

and granted to the Presbyterian Church for the purpose required. Lot 507 is shown in green on lithograph No. 2. A slight amendment is necessary, as disclosed in Clause 6, to Section 2 of the Reserves Act, 1934, owing to a wrong location number having been inadvertently quoted. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.33 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 12th November, 1935.

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

QUESTIONS (2)—NECESSITOUS FARMERS.

Commonwealth Advance.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What was the total amount made available by the Commonwealth Government for necessitous farmers in Western Australia during the last three years? 2, What are the total disbursements from the fund for—(a) sustenance; (b) machinery—duplicate parts, and other necessary farm equipment; (c) stock; (d) fodder for stock; (e) any other purposes? 3, Have the advances made from the fund been debited to the respective farmers, either in part or in whole? 4, What amount is still in the fund or funds?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Amounts made available by the Commonwealth Government are:—1933, £46,021 of the Wheat Bounty was set aside for necessitous farmers, the balance payable on acreage basis; 1934, £70,609 of the Wheat Bounty was set aside for necessitous cases, and the balance payable on acreage basis; 1935, £137,500 for necessitous cases. 2, (a) and (e) 1933—£46,015 for sustenance, 1934—£68,705 for sustenance, 1935—£76,178 (sustenance £74,513 and seed wheat £1,665: see also answer 4, 1935); (b), (c) and (d) Nil. 3, No. 4, 1933 £6, 1934 £1,904, 1935 £61,322—of this amount further expenditure totalling £36,360 has been authorised and further claims are still being dealt with.

Chaff Supplies.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND asked the Chief Secretary: To elucidate the answers to questions asked on the 29th October respecting chaff—1, Was the £11,840 (Question 1) paid from an advance made by the Federal Government for necessitous farmers? 2, Will the Minister name the definite fund from which advances were made to the Agricultural Bank for the purchase of chaff for distressed farmers? (Vide Question 6.) 3, What penalty was imposed for the cancellation of the 2,800 tons of chaff referred to in Question 14?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No. 2, I.A.B. funds. Also, the Commonwealth Government approved of the unexpended balance (£8,513 7s. 5d.) of Additional Farm Labour Funds (which was made available in July, 1930, and which ceased to operate in September, 1931) being utilised. 3, As the Government will again be in the market for chaff to assist settlers in the drought areas, it is not considered in the farmers' and public's interest to give details other than to repeat that up to 18s. 7d. per ton was gained by the farmers on the cancellation.

QUESTION—MINING.

Western Mining Company's reservations.

Hon. C. G. ELLIOTT asked the Chief Secretary: 1, (a) What area in square miles of reservations of greenstone country is now held by the Western Mining Corporation, Ltd., in this State; (b) what principal goldmining centres are included in the reservations; (c) when do the

reservations expire? 2, In the event of an individual, syndicate or company applying for a reservation situated and included in reservations held by the Western Mining Corporation, would it be necessary for the Government to obtain permission from the Western Mining Corporation before the reservation could be granted?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, (a) 493.4 square miles total area; (b) Nannine, Londonderry, Norseman, Day Dawn and Kookynie; (c) At various dates from now to June next. 2, The areas referred to in Question No. 1 are not available for reserves in favour of any other than the existing holder. Temporary reserves are not granted within certain goldfields areas other than the above, within which the Western Mining Corporation are operating or propose operating at an early date unless such corporation signifies that its operations or proposed operations are not affected. This does not, however apply in any way to leases or other mining tenements but purely to applications for temporary reserves.

PAPERS—AGRICULTURAL BANK.

Resignation of G. M. Cornell

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.37]: I move—

That all files and papers, including the file of the Public Service Commissioner, relating to the employment of George Meredith Cornell (No. 547, Public Service List, 1934) by the Agricultural Bank, his resignation, and long service leave salary be laid on the Table of the House.

I move the motion because of certain questions which I asked, and which were answered by the Chief Secretary, on the 29th October. The answers set out that three months long service leave had been granted, that certain payments had been made, and that then payment was suspended. It appears to me that there is some mistake in that. Regarding the long service leave, I understand there have been no payments, and so far as I can gather, the position is that Mr. Cornell had been employed by the Agricultural Bank and applied for his long service leave, which I gather was granted, and that then he was offered other employment, which he accepted while on long service leave. I understand that by arrangement with the Public Service Commissioner, Mr. Cornell was told that the proper thing

to do would be to resign, whereupon all would be well and the matter would be finalised. He resigned, I understand, and then, as the payments were not forthcoming, a letter was written by the General Secretary of the Civil Service Association on the 1st October to the Public Service Commissioner, setting out that payment of a portion of the long service leave had been withheld and giving notice of intention to approach the Public Service Appeal Board. The Public Service Commissioner on the 3rd October replied as follows:—

In reply to your letter regarding Mr. Cornell, I beg to point out that a recommendation to grant the long service leave was made by me, and any failure to pay the salary for such leave is due to some action by the Government. In these circumstances I am unable to see that Mr. Cornell has an appeal against any action on my part.

I am anxious to see the file and papers with a view to ascertaining the position as disclosed by them.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Further report of Committee adopted.

BILL—ELECTORAL.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Nicholson in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Sub-districts:

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That after Subclause 2 the following be inserted to stand as Subclause 3:—“(3) No person shall be appointed a registrar for more than one province; and no person appointed the registrar for a province shall engage in any business other than the performance of his duties as an officer under this Act.”

If the rolls are to receive proper attention, it is necessary that there shall be an officer whose sole duties shall be concerned with the

earrying out of the electoral work in each province. I want to ensure that the officer shall be engaged solely in electoral work, and not under the authority of anybody else. If the Council rolls are to be kept clean, it is essential that that should be done. I do not want the present position to continue and an officer have opportunity of shelving the matter because he is engaged in other duties.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Seddon wants a full-time registrar for each province. In the past we have had registrars for districts acting as registrars for provinces, and in some cases the registrar for one province has also been the registrar for another province. Sometimes, during rush periods, it has been necessary to employ additional assistance from the department. Under Mr. Seddon's amendment we should have one registrar for each province with no other duties cast upon him. In some cases it would mean that for three parts of his time he would be walking about with his hands in his pockets. There is no warrant for the amendment nor for the largely increased expenditure it would involve.

Hon. H. SEDDON: My experience is that the work of revising the rolls for provinces has been anything but satisfactory. Frequently the officers engaged in this duty are also engaged in important daily duties, with the result that the electoral work is left to a comparatively junior member of the staff. If the officer doing the electoral work faithfully carries out his duties, they will take up the whole of his time. There is a change of something like 30 per cent. in the constitution for enrolment between elections, and as it will be possible for the electoral officer in charge of a province to engage also in electoral work, I contend that if he does his duty properly the whole of his time will be taken up in keeping his rolls clean. Revision of the Assembly rolls usually takes place immediately before an election, and at present men are engaged doing special work in revising the rolls in their districts. Originally it was intended that rolls should be revised annually, but on the ground of economy this duty has not been performed, and consequently the electoral work has suffered. No other function of government is more important than the function of preserving the electoral rights of the citizens. In the North Province, with the smallest number of enrolments, the electoral registrar in

