

these car watchers have done anything that is contrary to the public interest.

Mr. RODOREDA: I am not one to reflect upon the probity or honesty of car watchers, but I do look upon them as quite unnecessary. I have never paid one of these men for looking after my car, but it is not nice for people to be made to feel they are criminals if they drive away without giving them something. Numbers of these car watchers act as if they were traffic inspectors, and frequently order about the car owners. It is the duty of the police to look after cars. We might as well allow a body of men to constitute themselves house-watchers and to demand payment for their services as such.

Mr. CROSS: I support the amendment, having observed that car-watchers' activities in the city are not in the interests of car-owners. I observed a car-watcher ordering a man who had pulled in with a car to take it away.

Mr. Moloney: Who was that car-watcher?

Mr. CROSS: I do not know.

Mr. Moloney: Then you are merely making ex-parte statements.

Mr. CROSS: The actions of some car-watchers approach blackmail. These men are not responsible to anybody, and the great majority of car-owners do not approve of the system.

Mr. HEGNEY: I support the amendment because, according to my experience, car-watchers are unnecessary. On very few occasions indeed have I paid a car-watcher. Once I left my car and refused to pay the shilling for having it minded. On my return I was minus some spanners, a fact which I attribute to my refusal to pay the shilling. Many a car has been taken from a parking area supposed to be watched. The car-watchers are superimposed on the police, to the detriment of car-owners. If they are to continue, let them be registered and controlled by the police. The presence of a car-watcher is no guarantee of the safety of one's car.

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

Resolutions reported, and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Rodoreda and the Acting Minister for Works were appointed

to draw up reasons for disagreeing to certain of the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

House adjourned at 9.51 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 29th October, 1935.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Plant Diseases Act Amendment Bill.

QUESTIONS (2)—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

Chaff Supplied to Farmers.

Hon. J. CORNELL (for Hon. H. J. Yeland) asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What was the total cost of chaff supplied by the Agricultural Bank to farmers in the wheat belt during the immediate past season? 2, (a) How much of this was imported from the Eastern States, and from where; (b) how much was procured direct from the farmers of Western Australia; (c) how

much was supplied by the chaff merchants of Western Australia? 3, Was the chaff bought on sample? 4, Was the chaff supplied true to sample? 5, What were the contract prices—(a) in Western Australia through merchants; (b) in other specified States; (c) to local farmers, if any? 6, From what Government fund were the accounts paid? 7, Have the farmers been debited with the cost? 8, If so, what was the price charged to them? 9, How many farmers who received chaff have paid in part or in full for same; and how much has been received? 10, Was the chaff inspected before being delivered to farmers? 11, If so, was any rejected? 12, In view of the complaints by farmers that inferior chaff was delivered, who is to stand the loss of such deliveries? 13, (a) Has all the chaff procured been delivered; (b) if not, how much is still in hand, and where is it located? 14, (a) Did the Agricultural Bank or any other authority cancel any contracts made in this or any other State; (b) if so, how many tons were cancelled, and what was the cost to the Government and/or the Agricultural Bank?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Agricultural Bank did not supply any chaff to settlers from its own funds, but acted as agent for the Government. £11,840 (includes freight). 2, (a) 868 tons; South Australia and Victoria; (b) 517 tons; (c) 86 tons. 3, F.a.q. 4, Yes. 5, (a) £4 12s. 6d. and £6 5s. per ton f.o.r. (at seller's siding); (b) £4 2s. 6d., £4 5s., £4 5s. 9d., £4 7s. 6d. per ton f.o.b. (bagged) South Australia, £4 5s. (bagged), £4 10s. (baled), f.o.b. Victoria. (Representing approximately £2 per ton lower, f.o.b. Fremantle, than price asked by local farmers at that date); (c) £4 15s., £5, £5 2s. 6d., £5 7s., £5 10s., £5 15s., £6, £6 5s., £7, £7 10s. f.o.r. 6, Funds made available by the Treasurer to the Bank for relief purposes. 7, Yes, with total cost to the State. 8, £6 per ton delivered. 9, Nil. 10, Yes. 11, 14 tons purchased at York. 12, Total net loss £36 borne by Government. 13, (a) No; (b) In the public interest this should not be disclosed. 14, (a) Yes; (b) 2,800 tons which was at reduced rates, representing a saving of up to 18s. 7d. per ton.

