small as 10 acres being required—are able to develop, clear, fence and pasture the land, and make provision for water, without assistance from any Government instrumentality. They do not require help through the R. & I. Bank, or any other medium that the Government has for assisting settlers.

It might appear to some members that an area of 10 acres is quite small; and so it is. On the other hand, if it is suitable country for orcharding it can be the means of providing a living for someone. From the point of view of the Government or the Forests Department, these comparatively small areas might be relatively insignificant, but in parts of my electorate, even a matter of 10 acres is of considerable importance to the people concerned.

As the Minister would know, in many instances the areas applied for are swampy—summer land, as it is termed—which is of relatively small importance from a forestry angle. This sort of dangling a carrot in front of a donkey indefinitely has to stop. A decision must be made in fairness to the settlers concerned, and particularly in fairness to the sons of settlers who would like to stay on the property and take over the responsibility from their parents, and possibly provide for them in their old age. But when they realise that the existing property is too small to maintain two families they realise that there must be an extension of the properties before they can wisely agree to remain there.

I would like to hear the Minister's views on this matter and to know what the Government's policy is to be, and when we can expect some decision on the important question of land classification in the South-West.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.20 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 24th October, 1957.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

TRADE WITH EASTERN STATES.

(a) Tonnage of Goods Carried by Rail.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

Can he please supply the following information:—

(1) What was the tonnage of goods entering Western Australia by rail from the Eastern States for the years 1955-56 and 1956-57, respectively?

(2) What was the tonnage of goods carried by rail from Western Australia to the Eastern States for the corresponding periods?

The MINISTER replied:

	1955-56.	1956-57.
(1)	48,750 tons.	50,170 tons.
(2)	18,518 tons.	30,340 tons.

The figures do not include consignments originating or terminating at Kalgoorlie, the handling and accounting of which are dealt with by the Commonwealth officials at Parkeston.

These figures do not include consignments which originate and terminate at Kalgoorlie; that is at Parkeston. Obviously there is a greater tonnage of goods carried than the figures I have given disclose, because a quantity always terminates at Parkeston for the Trans-train and is either destined for Kalgoorlie or travels elsewhere by road.

The same thing applies to the quantity of goods travelling from west to east because a certain quantity is taken by road and entrained at Parkeston. It is not very great, but goods such as motorcars are freighted in this manner, and I understand that the pick-a-back system also means that quite an amount is carried in addition to the tonnages I have mentioned.

(b) Goods Originating and Terminating at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he inform the House at the earliest opportunity the amounts of goods originating and terminating at Kalgoorlie as mentioned in his reply?

The MINISTER replied:

I will endeavour to obtain the relevant figures from the Commonwealth Railway Department.

PENSIONERS.

Number under 1871 Act.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

What is the approximate number of pensioners drawing pensions under the 1871 Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

I have not been able to obtain the actual figures, but I understand there are approximately 300.

BILL—CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL LANDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—BETTING CONTROL ACT CONTINUANCE.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [2.36]: I move—

> That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. J. MURRAY (South-West) [2.37]: Before addressing myself to the Bill, may I congratulate the Chief Secretary on his return, and express my hope that his early return to full duty will have no detrimental effect on his health.

In connection with the Bill, I stress the point that prior to the tea suspension last Tuesday, there was considerable confusion, caused partly by the early termination of the Supply Bill debate, and this left some members, who might have addressed themselves to the betting control measure, out of the Chamber. It is remarkable, however, that the one person who was not caught in this confusion was the Minister who introduced the Bill and who came into the House with a prepared statement in reply to certain matters which I had raised on Thursday of last week. This statement did not take into consideration the fact that all members could have spoken at length on the measure, and might have raised points which required a considered reply.

Because of the confusion, only three members spoke to the measure before the Minister replied to the debate. Therefore, it may have been competent for him to suggest in his reply that I was the only member, and the only person of the public of Western Australia who was dissatisfied, firstly, with the operations of the Betting Control Board; and, secondly, with certain bookmakers who were operating under this legislation.

When I spoke to the second reading I gave credit to the s.p. bookmakers for their efforts to maintain an outward show of decorum and good management of licensed premises. I say, "an outward show." I said that it was in their interests to do so, and I believe that that will now be maintained because the Act comes up for review in a few years' time. In my opinion the fact that the legislation was coming up for review this year was the one factor which put a brake on any irresponsible conduct by licence holders.

I believe that certain of my remarks on this matter were misunderstood. I said on the second reading that as regards the control of this legislation, which is vested in our Police Force, they now have circumstances similar to those which existed before licensed bookmaking was established in this State. What I wanted to imply, when I made that statement, was that prior to the introduction of this legislation no action was taken by the police to stamp out illegal betting. Prosecutions were launched periodically, as a revenue-producer only; and those prosecutions took place after they had been pushed from higher up to make a raid here and a raid there.

Strangely enough, in those days the actual operator was never on the street, or in the shop, when the raid was made. But some comparatively innocent person —and I say "comparatively innocent" because he knew what he was doing—was duly arrested and fined. He was fined the minimum penalty; whereas if the bookmaker had been consistently prosecuted, he could have been gaoled eventually. I said in my second reading speech that we have now more or less reached a similar stage because under this legislation premises are licensed, and the Act stipulates certain people who can be prosecuted for being on premises.

But as I illustrated, at no time has it been possible to prosecute, or if it has been possible it has not been done, and no prosecution of the main offender—and

that is the licensee of the premises—has taken place. I know it is difficult to sheet home a prosecution in this regard; the Minister stressed the fact that the word "knowingly" was placed in the Act, and therefore it was difficult. In fact, it was a good let-out.

So I for one at this stage do not blame individual members of the Police Force for adopting the attitude which has arisen—and there is no doubt that it has arisen—of saying, "Well, the main offender cannot be got at, so why prosecute the comparatively few individuals who have a little to gain but a lot to lose by their mode of life, and for indulging in betting before they have reached a certain age?"

At no stage in my second reading speech did I suggest that the Police Force of this State had neglected to carry out their duties of making routine inspections of betting premises. That routine inspection is carried out on all licensed premises, whether they be hotels or betting premises. In the main, plainclothes officers of the Police Force use this routine inspection for a definite purpose, apart altogether from finding out whether somebody is committing a very small breach of the Act.

They use it for the same reason as the police in Kalgoorlie use the two-up ring. They make routine inspections because the natural places to look for undesirable persons were at the two-up ring in Kalgoorlie, and the hotels in the metropolitan area; because of premises being licensed under the Betting Control Act, they look for them on betting premises. The police are not necessarily looking for those who are committing minor breaches of the Act.

In the main they wait for some advice that there has been a transgression of the law; and up to the present that advice or information has come from the bookmakers themselves who, so long as control of the Act is kept within Parliament, feel that they have to keep their premises at a very high standard.

I was very impressed by the reply the Minister made to my remarks. What I said differed from the contention of the Betting Control Board in one respect—the interpretation of words. The board contended in its reply through the Minister that it suspected certain occurrences were taking place; in other words, it had a distinct suspicion. It suspected certain things were taking place but it was unable to obtain sufficient evidence to launch a prosecution. I suggested certain things. I retained the same right as that of the board; namely, at that stage I was not prepared to point a finger at any particular individual as having committed a breach of the Act.

There is a difference between my rights and the powers of the board. At no time need the board have proof before launching a prosecution; on the other hand, I must have definite proof before I can ask for a prosecution to be launched against people in respect of certain occurrences. Under its powers, the board has authority to promulgate regulations. Let us examine what it has to say in regard to the cancellation of licences. The regulations provide—

> The board may as an administrative Act vary, suspend or cancel the licence as the case may require, if it is satisfied that the conduct or practice of the holder thereof renders it undesirable that he should continue to hold a licence.

There is no suggestion that the board needs proof that the bookmaker was contravening the Act before exercising its powers under that regulation. That regulation, which absolves the board from any responsibility for damages, says further—

> The cancellation, suspension or surrender of a licence does not entitle the holder to any refund of the whole or part of the annual fee for the licence in question, paid for the year in which his licence is cancelled, suspended or surrendered.

Because of the intricate ramifications of many provisions in the Act, the board does not have to prove a case or to successfully prosecute a bookmaker in the Police Court before it can cancel or suspend a licence. It can cancel a licence as long as it is satisfied that breaches are taking place.

Before preceeding further, I would point out that the Minister stressed in his reply to the second reading debate that one matter with which the board was concerned was the very exhorbitant rental being charged for premises licensed under the Act. In this respect, where premises are licensed, the board picks out the site, whether it be adjacent to hotels or not, with a view to licensing the most suitable. The board fixes the standard of the premises to be registered. They are either newly-built premises, renovated premises, or premises brought up to the requirements of the board. That is a costly business.

It should be understood by everyone that the owner of licensed premises would charge a rental according to the value of the site. If it is a good site and the turnover is anticipated to be great, it is only natural for the owner to ask for a reasonable rental. The same thing is done, with no exception being taken, in respect of hotels. When the licence of a hotel owned by large interests is surrendered by the existing licensee, and the licence is to be taken over by another, the rental is fixed according to the amount of liquor consumed in that establishement; in other words, the site has a great bearing on the rental.