charge would have a thousand names on the Council roll and 3,000 names on the Assembly roll. In the Central Province, represented by the Chief Secretary, there are 6,000 names on the Council roll and 9,000 on the Assembly roll. No registrar would be able to cope with the work in that province without additional assistance.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There has been very little indeed to complain about in regard to the work of the registrars in the various districts. In my own province there is not a great deal of work to do, except during an election, for the bulk of the work is done in Perth, where there is indeed a great burden placed on the Chief Electoral Officer. Our rolls seem to be well attended to, and periodically considerable numbers of names are removed, names of people who have left the district or have become disqualified. It is clear, therefore, that great energy has been displayed by the various electoral registrars.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I will support Mr. Seddon. Recently I went to the trouble of taking one of the electorates in my own province and, working on the law of averages, I found that in that electorate alone there were at least 1,300 names of persons who were entitled to be on the Council roll also, but who were not on that roll. The only way to get them on the Council roll is for a candidate to put them on, or alternatively to rely on the people themselves taking the necessary steps. The department asks the local authorities for lists of their enrolments, not with a view to having the names thereon placed on the Assembly and Council rolls, but to see that those who have lost their qualification are removed. The attitude of the department is not to secure full enrolment for the Council, but to see that the rolls are depleted by the removal of names not entitled to be on them. If the department showed the same zeal in putting names on the roll, there would not be much to complain about. It should be the exclusive duty of the registrar to keep the rolls up to date.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I will support the amendment, for, even if it means a little extra cost, it would give us purer and more up-to-date rolls, and so the increased expenditure would be justified. My experience of the Council's rolls is that fully 90 per cent. of those enrolled are usually put there by candidates. Where enrolment is com-

pulsory it is a different proposition. The rolls should be kept as up-to-date as possible. I admit that of late there has been a vast improvement, but there is still room for improvement, and there is abundant work for a full-time officer.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Mr. Seddon does not quite desire what the Minister suggested, namely, that a full-time registrar should be employed to attend to the Council rolls only. He wants the registrar to be engaged in general electoral work. Then the expense would not be so much. There would be required but ten registrars. The experience of every Legislative Council candidate is such that the rolls are never found to be in the condition in which they should be. I have experienced that myself. The officers engaged by the department state that it is their duty to see that the Assembly rolls are purified because there we have compulsory enrolment. But as far as the Council rolls are concerned, as compulsory enrolment does not apply, it does not seem to matter. Thus the candidate is involved in a lot of heavy work and expense.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Do you suggest compulsory enrolment for the Council?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: Yes, and compulsory voting too, and some way should be found to make that possible.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Move an amendment in that direction.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I am dealing with this amendment at the present time, and that is enough for me. Mr. Seddon's suggestion means that the registrar shall be employed in respect of electoral work only.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Matters have been allowed to drift, and a lot of money has been spent in the different electorates, far more than would pay the salary of registrars. The rolls are never in good order.

Hon. H. Seddon: Especially in connection with by-elections.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Whether Parliament would agree to compulsory voting in connection with the Legislative Council is another matter, but there should be ten registrars appointed, one for each province. From my experience all would be very busy men if they attended to their duties. In my province alone there are seven Assembly rolls, and those would have to be kept in order by the registrar. What time then would he have to spare for other duties? There are about 10,000 electors on the East Province roll but if they were in proper

order the number would be 16,000. The amendment, if agreed to, will go a long way towards having the electoral rolls in something like decent order, and many more people would be given the opportunity to exercise the franchise.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I intend to support the amendment. I cannot quite follow the Chief Secretary, who said that if a man were appointed to do this work in the terms of the amendment, he would have a lot of spare time on his hands. The Federal Electoral Department employ divisional returning officers throughout the State, and each has a staff.

Hon. G. Fraser: There are only five in the State.

Hon. W. J. MANN: If they are all like the one I have in mind they would all be overworked. The amendment will make for better and complete rolls.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: There seems to be an impression in the minds of more than one member that the employment of a full-time registrar in each province would lead to more complete rolls.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Improved rolls.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: It may lead to improved rolls by reason of the removal of the names of people not qualified to vote, but certainly not to place names on the roll. That is not the duty of an electoral registrar. Probably the appointments would lead to cleaner rolls in each district, and particularly in the town in which the registrar happened to live. I do not see how his efforts could extend much further.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The Federal officers do it.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I also intend to support the amendment. In 1934 just before my election I got the complete road board and municipal council rolls, and I added to the Legislative Council roll between 800 and 900 names. With the information I obtained from the road boards and municipal councils I could have added 2,000 names to the South-East Province roll, because I know that there were many people qualified for enrolment whose names were not on the roll. If a registrar is appointed in a central position in a province, he will be in close touch with the work and it will be possible for him to make a thorough search of the road board and municipal council rolls, and the result will be a clean roll. The cost to a candidate of adding

names to a roll is considerable. We know that enrolment for the Assembly is compulsory, but there are many people who do not know how to fill in cards, and a registrar or his officers could render assistance in that way.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I am in favour of the amendment provided that it is not going to undermine the proposal in the Bill which sets out that each Assembly registrar can look after the roll of the Council in that particular sub-district. The amendment hardly goes far enough. If I had my way I would see to it that no one touched the rolls at all except the officials. We know that in connection with both Assembly and Council elections candidates are put to enormous expense in having to send canvassers out to see that people are enrolled. That should not be the function of a candidate. I favour not only compulsory enrolment but compulsory voting as well. At the latest election held there was practically a 90 per cent. poll because of the application of the compulsory voting provision. I have been informed by those in touch with these matters that the application of the compulsory voting provisions is easy where the Assembly is concerned, but that many difficulties have to be overcome before they can be applied to the Legislative Council. I want to be satisfied that the amendment will not alter the effect of the clause to such an extent that it will mean a reversion to the present system.

Hon. G. W. Miles: But it proposes that the officer will be the chief electoral registrar for his province.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I want to be satisfied on that point.

Hon. G. FRASER: At first glance the amendment seems a very good suggestion, but on analysis it does not appear to me that the advantages to be secured will be commensurate with the expenditure entailed. We should endeavour to have not only a clean roll but one containing the names of all entitled to enrolment. I cannot see that the mere appointment of an individual as chief electoral officer for the province will have the effect of adding one name to the roll. For instance, if a registrar were appointed for the Central Province, he would presumably have his headquarters at Geraldton and how would he be able to ensure that the roll for Wiluna was absolutely correct?

Hon. A. Thomson: He could travel round.

Hon. G. FRASER: Is it expected that this officer shall travel throughout the province and go from door to door to see whether people are correctly enrolled?

Hon. W. J. Mann: No, but he could take the ratepayers' rolls at the road board offices.

Hon. G. FRASER: People must enrol themselves; that is not the duty of an electoral registrar. If additional expenditure is to be incurred, I would prefer the money to be spent on the engagement of canvassers who would go from door to door and see that the rolls were made effective and clean.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: That would be all right in the cities and towns, but it would mean that the man who was living seven miles away would be left off the roll.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is not so, if the individual concerned takes the initiative himself. The amendment will not have the effect of enrolling that individual who is living seven miles away.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Of course it will.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: He will have the machinery and organisation available to assist in his enrolment.

Hon. G. FRASER: There will be no additional machinery or organisation that is not available now!

Hon. G. W. MILES: The object of the amendment is to secure the appointment of a chief electoral registrar in each province who will take charge of electoral matters and will have sub-registrars in the various Assembly electorates contained within the province. The registrar for the province would have to accept the responsibility for keeping the rolls up to date.

Hon. G. Fraser: How could he put one name on the roll?

Hon. G. W. MILES: He would instruct his sub-registrars to bring the rolls up to date and see that the rolls contained the names of those people who were entitled to exercise the franchise.