Resignation of G. M. Cornell.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Have the proper recommendations been made to the Minister concerned

in respect to the payment of long service leave salary to George Meredith Cornell (No. 547, Public Service List, 1934) consequent upon his resignation from the Agricultural Bank staff as from the 15th April last? 2, If so, has the amount due been paid? 3, If not, why has this payment been delayed for over six months from the date of the resignation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. Three months' long service leave was approved by His Excellency in Council on the 14th November, 1934, the commencing date of long service leave being 16th January, 1935. 2, Payment was made from 16th January, 1935, to 14th February, 1935. 3, Payment suspended as contravention of regulations had taken place. Mr. Cornell was advised on the 15th February, 1935.

QUESTION—REVENUE RECEIPTS.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: What were the total receipts from the following sources of revenue for the three months period ended 30th September, 1935:—(a) Land tax; (b) Income tax; (c) Financial Emergency tax; (d) Hospital tax; (e) Dividend duties; (f) Entertainment tax; (g) Totalisator; (h) Stamp duties; (i) Probate duties; (j) Licenses?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: (a) £20,148; (b) £65,745; (c) £183,446; (d) £47,329; (e) £38,109; (f) £21,685; (g) £11,190; (h) £71,664; (i) £27,174; (j) £16,539.

QUESTION—LOTTERIES COMMISSION.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What were the total receipts from lotteries conducted by the Lotteries Commission during each year ended 30th June from the inception? 2, What were—(a) total expenses; (b) total disbursements, in each of the same periods? 3, What amount was carried over as undistributed at the end of each of the above periods?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The returns given are for the 12 months ending 31st December each year, as the financial year of the Lotteries Commission closes then. The returns for 1935 are from January to the end of Consultation No. 31. 1, 1933, £124,709 17s. 6d.; 1934, £206,298 7s. 6d.; 1935, £155,952 15s. 2, Expenses—1933, £19,919 12s. 1d.; 1934, £32,324 3s. 9d.:

1935, £23,528 15s.; Total disbursements—1933, £31,503 8s. 10d.; 1934, £53,773 5s. 1d.; 1935, £55,162 5s. 3d. 3, 1933, £20,821 18s. 4d.; 1934, £30,388 8s. 8d.; 1935, £2,401 4s. 9d.; Total £53,611 11s. 9d. The balance shown on hand is subject to donations of £38,932 7s. 11d. made but not yet paid out, leaving a balance available for distribution of £14,679 3s. 10d.

QUESTION—NATIONAL INCOME.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary: What was the estimated national income of the State of Western Australia for the financial years 1932, 1933, 1934, and 1935?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Year ended 30th June, 1932, £33,934,860 (a); Year ended 30th June, 1933, £36,140,925 (b); Year ended 30th June, 1934, £40,074,180 (c). (a) Includes bonus on wheat, £714,210, and on gold, £74,512. (b) Includes bonus on wheat, £436,145, and on gold, £86,928; (c) Includes bonus on wheat, £639,493. Notes.—(1) Available data for 1934-35 are not sufficiently complete to form a reliable estimate for that year. (2) The above figures should be accepted with reservation as the formula used is strictly applicable to an economic unit (e.g. the Commonwealth) and does not provide for interstate transfers of income. This tends to inflate the Western Australian figures, especially where gold forms a major portion of income.

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

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, the time for bringing up the report of the committee was extended to Tuesday, 5th November.

BILL—BRANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

BILL—DROVING ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

BILL—RURAL RELIEF FUND.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 2 to 8 made by the Council, but had disagreed to amendment No. 1 for the reasons set forth in the schedule annexed.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had considered the amendments made by the Council, had agreed to Nos. 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, had disagreed to Nos. 2 and 3 for the reasons set forth, and had agreed to No. 5 subject to a further amendment in which the Assembly desired the concurrence of the Council.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act Continuance.

Transmitted to the Assembly.

2. Tenants, Purchasers and Mortgagees' Relief Act Amendment.

Passed.

