be there to register the applications and to receive objections and take the names off the roll when it is proved that the qualification is no longer held. Why they should go to all this trouble to go around the country to find out who is on or off the roll I cannot understand. Anyone who will not take the trouble to register does not deserve a vote, because it shows that he has not given the slightest consideration to the question to be submitted. Some people say "Give everyone a vote," but many people do not know whether they are on the lists, and then we hear them asking "How will I vote?" Some might be heard to say—"Oh, I will not vote for so-and-so," and members of the opposite sex—"Oh, yes, a handsome man like so-and-so, I will vote for him."

Hon. J. Cornell: Is that how you got in?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: The hon. member is a man of very great discrimination. I think we are going to too much trouble altogether in connection with this matter, and the only question is whether it should be compulsory or optional. If it is compulsory everyone who does not register should be fined, and if it is optional and people do not apply over their own signatures, without being rounded up by a lot of other parties, they should go without the vote. I am pleased that the Hon. Mr. Colebatch has brought the matter up.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER (Metropolitan-Suburban): To my mind the chief aim of the Electoral Act should be to render it as easy as possible for a person to get on the roll, and as hard as possible when once there to be taken off. I join with Sir Edward Wittenoom in saying that once a man has a vote, which is a privilege of citizenship, he should do his utmost to retain it, and should have to go to certain trouble to see that he does retain it. I received one of these circulars, and I found my way to the office of the Chief

Electoral Officer and asked the reason why it was sent to me. Why, I asked should I receive a circular considering that I had been on the roll for the last 17 years for the particular qualification I possessed, and I inquired what would be the result if I did not fill in the card and return it. I was informed that there would be no result. "Would not my name be struck off the roll?" I asked. "No" was the answer. "Then what is the object of sending out these cards?" I asked. The object why it was sent out, I was informed, was that in some cases electors still remained on the roll for qualifications which they did not now possess. The department endeavoured to ascertain whether they still retained the qualification, or if they had parted with the qualification, as that assisted the department to purge the rolls and strike off those who did not now possess the qualification.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Such people should be penalised.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I asked what course would be adopted if I did not reply, and was informed that the Electoral Department would make a search of the Titles Office or inquiries from the municipal council or roads boards, and if the qualification was not discovered there a second notice would be sent asking me to substantiate the claim, and in the event of my not doing so, I would be struck off.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: They should do that first.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I see the trouble to which the Electoral Department is going, and I quite appreciate it, and I would like here to give testimony to the whole-hearted zeal which I think does animate that department to see that the rolls are kept clean. But what I object to is that the notice is misleading. I am afraid that the elector who receives a notice of this kind would think that he had no qualification. He would conclude that his qualification was challenged and that he must return the card stating that his name should be struck off the roll. The circular is unfortunately worded. The second paragraph reads—

A proclamation has been issued by His Excellency the Governor directing the preparation of a new roll for the above-mentioned province, which shall contain the names of all persons on the present roll—

And then in large type it says—

who appear to me to retain their qualification.

The first reflection which naturally comes to a man on reading that is that he does not retain his qualification, and after reading the words in very big type "I am unable therefore to satisfy myself as to whether or not you are eligible for transfer to the new roll" the elector would conclude that he was to be struck off the roll. To a man who has been on the roll for many years as I have been, it is very unfair that there should be an attempt to strike him off the roll. I do not believe that is the intention of the department. The circular is misleading.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: They have not the power to say that although they have struck him off.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: The Act says that the name shall be struck off—

Hon. W. Patrick: I know where names have been struck off.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Section 40 gives power to strike off the names of all persons (1) who from information supplied by the Registrar General of Deaths appear to be dead or who from information supplied by the Inspector General of the Insane, the Superintendent of Public Charities, and the Comptroller of Prisons appear to be disqualified, (2) who appear to be otherwise disqualified, and (3) in the case of Assembly rolls those who do not appear to reside in the district. According to the circular it looks as if the department is trying to strike off persons who are qualified. The motion moved by the hon. Mr. Colebatch is in a somewhat different direction from the trend of the discussion. It affirms the desirability of the names of all persons appearing on the existing rolls and who are shown by the municipal or road board lists to possess the necessary qualification, being retained on the new rolls. I quite agree with that; the trans-

fer from those rolls to the electoral roll of the State should be automatic. At the department I am told that is not so, and I fail to see why the transfer should not be automatic.

