

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 3rd October, 1935.

	PAGE
Assent to Bill	1005
Bills: Native Flora Protection, 1r.	1005
Workers' Homes Act Amendment, 2r.	1005
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, 2r.	1006
Electoral, Com.	1007

The SPEAKER 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 Northern Australian Survey Agreement Bill.

BILL—NATIVE FLORA PROTECTION.

Introduced by Mr. Sampson and read a first time.

BILL—WORKERS' HOMES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 1st October.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [4.34]:

There is certainly not very much in the Bill, except that it proposes to increase from £400 to £500 the maximum salary limit of a person who shall be eligible to acquire a worker's home. The original Act provided that no person with a salary of more than £300 should be eligible for a worker's home, and in the Act of 1912 the amount was increased to £400. Now it is proposed to increase it again, this time to £500. I do not think we can have any objection to it, except that we have to be careful that the intention of the Act is not defeated by the proposed amendment. Originally it was provided in the Act that the limit to which advances might be made from the fund was £550, but the Act of 1928 raised that to £800. I believe the trouble the board is experiencing to-day is caused by the increase in the advance permitted by the Act of 1928. It means that a house built at a cost of £800—in many instances together with an amount provided by the applicant—becomes a

fairly expensive house. When we reach a capitalisation of from £800 to £1,000—frequently it depends on the value of the land on which the house is built—it certainly means an expensive house. The original intention of the Act was to provide homes for workers on the basic wage. We are defeating that original object by increasing the amount to £500, the salary of a person who may in future get an advance. True, as the Premier pointed out, that it is being done largely to enable the board to dispose of some 63 reverted homes they have on hand. But that is not going to be the limit to the operations of the Bill, if it becomes an Act, for it will mean that anybody with an income of not more than £500 who makes application for an advance will normally secure that advance. We know that a person on a salary of £500 can easily enough make financial arrangements to have a house built. I am a bit concerned as to whether we are doing what is right by extending the operations of the Act in the manner suggested. The principal thing the House ought to do is to try to have provided a cheap type of house, such as is being done in the Old Country, a house in which the worker can live at from 7s. to 15s. per week. In the Old Country, city corporations and urban councils are building homes at a maximum rent of 13s. per week and, as we see by this morning's paper, a minimum of 5s. 6d. per week. I do not suggest that we can compete with the Old Country, but I say that workers' homes at 7s. 6d. per week is what we desire here. Since we have the policy of providing homes, let us direct the board's attention to the fact that what we want is cheap homes in which people can afford to live. It is terrible when a person on the basic wage has to pay £1 or 25s. per week rent.

Mr. Sleeman: He cannot do it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is so. I should like to see a fairly large area of land set aside for the purpose of building these homes, with transport provided at a rate people could afford to pay when going to and from their work. If the board did that, it would be of considerable advantage, and I am sure the Act gives all the necessary power. When we build a home at a cost of £800, it is a very large sum, and I think the worker has to pay 6 per cent. on the money, which would

mean, in all, £1 per week by the time he has paid rates and taxes. It is agreed on both sides of the House that we want cheap homes. I do not know why people dislike living in wooden houses in this State.

Mr. Sleeman: It is not that they dislike it, but the local authorities declare brick areas.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Well, we ought to deprive the local authorities of such power. The city fathers should be reasonable enough to realise that they have responsibilities to the people. When I was in the Ministry, I discussed the matter with a member of the Workers' Homes Board, and he pointed to the difficulty of getting the worker to accept a cheaper house. He said that when workers came along with applications, they wanted better designs than those submitted to them. I believe myself the board should be prepared to build a house which would be more in line with what the worker could pay.

The Minister for Mines: I do not take exception to the worker objecting to their designs.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But he can submit his own design.