BILL—ELECTORAL.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.50] in moving the second reading said: For some years past it has been recognised that the Electoral Act required revision. Certain weaknesses had become apparent, and unscrupulous people were not slow to take advantage of openings for improper practices. In view of these facts, as members know, a joint select committee was appointed towards the end of last session, to consider and recommend amendments to the two Acts which constitute the statute laws relating to parliamentary elections—the Electoral Act, 1907-21, and the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899. Subsequently the Committee were appointed an honorary Royal Commission. The Royal Commission ex-

amined the Acts thoroughly, made full inquiries and heard evidence, and then submitted a report embodying recommendations for amendments that were considered necessary to bring the legislation up to date and remove loopholes for corrupt practices. The more important recommendations of the Royal Commission are embodied in the Bill. Many of the provisions of the present Electoral Act are quite satisfactory, and will remain unchanged, but other sections require alteration, and this Bill will accomplish that aim. In the drafting of the measure, the Government have had these recommendations in mind and have adopted them to a very large extent. Some amendments have been made by the Department, but these have been mainly for machinery purposes. The Government have included "compulsory voting," but even this was suggested as advisable in the Royal Commission's report, although it did not appear in their draft Bill. The effort of the Government has been to avoid any departure of a party character from the recommendations of the Commission, so that most necessary amendments of the Act, designed to prevent abuses, should be placed on the statute book. One proposal in the Bill relates to the qualifications of electors of members of this Chamber. Under the existing law, this matter is governed by Sections 15 and 16 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899, as amended by Act No. 40 of 1934. It is considered that such provisions are out of place in the Constitution Act and should come under the Electoral Act, so that any person who refers to that Act will know exactly what the law is in regard to the qualifications necessary for obtaining the franchise for this Chamber. This was one of the recommendations of the Royal Commission. In view of this, it is proposed to repeal those two sections and to include in the Bill the necessary provisions, amended in such a way as to clarify the law and obviate confusion. It is felt that the amendments proposed will minimise abuses which are easy of perpetration under the Act as it stands to-day. At present a freeholder who has a "legal or equitable estate in possession of the clear value of £50" is entitled to a vote for the Legislative Council. In the Bill the words "clear value" are altered to "clear capital value." A definition is given to "clear capital value," which makes it cover all build-

ings, erections and improvements on the land, less all encumbrances, excepting the payment of rates and taxes for the current year.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is all right, but the Assembly struck out the main part, "registered."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The value is determined by the price which a bona fide seller might be expected to require at the time of valuation. But, in this connection, no regard must be had to minerals, precious stones, etc. No more than four persons in the aggregate will be entitled to be enrolled as freeholders, or as leaseholders, in respect of their interests in the same area or parcel of land. If the person owning the freehold property is the inhabitant occupier of it, he must enrol as such and not as a freeholder, even though he would otherwise be qualified to do so. The reason for this is that much trouble is occasioned the department in endeavouring to keep in touch with the sales of freehold property on which electoral registration is based, whereas it is comparatively easy to ascertain whether an elector has vacated the house which entitled him to a vote. Under the existing law it is possible for a number of people to claim qualification in regard to one particular property—in other words, many estates and interests may be created in the one piece of land by leasing and sub-leasing. Again, in the case of property being bought under contract, both the vendor and purchaser may claim to be registered; or where a married woman is the purchaser, she may claim as the equitable freeholder, the husband may claim as the householder and the vendor as the legal owner. It is now proposed to tighten up the law in this respect. Four votes will be the maximum allowed in respect of any one piece of land for either a freehold or leasehold estate. There is an amendment to the household qualification for the Legislative Council. It defines what a householder is intended to be. He is to be an inhabitant occupier who, as owner or tenant, occupies, as a domestic establishment in the province, a dwelling house of the clear annual value of £17 at least. Only one person can be enrolled as an inhabitant occupier of any one particular dwelling. The term "inhabitant occupier" will include flats which are occupied as separate establishments, but will not include rooms which are occupied as lodgings. A definition is given

to "clear annual value." It means, in respect of both the occupier and the lessee, as the case may be, the rental value (unless it is a nominal rent), and, where no rent is paid, or only a nominal rent paid in money, or where a person renders services or money's worth in return for the premises, the value is estimated at the full fair average amount of rent at which the property may reasonably be expected to let from year to year. An important alteration is the deletion of the provision enabling a person to be enrolled because his name appears on the ratepayers' list of a local authority. Present provisions make it obligatory on the Chief Electoral Officer to place such persons' names on the roll for the Legislative Council without inquiry. Many names have been erroneously retained on the ratepayers' lists, with the result that they have also been retained on the Electoral Rolls. Not only that, there is deliberate roll-stuffing under this head.