If the board is so concerned with the high rentals being charged for the premises, although the Act does not permit it

to cancel the licence of premises as an administrative act, it can forthwith license other premises adjacent to that site. I go on from there to reply in a small way to what the Minister said about my being unfair—that was not quite the word he used, but it merits the suggestion—in attacking this board.

Like other members in this House, I, when I voted for this measure, did not believe that this Act was the answer to the problem—because I am a firm believer in the totalisator—but I did believe that the success or otherwise of the operations of the Act would depend on the personnel of the board and the way they administered the legislation.

But at this stage I find it extremely difficult to accept the Minister's assurance that all is well with the administration of the Act. To illustrate my point, we find that a person who was disqualified by the W.A. Turf Club from the racecourse and who was therefore not qualified to hold an s.p. bookmaker's licence was, after having his disqualification period considerably reduced, issued with an s.p. licence to operate a shop. Soon after the issue of this licence this person was again disqualified by the turf club, and he would not have been disqualified except for a misdemeanour or some improper practice on the course.

He having been disqualified, the board had no option but to cancel his licence; and if the case had finished there, neither I nor any other person could feel other than that all was well. But what are the circumstances? This man—twice disqualified by the turf club—is now operating betting premises, and the same premises in respect of which he first had his licence cancelled. Strange as it may seem, that is an example of the behaviour of a board that we are asked to believe is acting in a most circumspect manner and doing all things possible to protect the public interest.

The Minister for Railways: He was licensed again?

Hon. J. MURRAY: Yes, and is operating in the same premises as those in respect of which he had his licence cancelled.

The Minister for Railways: Do you know of any trainers or owners who have been disqualified and, after a time, relicensed? Or bookmakers?

Hon. J. MURRAY: I am pleased with the Minister's interjection. To my mind there is no similarity between trainers, owners and others on the racecourse and s.p. bookmakers. S.p. bookmakers are conducting a protected business by the goodwill of Parliament which set up an Act to give them that special right; and it is the board's responsibility to see that those people who are duly licensed are of the highest possible integrity.

The Minister for Railways: What was the nature of the disqualifications?

Hon. J. MURRAY: I will not go into the nature of the disqualifications; but I may say that the final one was for improper practices, without enlarging on that. "Improper practices" could mean anything. The Minister made play with the suggestion that large sums of money have been paid as ingoing in respect of certain premises. Because of the importance of this aspect, perhaps the board in its wisdom, or otherwise, could give the exact figure, or nearly so, in relation to the transfer of a licence held adjacent to a hotel the licensee of which was a very near relative of the occupant of the licensed premises, which only a short period ago changed hands. The board may give us the exact, or nearly exact, figure. If it does not come up very nearly to the figure I suggested the other night, I will be very surprised.

These premises are situated adjacent to one hotel and very far distant—at least a quarter of a mile—from another licensed premises. That licence was one of those voluntarily surrendered and the amount transferred was a considerable sum—and I stress the word "considerable."

At this stage, it is also pertinent to ask whether the board will explain the circumstances in relation to a licensee who apparently surrendered one licence in a near suburb—still in the metropolitan area—and was forthwith issued with a licence in an adjacent suburb. Whether the man voluntarily going out of this particular business in one suburb was bought out at a considerable figure or not is beside the point; but he was forthwith issued with a licence in an adjacent suburb. To use a colloquial expression, I would say that the man in question had not the proverbial feather to fly with. Yet the board says that it issues these licences after a very close check.

Then I wonder whether the board will very closely examine the application for a licence for premises that are being built adjacent to the Willagee hotel. The premises are not quite complete. Not only would I be interested to know who obtained the licence, but I would be very pleased to know the names of those who will be associated with the licensee of these premises.

Finally, on this question of licences and transfers, may I suggest that the Minister in his defence of the Bill raised the point that in two known cases the board has saved the ingoing licensee—in one case £250; and in the second case, somewhere in the vicinity of £600.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: How could it save them?

Hon. J. MURRAY: Because by its intervention it prevented the ingoing licensee from paying ingoing to the previous licensee. Perhaps this is one of those two cases. I want to stress this one because in my view it is one where the board did exercise its prerogative of interfering—if you like to use that word—in a business transaction between an outgoing and an incoming licensee.

These are roughly the facts. The premises were duly licensed; but before the s.p. licensee was allowed to occupy them, the board in its wisdom—again, or otherwise—said to him, "Before you can operate in these premises you must put in certain fittings. You must also erect conveniences for both sexes." Despite the fact that this licensee was not the owner of the premises, the board said to him, "You must spend a considerable sum of money before we will allow you to operate on these premises." Believing that to go into this class of business was worth while, the licensee spent somewhere in the vicinity of £1,000 to bring the premises up to the standard ordered by the Betting Control Board.

I do not want members to think for one moment that I am raising my voice or one finger to protect a man who in any way has committed a breach of the Act, but the circumstances have to be related. Subsequently the licensee committed a breach of the Act—and there was no doubt it was a serious one. He was prosecuted for an offence which is one of the most serious under the Act—that of betting on premises other than those on which he was licensed to bet—and the processes of the law had to go forward. The board duly cancelled his licence; and there is no objection to that. But I do object to the fact that while he committed a very serious breach under Section 13 of the Act, no action was taken against those who made bets with him on those unregistered premises, and who were equally guilty and should have been prosecuted under Section 23.

As far as I can ascertain, those offenders were not prosecuted; and so it would appear that, while the police had a watertight case against the bookmaker, they must have been acting on information supplied by people equally guilty of an offence, who for that reason alone seem to have escaped any penalty. Once the bookmaker was successfully prosecuted, he knew his licence was forfeit, although he had spend £1,000 on making the premises fit for occupation. Very soon after the prosecution, he was approached and asked what he would take for the premises. He said, "I spent £1,000 on the place, but I cannot expect to get that much. What do you think about £500?"

The approach was made by a man who well knew that the licensee could remain only for a few days and he said, "Take £50 or nothing." The remarkable thing is that so far the ex-bookmaker has received nothing, and I say that is one case where the intervention of the board saved an ingoing licensee a considerable sum of money.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Wasn't the owner of the premises responsible for the £1,000?

Hon. J. MURRAY: No. There is no compensation payable under the Act or regulations. The Minister took me to task for suggesting that the large staff in the office of the Betting Control Board "toil not, neither do they spin"; and in the prepared statement which he delivered in reply he pointed out that, despite what happens over the rest of the year, at the end of the year, when new licences are coming up for review, the staff has to work long hours of overtime in order to deal with them.

Having heard that statement and in view of the fact that there are 129 licences issued in the metropolitan area and 156 in the country—a total of 285—to be handled by the staff of five, plus the members of the board, I feel it is no wonder that members of the public as well as members of Parliament criticise the snowballing increase in the number of public servants.

The Minister for Railways: There are many more licences than that.

Hon. J. MURRAY: I am using the figures supplied by the Minister in another place in answer to a question.

The Minister for Railways: Why not use the authentic figures?

Hon. J. MURRAY: If the Minister who controls the Act does not know—

The Minister for Railways: You would not trouble to find out.

Hon. J. MURRAY: —the correct figure, I think it is a matter of great concern that he deceived the House in that regard. I think he should know the correct figures, and that is why I used them; and I thank the Minister for his interjection.

It is no wonder people express concern; and I think it is competent for the public generally to expect the board, over the 12 months, to review the question of whether licence holders are conducting their premises in such a way that their licences should be renewed. If that is done, the end of the year work should be comparatively light; and this large staff—the whole outfit costs just on £16,000 per annum—should be able to handle the work in the ordinary course of events. If not, it is a shocking state of affairs. If that is the position, I hope the example they are setting will not be followed by the rest of the community, or it will be a black outlook for this State.

I have been questioned as to what we have achieved by passing an amendment to the legislation to ensure that it will

come up for review again in 1960. Despite the way the amendment was received in this Chamber, there is nothing to say the legislation will receive the same reception elsewhere. But what we attempted to—and I hope did—achieve was to remove the Act from any suggestion of party politics.

The original measure was introduced as a non-party Bill and was dealt with in both Chambers on that basis; but had this House agreed to make it a permanent Act, that would immediately have placed the legislation on a party political basis, under which no amendment could have been moved successfully unless the party occupying the Treasury bench was prepared to agree to it.

As the matter stands now, it is perfectly competent for any member of any political party, either here or in another place, or even a member not belonging to any party, to move any amendment to the legislation that he thinks will be for the betterment and furtherance of control of betting in this State. I would like to be able to use the words "effective control" because that is what we are aiming at; but they do not appear in the long title of the Bill. However, any amendment designed to that end—if the mover can convince a majority in either Chamber to accept it—may still be discarded if it is not in accordance with the policy of the Government of the day.

In 1960 those members who have, over a period of years, attempted to amend the legislation for the greater protection of the people with regard to the control of betting can, by a simple motion in either Chamber, ensure that, whatever Government is in office, it will have to examine the continuance measure in order to bring down amendments such as may be desired, if the member who is the mover in the matter can get the bare majority in either Chamber. For that, if for no other reason, I thank the House for the hearing it has given me.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [3.29]:

I regret having to speak on the third reading of the measure, but I was absent in the country when the Bill was debated on the second reading. I wish to reiterate my firm conviction that off-the-course betting should be conducted only by the totalisator system. I would be failing in my duty if I did not again register my protests against the present system and add that it should be replaced by the totalisator system.

