

an amendment might be framed. The amendment, however, had not arrived and he asked that progress be reported.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Progress reported.

PAPER PRESENTED.

By the Premier: Public Service list for 1913.

House adjourned at 11.28 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 7th October, 1913.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1, Government Savings Bank.—Annual balance-sheet, report, and returns for year ended 30th June. 2, Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly appointed to inquire into the removal of E. H. Hamel from the Public Service. 3, Public Works Department.—Roads Act, 1911.—By-laws of the following Roads Boards:—(a.) Perth Roads Board. (b.) Warren Roads Board. (c.) Shark Bay Roads Board. (d.) Yalgoo Roads Board.

QUESTION—EARLY CLOSING PROSECUTIONS.

Hon. W. PATRICK (for the Hon. R. D. McKenzie) asked the Honorary Minister (Hon. J. E. Dodd): 1, Have any prosecutions been instituted in the metropolitan district under Sections 9 or 12 of the Early Closing Act, 1902, or its amendments? 2, If so, how many, and what was the result? 3, Have any exemptions under the same sections of the Act been granted? 4, If so, how many, and why?

The HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. J. E. Dodd) replied: 1, Yes. 2, Under Sec. 9 and amendment—41 prosecutions resulting in 33 convictions, 5 dismissals, and 3 cases withdrawn. Total fines, £11 7s.; costs, £8 5s. 6d. Under Section 12 and amendments—75 prosecutions, resulting in 67 convictions, 2 dismissals, and 6 cases withdrawn. Total fines, £30; costs, £10 8s. 6d. 3, Yes. 4, One. To facilitate stocktaking, one wholesale and retail firm was granted permission in April, 1912, to employ assistants overtime on 24 days continuously in lieu of twelve days in each half-year, as provided by Sec. 14 of the Early Closing Act.

QUESTION—EMPIRE PARLIAMENTARY PARTY'S VISIT.

Hon. W. PATRICK (for the Hon. R. D. McKenzie) asked the Colonial Secretary: 1, Is it in pursuance of a policy of discouraging the mining industry of the State that the Government did not include views representative of the industry in the souvenir programme presented to members of the Empire Parliamentary Association at the social held on 1st October, other primary industries being so represented? 2, If not, then why was the omission made?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: 1 and 2, The object of the Government in compiling the "Souvenir Programme," combined with an official itinerary, in connection with the recent visit of members of the Empire Parliamentary Association, was of a twofold

nature, viz. :—(a) To illustrate the brochure with a view of assisting the delegation to recall the incidents of the tour; and (b) In view of the exceedingly brief nature of the visit, that some authoritative and informative detail should be placed in the hands of the British Parliamentarians. With regard to (a), the "Souvenir Programme" was designed, in accordance with its title, for the purposes of a Programme whilst the Delegation was on tour, and at the same time serving as a reminder of the actual places visited in Western Australia. It was thought advisable, however, to specially refer statistically to those important industries which time would not admit of inspection, viz., mining, pearling, pastoral, etc. Each member of the delegation was also presented with a copy of the illustrated "Official Handbook," which deals extensively with all the industries of the State, with a supplementary page inserted giving the latest mining and other statistical data to the 30th June, 1913. Further, a special package of official literature was handed to each of the visitors, and this was subsequently described by them as being eminently suited to the occasion, and of great value in connection with the investigations being made.

QUESTION—YANDANOOKA ESTATE.

Hon. W. PATRICK asked the Colonial Secretary : 1, Is it true that the Government have set apart or intend to set apart an area on the Yandanooka estate as a quarantine station for infected cattle ? 2, If so, is it their intention to send cattle suffering from pleuro or tick to this portion of the Government's latest purchase under the Agricultural Lands Purchase ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied as follows:—1 and 2, To meet a special emergency, a portion of a recent shipment of East Kimberley cattle purchased by the Government, has been sent to Yandanooka for fattening. The beasts, though coming from an area

where pleuro exists, were inoculated before shipment and carefully scrutinised at Fremantle before being despatched, and no traces of the disease were apparent. They are being kept in an isolated paddock at some distance from the other cattle.