A husband pays rates in his wife's name, although she may possess no property at all, and she thus becomes qualified for a vote for the Legislative Council. In most cases it is done, in the first instance, with a view to getting increased voting power for a municipal or road board election. After that it is availed of to secure a vote for this House. It is proposed to remove this qualification, subject to owners at present enrolled being allowed to vote until the 30th June, 1936. Their names will then be removed from the roll unless entitled to be retained by reason of some other qualification. An amendment having the effect of extending the qualification to a person having a right of ownership in a dwelling house as a chattel, was included during the Committee stage in another place.

It is also proposed to bring the provisions in regard to naturalised persons enrolled for the Legislative Council into line with the law relating to the Assembly enrolments for these people. This will be done by making it necessary for them to be naturalised, and also to have fulfilled ordinary residence conditions in Western Australia for six months, instead of the former Council enrolment requirement of 12 months.

Hon. J. Cornell: The other position was absurd.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Another proposed amendment relates to persons

residing outside the State. Under the present Act, a person, although permanently resident outside the State, is entitled to be on the Legislative Council roll provided he continues to hold a qualification. This provision undoubtedly tends to leave openings for impersonation.

Hon. J. Cornell: I do not agree with that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is how I am advised. It is now proposed to provide that a person shall be entitled to enrolment only for so long as he lives in the State, or is not absent therefrom for a period of more than 12 months.

Provision is made to enable a Council elector, who was qualified to vote on the date of the issue of the writ, and subsequently loses his qualification prior to polling day, to vote at an election for the province for which he had been enrolled.

Section 17 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899, deals with disqualification of persons of unsound mind, convicted persons, and those in receipt of Government relief, etc.

It is considered that the proper place for this provision is in the Electoral Act, and it is therefore proposed that Section 17 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act be repealed, and in its stead, it has been decided to include in the Electoral Act a set of disqualifications common to both Houses. The concession given to British Indians by the Act of 1934 will be retained, and it is also proposed to allow half-caste aboriginals to exercise the franchise if they can satisfy a magistrate that they are fit and proper persons to do so. Furthermore, the disqualification of persons in receipt of Government relief will be abolished.

Important amendments with regard to enrolments and the keeping of the rolls are included. Instead of claims having to be held for 14 days before they can be registered, as at present, provision is made in the Bill to enable them to be registered immediately. This brings the practice into line with the procedure in the Commonwealth, and in the other States.

Hon. H. Seddon: Don't you think that will make for roll stuffing?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I shall be glad if the hon. member will go into that, because we want a sound Bill. Where an election is to be held, they can be regis-

tered up to 6 p.m. on the day of the issue of the writ. It is also provided that sub-province rolls shall be kept for the Legislative Council, to bring the Act into line with the present provision of sub-district rolls for the Assembly. Compulsory voting for Legislative Assembly elections is provided for in the Bill. Under a system of popular election, it is desirable that machinery should be provided for a genuine expression of the people's will, and it is logical that compulsory enrolment should be accompanied by compulsory voting. In the Commonwealth and all the other States, with the exception of South Australia, voting is compulsory. The present provisions in relation to postal votes will be superseded by entirely new ones. It is recognised that, as far as practicable, provision be made to enable every eligible person to vote. Yet it would not be possible, without heavy outlay, to provide ballot boxes to meet the needs of isolated settlers. Cases of sickness and temporary absence from home must also be provided for. The present method of taking postal votes furnishes loopholes for malpractices, and unscrupulous people have not hesitated to avail themselves of the opportunities presented. It is considered that the proposals embodied in this Bill will prove to be more satisfactory, and less likely to permit of abuse. The provisions in regard to voting in absence will also be tightened up. In future, ballot papers for voting in absence will be supplied only upon application being made to the Chief Electoral Officer or to a registrar. Provision is made to enable a person who resides at such a distance from a polling place as to make it inconvenient or impracticable for him to attend there to vote, to be continuously registered as an applicant for absent ballot papers. A further provision will enable an elector to vote on polling day at a polling place outside his province or district.