Hon. M. L. MOSS : It is the clear intention of Parliament.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER : It would save a lot of trouble to the elector who, knowing that he was on the municipal or road board roll, could rely upon his name being automatically put on the electoral roll. It would give electors a greater sense of security. When I was at the electoral office I was furnished with copies of a number of notices which are being sent out, and in a number of instances these notices are justified. I was informed that in the case of a man who appeared to retain a qualification at Boulder, and who went to reside at Perth, application was made for his registration on the Perth roll. The department sent him a peremptory notice stating in effect, "You are on the roll at Boulder. Unless you substantiate that claim you will be struck off." That course obviously is justified. I have ventured to give the House my own experience and my idea that the department in issuing these circulars was doing not more than issuing a misleading notice, but I bear testimony to the endeavour of the department to keep the rolls clean, and in proper order.

Hon. F. CONNOR (North) : It is my intention to support the motion and, in doing so, I would like to say that I have had the honour of having one of these cards sent to me. I do not know why that expense should be gone to by the Government. Surely the Electoral Registrar should know that such men as Mr. Moss, Mr. Gawler and myself still live in the State and possess the necessary qualifications which entitle us to vote. I do not think that the onus should be cast upon us to prove that we possess these qualifications. The position is exactly the same in the case of any individual whose name is on the roll. He should not be called upon to prove, simply for the satisfaction of the department or, perhaps, an individual in the department, that he holds the required qualifications. I would

point out that if it depended entirely on these cards many people would not have their names placed upon the roll. Take, for instance, a case like my own. I have been absent from the State for some time and I know of cases where people who have possessed qualifications for many years, and still hold them, have had occasion to leave the State. The cards are sent to them and perhaps, through no fault of their own, these cards are not returned, with the result that their names are struck off. I repeat that the onus should not be with the individual. Once having proved that he is entitled to be on the roll his name should remain there. I do not want to labour the question, which has my support.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East) : I am entirely with Mr. Colebatch in regard to the intention of his motion, but I think it can be improved and made effective by a slight alteration. It is my intention to move that the words "appearing on the existing rolls," in lines 5 and 6, be struck out, and in the last line the word "retained" be struck out and "placed" substituted. The motion will then read—"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that instructions be given to the Chief Electoral Officer that in compiling new rolls for the Legislative Council provinces the names of all persons, who are shown by the municipal or road board lists to possess the necessary qualification, be placed on the new rolls." If Mr. Colebatch will accept that amendment I will not labour it.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch : Certainly.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN : I only want to say that I hope that neither Mr. Stenberg nor any of his officials will take this to mean that the non-appearance of a name on a municipal or roads board roll should necessarily disqualify a person.

Hon. H. P. Colebatch : They can get on if they claim.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN : I came across a registrar not long since who had struck off quite a number of names from a roll. I asked him why he had done this, and he said "I have gone through the muni-

cipal and roads board rolls, and the names are not on them, so I struck them off the Electoral roll." "But," I said, "that is only part of the collateral evidence to guide a registrar that there are people qualified whose names never appear on those rolls." He replied "If I have struck them off wrongly they can get on again." I said "What about their position in the meanwhile?" He said "Oh, they can get on again." I need not add that the registrar was struck off himself, not from information given by me, but from information which came from other sources. I say it is important that registrars should be carefully instructed that people who are qualified should have their names on the roll. I desire to move an amendment—

*That in lines 5 and 6 the words "appearing on the existing rolls" be struck out, and in the last line the word "retained" be struck out and "placed" inserted in lieu.*

Hon. H. P. Colebatch: I will accept that amendment.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary debate adjourned.