I think every member knows that in this State both the trotting and the racing clubs first instituted the quinella system, which is a totalisator system of betting. In recent times we have also had the jackpot system of betting being instituted, and this indicates the various facilities available for different types of betting, and shows how these facilities can be carried out within the State. A number of people attend the races today only for a very short time, for the express purpose of placing a bet on the jackpot totalisator.

The PRESIDENT: Order! I must draw the hon. member's attention to the subject matter of the Bill which is to alter the figures "1957" to "1960." The subject matter has nothing at all to do with totalisators or jackpots.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I was trying to line my remarks up with the fact that this Bill would have ended this year had it not been for the proposal to continue it until 1960 as a result of the amendments passed in this House recently. I really wanted to indicate that I was in agreement to the restriction of this measure for a three-year period, instead of its being allowed to become what one might call continuous legislation, operating year after year.

My reference to totalisators was made with view to expressing the hope that after three years we will review our ideas and introduce into this State a totalisator form of betting instead of the present betting shops. If I am wrong, I hope you will sop me again, Mr. President, from referring to totalisators in that context. We have in the Eastern States the spectacle of several of these States considering the introduction of totalisator betting in place of betting shops. During the next three years we will have the opportunity of seeing how that principle will operate in those States.

If it operates successfully, which I believe it will, then it will be time for us in this State to revise our ideas and turn from our present system of betting to a totalisator system. I would like to deal further with this Bill, but I do not wish to delay the House any longer. It was only a matter of registering my thoughts and feelings on the measure. I am pleased that the life of the measure has been limited to three years, for the reasons I have given; and I am sure that at the end of that period we will change our system in this State and get down to what is a right and proper system of betting.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North—in reply) [3.34]: After having listened to the lengthy speech made by Mr. Murray, I find that he still fails to give us a specific case which will justify his complaints. The two specific cases he did mention failed to do this. In the first case he agreed that the board had taken action, and had taken away the licence from the bookmaker who had breached the Act. Prior to that the hon. member had complained that no action had been taken by anybody for breaches of the Act.

Accordingly I cannot understand the trend of Mr. Murray's thoughts in this matter. However, I certainly shall see that the Betting Control Board receives a copy of his speech so that the further

complaints he has voiced may be considered by that body, and perhaps at some later date another prepared statement could be forwarded for the information of the House.

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the line taken by the hon. member in his complaints, when citing an example as to why the staff of this body should not be working overtime on the annual issue of licences. The hon. member says there are only 200-odd licences to be issued.

I am sure that Mr. Murray has studied this Bill; and since he professes to be such an authority on this matter, I cannot for one moment believe that he does not know the number of licences that have to be dealt with, and the amount of work that has to be carried out in the office at the end of each licensing period; because in the report that has been laid on the Table of the House the number is shown as 2,281 up to the 31st July, 1957. In the previous year, up till the 31st July, 1956, there were 2,469.

So I feel the hon. member was a little unfair when he used the figure given by the Minister in another place in reply to a question. He knows very well what bookmakers' licences have to be dealt with. There is the question of their employees, their premises and the matter of racecourse bookmakers having to be licensed. As I have said, the hon. member quoted a figure that was 10 per cent. of the actual number. That is the only complaint I have of the hon. member's speech, and I do not propose to criticise it any further.

I would say that Mr. Baxter's remarks did not deal with the Bill at this stage, as you pointed out, Mr. President. But for the information of the House, I can only pass on what I have read in this report; namely, that the question of totalisators has been examined and not recommended for adoption in this State—mainly, I think, because of the size of the State and the difficulty involved in trying to operate the system successfully throughout such a large area.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—MARKETING OF POTATOES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Public Service.
Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

2, Optometrists Act Amendment.
Transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East) [3.42]: If there is any Act that requires amending it is the Electoral Act; and if there is one way that it needs remedying it is by consolidation of the various rolls. At present there is a multiplicity of rolls. For instance, it is possible to be enrolled in the local government area in which one resides. It is also essential for one to be enrolled on the Commonwealth roll, and it is compulsory to be enrolled on the Assembly roll of the State in which one lives. It is also available to one to have one's name on the Legislative Council roll, provided one has the necessary qualifications.

So there are four rolls at least. Is it any wonder, therefore, that a person is often in doubt as to whether he is enrolled at all? In fact, very often he considers himself enrolled when he is not. He may have received two cards, one from the State and the other from the Commonwealth. He goes to a lot of trouble to see that they are properly filled in and witnessed, and imagines that he has done all that is required of him; particularly when someone might tell him that one is for the Assembly and the other for the Commonwealth.

He might add, of course, that one is for the Council; and if this happens, and by some chance a municipal council election is about to take place, the man concerned goes to the town hall to look for his name and is surprised to find that it is not on the roll. He then says, "It is only a matter of six months since I enrolled for the council," and he has to be told that this was not the municipal council for which he had enrolled—the one for which he had enrolled was the Legislative Council. So he learns for the first time that there is a difference in those two rolls. The same could apply in the case of enrolment for road board elections.

So if an attempt is to be made to bring about uniformity, and the amendment in this Bill does so, it should be to reduce the residential qualification for the Commonwealth, the Assembly and the Legislative Council to one month. It has evidently functioned quite successfully for the Commonwealth, and no protests have been

raised against it so I cannot see why it would not also suit the Assembly and the Legislative Council in this State.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: It would not take five minutes to get on the Legislative Council roll now.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: If the day comes when we can consolidate this Act it will be a great step forward. People do not know which particular subdivisions they reside in when it comes to the Federal rolls, as the name is so different from the Assembly district or the Legislative Council province. Therefore, a person cannot be blamed if he is not correctly enrolled. It is unfortunate that there is a different way of voting. The most acceptable method is the preferential system, and it is the correct one.

Under this system one gets the representation one desires, or his second choice; but in road board elections the "cross" still prevails. The elector marks a cross against the name of the candidate he favours. Again there is that complexity. If it is difficult for the Australian-born-and-educated person, how much more difficult is it for new Australians who have been recently naturalised and told that one of the new rights they have acquired is the right to enrol and vote for these elections?

Hon. G. Bennetts: Their member will tell them how to vote.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They should have enough intelligence themselves. They have no right to be on the roll if they haven't that much intelligence.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: A lot of people lack that intelligence. In regard to postal voting, it appears there has been another atempt by the Government to have a little more uniformity. In talks I have had with the Chief Electoral Officer, he maintains that our present system of postal voting leaves itself open to abuse. I suppose that would apply to any form of postal voting, but there is a greater degree in ours than under the Commonwealth system.

If one reads the debates in Federal Hansard of discussions which took place in regard to postal voting, one finds that there are many abuses under the old Federal system. I think the Commonwealth now has a set-up by which a person applies for a postal vote and, in turn, receives a ballot paper from the returning officer which he completes in the secrecy of his own home or the hospital of which he is an inmate and returns by post. Therefore he is able to vote in secrecy. It is held that this system is much less liable to abuse than the system we have, where a person goes to the bedside of a sick person and the whole operation is done there and then.

Having heard the many arguments for and against, and having heard the Chief Electoral Officer enumerate abuses—we have heard suspicions talked about this afternoon—I feel we should adopt the Commonwealth system as set out in this Bill. If we do that, we will be taking steps towards the day when there will be less abuse and a more correct system.

There is another alteration proposed in this Bill, and one that has been described as minor. However, I would suggest that it is a major alteration. It is in regard to the witnessing of the signature on the claim form. I have had quite a deal of experience in regard to enrolments over the years, and have done quite a lot of canvassing; and I see no need for the witness to have any knowledge of what is on the claim card.

When a justice of the peace or a commissioner of declarations witnesses important documents, or a will, it is accepted that one does not read the contents to him, as he is not required to know what the documents contain. I have witnessed many wills, and I made it my business not to know what they contained. If a witness certifies that the person enrolling for an electoral district is the person whose signature appears on the claim card, that should be sufficient.

I have seen a number of cases where persons witnessing claim cards have received a notice from the Electoral Department to the effect, "Under what circumstances did you witness the claim card of so-an-so?" Because of this, people are diffident about witnessing claim cards, and I do not blame them. Why should they have to make inquiries as to the correctness of what is on the card? It is essential that the Act be amended so that the witness will be purely a witness to the signature of the elector who fills in the claim card.

Sitting suspended from 3.50 to 4.10 p.m.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I now wish to deal with the question of penalties. At present when a charge is considered to be of serious import, the person concerned is arraigned before a police court and charged by the electoral officer. Probably the electoral officer does not want to go that far; and it is perhaps distressing for the person charged.

The Bill proposes that the penalties shall be imposed by the Chief Electoral Officer, and this practice is much the same as that which applies to minor traffic offences. There is no need for me to elaborate on this question or to point out it is far better for the Chief Electoral Officer to deal with these matters than to go through the court procedure for minor offences.