The Minister for Mines: Yes, he can.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That is, provided it is acceptable to the board. I should like to impress on the board that what the House desires is a house that will not necessitate the paying of more than 10s. or 15s. per week. If we could get such a house, we should be getting what was intended by the original Act. It is also proposed in the Bill to alter the name of the Workers' Homes Act to the State Housing Act. I have no objection to that. Shakespeare, I think it was, said a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. But we should be careful about this proposed alteration in the name. I want to ask the Premier how will it affect the securities; will they have to be altered and, if so, who is to pay the cost of the alteration? I have never known the Titles Office to do anything for nothing, but if there is to be an alteration in the titles, the workers should not be asked to bear the cost. We ought to say that any alteration required by the Titles Office should be met by the board without cost to the workers. I do not think we are going to do what we set out to do, and I think it unwise to increase the salary limit of applicants for homes. In this regard, the

greatest responsibility we in this House have is to find cheap homes, not to house people drawing salaries of up to £500 per annum. The Government have altered their policy and I do not think it is going to assist them materially in the disposal of the converted homes the board has on hand. Some time ago I looked at war service homes in this State, having in contemplation the purchase of a house; and I am bound to say there was not the value in those places. There was no occasion for me to look at workers' homes which were standing unoccupied, because I could not have got one had I wanted to—I would not be permitted to do so.

The Minister for Mines: As regards homes built in the first rush of the scheme, undoubtedly the value is not in them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the value is really in the workers' homes, well and good; but if it is not there, let the homes be written down. Should the Government consider that the change of name of the board will assist them in getting rid of some of the homes they have on their hands, I have no objection. However, I repeat, the policy of the Act is to provide still cheaper homes, and not more expensive homes—to provide homes in which the people can afford to live, and which they will not be compelled to leave when temporarily out of employment.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 1st October.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [4.48]: When the Estimates were before the Chamber, I voiced my opinion on this legislation, saying I considered there was on the Government a responsibility which they refused to accept. They were amending this legislation when there was a more immediate and more pressing obligation upon them, namely, to provide full-time employment for people on part-time. Government employees on the lower wages ought to have received an increase. I have in mind the married man, with wife and family, on £230 a year. The higher-paid Government employees might have waited for another year to have their cuts restored. We know there has been an

improvement in the State finances; and had higher-paid officers waited as I suggest, the Government would have been able to provide full-time employment for some men now on part-time. That is the only protest I have to raise against the Bill, though I must say I do not like the drafting of the measure. It purports to deal with Part II. of the principal Act, referring to salaries; with Part III., referring to superannuation and retiring allowances; and with Part IV., applying to grants. It also proposes to redraft the provisions dealing with superannuation and retiring allowances, and to include them in the Bill. But Part I. of the Act of 1934 has not been repealed. Section 3, in Part I., deals with a number of things which are being repeated in this Bill—"Preliminary," salaries, superannuation and retiring allowances, and grants. "Preliminary" also deals with interpretation, interpreting "grant," "magistrate," "salary" and so on, which terms have no present application. When bringing down this Bill the Government might have caused it to conform more closely to the usual practice of drafting. As the parent Act expires at the end of the year, the opportunity might have been taken to redraft the whole measure, deleting the preamble, which is so objectionable to hon. members opposite. The previous Government introduced that preamble once; the present Government have introduced it once, and they now propose to continue it.

Mr. Marshall: The preamble is nothing to be proud of.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Bill gets away from the original intention—spread of sacrifice. I shall not read the preamble, as it was read here so often when we were on the other side of the Chamber. In fact, it was read every time this legislation was before the House. But there is a great change in hon. members opposite when they move from one side of the House to the other. When they were sitting in Opposition, the preamble was a shocking thing; but now they desire to conserve it, even when it has no application whatever.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Will you move that it be struck out?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will not interfere with Government business.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do you mean that remark to apply for the whole of the session?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No, I do not. When in office we found it necessary to introduce this legislation. The preamble begins—

Whereas at a conference between Ministers of the Commonwealth and Ministers of the States . . . to devise measures for meeting the grave financial emergency existing in Australia