## BILL—WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 24th September.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN (South-East): I have first of all a matter of minor criticism which I shall mention, and I would like to suggest to the Minister in charge of the Bill that the course which has been adopted in Clause 4 is an unusual and an undesirable way of repeating or rather of continuing a measure. The Act, as hon. members will remember, was limited to one year's duration. The Minister desires now to remove the limitation, and he has done so quite properly in the first line of Clause 4, which says "Section 21 of the principal Act is hereby repealed." I want to point out that that is enough. There is no need to go on and say, as

the clause does, "and the said Act shall be and the same is hereby made perpetual." That is nonsense.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: You cannot do it.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: We are not Medes and Persians, and we may alter, amend, or repeal any Act. I suggest, therefore, that the second line of that clause be struck out. Now with regard to the continuance of that Act. It gives opportunity for some necessary criticism of the administration. I want to point out very briefly—leaving it to hon. members whose constituents are more entirely concerned, to follow and deal with the matter more fully—that the administration has dealt cruelly with new settlers in the dry areas, who, in the hour of their distress were left to make contracts with the Works Department for the supply of water from the Goldfields scheme. The administration has dealt unjustly—that is a still stronger word—with the owners of property abutting on the old pipe line constructed 12 years ago purely for the purpose of supplying the goldfields with water, and without regard to the people whose properties lie between Mundaring and the goldfields. Now about the cruel treatment of the settlers in the dry areas. The Minister administering this Bill claims that he has been almost a God-sent deliverer of these settlers. With many of these new settlers it is a case of "Save us from our friends" for the Minister has placed upon them a burden which they never can carry. Any settler whose property abuts on the line, or is within ten chains of the line, is open to be taxed for all his land running a mile backwards, to the extent of £5, and then 5d. per acre for every acre he holds. If these were districts for intense culture, it would be an entirely different matter, because the water could be used for irrigation purposes, but where it is simply used for watering stock, and where many of those settlers have their own provisions for watering stock, quite regardless of the Minister, it is a cruel imposition to say that they shall pay this £5 and the 5d. per acre. I hope our Minister, in whom we have every confidence as a fair minded man, will make representations

to his colleagues that the Minister for Works has placed upon many new settlers a burden that will crush them off the land. I feel quite as strongly with regard to the injustice that has been inflicted or perpetrated on the older property owners through whose land the old pipe line was placed without any reference to them or as to any redress they might have in the future. The Minister for Works comes to these settlers and says "You all have your own provision for watering stock; you do not want my supply of water, yet I am going to tax you just as if the supply had been provided for you and you were using it." I say this is a monstrous act of injustice.

Members: Hear, hear.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: It would be just as rational for the Railway Commissioner to go to these men and say, "We have provided railway facilities for you, and whether you use them or not, there will be a minimum tax which you will have to pay, because the railway passes your property." There would be more in that because a railway is a monopoly and is recognised as such for the transit of the country's products, but in the matter of the water supply, every land owner along this pipe line has for years past provided himself, in many instances at enormous expense, with all the water supply he requires, and the Minister has now come down and taxed these men, and it is an intensification of the injustice in the case of these men, that when the pipes were laid down, the then Government went to them and said, "It is quite within your power to make us wait until we get an Act of Parliament through, but we come to you and say, 'will you allow us to put this pipe line through your property.' " The property owners said, "Yes, certainly." Now the Government declare that because the pipe line is near enough to these people for them to draw water from, whether they want it or not, they will have to pay for such water. It is a monstrous thing. Now with regard to the administration in connection with drainage, I am not going to take the

duty that the metropolitan members should take. As a matter of fact, I did not move the adjournment of this debate until I had looked around for other members to speak, but possibly some of those members were absent. It is a notorious fact that in connection with the drainage works in this city what I would call political unionism has done its complete work. I do not think there has ever been an instance in the history of the State where the political bosses of the unions have effected a more complete work than in connection with this drainage. They have so raised up the costs in connection with services rendered, that, but for compulsion under the law, there would not be a single house connected with the sewerage system, because the costs have been so worked up that there will be for ever a gratuitous and utterly unnecessary burden placed upon those properties. I believe in good wages, but I hold that wages have to be earned or they never can be paid, and I say boldly that under this complete work of political unionism currency has been depreciated. A sovereign pays for to-day in some cases two-thirds and in other cases barely half what it paid for 10 or 12 years ago in this State. That is the position, and if I wanted to contrive the keenest torture for any one of the present Ministers it would be to compel him to sit for a few hours and watch the operations on some of these works. Whilst waiting for a train I happened to be compulsorily detained near a little job that was going on. A man had to cut through a piece of weatherboard. I admit that it was a dry board, but how long do hon. members think this man was in cutting it through? Nearly a quarter of an hour, and during the cutting of that one board, which is about a minute's work, he had three yarns with passers-by. I will be asked what that has to do with political unionism, and I make bold to say that the attitude of political unionism is this—"Men, don't burst yourselves"—and the mens' quarrel with the foreigner, who is called an alien, is that he is an adjective speeder-up, and he will not spend his money