BILL—WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE, AND DRAINAGE AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th September.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH (East) : There is only one clause in this Bill in relation to which I propose to address a few remarks to the House, and that is Clause 4, the purpose of which is to repeal Section 21 of the principal Act and to make that Act perpetual. In regard to that I intend to refer to it only as it affects the administration of the Goldfields Water Supply Act Amendment Act of 1911. To my mind no Act ever placed on the statute-books of this country has been administered in so harsh and unsympathetic a manner by the authorities as that particular measure. I intend to call attention very briefly to some of the remarks made by Ministers in this House and another place when that Bill was before the House, which, no doubt, induced some hon. members to support a measure which would otherwise not have met with their approval. In introducing the measure in another place the Minister for Works made it clear that the intention of the measure was to make an adequate charge for the expenditure the Government intended to incur. He pointed out the necessity there was to extend the water pipes in different parts of the drier districts, and said that in order to do this they must have a rating scheme. In speaking on the different charges the Minister said—

Another main may be smaller, and for that reason the capital cost would be less, and the rate need not be so great. I want to make this clear, to show that although the maximum rate

is 5d., and as far as the 13 extensions are concerned is 4d., at the same time a number will be under 4d., and it is possible for a Minister to discriminate so that he only levies the rate to recoup him for the expenditure on that one particular main.

Throughout the whole debate it was made clear that the object of the Bill was to enable the Minister to recoup himself for the expenditure he proposed to incur. When the measure was before this Chamber the Colonial Secretary in moving the second reading said—

It is proposed to start rating the new mains from 1st January next, and in regard to the extensions under the guarantee system, rating will commence at six months' notice, so that rating will be in full swing from 1st July next in respect to the old and new mains. Under the Bill it is proposed to charge annually a fixed sum of £5 for every connection, and for general rating a maximum of 5d. has been fixed, with special provision for the Minister to charge more than this if necessary, in order to cover the expenditure.

He further said—

Water supplies will not be forced on the farmers, but if they are willing to foot the bill water districts will be declared.

Later on, when the matter was being considered in Committee, the question of taxing the people along the existing mains arose. It was pointed out that it was unjust to these people. They were asking the Government to do nothing for them, yet their land, some of it being of inferior character, was made subject to a holding charge of £5 per annum and an additional rate of 4d. per acre, which was in many cases more than a fair rental for the land. The Colonial Secretary said—

It was not the Government's intention to make it apply to existing pipe lines at present, or for some time to come. Eventually it might be applied. At a later stage the Colonial Secretary said—

It was impossible to give a guarantee that the measure would not extend

to the existing pipe line in future, but there was no intention to so extend it at the present time, and he did not think that a step like that would be taken without giving members of both Houses an opportunity to discuss the matter. He understood it was the intention of the Government to bring down a Bill later on to meet existing circumstances. The people to whom this Bill applied had all been consulted and had consented to its provisions.

The Colonial Secretary: Read to the bottom of the page.

Hon. H. P. COLEBATCH: I am coming to that. It was clearly stated that the people to whom this measure applied had all been consulted and had consented to its provisions. As a matter of fact, not one single individual along the existing pipe line had been consulted, or, if consulted, would have dreamed of consenting to the provisions of this Bill. Later on the Hon. Mr. Wilding asked for an assurance that this would not be made to apply to pipe lines already in existence before another measure was brought down, and the Colonial Secretary stated—

In 12 months' time the Minister for Works intended to apply this Act to all existing lines.

The Colonial Secretary had previously given an assurance that there was no intention to extend it at the present time, and that he did not think the step was likely to be taken without hon. members being given an opportunity to discuss the matter. After the statement of the Colonial Secretary that the Bill would apply to pipe lines already in existence at the end of 12 months, the hon. Mr. Cullen moved that the following be added to stand as Clause 10, "This Act shall continue in force until the 31st December, 1912, and no longer," and it was explained that the object of that amendment was to convert the partial promise of the Colonial Secretary, that a Bill would be submitted to Parliament, into an assurance that the Government would not go on with this work without submitting a Bill to Parliament within the next 12 months. That amendment was carried,

but it was subsequently defeated in another place. The matter again came before this House, I believe on the last day of the session, and here we have a statement from the Colonial Secretary—

The Minister for Works stated that it was not proposed that the rate to be imposed on the land adjoining the old main should be 4d. per acre—possibly it would be as low as 2d.—because there was no capital expenditure involved for which the department would have to be recouped.

That was the assurance given to this House in the closing moments of the session; and it was largely on that assurance that the Bill was passed into law. It was an assurance from the Minister for Works through the Colonial Secretary that it was not proposed that the rate to be imposed on the land adjoining the old main should be 4d. per acre and that possibly it would be as low as 2d., because no capital expenditure was involved for which the department would have to be recouped. In spite of that the Administration clapped a rate of 4d. per acre on that land which the Minister assured the House would not be rated at 4d. and might be rated at only 2d. I shall be glad to listen to any explanation which the Minister may have to offer. I know the rate imposed is grossly unjust, so far as the people in the Eastern Districts are concerned. It is a rate which many of them have not paid, cannot pay, and never will be able to pay profitably, and I know from reading these debates that this House would never have agreed had they been told that this rate of 4d. per acre would be imposed indiscriminately on all these people, whether they asked for a special service or not. The Minister asked for permission to rate these people in return for services which he was going to render them, and to recoup him for the expense; and over and over again we find the statement that the people to be affected have all been consulted and have all agreed. As a matter of fact the people most vitally affected were never consulted; they have had nothing spent in their interests, and would never have agreed to the imposition. In the circum-

stances it is my intention to enter a protest, both against the unjust treatment meted out to the settlers and also against the improper method by which this amending Act of 1911 passed the Chamber; and to ask members when in Committee to strike out Clause 4 of the Bill.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North): The Coolgardie Water Scheme—

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom has already spoken on the Bill.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: It was only a short speech.