I presume the present Government have demonstrated clearly that the "grave financial emergency" does not exist now. Therefore that reference to it might well be omitted. And other things which have no application might be omitted also. Still, those cuts ought not to be restored until we are able to give full-time employment to people now on part-time. Meanwhile persons on higher salaries might have continued to bear the cuts. I know hon. members opposite will have something to say on this Bill, which I feel sure they will not endorse. They know the condition of the people as well as I do. I do not say they know it better, because persons suffering—when they cannot get help from the Government side of the House—go to the Leader of the Opposition. That is customary. I have had quite a lot of it. In bringing down this Bill the Government are making a mistake. I desire again to protest against the doing of something which is wrong until sacrifices have been spread more evenly. If there is no necessity for sacrifices now, let the lower-paid officers have preference.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—ELECTORAL.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 to 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Qualification for the Council:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In view of the extreme length of this clause, covering about three pages, would you, Mr. Chairman, divide it into subclauses? Otherwise it will be difficult to follow.

The CHAIRMAN: I will do anything that will convenience the Committee. I shall put the subclauses separately.

Subclause 1:

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1, paragraph (d), subparagraph (i), line 1, the word "registered" be struck out.

The object of the amendment is to enable a person who has a legal or equitable estate in possession in land situate in a province having a clear capital value of £50 at least, above all charges and encumbrances affecting the same, to be registered as an elector. In submitting the amendment, I shall follow the argument which has already been addressed to the House by the member for West Perth. There are many cases of people who are at present on the roll and who have not a registered title. To obtain such a title involves a considerable amount of expense which these people, in their present financial position, cannot afford. They would have to employ a solicitor and pay his fees, in addition to stamp duty and registration fees. Is it desirable to strike these people off the roll? They cannot in any sense be deemed protectors of the rich. They belong to the poorest class. The big holders would, of course, be registered. The reason advanced for the inclusion of the word "registered" is that it will enable the Chief Electoral Officer readily to determine whether or not a claimant for enrolment possesses the necessary qualification, but surely that could be determined equally well by examining the documents of title—the small titles, as the member for West Perth called them—that these people possess. In that way the Chief Electoral Officer would be just as sure of his ground as if the claimant's title were registered. This is purely a machinery matter. I understand from what the Minister said in reply on the second reading that he has no desire to do anything except to alter the machinery provisions of the Act. His wish is to make the machinery more perfect and to prevent the fraud that has taken place in the past. He said he had no wish to go beyond that. Yet here is a clause, the effect of which is to take away the franchise from the poorer class of people. Advantage should not be taken to alter the franchise in any way by the present measure. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I support the amendment. I can cite many instances on the goldfields where houses are sold under a contract of sale, the contract not being registered in any way. Under such contracts, the purchaser usually pays a small deposit and agrees to pay the balance of the purchase money at a certain amount per week. He does not become re-

gistered as the proprietor of the property until such time as he pays the full amount of the purchase money. Nevertheless, purchasers under contracts have just as effective a qualification as if they were actually registered as proprietors of the land. They may, in fact, before the contract expires, arrange a mortgage over the property, pay off the vendor, and become registered as the proprietor of the property. The same privilege should be extended to persons buying property under a contract of sale as is extended to those persons who have a registered title.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: In the administration of the Electoral Department it has been exceedingly difficult to determine whether or not some people are entitled to be enrolled. A claim may be made by some person to be enrolled, but the Chief Electoral Officer, or registrar, is unable to satisfy himself whether the claim is genuine: and, in any case, it is exceedingly difficult to determine at what stage during the currency of a contract for sale between two parties one of them becomes entitled to be enrolled. The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) spoke of contracts which provided for the payment of a small deposit, the balance to be met by weekly payments. Assume a person bought a property and paid a deposit of £10, agreeing to pay the balance at the rate of £1 a week, some 37 or 38 weeks would have to elapse from the time he paid the deposit before he would be entitled to be enrolled. The Chief Electoral Officer would experience very great difficulty indeed in ascertaining when such a person became entitled to enrolment. The clause would not have the effect of taking away the rights of any person, because I suppose that nearly all the people who would be qualified under this section would also be qualified by being householders.