freely; he is thrifty and saving, therefore he is a bad man. Now there must be some remedy found for this wicked waste of money. It is not only a depreciation of the currency, but it is a degradation of industry, because men keep on getting a wrong view of their duty to those who pay for their work. By the way, there was a remarkable piece of evidence in the court the other day. A young clerk—and there are lots in this department—was giving evidence, and he stated he was 19 years of age. "What pay do you get?" he was asked, and he answered "£2 a week." He was a fancy witness for the union. Then he was asked—"Do you think that salary enough?" "No." "What do you do with it?" Now in the olden days, the days of our fathers, who laid the foundations of Australia, if a young fellow getting £2 a week was asked that question he would have said—"I live on £1 and I send the other £1 back to the old people at home." But what does this young fellow say now under the influence of political unionism? "I can just exist on £2 by help from my parents on the farm." It is not only a depreciation of currency, but it is a destruction of manly fibre and self-reliance on the part of the people. "Get all you can and give as little as possible for it." A young dog like that ought to be thrown into the deep water in order that he might get some little fibre in swimming out.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: That would spoil all his clothing.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Yes, this youngster wanted from £30 to £35 a year for his clothing, as much as the average man lives on in the Old Country. I know of a minister who borrowed lots of money to make work, and his instruction to the mass of men was this, "I do not want you to burst yourselves; take things easily. Do not let me be bothered by people coming to me and saying that they saw you loafing, but just take things steadily."

The Colonial Secretary: Did you say a minister?

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: Yes, but not one of the present group.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: A minister of the gospel.

Hon. J. F. CULLEN: No, a minister of the Crown, and he made lots of work for his own supporters. I repeat that not a single private connection would be made to-day in connection with this sewerage and drainage, but for compulsion by the law, because every private owner is saddled with such a gratuitous and unnecessary extra on what ought to be the expenditure, that he would never do it unless he was compelled. I want to pass on this hint through the Colonial Secretary to the Minister in charge of the department that the fine work put in by the political bosses has about reached breaking point, and ministers ought to advise their friends to go slow.

Hon. M. L. MOSS (West): I do not want to attribute to political unionism or the Government the blame for what is taking place in connection with the sanitary connections, but there is a very real and substantial grievance existing in the metropolitan area. I am deluged with complaints from my constituents and people in Perth as to the tremendous cost imposed upon the people in this connection. I am not satisfied that this excessive cost has only arisen during the term of office of the present Government, because I think it was excessive when the previous Government were in office. I have had prices from private contractors for the same work as has been carried out under the department, and I could give definite illustrations, many of them, that the price charged by the Government is 50 per cent. above that charged by private contractors. Of course it might be asked, "Why is it that the work is not given to the private contractors to perform?" The reason is that under the statute payment of the money which the Government charge for these connections is extended over a term of six years; the cost is payable in quarterly instalments and bears a small rate of interest, and in connection with sanitary connections, particularly for small cottage properties, it is a fearful thing to ask a poor person to plunk down £50 in a lump sum. The consequence is that these unfortunate people cannot find

the lump sum, and they are compelled to have the work carried out by the department. The remarkable thing is this, that when the bill comes in there is not one, solitary item showing how the lump sum is made up. Only this morning I had two bills shown to me at Fremantle, and I am sorry that I have not got them in the House this afternoon, because I intended to move a substantive motion to deal with this matter. In one case I can assure hon. members that the bill is £60 12s. 6d. for the connections in a small cottage in South Fremantle.

Hon. W. Patrick: Do they not give details?