At present no provision is made for an absentee to vote at any polling booth. Those who have much to do with elections would say that the provision in the Bill is a definite step forward. On polling days I have taken people who were feeble to polling booths only to be told that they

were not the correct booths, but that I should go to some others because the persons concerned happened to be on the boundary of two electorates. It is also possible, as Mr. Wise said, that three or four booths would have to be passed in order to get to the one designated as the correct one.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: As it is, that feeble person of whom you speak could get a postal vote before polling day.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: Has the hon. member never heard of anyone who could be feeble on the day, or have some disablity on the morning that he did not have the day before?

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Of course he has.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I pass on to the question of the limitation of candidates' expenses. Certainly there is little merit in what obtains at present. For those who want to be exact, it is a difficult job to define what were the expenses incurred at an election. What value this has, I do not know. So the proposal to eliminate this provision is quite sensible.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: If the expenses were eliminated altogether, it would be better.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: Yes. The next question concerns party designation. We all know that quite a few people do not dig deeply into the question of politics and do not take sufficient interest to know the personal ability of each candidate. In these days of party politics a person might say, "I have a certain party to which I am wedded, in the absence of personal favour." If the party designation were shown on the voting paper it would guide such a person when he went into the ballot box so that he could make the choice he desired.

It would, perhaps, also eliminate the necessity for the canvassing that obtains so close to the entrance to the booth. We have heard quite a bit of discussion as to what is the entrance. That jockeying between the party advocates is for the reason that they just want to be certain that the people who go into the booth vote for the parties they desire to support; and quite a few are wedded to parties, although we do find some who travel the middle of the road. So if the ballot papers contain the party designations it will avoid so much jockeying outside polling booths. With those comments I support the second reading.

HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West) [4.15]: This House is entitled to be somewhat confused as regards this Bill, because there has been so much rumour about several Bills being introduced to amend the electoral laws of this State. When this measure was brought down we listened to a very calm and balanced introductory speech by Mr. Wise, in which he told us that, although it is difficult to introduce amendments to the Electoral Act without some political bias, this Bill is non-political and is a sensible and logical measure.

Last night we listened to another supporter of the Government giving a straightout political harangue on this measure; it could have left no doubt in our minds that this Bill, so far as she was concerned, was political in the extreme. It is a little difficult to balance the two approaches to the problem.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The hon. member was not in charge of the Bill.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Agreed. Then today we heard a speech which followed much along the lines of Mr. Wise's speech; Mr. Teahan's attitude was much more fair and tolerant.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: It was a balanced attitude.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Yes. So members of this House are quite entitled to be confused after listening to the first two speakers on this Bill. As Mr. Wise pointed out, amendments to the electoral law always excite a considerable amount of discussion and opposition. History shows that theories in regard to electoral matters do not always work out in the best interests of the people. A classic example is the slavish following of advanced theories by France. Their system, in theory and in practice, presents a very accurate representation of the many different degrees of feeling throughout the country. But, of course, the net result from the governmental point of view is disastrous.

Strangely enough, when we start to theorise too much in the realms of political machinery we invariably seem to finish up with that result. The comparison, at the other end of the scale, is England, where they have the first-past-the-post system. Despite the fact that theoretically it has many faults, the net result is a Government with a sufficient majority to ensure stable government which, after all, is the main desire of most people.

There are some very desirable features in the Bill; or perhaps it might be wiser to say that some undesirable features in the present Act have been tackled. But it is a matter of opinion as to whether they have been tackled in the wisest manner.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Mr. Wise introduced them!

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I am not casting any reflection on Mr. Wise. For example, there is this vexed problem of "how-to-vote" cards, and the distance from the booth. They always seem to be a problem, and in some places there are no fences at all; some have token fences and some polling booths are in halls where the entrance is always in doubt.

Why not do away with "how-to-vote" cards altogether and adopt a system which I know some of my own party members would not agree with?

Why not have a placard, say one 4ft. by 2ft., on which the Electoral Department printed a "how-to-vote" card? If it was done by the Electoral Department, all the "how-to-vote" cards would be in the same print and of the same size. Each party could draw for positions in the polling booth, and these cards could be hung up on the wall. That would dispose of all this battling for positions.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: We tried to do away with the "how-to-vote" cards but the Government would not agree to it.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: We could not do away with "how-to-vote" cards altogether, even if we passed the necessary legislation.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Are you flying a kite?

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: All parties would have some form of "how-to-vote" cards. They would try to give some sort of advice or instruction on how to vote for their particular party. In my opinion the only way to get over the trouble with "how-to-vote" cards is to put up the placards, as I have just mentioned. We can pass all sorts of legislation regarding the distance from the entrance and so on; it will not make any difference, because we all know that people sit in motorcars and hand out "how-to-vote" cards; or they place themselves in front of a doorway and, as one rushes past, they slip a "how-to-vote" card into one's hand.

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: Put the party designations on the ballot paper and it solves the whole problem.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Then the ballot papers become cluttered up. That is why I cannot see any point about having party designations on the ballot paper.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: The Bill says they can only be put there if there is room for them.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I think we could overcome the whole problem of the "how-to-vote" card by putting placards on the wall of the polling booth. So it is a matter of very grave doubt as to whether this measure tackles in the wisest possible way some of the problems with our electoral laws. We certainly do not get over one problem by saying that the distance shall be 20ft. instead of 50ft. During the last election I went to one polling booth and I saw a sign as big as the balustrading around this Chamber; and there was a table laid out and chaps sitting down at it, and people were lined up at the gate. It was a town which has always been one-sided in its voting. As a result, I did not bother much about it. I did not expect to do very well there, and so it was not worth worrying about. But every law in the book was broken.

When Mr. Wise replies, as a matter of interest I would like to know what the position will be in regard to taxation allowances, and whether it has any relation to the allowable theoretical maximum for election expenses. Also, and quite as an aside, I would like to advise Mr. Teahan that it is always wise for a person to look through a will, before he signs it as a witness, to make sure that he is not a beneficiary; otherwise, if he is a beneficiary, he is signing it illegally. So I think it is always wise to ask about these things before one agrees to them.

It is interesting to note that so much emphasis has been placed on making it easy for the electors. It has been said we should make our electoral laws such that the people do not have to think so much in regard to them. Yet, despite what Mrs. Hutchison said last night, I think every political party is making efforts to educate the public in regard to political matters, and to make them think. Every educationist in the country is striving with that one purpose in view—to make the people think. And if we make our electoral laws such that people do not have to think in regard to them we will not be doing anything for the people themselves. Surely the fact that it is making the position easier for the public is not a virtue of the system.

I would say that the votes of those who cannot or do not think are of considerably lesser value than the votes of those who can think. I agree that they are all entitled to their votes, and must have their votes; but I see no reason why a lack of necessity to think should be quoted as a fundamental virtue, just the same as I can see no particular virtue in uniformity.

It is a good thing when one is breeding a line of Merino or Corriedale sheep; but I can see no virtue in uniformity for its own sake, unless it can be proved definitely that it is advantageous. Obviously, had the human race decided in its infancy that uniformity was a virtue, we would still be running round in loincloths and winning our mates with clubs.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: In the modern world the mates chase you with a club.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: There might be some wisdom in that remark, too. Even though every effort has been made to tackle some anomalies and some problems with our electoral laws, I do not think the Bill makes a complete or thorough job of it; and, for the reasons I have outlined, I oppose the measure.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [4.28]: I have taken considerable time to study the ramifications of this Bill. Although I have not been able to complete the job, I find there are approximately 35 or 36 amendments to the Electoral Act involved. Actually there are only three or four departures from the present legislation and

the rest of the amendments merely amount to a tidying up of some of the drafting in the present Act. In fact, some amendments are almost word for word with the present wording of the Act. So I think we could confine ourselves to those portions of the Bill which are of major importance.

The first amendment relates to the qualifying period of residence, and seeks to reduce it from three months to one month. The reason given for this amendment was the desire to bring about uniformity with the Commonwealth electoral legislation. By making a study of the reasons why the period was originally altered from one month to three months, it will be seen that on two occasions—I cannot say whether or not this is true—it was suggested that roll stuffing took place in the Vasse electorate and in the Greenough electorate. That took place in the early 1930's.

I do not know what occurred in Vasse; but in the Greenough electorate the late Mr. Kennedy was elected as a result of the shifting of workmen from one electorate to another prior to the election, with sufficient time to enable them to be enrolled. We should not point the finger of scorn at any political party in this regard.

Rather than do that, I would point out that the Government would be well advised to retain the period of three months. Although it may be possible to stuff the rolls even with the three months' residential qualification, the opportunity is very limited. The opportunity for roll stuffing with a one-month residential qualification is much greater.

Although it has been said that roll stuffing is not so easy as it was in the 1930's, if we look at the number of road gangs being shifted around the country from job to job, we can see that it is within the bounds of possibility to stuff the rolls at the present time. A gang of men can be sent into an area to lay the surface of a road; it is then sent to another district while that section is settling down. That goes on all the time. It is possible to shift these gangs from one area to another, to qualify under the one month's residence and so to be enrolled.

Members opposing this measure are not depriving the people of a franchise. They will still be eligible to vote in the electorate in which they are enrolled. Our electoral law is not the same as the Commonwealth electoral legislation. In my opinion it is much better. If the three months' residential qualification is retained no political party can be accused of roll stuffing. That safeguard should be maintained.