On motion by the Colonial Secretary debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 2nd October.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER (Metropolitan-Suburban): I wish to put before the House a few reasons on behalf of those bodies outside of Perth and Fremantle why the Bill should be accepted. I may say I have had requests from the various local bodies, such as the Claremont roads board, the Claremont municipal council, the Peppermint Grove roads board, the Cottesloe municipal council, the West Guildford roads board, and the Midland Junction municipal council, asking me to support the Bill; and the only qualification made was in the case of the Claremont municipal council, who asked me to support it in so far as the Perth-Fremantle-road itself is concerned. From the point of view of these intervening local authorities outside of Perth and Fremantle a change is required in the system of control of the Perth-Fremantle-road. The present system of control came into existence under the Public Works Act of 1902, when the Government, under Section 84, I think it was, proclaimed the road as being under the control of the various local authorities through whose districts the road passed. Since then that has been the system of control. Unfortunately at the time that system came into vogue the road was in

a very bad state of repair. There is no doubt about it, it should have been altogether taken up and reconstructed. It had been constructed a very considerable time ago, and was hardly in a condition to cope with modern traffic. The result was that the local authorities had a very hard task to perform to keep in repair a road which had not been handed over to them in a proper state of construction. To my mind, as far as the Perth-Fremantle-road is concerned, before any other system is adopted it should be overhauled from end to end, and I think in particular a large amount of re-grading is required. There are two very steep hills between the half-way house and the Claremont municipality which are responsible for a large amount of wear and tear and which offer a considerable strain on the road generally. Not only that, there is a very large hollow nearly opposite the Albion hotel which after heavy rains is covered for a distance of from 50 to 100 yards with water a foot deep, through which all passing vehicles have to go. Under the present system the municipalities and the roads boards were supposed to receive subsidies to assist them in the upkeep of this road, but these subsidies have absolutely ceased during the last two years, and none of those bodies have had a penny to assist them in the upkeep of the road. Not only that, but the ordinary subsidies to municipalities which, some years ago, were large, have been very considerably cut down, to, I believe, an amount of 7s. 6d. in the pound on rates collected. I would like to draw attention to some anomalies existing under the present system in regard to these intervening local bodies. In some instances we have the road skirting the boundary of the local authority. That, of course, is very different from its going through the centre of the district, because if it only skirts the boundary a large part of the local traffic does not use the main road, but is thrown back on the other roads within the district. We have instances of the local authorities getting rates from only one side of the road. Then we have a great length of the road going through one district which, al-

though widely scattered, has but a very small rating return. In the case of the Claremont roads board, which is one of the largest districts between Perth and Fremantle, there is something like $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles of main road, and the roads board only receives in return rates totalling £50. Hon. members will recollect, so far as that roads board is concerned, that it has really two branches of this main road, one passing Karrakatta and the other adjoining the King's Park, the old road. We have Peppermint Grove, which has three-quarters of a mile of this road skirting its boundary, and receives rates from only one side of the road. Then there is this most extraordinary position: the boundary between the Peppermint Grove district and the Cottesloe municipality is five feet from the Cottesloe municipality's side of the road. Peppermint Grove, therefore, has to keep the whole width of the road in repair while Cottesloe receives the rates from the other side. Cottesloe municipality has two main roads to keep in repair, for the reason that the main road proper is in such a disgraceful condition that the traffic is diverted at the south end of the municipality, across the railway line and along the straight road running up towards Claremont. It is obvious that an extra burden is imposed on the Cottesloe municipality under these circumstances, and therefore hon. members will see that there are very serious anomalies in connection with the system as regards these local authorities. It is almost impossible under these conditions to properly allocate these subsidies even when they are paid, and, as I say, the subsidies have ceased during the last two years. Such a system as we have at the present time results in a sort of patchwork repair all along the road. Each authority has its own repair work to do and its own method of doing it, with the result that the work is done in many different fashions. Not only that, but I think the tendency is for each local authority to do as little as possible, especially seeing that it has to find all the money itself. Consequently the road is starved. I have been dealing so far with the Perth-Fremantle-road. To a large ex-