Hon. M. L. MOSS: No. The owner of the property asked for the details and was unable to get them. I am credibly informed that what goes on is this: If a piece of piping is wanted a journey is made to Fremantle for it, and the time occupied in the journey to and fro is charged for. It is all included in the lump sum, and the owner is compelled to pay. Here is another illustration: There is an hon. member in this House who had a septic tank on his property and therefore all the necessary connections in his house, and to connect him up with the system it was unnecessary for the workmen to enter his house at all, yet the cost charged to him was £78. That statement can be substantiated by an hon. member in this Chamber. I am not blaming the Government altogether, but there is something radically wrong, affecting a large section of the community, and I am mentioning these facts so that the Minister may convey to his colleague, the Minister for Works, the opinion that must be held by every member in this Chamber that he should exercise a closer and better supervision than is being exercised at the present time. It is a scandal that people owning small properties should be penalised to the extent of £50 for house connections. These people are forced into the hands of the Government by the better terms which the statute provides, and it is quite true, as Mr. Cullen said, that if it were not for the law people would not face this tremendous cost.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: They can raise the rent.

Hon. M. L. MOSS: They can certainly raise the rent, but this cost presses hardest on the poor artisan or workman who has his own property and is confronted with a mortgage of £50 or £60, and has no opportunity of checking the amount he is charged. Cannot something be done to remedy this state of affairs? I do not want to blame political unionism or anything else, but I believe that closer supervision will remove a good deal of the burden that these people are at present called upon to carry. I hope the Colonial Secretary will convey to the Minister for Works the idea prevalent in this House that something ought to be done to remedy an undoubted evil.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North): In connection with the debate on water supply, I would like to endorse a good deal that has fallen from Mr. Cullen, because it might seem like exaggeration when he states that some people are obliged to pay rates on account of being contiguous to the Coolgardie water scheme when they derive no advantage from it and take no benefit. I know an instance and it is a personal one. I, as a rule, object to giving personal instances, but no one can speak so well as from personal experience, and I can give this instance as I own the land and have to pay the rates every year. I am able to state the hardship there is on some people. The water does not come close to this land at all; it is no use to it. I have never wanted it, but I have to pay the rate on it every year. That is an illustration of what a great many other people have to do as well as myself. The land is not worth the rates paid on it. I would be prepared to sell it for what it cost, in fact I make this offer in this House, that I will sell the land to any one to-morrow for sixpence. The land is situated in Beverley and it is rated. It is contiguous to the Coolgardie water scheme. I have never had a drop of water on it, the land does not want water, and I am prepared to sell the land to-morrow for sixpence, and hand the title over to anyone who will take it. That is an illustration of how harshly this matter presses on people when they do not want the water.

On motion by Hon. W. Patrick debate adjourned.

## BILL—TRAFFIC.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 25th September.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE (South-East): The wide scope covered by this Bill necessitates equally wide discussion and I intend, with the permission of the House, this evening to have a fair say with regard to the provisions of this measure, and, in doing so, I trust I will not descend to the lower plane tactics adopted by the responsible Minister who introduced this Bill in another place and who, in the course of his remarks concerning this Chamber, picked me out for special condemnation. I may say at the outset my best thanks are due to the Colonial Secretary for the manner in which he handled the unpleasant paragraph which was placed in his hands the other day in connection with this Bill. No doubt it was passed on to him, but, with his usual tact and good feeling, he expressed himself satisfied with the few interjections which I made. But I am not satisfied with the remarks which fell from the Minister for Works. I strongly resent the reference made by that gentleman to this Chamber and I desire to add my protest to the protests that have already fallen from previous speakers in this House. I know the desire of every one in this Chamber is that the Bill shall have fair treatment. There is no desire to block it from mere cussedness, if I may use that expression. We are all agreed that this important Bill should not be lost to the State. I was one, when the Minister first introduced it, to give him credit for its introduction. I mention this because I notice by the paper that special reference was made to me. What are we to expect when we find, according to the daily Press, a responsible Minister in another place using expressions such as those which are embodied in an extract which I intend to read with the permission of the House. It is the *West Australian* that I intend

to quote from and these words appear there—

As far as the Government were concerned, they were prepared to receive suggestions from anyone to assist them in framing a Bill that was in the best interests of the people in the various portions of the State, but he was not going to sit down and take the judgment of the Legislative Council, which was not representative of the people, and was not supposed to know the people's requirements as well as the Legislative Assembly. The Legislative Council represented only a privileged section of the community, and its members were for such large areas that they could not keep in touch with the requirements of the smaller places, as could members of the Legislative Assembly. It had been said with regard to another Bill that he should have been more moderate in his remarks in reference to the Legislative Council, with the view of getting the Bill passed. But he was not going to be a party to a system of going on their knees to anyone in order to get legislation through the Legislative Council.