Hon. H. SEDDON: Under the existing arrangements and in accordance with the provisions of the Bill, there will be electoral agents in every centre of any size, and instead of having to report, as they

do now, to the head office in Perth, they will communicate with the chief electoral agent for the province. The last mentioned will be responsible for seeing that the whole of the rolls for his province and the Assembly seats included within its boundaries are kept up to date. My proposal is that each chief electoral registrar for the various provinces shall be responsible for the work that attaches to his position. Under existing circumstances there is too much tendency for an electoral officer to shelter behind the head office, instead of carrying out his task satisfactorily. As to compulsory enrolment for the Legislative Assembly, when the Government appointed a man to canvass the Kalgoorlie electorate, he was not appointed to enrol people but to go from door to door and check the rolls. At the same time he was to warn people who were not enrolled of the penalty confronting them. As a result of that individual's investigations, I understand it has been found necessary to discard the old roll and to print a new one. Over 700 names were added to the roll and I have been credibly informed by interested persons that there are yet 800 names to be added. I believe that any Assembly roll could be taken, and a similar state of affairs would be disclosed. That is because ours is largely a migratory population and that fact is more emphasised in the country areas than in the metropolis. During my second reading speech I drew attention to the fact that names of persons who had died, left the State or had been confined in a lunatic asylum, still remained on the roll for my province, although the attention of the electoral registrar had been drawn to the position. As the officer proposed in the amendment will be employed full time on electoral work, he should be able to ensure clean, effective rolls.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: During the debate some members have questioned whether registrars, if appointed as proposed, would be able to add new names to the roll. The officer could take the ratepayers' roll.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is generally 12 months behind the times.

Hon. E. H. ANGELO: He could see that everyone entitled to be enrolled was, in fact, enrolled and as his would be a full-time job, the task should not be beyond him. It is hopeless to expect the electoral

registrars to accomplish that result under existing conditions. I have fought seven elections and have always considered it one of the most objectionable requirements that I and my friends had to go round and put the names of people on the roll. That should be the job of the registrar himself and he should see to it that the rolls were complete. The present system under which candidates have to try to get people enrolled gives an unfair advantage to a man possessed of more wealth than another. Candidates of means could have half a dozen canvassers out before an opponent with less money could call on two or three electors, and generally the elector enrolled by Brown would vote for Brown. That has been the means of keeping out of Parliament some really good men, simply because they had not as much money as their opponents possessed. If there was a registrar for each province, he would be proud of his rolls, and would do his utmost to keep them up-to-date. I do not think the expense would be great. If there was a registrar for East Province, a good deal of saving could be effected in head office, and that saving would offset the expenditure in East Province.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Evidently half a dozen registrars would be required in East Province if they were to undertake the enrolment of all persons entitled to have their names on the roll. The registrars would not stop at the ratepayers' lists; they would have to enrol householders. I cannot see any justification for the amendment. In my opinion the registrar should not have to undertake the enrolments. He should occupy an impartial position, and be above suspicion. If he were engaged in enrolling electors, all sorts of wrong constructions could be placed on his actions. The registrar would be the sole judge of the elector's qualifications, and he would simply possess knowledge of conditions in his own district. He could ascertain whether persons on the roll were qualified, but beyond that he would not be in touch with affairs. In order to complete the job, it would be necessary to have full-time registrars for Assembly districts also.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I did not suggest that the registrar should be sent around the country to make enrolments. If he attended to his work properly, his time would be fully occupied in his office.

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

Ayes	18
Noes	5

Majority for	13
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AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. R. G. Moore
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. C. G. Elliott	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. J. Velland

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. G. Fraser	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 3 the words “for a province and” and the words “provinces and” be struck out.

That would permit of the same person being appointed registrar for a district and sub-district, or for two or more districts and subdistricts.

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

Clauses 10 to 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Qualification for Council:

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That the following be inserted to stand as paragraph (b): “Is not in receipt of relief from Government or from any charitable institution.”

That provision is contained in the Constitution Act, but has been omitted from this Bill.

Hon. G. Fraser: Quite right, too.

Hon. H. SEDDON: As there is a property qualification for the Council, a person in receipt of relief should not be entitled to be an elector for the Council.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I oppose the amendment, which is a blow at sustenance workers. Those men are occupying homes, and a great majority are eligible for the household franchise because of the clear annual value of their homes, but Mr. Seddon would disfranchise them because of their temporary poverty, for which they are in no way responsible. I am surprised at the action of the hon. member.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You would not class that as charitable, would you?

Hon. G. Fraser: The amendment specifies relief from the Government.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Seddon would have the names of such men struck off the Council roll because, during the intervals when they have to stand down without work, they receive relief from the Government.

Hon. H. Seddon: The Constitution Act disfranchised them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the Constitution Act of 1899. The Royal Commission consisting of representatives of both Houses decided not to include that in the Bill. The Act of 1899 was passed when there were no such conditions as exist to-day, and no general depression. There were several people receiving pauper relief because of old age, and some widows who had been left with large families. Even then it would have been iniquitous to penalise people, if they possessed the necessary household qualifications, by preventing them from being franchised. To-day there are men who accept work from the Government, and after a certain period return home and receive sustenance relief. Mr. Seddon now wants to disqualify these people and prevent them from voting. The principle set forth in the amendment was negatived by the Royal Commission, and I hope will be rejected by the Committee.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The interpretation of sustenance work and relief work by the Government is the Chief Secretary's interpretation, not mine. The Act says “is in receipt of relief from Government or from any charitable institution.” The Government have been very strong in their argument that they have taken people off relief and put them on to sustenance and sustenance work. They now say that sustenance work is only relief work. Most of those who are now in receipt of Government relief are not paying any rent at all, let alone a rental of £17 a year. Those who are paying rent will, of course, retain the qualification as a householder.

Hon. G. Fraser: You will have them all out.

Hon. H. SEDDON: That is the definition of the Government, not mine. I am prepared to accept the definition they have advanced since they have been in office.

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member is confusing the issue. At no time have we said that sustenance work is relief work.

Hon. H. Seddon: Yes, you have.

Hon. G. FRASER: The Leader of the Government has explained that when a man went away on relief work he was working for his wages, and when he had to go home he received sustenance until he could be put to work again. At no time did he construe the work portion as Government relief. Quite a number of works are known as Government relief works, and were put into operation to relieve the unemployment situation. The men who are doing the work would not be disfranchised, but those who are unable to work and are receiving relief would be disfranchised. Those people have to stand up to their responsibilities as householders. Hundreds of widows are receiving relief through the Child Welfare Department and have to pay their rent. Would Mr. Seddon disfranchise them also?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: There has been a lot of talk about nothing. I understand the Government instituted work to enable men to earn wages and obviate their having to receive relief from the Government. The Government boasted about that and said they had taken men off relief and put them to work.

Hon. G. Fraser: That is so.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: A man is put on to work for so long, and then has to stand down for a while.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale: He still gets relief from charitable organisations.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am not in favour of the amendment.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You are showing some brains now.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Of the people who are receiving relief very few own any property or occupy a house of the necessary rental value.

Hon. G. Fraser: There are hundreds in the West Province.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I regret that the hon. member should represent such a poor province. It is a disgrace to Governments that there should be hundreds of people around Fremantle paying £17 a year rent and receiving sustenance from the Government.

Hon. G. Fraser: I did not say sustenance; I said relief.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not believe it, I believe the widows receive 10s. a week from the Child Welfare Department, making a total of £26 a year. If they paid £17 a year rent, I do not know what they would have left to live on. Very few people on the Legislative Council roll are receiving relief in the sense that is meant here.