tent the same remarks apply to other main roads, that is, the main road between Perth and Guildford and the Perth-Armadale main road. For instance, Belmont, I am told, has spent nearly one-third of its income in keeping its portion of the main road in repair. West Guildford has three miles of main road in its district and has to keep it in repair, although its total rate return is comparatively very small. Then we have Victoria Park, which is so situated that all the traffic to and from Perth and Guildford and along the Perth-Armadale and the south road to Fremantle concentrates at the causeway and runs through that municipality with the result that Victoria Park has 5½ miles of main road to keep up. In 1909 Victoria Park spent £462 on the upkeep of the main road. This dwindled in 1912 to £124. In 1909 the municipality spent £304 on the Guildford road and in 1912 only £54, while on the Perth-Fremantle-road £62 10s. was spent in addition. Victoria Park in 1906 spent £1,000 on drainage and reconstruction of these roads from loan funds. I may remind hon. members that these figures take no account of other expenses which these local boards have, such as lighting and watering, and I can assure hon. members that the watering of these main roads by the local authorities is a very considerable item. I have been furnished with particulars of the traffic passing through Victoria Park municipality on Friday, Saturday and Sunday last. These figures were taken between 5 a.m. and 7 p.m. on the Friday and Saturday, and between 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. on the Sunday. The traffic after going across the causeway totalled, on the Albany-road, 438 vehicles, including motors, motor bicycles, bicycles, and horse vehicles, and from Perth 389, and along the Guildford-road a total of 490 to Perth and 486 from Perth, and on the Fremantle-road 290 to Perth and 148 from Perth. Hon. members will see that that constitutes a very large amount of traffic and owing to the concentration on the Causeway that traffic really all falls on Victoria Park. The hon. Mr. Kingsmill has given the position of the Perth municipi-

pality as it will be under this Bill and chief of all he has stressed the loss of license fees which Perth will sustain. I think it is an incontestable fact that Perth receives too much in the shape of license fees.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: No.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Perth collects a very large amount in license fees and it cannot be gainsaid that the larger proportion of this large number of vehicles licensed in Perth use the Perth-Fremantle-road, and, on the other hand, a very small proportion of the small number of vehicles licensed in the suburbs use the Perth roads. It must be remembered that the Perth-Fremantle-road has to carry an infinite variety of traffic. It has to carry a portion of the suburban traffic; it has to carry the heavy goods traffic between Perth and Fremantle and it also has to carry traffic from the steamers berthed at Fremantle to the city, which is no inconsiderable amount; and in addition there is very heavy holiday and Sunday traffic both to the river and to the seaside, and a very large proportion of it comes from Perth. I think we may also urge, if it is urged that the suburban vehicles use the Perth roads and no doubt they do to a certain extent, but not to anything like the proportion—

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Does that justify the taking over of this control by another department?

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I am not speaking from that point of view. My point of view is the local authorities, the roads boards' point of view, in contradistinction to that of Perth. I would also like to point out to those who urge Perth's claims that a very large number of suburban residents pay rates to the Perth council in respect of offices, and I think that must be taken into consideration in looking at the incidence of this Bill. In the figures which the hon. Mr. Kingsmill gave the other day he did not make any reference to the subsidy which Perth receives on the rates collected for properties along the Mounts Bay-road—I do not say that it is a large amount; I believe it is something like £70—nor

did the hon. member state what I think is a fact worthy of mention, that the Perth vehicles which use the main road between Perth and Fremantle also use the King's Park-road, and with the upkeep of that road, as far as I know, the Perth City Council have nothing to do. It is maintained by the King's Park Board; that is the road through the park. That road is used considerably and rightly so too, by the Perth vehicles going to Fremantle and using the Perth-Fremantle-road. Then again as they have no other outlet, they use the Subiaco-road too. Perth has nothing to do with the upkeep of either of these roads and, although Perth may lose under the provisions as regards the pooling of licenses, those who urge the claims of the city overlook the fact that Perth will get some return, inasmuch as it will receive a subsidy towards the construction of its portion of the road which the city authorities have to maintain, a distance of something like three miles.

Hon. W. Kingsmill : That is not the trouble; the trouble is the shifting of the control.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER : The shifting of the control to the Minister ?

Hon. W. Kingsmill : Yes.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER : I wish hon. members to understand that I am referring more particularly now to the position of the local authorities.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : The hon. member will come to the other point by-and-by.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER : Possibly, unless I wait until the Committee stage. I am now dealing with the relative positions of Perth and the other local authorities under the Bill. There is no doubt that under the Bill the local authorities will have a vastly improved position.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : Vastly ?

Hon. D. G. GAWLER : I think they will.