Not only do we find road gangs being shifted about the State, but also a large number of piece-workers. They move around the State from season to season, according to the requirements of the work on which they were engaged. It would be almost impossible for them to indulge in roll stuffing. They face one difficulty in that after one month's residence at a place, if the Bill is passed, they will be able to be enrolled; then, if they were to move to another electorate in three months' time and qualified with one month's residence, they could be enrolled again. It is not right to put the electors of this State to all that trouble, and for that reason the present provision should be retained.

There are one or two amendments which will enable the Chief Electoral Officer to direct the registrar for a district to keep the province part roll. This is now being done. Then it is proposed to delete persons wholly dependent on relief from State or charitable institutions. It does not matter whether they are in the Bill or not; they are redundant. Another amendment seeks to increase the price of a roll from 1s. to a maximum of 5s. The present provision provides that that price should not be more than 1s., and we are paying the maximum of 1s. If this Bill is passed it is possible that we will be charged 5s. per roll.

While I appreciate that the cost of printing has increased considerably, I consider that the price of 5s. is too high. At certain times of the year many rolls are in use, particularly during elections. They are used in the interests of the community. It would be much wiser, therefore, if the cost of the rolls was kept down to a minimum.

A further amendment deals with the deletion of the term "the Superintendent of Public Charities" from the roll. Once again this amendment is of no consequence and is redundant. It does not appear to affect the legislation in any way. Another amendment deals with Section 43 of the Act. This is merely an amalgamation of two or three of the existing sections, and the amendment does not affect the operation of the legislation to any extent.

In reference to the amendment dealing with the Chief Electoral Officer sending a notice by post to a person whose name does not appear on the roll, I presume this provision would apply to new electors. A terrific amount of trouble has been taken in the Bill in respect of persons who want to disfranchise themselves. Admittedly under the law it is compulsory for a person to be enrolled, but if he desires to disfranchise himself we should not go to all this trouble to ensure that he is on the roll. That is his responsibility. If he is picked up for not being on the roll, that is the time to worry about the matter.

To carry out all the work on behalf of the person who very often deliberately fails to place his name on the roll is to go too far. I would like to know how the Chief Electoral Officer will go about ascertaining the names of those who are not on the roll. I do not know what are the means he will use, unless he is to say

to someone he sees walking down the street, "I do not see your name on the roll," and then go back to check.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Is it not because somebody else puts the same name on the roll that the electoral officer finds out?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: A person may have just attained the age of 21 and failed to put his name on the roll. How would the Chief Electoral Officer find out, unless he was informed by some person or political party? We should not go to all this fuss and bother about persons who wish to disfranchise themselves.

Another amendment deals with appeals against the objection to claims. Under the Act, when a person puts in a claim for enrolment, objection can be raised before the name gets on to the roll. The Bill proposes to delete that provision, but no provision is made in the Bill for objections until such time as the name is on the roll. If we are to allow objections to take place, it is only right and proper they should be heard before the names appear on the roll, when the claim cards are first put in. That is the right and proper time to raise objections, not afterwards. We should leave the existing provision as it stands.

The amendment seeks to increase the fee for lodging of an objection from 2s. 6d. to 5s. I am not opposed to that, because we should not encourage frivolous objections. The increase, in my opinion, is reasonable.

Another amendment, also consequential, seeks to reduce the time in which claimants are to be enrolled to 14 days before the time of the issue of the writ. If the right of objection is taken away from the claim itself, that might be all right; but if we are to retain the existing provision under which an objection can be raised against the claim itself, then the amendment will not be welcome.

A further amendment deals with the alteration of the commencement of the issue of the writ, which would be one second after midnight on the day it was issued to 6 p.m. That is immaterial. It has been in the Act and has operated fairly well over many years. I can see no reason for passing this measure just to have that provision altered.

One amendment deals with the alteration of the time for nomination, mainly for the provinces in the North-West, from seven to 45 days, to seven to 30 days. Whether or not transport has improved to such an extent that 45 days are not necessary and 30 days are ample, I see no necessity to alter the existing provision. It does not make any great difference whether 45 days or 30 days are provided for nomination. Although this amendment is immaterial, it is not worth while passing this Bill merely to put that provision into the Act.

Another amendment alters the date of appeal from 14 to 45 days, to 14 to 30 days for the issuing of the writ, which is consequential on the previous amendment referred to. Furthermore the time of returning the writ is proposed to be reduced from 90 to 60 days. I find that writs are issued as soon as possible after an election has been held, irrespective of whether 20 or 120 days are stipulated. The writ is returned to the electoral officer at the first possible opportunity; therefore the number of days does not count to any great extent.

Then we come to a new clause dealing with registration of parties and placing of party designations on ballot papers. I believe that in the proposal to register parties we are going beyond the realms of democracy. Quite conceivably it could happen that some party was not registered. By doing that we would be depriving certain persons of the right to stand for election.

I know as a member of Parliament that sometimes men nominate who are nothing but a nuisance. At the same time, we have no right to deny anybody the opportunity of standing for Parliament. Yet it could be, under a system of registration of parties, that somebody would be deprived of that right, and I cannot accept that principle.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Nobody would be deprived of the right, but he would be deprived of specifying any party designation.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: He could easily be deprived of the right.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: To stand?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The relevant provision reads as follows:—

> The Returning Officer on receiving an application for a party designation to be shown on ballot papers shall compare the authentication of the endorsement by the party or parties so registered with the copies of the record of registration of the party or parties, which copies the Chief Electoral Officer has certified as correct and sent to the Returning Officer, and if it appears to him that the endorsement is validly authenticated shall grant the application, but otherwise shall refuse the application, and his decision shall be final and not subject to any appeal.

All the officer has to do is to say, "This is not authentic," and the man has no appeal. Am I reading it correctly?

Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is your reading.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I want to know whether my interpretation is correct. I would say it is.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is even worse than I thought.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: That is what the Bill says. Under certain circumstances I would say that putting the party designation on the ballot paper would be highly desirable.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: You had better be careful how you use those words, "highly desirable." They could get you into trouble.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I appreciate the interjection. That does not alter the facts.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: The Government will bring down a Bill——

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Provided it did so under the circumstances I aim at, I would not mind. When introducing the Bill, Mr. Wise said it was Country Party policy to have party designations on ballot papers. I agree that is so—but with a qualification. That qualification is that no "how-to-vote" cards or literature would be distributed on polling day. It is our contention that if the party designation appeared on the ballot paper, the need for "how-to-vote" cards on polling day would be automatically wiped out.

I am prepared to say that if a Bill were introduced to provide for the inclusion of party designations on ballot papers, without this registration business, and also to forbid the distribution of literature and "how-to-vote" cards on polling day, I would be prepared to accept it. But this Bill does not provide for that.

This is a position that could arise: I have represented a province 14 years. For some reason or other—perhaps because of independence—I could fall foul of my party, which could say, "We will not nominate you for the next election." In those circumstances, despite the fact that I have been a conscientious member of the party and represented it in my province for 14 years, I would be on the outer.

Under this Bill, if I wanted to stand for election again, I would have to put myself down as an Independent candidate and not as "Independent Country Party." That is wrong. Though I had not received endorsement, I would still be a member of the Country Party, which I have represented for 14 years; yet, under this provision, I would not be allowed to use the designation, "Country Party."

Surely we are not expected to approve of such legislation! I certainly will not, because it is undemocratic to deprive somebody of the right to use a designation which he wants to use and which, in my opinion, he is entitled to use. I am not looking for any nigger in the woodpile. I am treating the Bill on its merits, going through it clause by clause, and giving my opinions on each of them. Although I have not had an opportunity to read the speech delivered by Mr. Wise I believe he did not deal fully with all the provisions of the Bill.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is not correct.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I said I had not read the speech.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: If you had done so, you would not have expressed that view.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Mr. Teahan dealt with some of the provisions. I think Mrs. Hutchison did not deal with any of them at all. Another amendment allows a cheque drawn on a bank to be used instead of cash. That is not much different from what has occurred in the past. The existing system has worked satisfactorily, and nobody has had much to complain about. It may be a desirable amendment, but the absence of the provision has not prevented anybody from nominating in the past.

Another amendment deals with an alteration of the wording concerning loss of deposit. The words, "successful candidate" are altered to "candidate leading on the first count." That may be an admirable amendment; but the existing system has worked very well, and there is no great need for any alteration at the moment.

It is to be incumbent upon the returning officer to publicly produce the names and party designations of candidates and of those who have been refused. Once again I contend that no electoral officer has the right to refuse a party designation. It is undemocratic.

A further amendment deals with absent votes being recorded at any polling booth even though the voter has passed through his own polling district. While this may seem reasonable, it could be much more inconvenient than the present method. Today one has the right of recording a postal vote before the day of the poll. But it could be that I would pass through my province at 6 o'clock in the morning and come down to the metropolitan area. There might be no election for that province for that day, but a polling booth could be set up right away from where I was situated, and it would still be inconvenient for me to go to that polling booth and record a bote. However, because the booth was set up, I would be bound to use it instead of recording a postal vote.

I cannot quite follow the amendment dealing with the splitting up of polling booths into alphabetical sections. At the moment in an area where there is quite a large poll, voters are sectioned off alphabetically when they go to vote. For some reason or other that provision is repealed, and I can find nothing that replaces it. Mr. Wise may be able to give an explanation when he replies to the debate. I would say that it is much more convenient for electors to go into a polling booth and see the alphabetical sections to which they can apply for ballot papers.