Hon. G. FRASER: There are hundreds of widows in the hon. member's province. A widow receives 9s. per child from the department, and may receive up to 45s. a week.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Some receive less.

Hon. G. FRASER: Out of that 45s. they are paying the rent of £17 a year. Hundreds of widows are enrolled for the Legislative Council.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Thousands of people would be disfranchised if the amendment were carried.

Hon. H. Seddon: People who are now on the Council roll?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: That is a reflection on the Government.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No. Funds are made available by the relief committees and relief councils for the assistance of relief workers who have had to stand down.

Hon. H. Seddon: Are they on the roll now?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Some of them are married men who are paying rent, and some of them own their own houses. Must a man sell his house merely because he is getting relief?

Hon. H. Seddon: The Government think so.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: There are men who because of their lack of skill and their small families are not able to get as much as others. Men on a small margin have a lot to contend with if they become sick. Would Mr. Seddon disfranchise them?

Hon. H. Seddon: The Act says so, not I.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The Act has never been applied in that way. The principle is wrong in the light of present conditions. If times were normal, the position would be different, though I would not support the proposal in any circumstances. It is unjust, and to advocate it constitutes a reflection on any Australian Parliamentarian. The hon. member would not care to defend the proposal in Kalgoorlie.

Hon. H. Seddon: I shall probably be asked about it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Then the hon. member will have a rough time. The amendment is most reactionary. It is only a waste of time to try to include the proposal in the Bill. For one thing, there are hundreds of widows receiving relief through the Child Welfare Department.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Are all those widows on the Legislative Council roll?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Most widows with children live in houses, and therefore pay rent. They do not often live in rooms.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I have studied these amendments, and made up my mind which to support and which to oppose. I had not intended to speak; but I cannot allow my friends opposite to beat the electioneering drum, as they have been doing, without giving the other side of the question. A great deal has been heard about widows. To some members widows seem the only persons worth consideration. But how about men who are not members of unions? What consideration do they get from the Government? They can die in the gutter or starve, but they will not get work unless they are members of unions. As to what is sustenance and what is relief, is it not clear in the recollection of hon. members that last session Mr. Kenneally introduced in another place—I helped to battle it through this Chamber—a measure dealing with the position of people who could not be prosecuted for getting away with sustenance money because they had rendered service for it? The Criminal Code had to be amended. Those persons were getting relief; they were giving service, and were getting money for it. Be it said to the credit of the Government that they brought down the necessary legislation. Mr. Gray and Mr. Fraser, who have been beating the drum this afternoon, fought to exclude those persons from the operation of the Criminal Code.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I must ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement. It is not true.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I withdraw. I will look up the debates, and probably revert to the subject at a later stage. However, it annoys me to hear so much about the widow, and not a word about the widower or husband who is allowed to starve if he does not join a union.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the Government are not able to find a position for an unemployed man, he goes on sustenance after a certain time. Occasionally it is impossible for the Government to find work for certain men, who then must go on sustenance. According to the Crown Solicitor's opinion, those men would be disqualified from voting.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Any of the persons referred to who are on the Legislative Council roll will remain there unless somebody objects to their names and has them removed. A sustenance worker while working is eligible. When he is found to be on sustenance, however, his name can be removed from the roll. But by the time his name has been removed, he may again be a sustenance worker and thus eligible for the Legislative Council roll. I shall not support the amendment. Under the present Act, a man who is on the roll without having the necessary qualification can vote simply because his name is on the roll.

Hon. G. Fraser: But such a man must make a declaration.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I am concerned about the poor widow. Under the amendment she will be hauled all over the State during elections. I do not want my election fought over a widow, or over half a dozen widows. There is no need for the amendment. Persons who, having the electoral qualification, obtain a little relief, will be able to vote. The married woman is often entitled to more consideration than the widow. Sometimes, on the other hand, a woman is lucky to lose her husband.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I fully expected a considerable amount of political propaganda to be made out of the amendment.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is not propaganda, but the expression of honest opinion.

Hon. H. SEDDON: This provision was in the Constitution Act and applied to both Assembly and Council until amended. The amendment amends the Constitution. A person possessing any property is not granted relief. Many thrifty people have come to me and said, "We have to spend everything we have, every penny, before we can obtain any relief." It has been argued that the amendment means the disqualification of every person receiving sustenance. However, the debate has shown that that is not so. The amendment merely disqualifies persons getting relief. I do not care whether the amendment goes in or goes out,

but it amends the Constitution Act and brings the constitution of this Chamber nearer to that of the other Chamber.

Hon. G. Fraser: That makes no difference.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

[Hon. Sir John Kirwan took the Chair.]

Hon. G. FRASER: It has been suggested that this provision was in the old Act, and that because no action was taken under it there was no harm in its remaining in the Act. It is true it was in the old Act, but it has been recommended by the Royal Commission that it should be taken out, and so it is omitted from the Bill. If the Committee are in favour of leaving it in the Act it will probably be interpreted that the Chamber desires that it is to be taken into consideration. We do not want that at all. I do not think anyone desires that because through unfortunate circumstances certain people are compelled to seek Government assistance they should be disfranchised. As I say, the Royal Commission thought that this provision should come out, and so if it be retained it may be used to disfranchise those people I have mentioned.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The amendment will be found in Section 17 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act of 1899. That section provides that every person shall be disqualified from being registered as an elector who is of unsound mind or in receipt of relief from the Government or from any charitable institution. Clause 18 deserves the fullest consideration on the part of the Committee, for the reason that it is proposed to transpose it from our Constitution Act to the Electoral Act. To transpose the section from the Constitution Act is attended with grave risks, and it is our duty to see that everything in relation to the qualification of the elector should be retained in our Constitution Act. The more one looks at the Constitution Act, the more does he become impressed with the necessity for retaining every vestige of it. On the second reading I said I was opposed to anything which would weaken or in any way destroy the functions of this House. Those responsible for the drafting of our Constitution Act were moved by a grave sense of the need for preserving this Chamber as a House

of review, and I believe it is the wish of every member to discharge the duties that devolve upon us as a House of review. If we alter the Constitution Act by removing this section of it to the Electoral Act, we may do considerable injury to the House; because the Electoral Act is not hedged about or protected in the same way as the constitution of the Council is protected by requiring that any amendments to that constitution shall be made by an absolute majority of the House. That is an important feature by the overlooking of which we would not be doing justice to ourselves, but on the contrary would be doing a considerable injury, for the reason that the Electoral Act can be amended at any time by a simple majority. I respect the recommendations of the Royal Commission, but nevertheless I suggest that we have to review what may have been decided by that Royal Commission, and if we see that the insertion of a clause like this would be detrimental to our constitution, the only thing we can do is to vote against Clause 18 in its entirety, and allow any amendments that might have been desirable in the qualification of the electors to be brought into some Bill amending our constitution. That would overcome the difficulty and we would still retain the sanctity of our constitution.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Nicholson referred to what evidently he regards as the iniquity of transferring a section from the Constitution Act to the Electoral Act.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I would not say iniquity, but undesirability.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This House has done it before, or at all events has sanctioned it. In 1907 the Government of the day, a Labour Government, introduced amendments to the Electoral Act, and in the necessary Bill modified an exactly similar provision affecting the franchise of the Assembly. On that occasion the amendment ran, "unless the person is wholly dependent on the Government for relief." So far as I remember, there was no objection raised to it in this Chamber; at any rate, it was passed, and is the law to-day. Considerable progress has been shown since the Constitution Act of 1899 was passed, and people view many things in a different light to-day.