Hon. J. Cornell: This provision is not general as in the other States and the Commonwealth.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is like the Commonwealth provision. The Bill repeals Subsection (2) of Section 8 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, which restricts the time between the issue and the return of writs to 42 days. The time allowed was considered to be much too short, and would most likely be found to be unworkable when

the new provisions in regard to absent voting come into force, especially in connection with far distant centres. The new provision under this head enacts that, in the case of a writ to fill a vacancy for the North Province—or any other province which may, from time to time, be specified—the writ shall be issued before the 20th February preceding the vacancy, and in all other cases the prescribed date will be the 22nd March. The present law in connection with the issue of writs for general elections for the Legislative Assembly will not be altered.

Now, with regard to the return of the writs, provision is made for a limit of 90 days for the return of writs for the North Province, in lieu of the existing provision of 60 days. The same period will be allowed for Northern districts for Assembly elections, and 60 days will be allowed in all other districts. There are some departures from the existing law in reference to electoral offences. Certain offences now designated as "undue influence" have been brought under the heading of "Other illegal practices," and will, accordingly, become subject to lesser penalties. These offences were:—

Interfering with any elector, either in the polling booth or within 50 yards thereof with the intention of influencing him or advising him as to his vote;

The personal solicitation of the vote of an elector on polling day;

The attendance by a candidate on polling day at any meeting of electors held for election purposes not being a meeting of his committee.

Hon. members know that, if a candidate is found guilty of "undue influence," his election automatically becomes void, and he suffers the disqualification of not being eligible for a seat in either House for a period of two years. In addition, a fine not exceeding £200 or imprisonment not exceeding one year could be imposed. It is proposed, therefore, that minor offences shall be regarded as "other illegal practices," for which the penalty is a fine not exceeding £100 or imprisonment not exceeding six months.

Hon. J. Cornell: What does the Commonwealth Electoral Officer say about the striking out of the litigation proviso? It ought to be put back.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The report of the Royal Commission drew attention to the fact that there had been cases of great laxity and abuse on the part of some

of the persons entrusted by electors with claim cards for forwarding to the Registrar, and a suggestion was made that persons so entrusted should be obliged to give a receipt to the claimant for the cards entrusted to them, and be obliged to forward the claim forthwith to the Registrar. After consideration, the Government decided that this aspect could be met by a more effective use of the provision for compulsory enrolment by electors themselves. A severe penalty is provided for cases where a person entrusted with a claim card neglects to forward it forthwith to the registrar. Many minor alterations and rearrangements have been found necessary, and the opportunity has been taken to bring all relative matters together, and to place each provision into the part of the Bill where it should correctly appear. I feel sure that members, after studying the measure, will agree that it will go a long way towards tightening up the Act and preventing abuses such as have been extensively practised in the past by certain unscrupulous people. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.17]: I moved the adjournment of the debate in order that I might give further consideration to Clause 2. I cannot find any objection to it, and therefore will not occupy the time of the House further than to say that I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair: the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 3:

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Does the proviso mean that if a road board embarked on a sewerage scheme, only the people residing in the district so served would have a vote and that other ratepayers would have no

say at all? In Kalgoorlie there is talk of installing a sewerage scheme in the main street. Most of the premises are business places, and very few people would be living there.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Under the Act it is possible to put into operation a scheme to serve a section of a district. Where that is done a poll is taken of the people who will be called upon to pay. The clause will do away with the anomaly at present existing between the Road Districts Act and the Municipal Corporations Act. At Geraldton a scheme costing about £9,000 will affect only certain ratepayers, and they will be called upon to pay for it.

The CHAIRMAN: The proviso is made retrospective to the 4th January, 1934.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That date has been inserted because it was then that the amending Health Act was proclaimed.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Though the proviso may be intended to apply only to the Geraldton scheme, once it is placed in the Act, it will apply to all schemes. If a local authority has power to strike a rate to pay for a scheme serving only a section of the people and their payments are not sufficient to meet requirements, the rest of the people who may be called upon to contribute should have some say.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Before a scheme can be undertaken authority to raise the money must be obtained. If the ratepayers oppose the scheme, they can object to the raising of the loan.