There are one or two other portions of the Bill that I have not studied carefully. One deals with an alteration of the distance from the polling booth at which "how-to-vote" cards can be distributed, the change being from 50yd. to 20ft. That would not matter very much provided "how-to-vote" cards were not distributed.

Such cards could be given to electors prior to polling day. But if the party designation were on the ballot papers, there would be no need for such cards. Surely we are not expected to lead these people around by the arm and tell them where, how, why and what they have to vote. We are supposed to be dealing with intelligent electors.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is a man's duty to inform himself.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Of course! And if he were intelligent, he would do so. The Government is trying to go too far to educate electors in matters concerning which they should educate themselves. That is where the system of compulsory voting breaks down to some extent. I will admit that in all walks and classes of life there is ignorance of electoral and parliamentary matters. I am not referring to any particular group when I say that.

As a matter of fact only last week I received a letter addressed to "Mr. Les. Logan, M.H.R., Geraldton." That was from a businessman. I am trying to impress on the House that ignorance of electoral and parliamentary matters is to be found in all walks and classes of life.

Other phases of the Bill are of minor importance. I have dealt with the major provisions. They are not acceptable to me, and I see no reason why I should accept the whole Bill just for the purpose of having incorporated in the Act a few inconsequential clauses that do not make much difference.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [4.49]: I am not going to discuss this Bill item by item, because those in favour of the measure will treat it as a committee Bill. I would like to say first of all that I accept this measure in the terms in which Mr. Wise introduced it. I only wish I had his ability to handle it in a completely non-political manner and to use the skill and technique he used in introducing it.

But this is an Act which has been used to my knowledge in the years I have been here as one out of which every Government has hoped to make a little profit; and although I did not have the privilege of listening to the debate last night, I understand that the nigger did raise his dusky head in one or two places.

I have recent recollections of a vast country where hundreds of millions of people, whose great difficulty is illiteracy, put on the ballot paper signs by which they register their intentions and in that way give the Government their views on the election of candidates. I think we are going back towards that stage in this country if, in order to help electors, we have to place on the ballot paper the names of the parties to which candidates belong.

To me it seems extraordinary that, in a country which spends millions of pounds per year on education, we should have to make this legislation simpler for that section of the people which is not sufficiently interested in the Government of the country to vote at elections. It seems, therefore, that the Act is arranged, in the main, so that that percentage of the people—whatever it may be—may be brought to the poll and assisted in every possible way.

I know of many ways in which they could be assisted still further. We could arrange for deputies for these people to be trained and appointed by the various parties to fill in their voting forms for them. That might be simpler than the proposal now before us. It seems to savour of the ridiculous that we have reached this level. Surely we can rely on the people having sufficient interest in the Government of the country to know who the candidates are and to what parties they belong! If we consider ourselves educated people, let us act accordingly.

A further point which interests me is the proposed reduction of the maturation period, from three months to one month. I can remember long debates on this question, arising from happenings under the original Act, when the filling of the rolls could take place. I believe either side is capable of doing that sort of thing, because one Government can pull people out of a province or constituency for the time being and another Government can put them back. I suppose it is human nature to endeavour, by any means within the Act, to win the ballot.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Surely you are not frightened of that taking place again!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I would not be frightened of anything happening, and that would not alarm me if it did happen. I think that much of the Bill is designed to tidy up the Act; but I do not believe it will make the slightest difference, in most instances, whether the proposed amendments are agreed to. I find it hard to support certain clauses.

Apparently, under this measure, no party can apply for registration of its party name once the writ has been issued. The application must be made before the issuing of the writ. So at the last moment, if there is some upset and a small number of people—20 or more—decide they want to stand by a candidate under some special terminology, it will not be possible and they could be disfranchised.

I remember that some years ago the length of time for issuing writs was increased, because of difficulties that occurred in Mr. Wise's province, where people were disfranchised because the time allowed was too short. Within a short period of years the speed of transport has so altered that we are now asked to bring the period back.

While much of the Bill has merit, I would like longer to consider its effect, before I vote. I support the second reading.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (North—in reply) [5.7]: I appreciate the response given to this Bill and the remarks of members who have taken part in the debate. One is forced to the conclusion, on listening to the analysis of the Bill and the interpretation placed on some of the clauses, that the only kind of measure to amend the electoral law, which could be unanimously agreed to, would be one to make it unlawful for anyone to oppose any sitting member. Perhaps a measure of that kind could be introduced on a non-party basis.

It was interesting to observe that every speaker to the debate found something desirable or meritorious in the measure, and I will come back to that later. When the debate nearly collapsed last evening, one could have been lulled into a feeling that silence meant consent to the measure; but I do not think that would have been a safe assumption. One could, too, have interpreted the silence to mean that there had been some pre-decision as to the Bill's fate. That, too, could have been a wrong assumption.

But there is this aspect which all of us, as seriously-minded legislators, are forced to face: that if there is something—much or little—meritorious and desirable, to use the words of members, in regard to the Bill, the desirable features should be considered on their merits singly, clause by clause.

The provision for a residential period of one month as the qualifying period, is one to which much attention has been given, and I cannot agree at all with the two principal arguments levelled against it. The argument raised particularly this afternoon by Mr. Logan—that it would enable roll stuffing to take place if Governments were inclined to follow that course—was also referred to by other members; but nothing has been produced, and only suggestions have been adduced, to support such a theory.

What transpired 27 or 30 years ago, or is alleged to have transpired, is insufficient an argument to raise against that provision of this Bill in 1957; because, if I were permitted to review the speeches on this point in another place, I could draw attention to the actions of Governments which were in office at the time of the alleged offences 27 or 30 years ago. I therefore suggest that that argument is irrelevant and insufficient as a basis for opposition to that clause.

Another suggestion, made by Mr. Griffith, was that, if we were seeking uniformity, we should take steps to have the Commonwealth take action to attain uniformity with us. Of course the hon. member is not so naive as to believe that that is a possibility. That is something which could not be brought about and which could not be put into effect; but to follow the course that has been set by the Commonwealth and which has proved effective in use is something which has merit, quite apart from the elements that I raised when introducing the measure, with regard to the printing of the rolls and the office aspects of the department.

It was suggested by Mr. Griffith, during his speech, and in his earlier remarks, that he considered the Bill to be most contentious and altogether too controversial, but he was not at his best in endeavouring to pinpoint the questions involving controversial and contentious matter. He was not successful in satisfactorily illustrating matters so contentious as to be vicious, any more than he was able to convert the desirable features that he mentioned into things that should not become law.

Therefore, if we are to allege that this Bill is very contentious and controversial, we have the responsibility of indicating the points that support such an opinion. Minor things such as the cost of the rolls are matters that are not nation-rocking in their effect, whether desirable or not; and indeed, like most of the provisions of the Bill, they are not, like the law of the Medes and Persians, unalterable at will by the House.

I would point out that the 1s. maximum was the amount prescribed in 1907, and the 5s. maximum it was thought would be an appropriate sum as a maximum in the case of certain rolls. If the House decides this on a particular point rather than by dealing with the Bill as a whole, that is a matter which would not cause much contention or worry to the Government. That also applies to many of the minor but desirable clauses in the Bill.

I would now like to refer to one other question which appears to be a vexed one; and that deals with the name of the party on the ballot paper. When introducing the measure, I mentioned that the idea initially came from the Country Party. I propose therefore to read a copy of a letter dated the 30th July, 1951, which expresses the views of that party, and which is over the signature of the secretary, Country & Democratic League of W.A. (Inc.). The letter reads as follows:—

> Dear Mr. Mathea:
>
> Last week our annual conference of delegates carried unanimously a resolution that we endeavour to arrange at future elections the position of the candidates' names on the ballot paper be decided by ballot, and that the name of party be included on the ballot paper.
>
> We have brought this request before your department's notice on a previous occasion, but no action has been taken, we would again ask you to bear this request in mind and place

it before a suitable authority when discussion in connection with the procedure of elections is taking place.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Is that the original letter?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: As I mentioned, it is a copy of the letter. As the one delegated with the authority of introducing this Bill and having heard this was the case, I sought the copy from the Chief Electoral Officer; and if members desire, it will be laid on the table of the House.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is not the original.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: No. It will be noted that there is no clarification that this will only be acceptable if we have no "how-to-vote" cards as was suggested was the policy of the party and was mentioned by Mr. Logan. I suggest that the Country Party was actuated by certain happenings not very long before that date when Mr. Mann, member for Beverley, and I think Mr. Barrett-Lennard, and one other, formed a party called the Liberal and Country League. This small unit absorbed the greater, and the Liberal Party became the Liberal and Country League. I believe that to be a fact; and therefore the Country Party which had been the Country Party for so long was anxious to have clarity in regard to who its members were and who its opponents might be.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would you mind telling us the date of that letter?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The date is the 30th July, 1951. It is a very appropriate date! So it is clearly to the advantage of candidates and parties to have their official representatives known to the electors. If one were to attempt by suggestion an improvement on what the Bill seeks to do in that regard—namely, to give clarity to the nominations and designation of candidates—it would be this: that underneath the actual designation of the party as printed on the ballot paper—and I shall give an example shortly of how that may be done—there could be a short title, as it were, so that in the case of the Liberal and Country League, underneath in brackets could be written "Liberal Party"; and in the case of the Liberal and Democratic League there could be printed "Country Party." I believe the electors are entitled not to be misled by designations which approximate to the wording of other parties.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: The A.L.P. could be the Democratic Socialists.