Hon. J. F. Cullen : A two-penny-half-penny subsidy.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER : In my opinion Perth and Fremantle—perhaps this will please my hon. friends who speak in

favour of Perth—should be dealt with on a separate basis altogether.

Hon. W. Kingsmill : They are.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER : They should control their own roads and collect their own license fees and have a decent subsidy to assist them. Every one recognises that Perth loses to a large extent owing to the absence of rates on Government property and that there is a large number of roads which may be called main roads and which are used largely by traffic in Perth, and if the Perth council were put on a different footing, some provision should be made whereby they should surrender a portion of the license fees they collect in order to compensate for the use they make of main roads outside of their own district. I have pointed out some of the anomalies in regard to the different incidence of the burden on these local authorities and the impossibility of properly allocating the expenditure on the roads. These matters and the question of the license fees show that some change should take place, and to my mind it points strongly in favour of the nationalisation of the roads. Theoretically speaking, the position of a main road should be such that the local authorities should pay for the local use of it and the public should pay its portion for its own use. That might be all right theoretically, but it might not be possible practically. At any rate, I say that the present state of affairs points strongly in favour of nationalisation. Nationalisation means that the general taxpayer should take on the whole of the construction and maintenance of certain specified main roads. I do not see why the Government, if they undertook that duty, should not be entitled to ask for certain assistance to a small extent from the local authorities in the shape of a special main road tax.

Hon. M. L. Moss : We have enough taxes now; do not suggest putting any more on.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER : Either that or in the shape of a portion of the license fees from the different authorities or a portion of the rates received from

properties along the main roads, in order to assist and allow the local authorities to bear some small portion of the expense. The control and responsibility for the upkeep of these roads should be with one body. It should either rest with the Government or the Government should give the local authorities money to do it, but I think the only solution is for the general taxpayer to take over the construction and maintenance of main roads.

Hon. W. Patrick: You know the system in South Australia?

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I believe the system there is that they declare main roads or that main roads are specified under a special Act. I think the Act of 1908 deals with this matter and I believe that some hundreds or thousands of miles of main roads in South Australia are declared under that Act, and the provisions of the 1885 Act, under which main roads could be proclaimed, are that the Government constructed them and the local authorities maintained them.

Hon. W. Patrick: They get a main road grant every year to maintain roads.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I was not aware of that.

Hon. W. Patrick: They have to keep a separate account of them, that is all.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I believe it was said in another place, when nationalisation was suggested, that the general taxpayer would not agree, or that Parliament would not agree to the taxpayer bearing the whole of the expense of constructing main roads.

Hon. J. Cornell: The taxpayer does so now.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I do not think that hon. members from the country would object to such a proposal, because, after all, those living in the town support the railways. The railways are built in order to afford communication to open up and develop the country. It might be suggested that the railways are reproductive works, and that the roads are not, but I think I am right in saying that, as regards railways, the Albany and the

Goldfields lines are the only two which are reproductive, and which are supporting the others.

Hon. W. Patrick: That is nonsense.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: And that the others are run at a loss.

Hon. W. Patrick: That is not correct.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: If people living in the town are prepared to be taxed to build these railways and to maintain them, I think it is only fair to ask the people of the country, in return, to take upon themselves the responsibility of providing for the upkeep of main roads.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Do you mean only in the city and suburbs?

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: No; specified main roads throughout the State.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: The Perth-Coolgardie-road?

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: I was suggesting nationalisation, and I said nationalisation would take the form of the State assuming the whole of the responsibility for the roads, or allowing the local authorities to do it but finding the money for them, possibly with a small subsidy, but I think the divided control which we have at the present time is a mistake. I have dealt with the position chiefly from the point of view of the Perth-Fremantle-road and chiefly with the intention of showing hon. members the anomalous and unsatisfactory position in which these local authorities stand at the present time. I am asked by these local authorities to support this Bill.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Naturally.

Hon. D. G. GAWLER: Yes. There are various portions of the Bill with which I am not altogether in agreement, and which I shall be prepared to discuss in Committee, but I certainly think the position of the local authorities will be improved under the Bill, and I do not think that Perth is in the altogether unfair position which has been represented. Under the circumstances I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. F. DAVIS (Metropolitan-Suburban): It is refreshing to hear even a partial approval of the Bill, since right throughout the debate it has been criti-

cised fairly severely, and the majority of the clauses and ideas contained in it have been condemned. I gather from the debate that the strongest objection to the Bill is the fact that it is considered to be a one-man Bill, and that the Minister for Works is predominant right through the piece.

Hon. R. G. Ardagh: It shows the strength.

Hon. F. DAVIS: One of the marginal notes states, "The Minister to be the licensing authority for the metropolitan area," and under another clause provision is made to delegate power to the local authorities, so that the Minister will not be the one man in absolute control of the operations of the measure.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Unless he delegates his authority he will be.