Hon. H. Tuckey: The ratepayers as a whole?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. The money cannot be raised save with the consent of the ratepayers.

Hon. H. Tuckey: The resident ratepayers?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes. If there had been any objection to the Geraldton scheme the proposal would have been voted on, not by those who would have to pay, but by all the ratepayers. The amendment will limit the poll to the ratepayers who will be called upon to foot the bill.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Complications appear to arise when an authorised scheme is to be extended. A scheme was installed at Katanning, was found to be inadequate and subsequently had to be extended. Will the Minister explain the need for the proviso? Evidently a scheme at Geraldton has

been embarked upon and now Parliament is being asked for authority.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The date has been inserted to coincide with the proclamation of the amending Health Act. The Geraldton scheme has not yet been started. It has been held up pending the finalisation of this measure.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I am still of opinion that under the proviso it will be necessary to take a poll only of those people residing in the locality served by the scheme, and in some instances the number will be very small. Which measure will prevail? There is a provision that, once the work has been done, if the revenue received is insufficient to cover interest and sinking fund, a rate may be struck on all the ratepayers to make up the deficiency.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Firstly, before any scheme can be inaugurated the whole of the local authorities concerned must agree to it. Secondly, if the system is to affect only one section of the district and the local authority desire that only those ratepayers who are benefited shall pay for the scheme or system, it is only right that these should be the people having the right to vote if a poll is demanded. If there is no poll, the whole of the ratepayers will be liable. The Bill deals only with the Health Act and sewerage schemes inaugurated under that Act. The amendment makes the same provision for a poll to be taken in all cases where a loan is to be raised.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Geraldton decided to instal a septic tank scheme, and to some extent did so. It was then found that the septic tank system would not answer in the thickly populated portion of the town. Expert advice was obtained, and was to the effect that the main portion of the town should be served by a sewerage scheme. I do not know whether that matter was referred to the ratepayers. However, under the Bill only those persons who will be served by the scheme will have the right to vote, and they are the only persons who will be rated. I do not think there is any difference of opinion in Geraldton as to the sewerage scheme. I personally am affected by it, and I welcome it. The same view seems to be taken by every person in Geraldton. The portion to be served by the sewerage scheme could not be served by the septic tank system. Pending parliamentary sanction, nothing is being done.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The explanations given seem to make it clear that the only persons entitled to demand a poll are those resident in the district where the scheme is to be installed. Yet the parent Act provides that if the revenue raised in that district is insufficient to meet interest and sinking fund charges in respect of the loan, the local authority can rate the whole of the district in order to make up the deficiency. That is a dangerous provision.

The CHAIRMAN: My desire is to narrow down the discussion. We are merely beating the air in discussing the proviso and where it is intended to go.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If a local authority decides to raise a certain amount of money for a sewerage scheme, it all depends on whether that local authority is under the jurisdiction of the Municipalities Act or under that of the Road Districts Act who shall be entitled to record a vote at a poll if one is demanded. Under the Municipalities Act it applies to all the ratepayers in the district. Under the Road Districts Act it applies to the resident ratepayers. In the present case the scheme affects only one portion of the municipality. Seeing that the Health Act contains no specific provision for the taking of a poll, any poll demanded would have to be a poll of all the ratepayers. The clause will simplify the matter to the extent of defining who will be entitled to record a vote at a poll, voting being restricted to the people of the district to be served. I understand that the rate to be struck at Geraldton for this scheme will apply only to the people served.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: The people of portion of the central ward.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It will not apply to the whole of the ratepayers.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no provision now for a poll under the Health Act.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The "principal Act" here referred to is the Amendment Act No. 2 of 1933. The intention is to amend Section 3 of that Act. In Geraldton it will be necessary to proceed under the Health Act in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Municipalities Act. There is a considerable difference between the requirements of a poll in regard to a loan under the Road Districts Act and the requirements under the Municipalities Act. Under the provisions of the Municipal Cor-

porations Act, it is the owner, not the resident-owner only, who is entitled to vote, but under the Road Districts Act resident-owners of rateable land only are entitled to vote. If the poll to be taken under the Health Act affected work in a road board district, there would be no difficulty. The Bill seeks to incorporate the provisions of the Road Districts Act, with the result that ratepayers in municipalities who have the right to vote at such a poll at present, whether resident or not, would no longer be entitled to vote unless resident in the district. If the provision in the Bill be agreed to, the right to vote respecting such schemes will be confined entirely to resident-owners.