Members: No.

Hon. N. Keenan: What about all the parcels of land now being sold on terms in the suburbs?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Most owners of land generally have a registered title.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is just what they have not got.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Consider the people buying from Land and Homes. They have not registered titles.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, but they can protect themselves by lodging a caveat.

Mr. Sampson: They pay 5s. down and 5s. for ever.

Mr. Patrick: Five pounds.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: People of that class are not likely to get such an equitable interest in land as would entitle them to be enrolled. Many of them are sued because they do not honour their obligations. Considerable evidence was given on this point before the Royal Commission. The Chief Electoral Officer suggested this amendment and the Royal Commission decided to adopt it.

Hon. N. Keenan: Has there been any grave abuse in this respect?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, but the Chief Electoral Officer, during the course of his evidence, informed the Royal Commission, that he could not say the Council roll was a true reflex of the people who were entitled to be enrolled. He pointed out to us the difficulties that prevented him from determining whether an individual was actually eligible for enrolment, and said the problem mainly arose with regard to the property qualification. The Chief Electoral Officer is the official charged with the duty of determining whether the claim lodged by an individual for enrolment for the Legislative Council, shall be allowed, and under existing conditions he is not in a position effectively to do so. I do not desire to deprive anyone who is entitled to be enrolled from having his claim admitted. The Royal Commission discussed this phase for some time in an endeavour to arrive at a more satisfactory basis, and the provision in the Bill represents what the Parliamentary Draftsman considers suitable. It has to be admitted that many people become enrolled merely because they are asked to submit their claims. When their claim cards are dealt with by the Chief Electoral Officer, he cannot deal with them satisfactorily with the law as it stands at present.

Hon. N. Keenan: And yet there has been no abuse.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Some people are enrolled although not eligible. Naturally there must arrive a time in a property transaction when the equity of one

of the parties falls below the amount specified in the legislation as the necessary qualification for enrolment for the Legislative Council. People are foolish who do not take the necessary steps to enable them to prove their qualification. The mere payment of 5s. to lodge a caveat should not prevent a person from taking the necessary steps through the Titles Office, to protect himself.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is the inclusion of the word "registered" to which exception is taken.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: All we are anxious to do is to secure a proper roll. I will consider any amendment that will safeguard the position, but rather than revert to the old order, I prefer the provision embodied in the Bill.

Mr. CROSS: I support the amendment because I believe the provision in the Bill will penalise a large number of people, particularly in the metropolitan area. The Minister for Justice does not seem to know the procedure adopted by individuals in the purchase of their homes. In many instances the husband takes his wife as a partner in the contract. They pay the required amount and frequently caveats are lodged against the seller. It is almost impossible for the Chief Electoral Officer to determine just when the individual becomes entitled to be enrolled. If the amendment be not agreed to, it will mean that the freeholder who has an equity in property, or joint freeholders, will not be entitled to enrolment until they can become registered as freeholders of the property, which would not be till the completion of the contract. That might deprive such people of enrolment for 10 or 12 years.

Mr. MARSHALL: It must appeal to members as somewhat remarkable that we should be arguing in this year of grace, 1935, as to whether an individual should have the right to a vote. I do not know when we will become democratic and do something of a democratic nature. It is sad to think that we are in much the same position now as 200 years ago. This particular clause still gives as the basis of the right to a person to a vote in connection with the Legislative Council, the qualification of cash, bricks and mortar or broad acres. It is astounding that any member should venture to defend the freehold or leasehold qualifications in these days.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment is to strike out the word "registered."