Hon. F. DAVIS: The special mention made in regard to the metropolitan area implies that such authority will be delegated.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: No, it does not.

Hon. F. DAVIS: I am of opinion that it will be delegated to the local bodies in the country. So far as I can judge the measure, the power is given to the Minister to be used only in extreme cases. It would not be necessary to deal with all local bodies, or to take away the power from them, or to act on their behalf. If the Minister did so, he would be fully occupied in doing this work alone, consequently it is extremely improbable that he would attempt to carry out all the provisions of the Bill in connection with every local body throughout the State. Power is there for the Minister to act in case local bodies do not carry out the provisions of the measure, and that, I take it, is really the object of the clause in the Bill.

Hon. F. Connor: Which clause?

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Clause 23.

Hon. F. DAVIS: Clauses 23 to 25 deal especially with this question. Mr. Kingsmill when speaking, dealt particularly with the Metropolitan area, and referred at length to that question and in one part of his speech he alluded to the proposal for the collection of all license fees by the department as an insult to the city

of Perth. For the life of me I cannot see how such a procedure can be construed into an insult to Perth. I think it is rather an act of justice to the suburban areas. It was also contended by Mr. Kingsmill that this proposal implied that the Perth City Council were not an efficient body, since it was proposed to take from them the license fees which they now collect and distribute them among the other boards. Again, I fail to see how these fees can be more equitably distributed than by the method proposed in the Bill. To my knowledge the traffic on the suburban roads, which is very heavy, is largely the traffic of vehicles which are licensed in Perth. On one day I started to count the number of motor cars which passed the house I live in, but there were so many of them that I grew tired of counting, and abandoned the attempt. The fact remains that the traffic on these main roads is very heavy and particularly is it so at week-ends, and it would be a simple act of justice if the fees now collected by the Perth Council were apportioned among the suburban areas.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Has an endeavour been made to do that?

Hon. F. DAVIS: An endeavour has been made in various places to do that. It has been suggested by one hon. member that the City Council should hand over a portion of the fees collected by them to the suburban bodies, but I consider that the proposal which is embodied in the Bill is much better and is more likely to give satisfaction than any suggestion that the City Council should be asked to voluntarily hand over a portion of the fees they collect.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: That proposal has never been made to the Council.

Hon. F. DAVIS: Even if it had been made I think it extremely unlikely that the Perth City Council would have agreed to it. The proposal which is embodied in the Bill I repeat will be merely an act of justice and, in my opinion, ought to have been carried out long ago. It is one of the best provisions in the Bill. Like my colleagues Mr. Gawler and Mr. Sander-son, I have received letters from the various local bodies asking me to support

this Bill, but even if I had not received those communications the measure would have had my support. There are many clauses in the Bill that are good and possibly there are one or two minor clauses which may require alteration, but generally the Bill so far as I can see, is an effort made to codify the legislation dealing with traffic and so make it possible for the average man to understand it and to get a grip of the question without having to refer to all the Acts which at the present time deal with the subject of traffic. It is certainly in the interests of the community that the Bill should be passed as early as possible, and I trust that in Committee it will not be mutilated as was done last year. The measure, I trust, will be carried as nearly as possible in its present form, and if that is done it will be of benefit to the State as a whole.

Hon. A. SANDERSON (Metropolitan-Suburban): While I do not think it is altogether edifying to have what appears to be a wrangle between the Metropolitan and the Metropolitan-Suburban members on this question, I do not think that any apology is necessary in dealing even at some length with this question of traffic. There is one point which has struck me and it is with regard to how far we are justified in rejecting measures which come before us a second time. This is the second occasion on which this Traffic Bill has been sent to the Legislative Council and I was looking for older and more experienced constitutional authorities to guide me on this matter.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: This House did not reject it.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I will allow the hon. member to deal with the leader of the House on that question because when the Bill was introduced we were told that it was practically the same Bill as that which was presented to the Legislative Council last session.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: And which the Government dropped.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The hon. member can fight that out with the leader of the House. What I wanted was guidance on the question as to how far we