Hon. H. Seddon: Well, what do you think about it?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It occurred to me that such a provision might seriously affect the position in such centres as the City of Perth. I made inquiries accordingly, and was told that the right to take a poll of persons more or less disinterested in a particular district was sometimes found not only cumbersome but unfair to the section that required the work to be carried out.

Hon. H. Seddon: I can cite an instance in which it operated in the opposite way.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I made inquiries during the week-end, but found that the provision was not considered to be harmful.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not desire to be misunderstood. I wish to help the Geraldton ratepayers and also any other section of ratepayers who may seek to engage in such schemes, but we must remember that the Bill, if agreed to, will apply to the whole State. An injustice could arise if a scheme were adopted by the ratepayers of a particular centre. Authority would be given to borrow money if, in the opinion of the Governor—which, I take it, means His Excellency's advisers, because the Governor would not know anything about such matters—the scheme was a payable one. If it were subsequently found that the scheme was not payable within the area affected, the cost of the scheme would become a tax on the people generally in the locality affected. There are specific reasons why one set of conditions were provided for municipalities and another for road districts. When a road district embarks upon a scheme under the Health Act, it is usually a minor work, but when municipalities undertake such obligations, the cost generally runs into many thousands of pounds.

As a matter of fact, the last persons I would go to for information as to the effect of the Bill would be those connected with the Perth City Council, because that municipality will not be affected at all. The whole of the city area is mapped out and sewered, so the Perth City Council do not come into the picture at all. Our duty is to see that the section of the people who embark upon a scheme such as is contemplated by the Bill must be responsible for the repayment of the money involved and must not have a right, as the Bill suggests they will have, to make it a responsibility for taxpayers generally outside the particular area affected. That is the hurdle at which I baulk.

Hon. H. SEDDON: When the Southern Cross municipality existed, an electric light station was erected, and the arrangement was that the ratepayers would be responsible for repayment of the loan raised. The municipality gradually declined and eventually became absorbed in the Yilgarn road board district. The result was that the whole of the ratepayers of the road district became responsible for the payment of interest and sinking fund charges on a scheme that served Southern Cross only. Under the Bill we may create a similar condition of affairs, and it is possible that people in the whole of the road districts concerned will become responsible for localities that sections of them only had agreed to assume. While I sympathise with the intention of the Minister, I think his objective would be attained if he confined the application of the clause to Geraldton.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Mr. Seddon has emphasised a phase apart from the point dealt with in the clause. Obviously the amendment to the Act, if agreed to, will apply to the whole of the State. I referred to the position at Geraldton because that matter is before us at the moment. If a poll had been demanded, the whole of the resident-owners in Geraldton would have had the right to vote. Whether we agree to the clause or not, the Geraldton scheme will be proceeded with. The ratepayers there were so satisfied with it that they did not raise any objection, nor did they demand a poll. The time has expired when a demand could be made for a poll. But that instance shows clearly what might have happened had there been

any objection. The object of the clause is to make the position clear as to who shall be entitled to vote at any poll demanded in such circumstances. It is considered that, for the purposes of the Health Act, the provision regarding polls in the Road Districts Act is more suitable, particularly as we amended the Health Act in recent years to provide for the sectional schemes. Naturally the people to be served by those schemes will be called upon to pay for them, and a charge will not be levied upon the rest of the ratepayers of that particular local authority. The Bill contains another amendment that must be agreed to before a start can be made with the Geraldton scheme. The point at issue at the moment is whether those who may exercise the right to vote at such a poll shall be resident-owners or the whole of the owners in the road board or municipal area. If the latter, they will have the right to vote on a matter that affects a portion only of the road district or municipality.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is clearly provided that those ratepayers entitled to demand a poll or to vote at a poll shall be persons who are resident owners of rateable land within that portion of the district which is to be served by the proposed work or undertaking to be carried out with the proceeds of the proposed loan. Then the last three lines of the proviso explain that the proviso shall be deemed to have come into operation on the 4th January, 1934. If my interpretation of that proviso is correct, anybody in any municipality can take on any scheme and there will be no means of placing any effective check upon it. Of course I may be wrong.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The fear expressed by Mr. Seddon and Mr. R. G. Moore seems to be that if the people in the area concerned fail to discharge their financial responsibilities towards the scheme, the ratepayers as a whole in the municipality may be called upon to make up the deficiency. Is it likely that the whole of the council would have approved of this scheme if they were not sure that it was in the best interests of the whole of the ratepayers? I think it is a satisfactory safeguard, that before any such scheme can be entered upon, the whole of the council must approve of it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 7—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd October.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [6.5]: I congratulate the Minister on having introduced the Bill in a more moderate manner than his leader in another place when that hon. gentleman first announced that salaries would be restored. If the Government wished to take the whole of the credit to themselves they should not have brought down this Bill at all, but should have let the Act lapse. The course they have taken has kept us in the invidious position we have occupied for the last three years; we have to vote for the Bill whether we like it or not, for certainly we must have that reduction of interest. So, as I say, the duty of the Government was to have let the Act lapse and bring in a new Bill providing for the reduction of interest and the superannuation scheme.