Mr. MARSHALL: I am aware of that, but that will not alter the fact that the qualification will remain. Why should people be required to register their interest? The Minister was wrong in stating that the purchaser of a property would be entitled to claim a vote along with the vendor. I am purchasing a property, but I cannot claim to be the registered holder. The vendor requires that security until I have fulfilled my contract. What law would give me the right to register as an equitable holder?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Put on a caveat.

Mr. MARSHALL: A caveat has been lodged, but how does that make me a registered holder?

Hon. C. G. Latham: If you were not, the caveat would not remain.

Mr. MARSHALL: But I might possess an interest of only £5 in a property.

Mr. McDonald: A caveat is included as a registered claim.

Mr. MARSHALL: If the word is retained, there will be more scope for abuse than exists under the present law. Will the Minister expect goldfields people to lodge caveats when properties are transferred on the time-payment system? At present we can get purchasers enrolled, but in future we shall be unable to do so unless they are registered. I must support the amendment; in fact, I shall oppose the whole clause on principle.

Mr. McDONALD: Since signing the report of the Royal Commission, I have given the matter further consideration and I feel some misgivings as to some of the amendments proposed in the Bill. When a man sells a property, the seller is registered, and there is no trouble about his getting a vote for the Council if his interest is worth £50. The man who buys under a contract of sale may register his claim by means of lodging a caveat. Contrary to the statement of the member for Murchison, the Minister was quite correct in saying that the seller, if he retained £50 worth of interest in the property, would be entitled to a vote, and that the buyer, if he had £50 worth of interest, would also be entitled to a vote. When a caveat is lodged, the Registrar of Titles makes no note of the terms of the contract of sale, and the Chief Electoral Officer could learn nothing of the terms from the caveat. The claim card would

give him almost as much information. The only way in which the Chief Electoral Officer could find out the details would be by calling for the production of the agreement. There would be more trouble involved if the purchaser had to lodge a caveat and pay 10s. for registration fee, and produce his contract of sale at the Titles Office, than there would be in taking the document to the Chief Electoral Officer. The position is very difficult, but the remedy proposed by the Chief Electoral Officer will not assist him.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: The Minister was quite wrong in saying that any person could be enrolled who could show that he had an interest in a property. According to the clause, he would have to be registered. A caveat would not indicate the equitable interest a person might have in a property. A caveat merely prevents dealings in the property, and it is possible for a person having no interest in a property to lodge a caveat against the title. When the Minister said that the Chief Electoral Officer would have no check if the word "registered" were deleted, he inferred that that officer checked all the claims made. That is absurd. He makes no attempt to do it.

The Minister for Justice: He does it. Make no mistake about that!

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Only when objection is raised to a claim.

The Minister for Justice: No; he is constantly checking claims.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: He would not take the 10,000 names on the Metropolitan-Suburban Province roll and check the claims.

The Minister for Justice: That is constantly being done.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: I know how constantly it is done, because in the North-East Province there were three persons on the roll for one freehold block for several years, and the block was not worth £50 at the time. On the goldfields, it is difficult to get people to understand that they have a claim, and to insist on registration will increase the difficulty. The amendment will increase the difficulties in getting people on the roll.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I intend to support the amendment moved by the member for Nedlands. It is all very well for the Minister to say that the Chief Electoral Officer will look into these matters. That officer has no opportunity of doing so; he is entirely dependent on the reports of his

various officers. On one occasion after applications had been made with a view to registration of electors, a local registrar took pride in saying, "We will get these people who sign false declarations." Very often equities are not registered and that allows the whole matter to remain open not only for prosecution but persecution of people. I agree that the words should be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I was hopeful that with the assistance of the member for Nedlands we would endeavour to make a reasonable amendment to this clause.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You should leave it as it is now.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe spoke of three people being on the roll for one area of land. I suppose it was not possible to find out which of the three was the owner.