This is very objectionable language. The extract goes on to say—

He submitted the Bill with confidence, and trusted that members of the Legislative Council would study it more carefully and realise that it was framed in the interests of the people, and that they must not take their limited view of Western Australia—limited as was the franchise on which they were elected. He hoped the Legislative Council would recognise that the highways and byways were the people's, and must not be viewed in a limited way by members of the property Chamber.

The Speaker: Order! The hon. Minister must not reflect on the Legislative Council.

The Minister for Works: I am not reflecting upon the Council.

The Speaker: The hon. Minister referred to the Legislative Council in terms that he should not.

The Minister for Works: I will not repeat it.

It is needless to make any comment on these remarks further than to say that they are unwise, unwarranted, and unjust.

Hon. F. Connor: Why do you take notice of them, then?

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: I am the only member of the Legislative Council who has been singled out by name by this Minister and I will not sit down quietly under misrepresentation. If the Minister had known to the full extent the proposals in the Bill he would have hesitated to condemn the members of the Legislative Council. I, as a member of this Chamber, approached the Bill from one view. Those members who are not conversant with country life listen to what country members have to say on such an important measure as the Traffic Bill. I again repeat, this Council has only one desire, that is to make the Bill a workable one, and that desire still exists in the Chamber, in spite of what the Minister said.

The PRESIDENT: I must draw the hon. member's attention to the Standing Order which says, "No member shall allude to any debate of the current session in the Assembly."

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: Mr. President, am I to quietly sit down and have these statements made about me and this Chamber in another place and not have an opportunity of replying?

The PRESIDENT: There is a way of avoiding that. You can say that you saw it in the public Press.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: I am quoting from the public Press.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is in perfect order.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: I did not intend to take notice of the remarks only for the document which was passed on to the Colonial Secretary, who was asked to take up a similar line of argument, otherwise I should not have read the extract which concerned me. My personal honour and integrity have been reflected on, there is no doubt about it, by the Minister, and I claim the indulgence of

the House to say a few words in reply. In my 20 years in this Chamber I have always avoided personalities. The political opinions of a man, although we may think they are wrong, do not take from the personal character of the man. I think the Minister should give me credit for acting to the best of my ability and in accordance with honest ideas. I have always taken that as a standard. I want to make a few remarks, with the indulgence of the House. The Minister in speaking said—

One member had practically gone through the Federal election campaign using the Traffic Bill as an illustration of what the Labour party would do if it had the chance. Mr. C. A. Piesse, M.L.C., had repeatedly made misstatements regarding the Bill, and he was supposed to be a fair-minded man. Despite the fact that his own brother had moved the amendment to exempt agricultural machinery, Mr. Piesse had repeatedly asserted that they were not exempt.

The very form in which it is put, "supposed to be a fair-minded man," infers that I am not a fair-minded man. "Repeatedly made misstatements"; that is not a very nice way to put it, to say the least of it. My remarks were founded on fact and I reiterate them in this Chamber. Was it wrong for me to say that the Bill provided for a tax of £1 a month on traction engines when traction engines were often used to draw chaff-cutters about? The Minister did not know how it affected the chaffcutter. Chaffcutters are in many cases drawn by tractor engines, and they are also drawn by engines which are pulled from place to place by horse power. That I did not discriminate enough between the two is the only admission I have to make as to my statements, and if I did make that error it was unintentional. In the present Bill it is provided that traction engines shall pay £1 per month license. Does the Minister know that traction engines are used in many places in the country districts, and they will come more generally into use by-and-by? If he knows that, he knows

that the moment the traction engine is moved from off a man's farm the owner is liable to pay a tax of £1 a month license. That is extortionate and out of all reason. There is another statement I am credited with saying, and I did say it—

Amongst its many extraordinary clauses was one that made it compulsory for a farmer who carted his neighbour's products to take out a carrier's license at twice the ordinary cost, and made it equally compulsory for the person in charge to produce the license, which must be kept in the personal custody of the person actually using the vehicle, under a penalty of three pounds.