Hon. L. A. Logan: The party to which I belong has always been the Country Party.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The suggestion which I have made is one to which considerable thought should be given, because this suggestion came from the Country Party itself. In my view it has much merit; and I cannot at all follow the argument that it is desirable that simply because a person retains membership of a party he should be entitled to carry that party's designation. If he is not endorsed by a party, he should not pretend to be the elect of that party.

I disagree sharply with the point of view contended by Mr. Griffith that the law provides only for candidates and not parties. That is mere eyewash; because if one were not an approved and authorised unit of a party one would not be in the race in an election where there was a contention between candidates of the same party. I could give numerous illustrations. One very pungent one, however, is the occasion when Mr. Grayden ceased to be the approved candidate for the seat of Nedlands. There are many other cases. Accordingly I would say it is in the interests of the political life of this State to have clearly shown, in order to clarify the information available to candidates, who is and who is not the official endorsed candidate.

In connection with matters that are not political it has become the accepted rule. In the case of the Superannuation Board, the Railway Reclassification Board and other elections that are conducted under the authority of the Chief Electoral Officer, not merely is the contestant's name shown on the ballot paper but also what he is. It presents no difficulty whatever. I have in my hand a ballot paper that was used in 1956 for the ballot associated with the Railway Reclassification Board.

Each member nominating for election has a description of his calling under his name. For instance, one is a storeman, in charge of Perth office; another is a lifter, Midland Junction; and a third is a turner, Midland Junction; and so on. The point on which Mr. Griffith made some play—whether it is practicable to print on the space available on ballot papers—is something to which I wish to refer. Mr. Griffith did not use those words by way of interjection when Mr. Logan was speaking. But those are the words of the Bill that it is practicable on the space available on the ballot paper for the party designation to be specified.

It is simply something to avoid by law the use of the name of a party which might, for instance, be the most honourable order of the political section of crustaceans. In the past we have had self-styled members of parties but the parties themselves were non-existent. The people nominating would have had us believe that they belong to something which was very euphonious and high-sounding, but which in effect had no standing at all.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Like the People's Party.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Yes, and all sorts of others. But if this is analysed impartially it will be shown that it is a protection to all recognised political parties. There are no encumbrances and it would be to nobody's detriment.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: A party must have 20 members before it can be registered.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: If it did not have 20 members it would never have a chance of holding a seat in any Parliament in the British Commonwealth. So I aver it is the party to which a candidate belongs which is of major importance in the political setup in this or any other State of Australia.

I now refer to the question of the change from 50yds. to 20ft. It will be noted that in the parent Act there is only one mention to the words "polling booth." One of the amendments in this Bill is to alter the words "polling booth" to "polling place" to fit in with the definition in Section 4 of the Act. It is quite clear that a polling place means any building or structure where a poll or election is appointed to take place. If we look at Section 192 of the parent Act we will find ample opportunity to interpret the words "polling place."

Admittedly, if this is to be clear beyond any doubt, Section 192 might have to be further amended by deleting any reference to the nearest street or way, and in conformity with the definition of the building being a dwelling-place, that the entrance to a building be the entrance referred to in regard to where the "how-to-vote" cards may or may not be handed out. It is a simple matter to clarify this point if we have the will to do so.

Mr. MacKinnon said that there were some desirable features in the Bill. Mr. Logan also said that he had liked many desirable things and, indeed, some, maybe admirable amendments—I took down the hon. member's words—but yet he could not support the Bill.

Hon. L. A. Logan: I did not say that.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: If the hon. member did not say that, he said something very akin to it; but I insist that the hon. member said he liked many desirable things. What I want to know is how many desirable things one must find in a Bill to give it support, so that we may retain those desirable things. Or are we frivolously to say that since we have decided we are not going to support this measure, we will vote against it even though it has some desirable things? If that is not so, it is merely an excuse to throw the Bill out at the second reading stage, because we do not want the contentious things; and we will not have them.

On the point raised by Mr. MacKinnon, I do not think there is any relevancy between what is required by the Taxation Department and the excision from the parent Act of the provision to submit an electoral return for the reason that if this is excised from the Bill it is thus excised from the parent Act. There is ample opportunity for a member to show his expenses associated with his expenditure as a member of Parliament. He is entitled to the deductions of the cost of an election, but there is no relativity between the Electoral Act and our taxation laws. Therefore, without labouring this matter, I would say to Mr. Logan that I cannot understand his statement that the Bill was not fully explained on its introduction. The hon. member either did not listen or he has not read Hansard.

Hon. L. A. Logan: I haven't got this week's Hansard to read your speech.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I carefully endeavoured to clearly explain all of the things which might be regarded as innovations and the things which were considered as controversial. So my suggestion is, in the words of Dr. Hislop, that though it may be that Governments could hope to secure advantage by amendments to the Electoral Act, this Bill has a good deal of merit in it. Let us examine these matters of merit and let us excise the contentious and undesirable, which are such in the minds of some members; but give us an opportunity to retain the meritorious that is in the Bill.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	14
Majority against	4

Ayes.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. F. R. H. Lavery
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. W. F. Willesee
Hon. J. J. Garrigan	Hon. F. J. S. Wise
Hon. G. E. Jeffery	Hon. J. D. Teahan
	(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. G. C. MacKinnon
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. J. Murray
Hon. L. C. Diver	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. Sir Chas. Latham	Hon. F. D. Willmott
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. A. F. Griffith
	(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. R. F. Hutchison	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. R. C. Mattiske

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [5.35]: This small Bill has been brought forward with the idea of easing certain restrictions which apply to new Australians in regard to the operating of certain machinery, and as such it is a move in the right direction. However, it has been suggested on behalf of those who have occasion to employ new Australians in considerable numbers that there could be further easement in these restrictions so as to make the Bill more acceptable. I have a small amendment on the notice paper which I will briefly explain, and members will then understand what the Bill intends to do and what the amendment seeks.

The purpose of the Bill is to amend Subsection (2) of Section 59 of the Inspection of Machinery Act. The section at present reads—

> Every applicant for a certificate shall be a British subject or an ex-serviceman or a worker who served in the Merchant Navy or Merchant Marine of an Allied Nation during the period of World War 1939-1945, and shall satisfy the Board that his knowledge of the English language is sufficient to enable him to perform the duties required as the holder of a certificate.

The Bill provides for the certificates of registration of new Australians who have either not lived in Australia long enough to obtain a certificate of naturalisation or perhaps were too young to have served in World War II. As I said before, it is a step in the right direction. But the Bill as it stands goes further than that and stipulates that they shall, as soon as possible, take out naturalisation papers.

It has been suggested that an Act such as this is not the right place in which to impose restrictions on those who are good citizens and in the great majority of cases take out naturalisation papers; but who, in some cases, and for good reason, do not desire to do so at the expiration of five years.

I can call to mind one case which I found at Carnarvon. I attended the naturalisation ceremony of eight or 10 new Australians where I met a Dutchman who could speak English better than those who were naturalised, and he had been here two years longer. I asked him why he did not get naturalised, and he told me that he intended to return to his homeland soon and that was the reason why he had not taken the step, because he did not want to repeat the process in reverse to claim his nationality back when he returned to his homeland. I regard that as a good reason.

In the outback, where these men are competent to perform certain duties—and perhaps have been performing them for some time—they should be allowed to carry on without any restriction of naturalisation being contingent upon their registration certificate remaining valid.

The amendment which I seek will merely delete the reference to being a British subject or an ex-serviceman or a worker who served in the Merchant Navy or Merchant Marine of an allied nation during the war and would make the condition simply that they shall have sufficient knowledge of the English language to perform the duties required of them and be competent to carry out the work.

If there has to be any legislation which lays upon them an obligation, willy-nilly, to become naturalised, it is suggested that it should go into some other Act and not into one which deals with the inspection of machinery. I have discussed this matter with the Mines Department and it agrees that not only would this suggestion fill the bill but would save it quite an amount of trouble.

It would save the department the trouble of making a check to see whether these men have complied with the certificate restrictions mentioned in the Bill and would make it easier generally speaking, to administer. It would enable these new Australians to settle down in their adopted country and do the work provided for them. The question of naturalisation could then be dealt with in the normal way.

I do not know of any other occupation where there is a condition of employment which demands that the employee shall become naturalised at the end of a certain specified period. I support the second reading of the Bill, with the reservation that it is my intention to move an amendment, which now appears on the notice paper.

HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [5.43]: I intend to support the Bill, but I am perturbed about the matter of speaking the English language. Before I came into Parliament I made friends with a great number of new Australians; and, even though I say it myself, I endeavoured to make them feel at home. Since I have been a member of Parliament, I have endeavoured to do that to a greater extent.