Mr. Smith: Each in his turn had been a registered owner.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I had a vote in the Metropolitan-Suburban province because I owned a block of land worth £60 or £70, but having disposed of my equity, I was no longer entitled to vote. I did not take any steps to inform the Registrar and was not aware that my name was still on the roll until I received a circular from a candidate four years later. What we want to do is to pass legislation which will enable those people entitled to be enrolled to have their names placed on the roll. The position at present is unsatisfactory and I agree that what is proposed may work out with some little hardship, but from the administrative standpoint there would be given a better check than that which exists at present. The Royal Commission dealt with this subject very fully and decided to make the recommendation contained in the Bill. If any suggestion can be made whereby we could have some check—there is none now—I will be prepared to accept it. I am not particularly insistent on the phraseology of the clause as it is, but I think it is better than the existing provision.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I agree with the Minister that it would be desirable, if it were possible to do so, to frame the clause in a way that would not interfere with those now applying for the franchise, and at the same time make it easier for the department to keep the rolls clean. It would be impossible offhand, however, to suggest

proper phraseology so as to bring about the desired result. I ask the Minister to consider whether the further consideration of this clause, which in very many parts is of a character that requires a considerable amount of investigation, could not be postponed.

The Minister for Justice: I have no objection to that.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Then for the time being I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause postponed.

Clause 19—Assembly elector continues qualified for three months after he leaves district:

Hon. N. KEENAN: I draw the Minister's attention to a contradiction: The second paragraph of the clause sets out that an elector who has changed his place of living to a district other than that for which he is enrolled on the day of the issue of the writ for an election for the district may until his name is transferred to another roll vote for the district in which his name continues enrolled at any election held within three months after he has ceased to live in the district. That is the existing law. In the clause we have just postponed it is provided that any elector who has lived for one month in an electorate becomes entitled to be enrolled. Then, by Clause 40, it is an offence not to become enrolled. So an extraordinary position is created. Now that we are trying to clear up the mess in connection with the rolls generally, we should also try to clear up the clash to which I have drawn attention.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Unfortunately, in this State there are many people who do not know where they will be on election day. Some may perhaps start out for one place to do well-sinking or fencing and may not be there for a month. Then they move on to some other place to do other work. There is no desire that anyone should be disfranchised in circumstances such as those.

Hon. N. Keenan: I do not suggest that they should be disfranchised.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: As it was in the original Act and as it is reprinted in the Bill, those people would have the right to vote somewhere. If we were to say that a month after they had left the district they should automatically

be struck off the roll, we would disfranchise thousands of people living under conditions somewhat similar to those to which I have referred.

Hon. N. Keenan: I did not suggest that, but rather to lengthen the period.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Things that people do not do in a hurry, they are apt to forget altogether. After the numerous prosecutions that have been launched by the Commonwealth Electoral Department, most people have developed the habit of furnishing claim cards with their altered addresses within a few weeks, so that their enrolments may be rectified. If we extend the period, people may forget altogether whether they have attended to the matter or not.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What is the provision in the Commonwealth Act? Do they provide for a period of one month, with three months' grace?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Commonwealth Act provides for one month. I have not studied the other point to be able to inform the hon. member if the Commonwealth allow three months' grace after the expiration of one month. When I considered this particular clause, I had in mind the possibility of disfranchising electors and I desired to safeguard their position.

Mr. RODOREDA: I do not think there will be the clash that the member for Netherlands suggests. The provision has been framed in the interests of the elector who leaves his electorate within three months of the issue of the writ for an election. Generally two months elapse between the issue of the writ and polling day, and during that period he cannot possibly be enrolled at all. Without the provision in the Bill, he would be disfranchised.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 20—Disqualifications:

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: The disqualification includes natives of Asia, except those of British India. That would deprive a native of Palestine of a vote.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If he is naturalised, he will be all right.