Hon. G. W. Miles: We had not a socialistic Government in those days.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is not the Government of to-day who are responsible for this Bill, but a Royal Commission which represented both Houses of Parliament. So far I do not see that we have received much support from those members of that Commission who sit in this Chamber; perhaps they will give us some support later on. Seemingly I am expected to know the ideas of the members of that Commission who framed these amendments; at all events, it is all being left to me.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Were you a member of that Commission?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, I was.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: There is another feature in regard to the amendments, and it affects returned soldiers. Yesterday was Armistice Day, and we were all requested to recognise the significance of the occasion by contributing to the funds of the Returned Soldiers' League throughout the State so that the money so contributed should be put into the amelioration funds of the various branches to assist members of the Returned Soldiers' League and their families. Probably there would be a thousand married men who would be given assistance in times of stress.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Where do you get your figures?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I have had a fair experience of the distribution of relief, and I have an idea of the amount of money collected. I should say that easily a thousand would require relief during the next 12 months. Under the hon. member's amendment, those returned soldiers would be disfranchised.

Hon. H. Seddon: They are disfranchised now.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If a returned soldier were challenged now, he would have no right to be on the roll, and we do not wish to re-enact the existing provision. Why insult so many people who receive relief of this description?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is true, as the Chief Secretary states, that certain amendments were introduced in the 1907 Act, but those amendments applied to the Legislative Assembly. I am looking at the matter entirely from the standpoint of the Legislative Council and the qualifications necessary in

the case of electors seeking to vote for members representing them in this House. If the Assembly had desired to object to the transference from the Constitution Act, as it then existed, to the Electoral Act, they would have been the proper authority to object. We have to bear in mind that the qualification for enrolment for the Assembly is merely that of manhood suffrage. The position is entirely different regarding election to this House. That is the point I stress, and it is for that reason I urge we should maintain in our Constitution Act all that is essential, not only in relation to the qualification of members but anything else of a vital character.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (b), subparagraph (i), of Subclause 1, the word "registered" be inserted after the words "has a."

This provides that in the case of a freehold the elector who claims qualification for the Legislative Council must be a registered legal or equitable freeholder. This provision was in the Bill introduced in the Legislative Assembly, and was taken out in that House. In my opinion it is one of the necessary provisions to enable the Electoral Department to carry out their duties satisfactorily. If they are going to receive claims for the Council, they should have some authority to whom they can refer, and the authority is provided by the insertion of "registered," which, later on, is defined.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I have a list of amendments I propose to move, and one covers this particular clause. I might be permitted to explain what my amendments are. I should like the paragraph to be deleted and this substituted—

(i) Has his name on the electoral list of any municipality or road board district in respect of property within the province of the annual rateable value of not less than £17: Provided that the Chief Electoral Officer may refuse to insert the name of any person if he is satisfied that the name of such person should not be on such electoral list.

(ii) Has a registered freehold estate in possession situate in the electoral province of the clear capital value of £50 registered in the Deeds or Titles Office at Perth.

The effect of my amendment is really to re-enact the existing law, except that it leaves out equitable freehold. My reason is that

the idea of the Royal Commission throughout was to tighten up the electoral laws to prevent any possibility of fraud or stuffing of the rolls. There is no simpler way of stuffing the rolls than by the "equitable freeholder." There is nothing in the Act to compel them to produce to the registrar or the Chief Electoral Officer evidence of their title. In effect, by striking out "equitable freeholder"—

Hon. G. Fraser: You strike off thousands of names.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Who, if they are genuine, can get on again in another and proper way. "Equitable freeholder" is the occupier of the house. In the past a husband may have owned the house and put his wife on the roll as the equitable freeholder by virtue of the alleged sale of the house to his wife on time payment. There are other genuine freeholders who have bought their homes on time payment and who are entitled to be on the electoral list of local bodies as occupiers, and so they are not disfranchised at all. I strongly advocate the striking out of "equitable freeholder" because that is a cloak by which frauds can be committed. We want to avoid that possibility.

The CHAIRMAN: As the hon. member's proposed amendment is not on the Notice Paper, it will be almost impossible for the Committee to grasp its full significance. The Committee therefore can now discuss Mr. Seddon's amendment, which does appear on the Notice Paper, and, whether it be carried or not, Mr. Parker's amendment can be dealt with at a later stage on recommitment. The hon. member has indicated the effect of his amendment, which can be moved at a later stage.

Hon. G. FRASER: I regret that Mr. Parker did not put the phase he explained before the Royal Commission.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Perhaps you were not there when I did.

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not think I missed more than one sitting. Under the hon. member's suggested amendment what will happen will be this: Say a registered owner has a property valued at £500. The amendment will permit that person's name to be on the roll, but the person who has an equitable freehold of £400 on the property will be disfranchised. There are quite a number who do not register. A person may own four-fifths of a property, and he will be disfranchised.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Seddon's amendment proposes to restore the stipulation that an estate must be registered. Registration was recommended by the Royal Commission and my personal view is that registration should be insisted upon as far as is reasonable. For instance, if insisted upon with regard to leaseholds, there could be dummy leaseholds. A man could lease a portion to Tom, another to Dick, another to Harry, and so on, all the individuals being friends upon whom he could rely for support. Except for the instance referred to by Mr. Parker, I do not think anyone would transfer property to another for the purpose he indicated. This proposal could be applied to freeholds because there is little risk there, but leaseholds present a different proposition altogether.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I would like the word "registered" included. There are people who have freehold estates but do not register them. Probably they do not desire to go to the expense of the transfer fees. If the amendment be agreed to, it will give the electoral officers an additional opportunity to check.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of subparagraph (i) of paragraph (b) of Subclause 1, the words "or has a right of ownership in a dwelling-house as a chattel in a province" be struck out.

These words were inserted in another place and affect the qualification of an elector for the Legislative Council. It will leave the door open to a considerable volume of enrolment not otherwise obtainable. An individual might have a house on a block of land for which he pays the Government 10s. or so as rent. He could not register as a leaseholder but would be permitted to register under this provision. It would enable a man to register who has a small house on a Crown lease or a mining lease. I do not think it is the intention of this House to extend the qualification to the degree indicated in the amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot see any objection to the proposal in the Bill. If a man has a house worth £50 and occupies it, he should be on the same basis as if the house were built on a freehold block. I recognise that it is a novel amendment.

Hon. G. Fraser: If the man has a £30 house on a £20 freehold block, he is entitled to a vote for the Council, whereas if he has a house worth £50 on a leasehold block, he is not to have the vote!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is so.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I hope the amendment will be agreed to. As the clause stands, it will leave the door wide open to a dishonest person, should he desire to be dishonest. He will merely require to say that he has a dwelling house, and it need not have any value at all. Should he put up a contractor's office and sleep in it, he could claim it to be a dwelling house and secure a vote.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Suppose he put up a 5-roomed house on a leasehold block.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: If he were so foolish as to erect a house of that description on somebody else's block, I should say he did not possess sufficient ability to exercise a vote.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (b) of Subclause 1 after "has a" the word "registered" be inserted.

This refers to the qualification of a leaseholder.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of subparagraph (iv) of paragraph (b) of Subclause 1 "bona fide occupiers" be struck out, and the words "is in lawful occupation" inserted in lieu.