I am very perturbed about the speaking of the English language by men who are in responsible positions. I know of a case where a man who is naturalised is employed. He has been here for eight years and is in a most responsible position so far as machinery is concerned; and there are men employed under him. These men have great difficulty in making him understand what is required, and there is no normal conversation between him and the chaps under him. I hope we will

not see the spectacle of men being passed as eligible to work under this Bill, and taking a naturalisation ceremony, when they can hardly speak English.

It is time something was done about this matter. The Immigration Department is passing men and women—I am more concerned about men, as they are in industry—who have not a sufficient knowledge of the English language; not because they are incapable—and I am saying this in all sincerity—but because they make no attempt to educate themselves in the English language.

The Commonwealth has made every endeavour to assist new Australians to learn the English language. It has made many publications available to these men, absolutely free of charge; and teachers from the Education Department are provided at night to teach them. There is no excuse for a man in a position of trust—and a person in charge of machinery is in a position of trust—not being able to speak the English language well enough to be understood. I hope that any man who seeks to take advantage of the right proposed in the Bill will be advised to look into the matter of learning to speak the English language.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [5.47]: It is important to be able to speak the English language, especially in the mining industry. Lately, many accidents have occurred in the mines; and I think that quite a few of them have been due to the fact that many new Australians cannot speak our language properly, although before they go underground they have to pass language tests.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Both amendments provide for that.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes. I heard it said the other day that motor drivers' licences are issued to these people. Well, that is fair enough, because a person driving a motorcar or motorcycle does not require much more knowledge of the English language than to be able to read and study the laws relating to the road. But it is necessary for a man working underground to have a good knowledge of the language and to be able to speak it well.

Before any person can get the privileges mentioned in the Bill, he should be naturalised. There is no doubt the Government is spending a lot of money on the education of these people. On Sunday mornings and at other times we hear over the air the attempts that are being made to help them. These people should have a thorough knowledge of the language and be naturalised before obtaining these certificates.

HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West) [5.49]: The points raised by Mr. Lavery and Mr. Bennetts are self-evident and are dealt with by the Bill. Understanding the language is a matter of competency. If instructions are issued, then it is part and parcel of the job for these men to understand them so as to fill the job competently in the same way as for a carpenter it is necessary to be able to hammer a nail or plane a piece of wood. All this is adequately covered in the Bill. I thoroughly agree with Mr. Lavery. I think that in many respects we have made the position too easy in regard to speaking the language. On some occasions when licences have to be granted, we could be a little harsher in our requirements in regard to speaking the language.

Be that as it may, I agree with Mr. Simpson that we have to look at the Bill from the point of view of those things that are a matter of competency and those things that are just artificial barriers. When it comes to a matter of competency I agree with the provisions of the Bill, but when it comes to saying to a man, "Get yourself naturalised or lose your job," I feel I must disagree.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: So do I.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: I do not think that when we asked these people to migrate here we said to them, "You can come out and get a job, but the moment your five years are up you will be sacked unless you are naturalised." I think that everyone who has spoken about migration has looked to the second generation for the main migrants. I do not think it matters whether these people are naturalised or not. It is in their own interests so to be, and for that reason the majority do take that step. But we are all fully aware of the fact that the children are Australians.

If anyone doubts this statement, let him go to a family where there is a mother, father, and a boy of 18 years of age who has never been to school in Australia; and another boy who has been to school here, for even such a limited period as one year. He will find that the father, mother and the boy who never went to school in this country are battling with the language; but that the younger child who went to school for just one year speaks it like a native. Such children think like Australian-born people think; and they are the ones we are after. So I take marked exception to a provision in any measure which makes it obligatory on new Australians to adopt our nationality, or else! It is a bad principle in employment.

Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: It applies to pensions.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Well, if they receive pensions they are in receipt of special considerations. We have many worthy migrants who have brought out families. I know of a couple who were military officers in their own country. Their families have all become naturalised: but these people, by taking the step, would be penalised and would suffer financially and in other ways. So, whilst entering

into the life of this country and having their family naturalised, they just have not taken the step themselves. If they take a job they could, as proposed in the Bill, hold it for five years and no longer. To my mind that seems wrong.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That is a fair time in which to become naturalised.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: They cannot become naturalised without losing rights they have earned in their own country. I have heard it said that in the event of a war it might be a good thing for these people to be naturalised. If a person is going to be a fifth columnist, he will be one whether he is naturalised or not.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Being naturalised would probably save him being interned.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: That is up to the individual. I would give these people every encouragement to become naturalised; but I do not think, as envisaged in the Bill, it should be a condition of employment. Therefore I hope that serious consideration will be given to the amendment forecast by Mr. Simpson.

HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South-East) [5.55]: I agree with the intention of the Bill which, I take it, is meant to make it possible for every new Australian, or visitor to the country, who wishes to lift himself a little out of the rut and take a step forward in his employment, to do so in a way that is at present precluded to him.

I have heard discussions on the language problem, and I think that in many cases it is not the fault of the person himself, but of the community in which he lives. I have taken part in several naturalisation ceremonies at which I was shocked to find that the applicants were literally unable to mouth certain words and phrases, and I am quite sure they did not understand what was said. On the other hand I have heard applicants who tried so hard to learn and understand what they were saying that they jumped the gun on the person officiating in regard to repeating the attestations they were being asked to make.

The Minister for Railways: They learned it like a recitation.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: True; but I think that in doing so they learned something of the meaning of the words. They were triers, and they are the people who will be interested in the contents of the Bill. These people, if they have not in their own country learned something of machinery, have, through a desire to go ahead in their employment in Australia, studied and sat for certificates to qualify them to work with machinery. Generally speaking, they are the ones who would have ambition, ability and skill and would rank as highly desirable citizens.

Referring back to the effect which the communities in which these people live, have on them, I wish to mention two communities in the South-East Province which, at the time of naturalisation ceremonies, go out of their way to make the ceremonies impressive; but, more important, they endeavour to make these people fit into their community. One of these places is Merredin. Every time there is a naturalisation ceremony there it is made a gala occasion. Distinguished visitors are invited, and an evening is arranged for the citizens concerned. Each time, one or more of the new citizens is invited to address the community; and they have done this with great credit to themselves. The same thing applies at Narembeen, where in every case one or more of the citizens concerned is invited to address the gathering; and not once have I heard one of them get up and not be able to express his thoughts intelligently.

Some of these citizens have fitted themselves so well into the community that by the time they come to apply for naturalisation they are looking forward to taking a greater part in the affairs of the district. One man at Merredin stood up and declared that it was his intention, at the next road board election, to stand for his ward. He was not jeered or laughed at, but was encouraged. Whether he still intends to do that I do not know, but he was spoken of in most praiseworthy terms.

I can recall that in another instance a young man was seeking a cadetship in the G.P.O. Although only young, he was well on the way towards a career in that department before he was naturalised. The reason for that was the attitude adopted towards him by the community in which he lived. These people have been accepted with the result that they are good citizens who want to become naturalised and are not, as might be inferred from the Bill, forced to do it. These people have become naturalised because they wanted to be one of us. I agree with the Bill, but I also agree that the amendment is important, and I intend to support it.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North—in reply) [5.59]: To listen to some of the speeches, one would imagine that the Bill was a restrictive measure; but it is not. It seeks to give a concession to the very people that Mr. Cunningham has just spoken of. It is conceding to them the right to qualify to obtain a certificate under the Inspection of Machinery Act before becoming naturalised.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: I agree with the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If at the end of the period—when they become eligible to become naturalised—they do not take any step to be naturalised, then they lose their certificate. I do not

see anything wrong with that. It is quite fair. Mr. MacKinnon says that he does not believe in any Act which requires naturalisation. He believes that anybody should be able to walk into this country and stand for Parliament, or for road board elections, or be placed on the roll and be able to vote.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I did not say that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They were the words the hon. member used; I will bet on it. This Bill gives a concession; it is not placing a restriction on anybody. The intention of the Bill is to concede to these people something which they do not now enjoy. It has not been easy to get the unions to agree to this; in fact it has been quite a job. I believe that if this country is good enough for a person to live in, he should adopt it at the correct time.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: The restriction does not apply elsewhere in Australia.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If they become naturalised they become eligible for old-age pensions and social service pensions. I have met men in the North-West who have been in this country for 30 or 40 years. Some of them ran away when the sailing ships were in the North-West in the early days. They are Scandinavians, and they have become so old that they cannot work. But because they have not taken the trouble to become naturalised they cannot get any social service benefits. So they have to go to the Old Men's Home, and the community keeps them. But a lot of them could keep themselves if they were able to receive the old-age pension, or the invalid pension.

I see nothing wrong with this Bill. It is a concession. As regards the language question, I think it is most important that they should be able to understand it and speak it. If a man was operating a hoist, or a winch, and he did not know what was being said to him, he might unwind when he was told to wind. I think it is most important for him to have a knowledge of the English language; and that other people, too, should be able to understand what he is talking about. In any case, I do not see how a man could pass a test for a certificate, or answer the necessary questions, if he did not have some knowledge of the language.

I hope the Bill will be passed as it is printed. I know that an attempt was made to amend it in another place; but the Government did not accept the proposal. If it is amended in this Chamber, I do not know whether the Government would be prepared to accept it; so I advise members to accept the measure as it stands.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 6.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 24th October, 1957.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.