were justified in rejecting the measure, but the point need not be laboured.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: The wishes of this House have been disregarded.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: There seems to be an inclination on the part of another place to disregard the wishes of this House. That is to be regretted, but I do not desire to waste any time over that, although I think it is worth calling attention to. The point which interests me is the question of good roads. The reports of the proceedings of the International Roads Conference which took place in London the other day show us the enormous importance of having good roads. Practically speaking, this has been brought about owing to the development of motor traffic all over the world, and I do not think we can exaggerate the importance of the development of this country by motor traffic, and to have motor traffic we must have good roads. Coming to the Perth City Council and the affront to their dignity to which reference was made, I can hardly credit that that municipal body are so thin-skinned as to pay the slightest attention to a matter of that kind, if the ultimate result is to be better roads in the metropolitan and metropolitan-suburban area. The amount of revenue which they derive from license fees I understand is comparatively small, not exceeding £1,300, but while I think the City Council ought to be treated fairly, I consider the metropolitan-suburban councils ought to have every consideration. I would suggest, for what it is worth, that it might be advisable to divide the much-discussed Perth-Fremantle road into three sections and allow the Perth Municipal Council to take over one section, the municipalities to take another and the Government to take over the third, and then at the end of five years we could see what kind of a job had been made of it, and what the cost had been in the way of maintenance.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: And then bring in this Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member is not in a hurry.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I do not see that it would make much difference whether we had this Bill or not. There are quite a number of acts that are directly or indirectly affected by the introduction of this Bill, but there is not one measure on the Statute book to which we can look to in regard to the question of good roads. I suppose the most important of all is the Roads Act, and the Bill we have before us repeals certain clauses in that statute. The Minister told us that in his introduction of the measure before us. Then I would also say to the representatives of the Metropolitan area how would the greater Perth scheme affect their arguments with regard to the injustice that was going to be done to Perth? Surely if a greater Perth scheme, which is presumably coming into force—

Hon. D. G. Gawler: There is no scheme.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I understand a Bill is to be introduced to enable this greater Perth scheme to be carried out. The importance of the roads in the Metropolitan-Suburban area cannot be overestimated. I do not wish to repeat what Sir Edward Wittenoom and Mr. Connor said the other day with regard to the Perth-Fremantle road, but I cannot help saying that practically every visitor to this country cannot but be struck by the disgraceful state in which that thoroughfare is at present. Surely it is the business of the Government to devise some scheme, without hurting the Perth City Council or any of the local municipal bodies in the metropolitan-suburban areas whereby they might put this road into proper repair. I think Mr. Kingsmill took a narrow view of Perth's position. I do not think that Perth will be seriously injured by the provisions of this measure.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Every time.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If that is the case how will the greater Perth scheme affect the question of the roads? How will the position be worked out if what is now proposed, which seems to me to be fairly reasonable, is going to work such a monstrous injustice to Perth? I

would ask the hon. member to take a wider view of the position and look at it from the point of view of the outside municipalities as well.

Hon. W. Kingsmill: What about the change which will give the Minister control?

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I would judge that by results.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: It is a matter of principle.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The question to me is not a matter of principle. The only principle I recognise in the discussion is the question of getting the best roads at the most moderate cost, both as regards capital expenditure and maintenance. I can claim to speak with some little knowledge and authority on this matter, because, if I have travelled over one mile of road in this country, I have covered fully 15,000 miles in Western Australia. I think, therefore, hon. members will admit that I am competent to speak on this question. The people I represent are personally very much interested in this question of good roads, and as to the control, that, to me, is not a matter of principle at all, it is only a matter of convenience. It does not matter which system is in vogue so long as the public whom we are here to represent get the best and most economical roads. I am inclined to think if there is this discussion between those three powers to which I have already referred, the Perth City Council, the Minister, and the metropolitan-suburban local bodies—

Hon. W. Kingsmill: And Fremantle.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Yes, perhaps Fremantle. Let us have four sections, and let Fremantle take the south side of the river as a section. Let them confer and see who can make the best road and maintain it in the best order whilst spending the least amount of money on the job. As to nationalisation, it was amusing to hear Sir Edward Wittenoom, the champion of the high tory party in this country, or at any rate the strong opponent of socialistic experiment—

Hon. J. F. Cullen: I thought you were that.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I the opponent of socialistic schemes?

Hon. J. F. Cullen: Yes, the arch opponent.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am very glad to hear that.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I returned thanks for the Government at Moora the other day.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The hon. member is very versatile. To talk of the nationalisation of the Perth-Fremantle road seems to me to altogether miss the point. I do not care whether it is nationalised or not—