Mr. J. MacCallum SMITH: But he may not wish to be naturalised.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Then he could not be enrolled.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I desire to draw attention to subparagraph (iii) of paragraph (a) of Subclause 1, which provides that the disqualification shall not apply "to any half-blood aboriginal of Australia who obtains a certificate in the prescribed manner from a magistrate . . ." That is an entirely new provision, and I suggest it is somewhat dangerous. In the first place, the half-blood may result from a cross between a Japanese and an aboriginal or between a Chinese and an aboriginal.

The Minister for Justice: Then the magistrate will exercise his discretion before issuing the certificate.

Hon. N. KEENAN: How does the Minister know? How will the magistrate know?

Mr. Marshall: The half-blood will have to secure his certificate.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes, that he is a fit and proper person to exercise the franchise. But are we to allow the law to be so extraordinarily loose that one magistrate may say a half-blood aboriginal is a fit and proper person and another magistrate may say he is not? I do not know that there has been any demand for the half-bloods to be granted the franchise. I do not believe there has been any such demand.

The Minister for Justice: Of course there has.

Mr. Marshall: Plenty of it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Mr. Neville raises every complaint he can think of on behalf of the half-castes as well as the aborigines, yet we have not heard the complaint that they are not on the roll.

The Minister for Justice: I have heard many complaints on that score.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Still, is it desirable to place half-castes on the roll? It is possible that in the far North there are more half-castes than whites, and we do not want to take the risk implied by that, particularly as this provision is so loosely drawn. I move an amendment—

That subparagraph (iii) be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I hope the provision, indeed the whole of the clause, will be allowed to remain. We hear talk of taxation without representation. Many of the half-castes successfully undertake all the responsibilities of citizenship, and live up to their obligations better than do some white men.

Mr. Marshall: Too right they do!

Legislative Council,*Tuesday, 8th October, 1935.*

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They stand up to their every obligation.

Hon. N. Keenan: How many of them?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Hundreds of them.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Then we had better be very careful about this provision.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I know personally many of these half-castes.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Some half-castes have wished to stand for Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We go to no end of expense in educating these people—some 300 of them attend mission schools—we endeavour to make proper citizens of them, and encourage them to leave the bush life of the blacks for the life of a civilised community. Are we then to say to them, "You may enjoy all these advantages, but you cannot have a vote for Parliament"? The half-castes have to pay taxes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I should like to know how many of them pay taxes; probably not 20 of them.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I myself know at least 25 half-castes who pay taxes. Many of them pay the hospital tax. Such people should be given a vote, so long as they are not predominantly black. That concession is given them by the Commonwealth.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

	PAGE
Bills: Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 2s. Com., report	1013
Brands Act Amendment, recom.	1014
Droving Act Amendment, Com., recom., further recom.	1014
Traffic Act Amendment, 2s.	1016
Rural Relief Fund, Com.	1022
State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment, 2s.	1025
Builders' Registration, 2s.	1026
Adjournment, Royal Show	1028

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

**BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT
CONTINUANCE.**

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 3rd October.

HON. H. V. PIESSE (South-East) [4.37]: I moved the adjournment of the debate last Thursday because I intended over the week-end to travel through the province I represent. I visited Lake Grace, where I was very pleased to note the excellent prospects for the coming season. In fact, one of the Agricultural Bank inspectors informed me that it was the finest season experienced in that part of the district for the past six or seven years, and he had no hesitation in forecasting an average of 14 to 16 bushels of wheat to the acre—

Hon. A. Thomson: Provided that rain falls soon.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE: I was about to remark, provided that rain falls soon. I visited Gnowangerup on Sunday. That district has had excellent rains, although they came somewhat late, and the lambing has not been good on account of the lack of green feed in the early part of the season. Undoubtedly there are other districts that are not as fortunate. Travelling up through Kondinin towards Bruce Rock there certainly seemed to be a decided shortage of water, and I read in the newspaper that a member had been visiting the more northern portions of the wheat areas and had commented on the shortage of water there. The water shortage is going to be the great difficulty, and it is a difficulty that the Gov-