That is exactly as provided in the Bill, which makes it compulsory for a person who carts his neighbour's products to pay an extra license under a penalty of £3. That is correct. Why am I stated to have made misleading statements when every statement was in the Bill, and is in the Bill to-day? Here is another extract from the *West Australian*—

The Minister for Works, continuing, said that Mr. Piesse had asserted that he (the Minister for Works) was going to take full control and run the whole show with inspectors. That was incorrect.

That is how he puts it. I did not say "going to run the whole show." The reference will show that I spoke of traffic inspectors, and I said the Minister was going to run the show with inspectors. What other opinion can any member come to when the appointment of the inspectors is subject to the approval of the Minister, and the dismissal is subject to the approval of the Minister? What other conclusion can anyone come to than that the Minister kept men there irrespective of the wishes of the bodies under whom they serve. I know that the Bill will not leave this Chamber with that provision in it. The whole explanation is to be found no doubt in a letter of mine concerning other matters that has caused this trouble. In reply to an interjection by Mr. S. Stubbs the Minister for Works said he was

going more particularly upon a letter published in the newspapers and signed "C. A. Piesse," and that that letter was absolutely incorrect. I do not propose to read that letter because it goes into matters which are foreign to the subject before the House, but some of the references in the letter concern the Traffic Bill, and some do not, but I allude to them because of the Minister's remark that I made statements which were absolutely incorrect. I charged Mr. O'Loughlen and his party in this letter with an attempt to increase taxation on the landholder by—(1) Doubling the land tax, (2) taking away the rebates and deductions allowed the taxpayer under the Liberal 1907 Act; (3) with an attempt to impose harassing conditions and extra taxation on the settler under the Traffic Bill they introduced; (4) with trying to make law an amendment of the Land Act that did away with freehold; (5) with introducing a Rights in Water and Irrigation Bill that embodied in its clauses conditions that were nothing short of confiscation. Where is there any untruth in that?

The Colonial Secretary: It is pretty strong.

Hon. C. A. PIESSE: It is strong, but it is true, and that is where the boot pinched. I cannot make any further comment on it, but the remarks I have made will be reproduced in *Hansard* and I will leave the public to judge between the Minister and myself. I am sure that the Minister took advantage of the opportunity to get home on me, not for any remark I passed in connection with the Traffic Bill, but in connection with the other matters which I touched upon. I am sorry to have taken up the time of the House on this question, but I resent imputations of this kind. If I have laboured the matter somewhat I am sorry indeed, but I could not allow my reputation, the reputation of my children, and the reputation of this House, of which I am a member, to be assailed without making some reply thereto. It is my intention to support the attitude which is being taken by the metropolitan members in connection with this Bill. The

Minister should have taken a higher stand and not gone for a paltry £1,400 from the metropolitan municipality. We want money in connection with main roads just as it is borrowed for railways. Reference has been made again and again to the good roads in South Australia. In 1901, when I first visited South Australia, I was struck by the beautiful roads they had there. At the time I was very actively engaged in business and got into close touch with the leading men of the State, and it did not take me long to find out that they had borrowed largely, on occasions £300,000, for those roads. They treated them almost on the same lines as railways were treated. Instead of tiddly-winking with the Perth-Fremantle road problem why do not the Government face the question of the main roads of this State generally? To-day I have given notice of a motion calling attention to the greater main roads of Western Australia, and advocating the need of placing them under the control of the Government, or if they like under the control of the roads board subject to a special grant. The roads I have referred to in the motion are those from Perth to Fremantle, Perth to Albany, Perth to Russelton via Bunbury, Perth to Geraldton, and a circular road from Perth to Perth via Toodyay, Northam, and York. Some of these roads have been made for 60 years, and a sum of £100,000 would probably be required to put them into thorough going order, and, if it is necessary to have extra taxation for the upkeep of these roads, I daresay it would be a simple matter by special license on the traffic of those roads to meet the case, as people would not grudge an extra license for travelling on the main roads in comfort. I am going to speak on this matter more fully when my motion comes before the House, and in the meantime I need refer to it only in a general way. As Mr. Connor pointed out the other day, the road from Perth to Fremantle is a disgrace to the State, and I do not hesitate to say that others of our main roads are also a disgrace. The roads I have referred to link up every part of any importance in the South-Western portion