Hon. L. CRAIG: And for the reduction of interest on repurchased estates.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, the Minister should see to it that there is a reduction made in the interest payable by those settlers who have taken up land on repurchased estates. I thought the Government had reduced the interest.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Not by one penny.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Well, the Government should do so. Mr. Cornell the other evening said he would support an amendment to the effect that we retain the salaries as they are to-day. I think that when in Committee we come to Clause 2 we should delete the words "the whole of Part II." Then the salaries will remain as they are, and if the Government will accept the amendment—I am afraid they will not—all will be well. But should the Government refuse to accept it, in all probability it will go to a conference, where we will have to agree to the deletion of Clause 2 or lose the Bill. In another place the Government have made a welter of the Bill and have talked about "iniquitous taxation on a special section of the community." But I say that if that measure had not been taken in

1931 the Government would not have been able to find the money with which to pay the Public Service; and if the Public Service had not agreed to the deduction in their salaries, the Government of the day would have had no alternative to dismissing 25 per cent. of the public servants. Yet at this late stage we have the Leader of the Government using this as a political cry because an election is coming on. If the Government wanted the whole credit or blame for the thing, they need not have placed this House in an invidious position.

The Honorary Minister: We would still have been in the same position.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Yes, but the Government would have had all the credit. This country is not in a position to pay all this extra money in salaries. We are not by any means round the corner yet, and I say the Bill represents merely an electioneering stunt. However, we are all in the same position as we were in last year, inasmuch as we have no alternative to voting for the Bill. Nevertheless when in Committee I will support that amendment to Clause 2 of which I have spoken.

On motion by Hon. R. G. Moore, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.11 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 29th October, 1935.

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

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—WILUNA WATER BOARD FURTHER LOAN GUARANTEE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 24th October.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [4.34]: This Bill is on a par with one that was introduced some years ago. It is to make provision for the supply of further water to the town of Wiluna. To that extent it will have the support of members on this side of the House and, I think, of members generally, because the provision of water supplies in country districts is of paramount importance. The only point that causes any concern is whether the provision now to be made will be sufficient to meet the requirements of Wiluna for a considerable period ahead. When the original measure was introduced, we were told that it would suffice for the population of Wiluna. Since then the population has increased, rendering this Bill necessary, and I should like an assurance from the Minister that in making this provision, the normal requirements of the town will be met for a considerable time. We do not want to have a recurrence of Bills to sanction the provision of additional water supplies. I should also like to know from the Minister whether the provision made in the Bill covers the money required for reticulation merely or also for securing water from underground supplies. The scheme seems to have the authority of the engineers as being sound, and the additional rateable value of the properties in the town should be sufficient to meet the charges. I take it that the Commonwealth Bank or the institution that is providing the money insists upon having a Government guarantee. I should prefer to see the scheme financed without a Government guarantee, for the scheme itself should be sufficient guarantee to the bank. So long as we have an assurance that the bank will not make the money available without a Government guarantee, the Bill is necessary.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [4.37]: I do not fear that any serious objection will be levelled against the Bill, but there is one point on which I wish members to be clear. The people of Wiluna are the only community who have attempted to do something for themselves. In all other gold-fields towns the whole responsibility of supplying water has been thrown upon the