After consultation with the Crown Law Department officials, it would appear that the words I propose to substitute are better than those I ask shall be struck out. A person may occupy a house in good faith and yet may not be in lawful occupation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The deletion of the term "bona fide" will have an adverse effect on the interpretation of the provisions of the Bill. It has been inserted to assure that the person shall really be in occupation of the premises. The words proposed to be substituted may be intended to prevent a person who occupies premises on a Crown lease from securing the qualification for enrolment. It is doubtful if many in that position will be eligible, but if the house were of sufficient value to entitle the occupier to secure the franchise, I do not

think any question regarding his title should be taken into consideration.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of subparagraph (iv) of paragraph (b) of Subclause 1 after "province" the word "of" be inserted.

The amendment is required to make the sentence read correctly.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That subparagraph (v) of paragraph (b) of Subclause 1 be struck out, and the following subparagraph inserted in lieu:—

"(v) is enrolled as an elector on the electoral roll of any municipality in respect of property within the province of the annual rateable value of not less than seventeen pounds; or is enrolled on the electoral roll of any road district in respect of property within the province of the annual rateable value of not less than seventeen pounds."

The subparagraph deals with the qualification of ratepayers. It is proposed to delete that qualification after the next election. I consider the ratepayer qualification is far more sound, from the standpoint of determining the value of premises occupied, than the leaseholder qualification. If any portion of the qualification is to be deleted, it would be preferable to remove the leaseholder qualification and retain the ratepayer qualification. While I am not prepared to go that far, I consider the ratepayer qualification should be retained. If we delete the latter, it would mean that if a person were renting business premises at £4 a week, although he did not live on the premises, he could not be enrolled as an elector as he would not have the qualification for a vote for the Legislative Council, although he would be far more entitled to it than the person who occupied a dwelling house of a clear annual value of £17 per annum. To restrict the qualification in that way is undesirable.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This provision has been on the statute-book too long, and there is no greater menace to electoral purity. Scores of people have been enrolled through the medium of this provision who are not entitled to be on the roll. They have no interest in property of any sort. Incorporated companies have been enrolled through the medium of their secretaries. A husband might be on the ratepayer's roll,

and he is able to get his wife on also. Thus there are two votes where there should be only one. Why should representatives of companies be put on the roll?

Hon. H. Seddon: It is right that they should.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is useless to argue with any member who adopts that attitude. A company is an entity.

Hon. H. Seddon: What is the qualification for the Council? Is it not a property qualification?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I know what is happening and could cite instances. Representatives of unregistered companies also have votes. A man boarding at a hotel has his name on the roll, and has no right to be enrolled.

Hon. J. Nicholson: An incorporated company must be represented by someone.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The ratepayer qualification does not exist in any of the Eastern States. Rateable value has been introduced, and that takes us back beyond the days of responsible Government. What does rateable value mean? It would be necessary to have £34 of rental value before a person could get a vote for this Chamber.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is it not 40 per cent.?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But in one important town it is 50 per cent. No member would expect the present Government to sanction legislation that would have the effect of increasing the franchise for this Chamber. I daresay the Royal Commission considered all aspects and concluded that the qualification was improperly used. They decided that the sooner it was abolished the better, but rather than upset arrangements for the approaching election, they proposed that the qualification should be retained until June next which, in my opinion, is too long.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: I disagree entirely with the Chief Secretary. The ratepayer qualification should undoubtedly be reinstated. For a number of years I occupied business premises for which I paid £25 a week rent, and £7 rates. During that time I was entitled to a vote for this House. When my lease expired and I continued temporarily on a weekly tenancy, I had no vote. Surely when one pays £1,250 in annual value and has such an interest in the province, he should be qualified to vote.

Hon. E. H. Gray: How many votes do you want?

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: One in each province for which I am qualified.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope the amendment will not be accepted. I cannot understand the logic of Mr. Seddon in saying he would prefer to retain this qualification as against the householder qualification. The householder occupies certain property and pays his rent.

Hon. H. Seddon: Sometimes.

Hon. G. FRASER: That is more than the person does who gets in under the ratepayer qualification. The qualification may be obtained by renting a little lock-up shop, but the hon. member would deny the vote to a person who lives in the district.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Probably the tenant of the lock-up shop would have more interest in the province than would the other man.

Hon. G. FRASER: It would be possible to enrol 200 or 300 people who were tenants of certain chambers in Perth.

Hon. H. V. Piessé: It is right if they are paying the rent.

Hon. G. FRASER: They are merely renting offices in a building.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do you think it is right for two Labour officials to have votes when they occupy one room with a partition in it?

Hon. G. FRASER: If that is so it should not be permitted. There is nothing fair or reasonable about the ratepayer qualification. Most of the people so qualified have a vote by reason of being resident occupiers or freeholders. Why should a person who rents a bit of an office in a building have a vote for this House?

Hon. L. B. Bolton: What about a man with a big factory?

Hon. G. FRASER: If he is fool enough to have a big factory without a lease, he does not deserve a vote.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: What about a company?

Hon. G. FRASER: Only individuals should have a vote.

Hon. L. B. Bolton: Companies are big ratepayers.

Hon. G. FRASER: We should consider individuals, not bricks and mortar.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: The ratepayer qualification should be retained. Many people who pay rates on business premises and have a good stake in the town live with their people, and, but for the ratepayer qualification, would not have a vote. Mr. Fraser said we were giving the franchise

to bricks and mortar instead of to individuals, but he knows that we have not adopted adult franchise for this Chamber. We have to consider the value of property to determine whether individuals are entitled to a vote, and bricks and mortar determine the value of the property. A man might have a block of land worth £5 with a house worth £200 on it. That gives the qualification.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: What about the parson. He does not pay rates and he has the qualification.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Yes, because he is a householder. By adopting the ratepayer qualification we have an independent tribunal fixing the valuations. People with small lock-up shops would be disfranchised if the ratepayer qualification were abolished. Yet if they placed a Coolgardie stretcher in a back room and slept there, they would be entitled to vote as householders. Thus one man might pay £10 a week, and have no vote, and another might pay 10s. a week and have a vote. That would not be fair. Thousands of people would be disfranchised if the ratepayer qualification were abolished. The roll can be stuffed under the householders' qualification as well as under the ratepayers' qualification, except that there is not the same check of values. A man may go into a house and get on the roll, and may never pay any rent.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Not many people go without paying rent.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: A man may decline to go on a ratepayers' list on the ground that he does not agree with the valuation placed there. He thus remains on the roll as a householder. The question then comes in, what does annual value amount to? Thousands of people would be thrown off the roll if the ratepayers' qualification were struck out. If necessary let us tighten up the qualification. If it is right that the registrar should be able to examine the qualifications denoted on the ratepayers' list, let him be given authority to do so.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I regret that the Royal Commission dropped the ratepayers' qualification. It is the best basis on which to found the Legislative Council rolls. It contains more safeguards than any other basis. It is based on the clear annual value or rental value. There is also provided an appeal court before which the ratepayer can dispute the value.

There are safeguards in that system which are not found in other systems. I support the re-introduction of this qualification.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I support the ratepayers' franchise. Take a Perth factory worth £10,000 and a number of shareholders who are ratepayers. Their public officer has, I think, the right to apply for a vote for the Legislative Council to represent that company or factory. An undertaking of that size should have a vote for the Legislative Council.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A company has no right to vote for the Legislative Council. It secures that right in another way, through the ratepayers' list.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: This qualification was dropped on the recommendation of the Royal Commission. Shocking things have happened as a result of the qualification, and yet the hon. member proposes to perpetuate them. This qualification has been responsible for more court actions than any other. It is intended to give preference to money over the floating vote. We must take notice of the impartial inquiry that has been held. This qualification has been responsible for much corruption in the past.