of this State. When one comes to realise this and the great traffic there is on them, one must come to the conclusion that it would not after all take such a specially heavy license to enable an income to be obtained that would pay for the thorough repair of those roads and for a sinking fund. As for this tiddly-winking with the income of the Perth City Council, I have no time for it. There are points in the Bill which I will deal with more extensively in Committee, but I want to say here that the penalty clauses are absolutely excessive in practically every case. I am not trying to obstruct the Bill; I say it is a good one, but the penalties are excessive except in the case of that attaching to joy rides, and it would not matter if that was made £100. It is provided in the Bill that every driver has to take out a license, at a cost of 5s., but what about children who drive others to school? They will have to carry a license under Clause 26. This would be simply robbery. Trap after trap goes past my place every morning with children on their way to school. Under this Bill if a wife, daughter, or son wants to drive to town instead of the husband or father, as the case might be, they have to take out a license, and yet this is proposed by a Government who say they are doing so much for the people and tell us that we do not represent the people. The Government who say that are going to take from the people in this wholesale manner. In their eagerness to get revenue the Government are imposing a burden on these people, particularly the drivers of vehicles in the country. I would specially draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that children drive to school in hundreds and perhaps thousands of cases. Some of them drive as much as six miles to school and they will have to carry their licenses and produce them to the inspectors. These poor little things will have to hand up their licenses; it is ridiculous. I will deal with other points in connection with this matter when we are in Committee. I trust that the Minister will not think I want to obstruct the measure. As a matter of fact I want to

make it a better Bill, and to make it lighter for the people. With that object I will move for a rebate to the people who have already paid licenses in one form. I say it is scandalously unfair that a man who has paid directly for the upkeep of the road, that is through property as taxed under the Roads Board Act, should be asked to pay a second time in the shape of a wheel license. At one time I was opposed to the wheel license entirely as in the other States I found that it does not exist. When I was last in South Australia, in the course of conversation with a farmer who was in Adelaide at the time, I asked him if he paid a wheel license, and he said no, he paid only the roads board rates. I say that people should pay whichever rate is the higher, the vehicle tax or the property tax, but they should not be asked to pay the two. I wish to thank hon. members for their indulgence in having allowed me to say a few words with regard to the charges made against me in another place. I want to repeat that the only thing on my part that could be taken to be unfair was where I did not discriminate between the two classes of engines that are used for chaffcutters.

On motion by Hon. D. G. Gawler debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.14 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Thursday, 2nd October, 1913.*

|  | Page. |
|--|-------|
| Bills: Fremantle Improvement, 2B., Com. .. | 1498  |
| Mines Regulation, Com. .. ..               | 1509  |
| Paper Presented .. ..                      | 1533  |

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

### BILL—FREMANTLE IMPROVEMENT.

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 23rd September.

Hon. J. MITCHELL (Northam): When introducing the Bill the Honorary Minister made it clear to the House that the owners of the land to be resumed at Fremantle had not been consulted, and he also made it clear that it was not intended that they should be consulted. I quite agree that the widening of the streets is an important matter, and that land should not be held when it is required for such public purposes. The Minister, however, told us frankly, and I admire his frankness, that the Fremantle municipality have asked for the right to resume a very large area. Block 328, as will be seen by the schedule, is not in any way connected with the widening of High-street, but blocks 329 and 329A are very large, and it is from these that the land for the street must be taken. I understand that the municipality of Fremantle desire to make this resumption of the three blocks in order that they may derive a benefit financially. It is expected that the widening of High-street will lead to the enhancement of the value of the adjacent property, and it is said also that the land at Fremantle is likely to improve in value, and if the municipality is given the power to raise the £80,000, which they require for the purposes of this resumption they will be able to make a good investment. Is it not possible that the owners of this land have waited for years to reap the reward of their investment, and is it not possible also that some person has bought land