Hon. G. W. MILES: If the Royal Commission recommended this they exceeded their duty. They were appointed to inquire into the Electoral Act, not to alter the Constitution. We are wasting time. I should like to see a vote taken on the question whether we should allow amendments to the Constitution Act to go into the Electoral Act. We may be here all night over these amendments, and then find the Committee are not in favour of the principle.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: My amendment would apply to people who are on the electoral or ratepayers' list. A person who has a vote in a municipality or road board is not necessarily a ratepayer, but is an occupier of rateable premises whether the rates are paid or not. I am in favour of this provision because it gives the Chief Electoral Officer an opportunity to check the qualifications of claimants. A person who wishes to get on the Legislative Council roll by virtue of being on the electoral list has to run the gauntlet of the local governing body. Mr. Gordon explained to the Royal Commission that there were many people on the rolls of local govern-

ing bodies who had no right to be there.

Hon. G. Fraser: They send the office boy from door to door.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: In some instances lists are supplied. The fairest way to get at the true qualifications is to take the electoral list of the local governing body. I suggest we add a proviso to the amendment that the Chief Electoral Officer may refuse to insert the name of any person if he is satisfied that the name of such person should not be on the electoral list.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That would give him too much power.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: He could not be given too much power to keep the rolls clean. The first abuse would be to stuff the electoral list, and the Chief Electoral Officer should have power to deal with that situation. I do not agree with the argument that a man ought to get a vote in accordance with the value of the property he holds.

Hon. G. Fraser: I do not suggest that.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I cannot see why a person should not have a vote as the occupier of the premises on which he has incurred a lot of liability, whether he is a resident or whether he earned his livelihood there, out of which livelihood he pays his taxes. There must be a proviso to show that he is genuinely there. I agree with Mr. Fraser as to that.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	17
Noes	..	..	..	6

Majority for	..	11
		—

AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angulo	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. R. G. Moore
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. C. G. Elliott	Hon. H. V. Piesse
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitchin
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. C. B. Williams
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That after the word "dwelling-house," in line 30 of Subclause 1, there be inserted "or property."

This would bring in the whole of the qualifications to which I referred in connection with the preceding five paragraphs.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 2 be struck out.

The subclause limits the qualification to the 30th June, 1936. The qualification having been re-inserted in the Bill, this subclause should be deleted.

The CHAIRMAN: It is almost a consequential amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 4 be struck out.

The object of the subclause is to compel the owner of a property who occupies it to register as occupier rather than as freeholder. The Chief Electoral Officer's argument is that when he found a person's name omitted from the Assembly roll he could immediately wipe that person's name off as occupier, thereby keeping the Legislative Council roll cleaner. He added that the person could then come back, should he wish to do so, as freeholder; but our experience is that it involves much trouble to get people to enrol for the Legislative Council at all. Moreover, by far the sounder qualification is that of freeholder.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The only object of Subclause 4 is to simplify procedure connected with the effort to discover whether persons are improperly enrolled. The officers of the Electoral Department have to make searches at the Titles Office, and the subclause would make their work much lighter. If the freeholder has ceased to be a householder, he can get on by reason of his freehold qualification. If he is living in the province, the subclause insists that he shall go on the list as a householder by virtue of his being the occupier.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I hope the subclause will be struck out. The scheme it proposes is a vicious one. We have frequently seen the freeholder registered as occupier on the present rolls, and the effect has frequently been to strike his name off the roll in the event of temporary absence from the premises. The man who has been entered as occupier or householder has very often indeed found himself off the roll at election time, and inquiry has elicited that

his name was struck off owing to his having notified the post office that he had left the premises, even though only temporarily. At the conclusion of an election in which I was personally engaged, I handed in a dozen names which had been struck off the roll, while I could guarantee that the owners of the properties in question were still occupiers of them, having left them merely temporarily. It is more difficult to get a freeholder off the roll.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, it is not. I have been struck off repeatedly.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I understand from the department that the person who has the freehold title is foolish not to enter himself as freeholder.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Alec Monger and I were struck off at just about the same time.

Hon. H. SEDDON: If the electoral officer is doing his job, before he strikes off a freeholder he has to refer to the records, and if the records show that the elector is still the freeholder of that property, he is allowed to remain.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: What I understood from the Chief Electoral Officer was that the enrolling of an inhabitant occupier enabled him to keep the rolls cleaner and keep a check on the Assembly rolls as well. So far, we have not heard of people being struck off who are freeholders. This might give them a chance of remaining on if they are registered as inhabitant occupiers. However, I see the difficulty of getting people on the rolls as inhabitant occupiers, although I do not see why they should prefer to be on as freeholders. I am in favour of this provision standing for the Council. It leaves with the Chief Electoral Officer a check for the Assembly rolls.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: I cannot see that this is of any value to the Chief Electoral Officer. When a man fills in a claim card, he sets down his qualification together with his address. What more could be required?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: It is very simple up our way, but down here it is difficult.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: This would make a man an inhabitant occupier when actually he is a freeholder, which is the best qualification of all.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I should like to assist the department, but I cannot see how the retention of this provision is going to help. But it will definitely operate against

the advantages accruing through registration as a freeholder. When a person registers as a freeholder, if he should leave the district his name still remains on the roll, with the altered address, whereas if he be an occupier and leaves the district, his name is crossed off the roll. So I say this will operate against the best interests of the elector, and that being so we should not here take into consideration the convenience of the department.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Another point the Chief Electoral Officer made was that if a man, being a freeholder and occupying the premises, puts down his name as an inhabitant occupier with that address, if he ceases to occupy the place and wants to retain his vote for those premises, he will have to put in a new claim card as a freeholder, but on the new claim card he inserts his new address.

Hon. G. W. MILES: Why put him to that trouble?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I would rather put him to that trouble than put a candidate to the trouble of finding out where the voter is.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON: Put him on as a freeholder and he is on permanently.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: And wherever he shifts to, you will never be able to find him.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I will support the deletion of this provision. It is hard enough now to find out the reasons why people are struck off the roll, and surely it is easier to strike off a householder than to strike off a freeholder. When a man registers as a freeholder, it is more difficult to strike him off the roll than if he registered as an inhabitant occupier.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: On the goldfields, when a freeholder whose name is on the roll leaves the district, we put in someone as householder, and so we get two votes. Also, if a freeholder sells his place, all we have to do is to add to the roll the name of the new owner. I have no objection to this provision in the Bill because, as a political organiser, I know the value of it.

Hon. H. SEDDON: The State is losing quite a lot of revenue through some of these transfers being held up. Any person on the roll as a freeholder who disposes of his property will come off the roll.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: But how many on the goldfields sell on an open plan?

Hon. H. SEDDON: We shall have a cleaner roll by having lists of names left with the department than by having this provision included.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That paragraphs (a) and (b) of the interpretation of "clear annual value" in Subclause 5 be struck out with the view of inserting the following:

"the annual value at which a leasehold estate in possession, or the dwelling-house of which a person is the inhabitant occupier, is valued for the time being under section three hundred and seventy-eight of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906, or section two hundred and twenty-four of the Road Districts Act, 1919-1933, as the case may be; or if there is no such current valuation, the annual value at which such leasehold estate or dwelling-house would be assessed on a valuation made under and subject to the said provisions of those Acts respectively."

The paragraphs (a) and (b) perpetuate a state of affairs which at present is giving quite a lot of trouble, namely, the method of determining the annual value of premises. The local authorities are in a position to assess the value of premises because they assess them every year. A person might contend that he is entitled to be on the Legislative Council roll. Under the amendment all he will have to do if his assessment be below the assessment prescribed in the Act will be to go to the local authority and say, "You have not valued my house high enough." No doubt the local authority will oblige him.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know that the hon. member really thinks the Government could possibly accept an amendment of this character, increasing the rental qualifications for the election of members to this House, because that is what it means. In some instances in connection with municipalities it would mean increasing the amount from £17 to £34, and in others from £17 to £29. If anyone took the trouble to read an electoral claim card they would see the meaning of "clear annual value." Mr. Seddon wants to provide a rateable value on which rates will have to be paid—quite a different proposition, and a substantial departure from the present Act.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I draw the attention of the Chief Secretary to the sections in the Constitution Act defining the qualifications for this House. The meaning is obvious to everyone. It is about time we had an

amendment of the description I have moved. In Kalgoolie alone there are 82 people on the roll under the conditions I have described. The fact remains that the local authorities say that the places in question are not worth £17. I am going to take the local authority's definition. I am not surprised to hear the Chief Secretary say the amendment is not acceptable to his Government, because everyone knows that the Labour Party for years past have advocated household qualification for this Chamber. Whilst we have property qualification let us stick to it.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: No Government would accept, and neither would they dare to increase the qualification for this House to £34 or even £30 a year. Originally the amount was £25 clear annual value. Now it is proposed to raise it to anything as high as £34.

Hon. H. Seddon: Nothing of the kind.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There was a definition of "clear annual value" given by Mr. Sayer in 1912. He was written to for this opinion by Mr. Stenberg, the then Chief Electoral Officer. Mr. Stenberg wrote on the 4th March, 1912, as follows:—

In view of the conflicting opinions as to the exact legal interpretation of the leasehold qualification for electors for the Legislative Council, as expressed in Section 15 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899, I shall feel obliged for an explanation which could be at once disseminated through the Press, with a view to dispelling any doubts as to the actual meaning of the qualification and prevent further irregular claims being sent in to the offices of registrars, which claims under present uncertain conditions might easily result in irregular enrolments. I attach hereto queries sent out from the metropolitan district office, and replies received thereto, from which it would appear that claims are made which, apparently, are not in accordance with the provisions of the Act. In view of the short period prior to the closing of the rolls, I shall feel obliged if you will kindly treat this matter as urgent.

Mr. Sayer replied as follows:—

To entitle a claimant to registration for a leasehold qualification—

(a) The claimant must have a leasehold estate in possession, and

(b) Such estate must have an annual value; and

(c) That value must be at least £17 a year.

A tenant for a term of years, or a tenant from year to year, would have a leasehold estate within the meaning of the Act. But a weekly or monthly tenant or a tenant for one year only, current at the date of his claim, in my opinion, has not a leasehold estate of the annual value within the meaning of paragraph 3 of Section

15 of the Constitution Act Amendment Act, 1899. Until the words "clear annual value" receive judicial interpretation I advise that the meaning should be deemed to be the fair rent at which the premises would ordinarily let, the tenant paying rates and taxes.

That has been the practice since Mr. Sayer gave his opinion. Now we are asked to adopt the rateable value. The hon. member must be simple indeed to think that any Government would accept his amendment.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not quite follow the argument of the Chief Secretary. Mr. Sayer's opinion was the fair rent, the tenant paying the rates and taxes. The Municipal Corporations Act sets out—

The annual value of rateable land which is improved or occupied shall be deemed to be a sum equal to the estimated full, fair, average amount of rent at which such land may reasonably be expected to let from year to year, on the assumption (if necessary to be made) that such letting is allowed by law, less the amount of all rates and taxes, and a deduction of twenty pounds per centum for repairs, insurance, and other outgoings.

What landlord pays the rent? Mr. Sayer never mentioned anything about ratepayers. The 20 per centum mentioned in the Act would only be 4s. in the pound and would amount to £2 or £3 altogether.

Hon. H. SEDDON: In the opinion read by the Chief Secretary, Mr. Sayer spoke of "clear annual value" receiving judicial interpretation. What is the word "clear" for in the Constitution Act? What does it mean? My interpretation is that "clear" means clear of all rates and taxes, the clear rent that you get. That has been the interpretation in the past. Now that we propose to restore the position to a sound basis, the Chief Secretary says that no Government would accept such an amendment.

Hon. C. R. Williams: Give us your interpretation.

Hon. H. SEDDON: My interpretation is that given by the local authority and you will get down to the basis intended, £17 per annum.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: There is no doubt that when the Constitution was framed the values set out in the Municipalities Act and the Road Boards Act were intended to be similar. There was no reason to suppose there would be any different value. In my opinion that is what annual value means: suppose a man invests his money in property. What he gets by way of profit is clear value to him. It may return him 5 or 10 per cent. If a man gets £50 a year

for a house and it costs him £10 a year to keep it in order, it cannot be said he gets £50 clear. The local authorities made provision accordingly.

Hon. H. Tuckey: That has been the position all along.

Hon. R. G. MOORE: Yes. Why fix the rateable value at £17, if it were intended to extend the privilege to a person who owned property of a rateable value of £14. The £17 basis was fixed because that was regarded as the lowest figure that should carry with it the qualification to exercise the franchise for this House. It must also be remembered that when that valuation was fixed in the Constitution, the house represented by that value was a far better one than a dwelling of that value to-day. That being so, the franchise has been liberalised through the depreciation of property values.

Amendment (to strike out paragraphs (a) and (b) of the interpretation of "clear annual value") put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	..	6
Majority for					10

AYES.

Hon. E. H. Angelo	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. R. G. Moore
Hon. C. G. Elliott	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. L. Craig

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. A. M. Clydesdale	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. E. H. Gray

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I move an amendment—

That in lieu of the paragraph struck out the following be substituted:—

"the annual value at which a leasehold estate in possession, or the dwelling-house of which a person is the inhabitant occupier, is valued for the time being under section three hundred and seventy-eight of the Municipal Corporations Act, 1906, or section two hundred and twenty-four of the Road Districts Act, 1919-1933, as the case may be; or if there is no such current valuation, the annual value at which such leasehold estate or dwelling-house would be assessed on a valuation made under and subject to the said provisions of those Acts respectively."

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I think the amendment should be extended further to

include freehold so as to be in conformity with the amendment that we carried at an earlier stage.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What amendment do you propose?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment on the amendment—

That in line 1 after "which a" the words "freehold or" be inserted.

Hon. H. SEDDON: I see the hon. member's point. Should we not include the words that we previously included in subparagraph (v.)?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not think that is necessary.

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

Amendment, as amended, put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—MORTGAGEES' RIGHTS RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILL—NATIVE FLORA PROTECTION.

Received from the Assembly and, on motion by Hon. H. J. Yelland, read a first time.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY TAX.

Second Reading.

Order of the day read for the resumption from the 6th November of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 9.52 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 12th November, 1935.

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

QUESTIONS (2)—WHEAT.

Commonwealth Grant to Necessitous Farmers.

Mr. PATRICK asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Is it correct that the Commonwealth grant to necessitous farmers was provided for farmers whose crops failed last harvest? 2, Is it intended to allocate the unexpended balance of the grant this year? 3, Is it correct that Agricultural Bank clients only are now receiving benefit from the fund?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, Yes, and proved to be necessitous as set out in the Commonwealth Act. 2, The money can be expended only in accordance with the Commonwealth Act, and if there proves to be a balance—which is not anticipated—the Commonwealth Government will have to be consulted regarding its disposal. 3, No; no discrimination of any sort was or is being made.

Bulk Handling Legislation.

Mr. STUBBS asked the Premier: Is it the intention of the Government to intro-