Hon. W. Kingsmill: Or macadamised.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: That is the point. We want the road macadamised, and as there is objection to the present Bill I would ask the Minister for Works if he sees any objection to the proposed experiment I have outlined, and we could see at the end of five years what the result was. I certainly support the Bill. With this, as with other measures, we have the privilege of going through it clause by clause and discussing the various points in detail, but so far as the principle in the Bill is concerned, what is most important to my mind is to get good roads and to meet the wishes of the three parties most concerned, the Perth City Council, the Minister, and the municipalities affected. I cannot see that there can be any objection to the Minister making the experiment with the Perth-Fremantle road, which, as it stands at present, is a disgrace to the country, a menace to traffic, and the cause of very bad impressions on the part of anyone coming to Western Australia.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North): I rise with a certain amount of hesitation as well as trepidation to make my remarks on this Bill, owing to the stringent criticisms that anything said in this House last year received from a Minister. I am basing my remarks on a report in the newspaper, which was to some extent quoted here the other day. In that speech the Legislative Council received a severe castigation from the Minister for Works, and I must admit that I was exceedingly surprised to think

that the Minister would descend to make such remarks. He is one of the members of the Ministry who has my highest admiration. I admire his energy and the amount of work and industry he puts into his duties, and I am surprised that one who is endowed with such a large amount of commonsense should be so undiplomatic as to metaphorically hit in the face an opponent, whether an individual or a number of individuals, when he is desirous of receiving something at that opponent's hands.

Hon. J. Cornell: You do not admire his criticism.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I do not admire his criticism and I do not think it was in good taste. When we come to analyse the Minister's remarks we find there is so little in them that I feel sure even the Minister will regret having uttered them. I do not propose to refer in detail to the report of his speech, because it was read out by Mr. Piesse word by word in the House the other day, but I shall just quote one or two points in regard to which the Minister was not quite accurate. He said in one place that "he was not going to sit down and take the judgment of the Legislative Council, which was not representative of the people, and was not supposed to know the people's requirements as well as the Legislative Assembly." That is a statement which I contradict most heartily. I consider that there are more men in this Legislative Council who are acquainted with the building and making of roads than almost all the other members of another place. There are men in this House who have been on roads boards, who have been chairmen of roads boards, and who have had practical work to do, and this is a work they understand, perhaps more so because they represent large constituencies and are returned on a franchise different from that of the electors of another place. Another remark by the Minister bore out my contention when he said "that members of the Council sat for such large areas that they could not keep in touch with the requirements of the smaller places as could members of the Legislative Assembly." The very fact

of members of this place representing large areas shows that they must have something to do with roads, because a man cannot get about those large areas without using the roads. The Minister said that he had the assistance of his professional men, and those men, no doubt, are very good, but I am prepared to say that there are many practical men who, by reason of having had a great deal to do with roads, are just as good at that particular work as the best experts the Minister could produce. I do not propose to refer to these remarks any further except to state that the members of the Legislative Council are elected by people who apparently are unworthy of a vote. I am sorry for those members in this House who represent the same side in politics as the Minister. I really believe that the Minister himself actually has a vote. He is one of those privileged persons who has probably helped to return one of the members of this House, and therefore in his criticism of those who have these votes he must include himself.

Hon. C. Sommers: He had two votes, I think.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: Property is not always a sign of brains or intellect, but very often the absence of it is *prima facie* evidence of want of brains. I am not going to say that this is always the case, but the absence of property is to a certain extent an indication of lack of ability and energy. Having made these few remarks I will address myself to the Bill, and say that I am quite certain we are all actuated with the same desire, which is to get a good Bill for the control of the roads in this State; that, at all events, is my idea. There is no opposition to the Bill because it emanated from one particular party. There is nothing of that kind, although at the same time, in spite of the argument of Mr. Sander-son, I might point out that, it is not usual during the same Parliament to introduce again a Bill which, according to the representatives of the Government, has already been rejected once. It is almost asking for the defeat of that Bill again.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: It is a new ses-sion.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: But the Bill is not submitted to new members or to a new body of electors. There is a certain amount of principle involved in this Bill, particularly in Clause 23. There is not the slightest doubt about that. Like the hon. member who preceded me, I am in favour of getting good roads, and I would be prepared to surrender a good deal of principle if I were sure that we could get those good roads, but the experiment here proposed is of a dangerous character, and would undermine much of the power of the recognised authorities we have throughout this State. We are told that if we do not agree with the ideas of the Minister for Works we must not vote for the second reading.

Hon. F. Davis: That is consistent.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: The theory of the Minister is that we should throw the Bill out if we do not agree to it entirely. Our desire is to be more charitable and to make a Bill which will suit the Minister, suit us, and suit the country. The position in connection with the Perth-Fremantle road is peculiar. This road passes through the districts of three or four local authorities, all of which resent spending money on any portion of the road because it is used by vehicles that do not belong to their own districts. We know that the Perth-Fremantle road is used largely in competition with the railways for the carriage of goods and luggage, and I am indeed surprised to see the tremendous traffic there is along that road in the carriage of luggage, and the exceedingly narrow width of tyres that is allowed. That is one of the greatest causes of the road being cut to pieces. I have advocated the principle for many years that the proper method of dealing with the road from Fremantle to Midland Junction is for the Govern-ment to put the road in order, and either keep it in order or pay so much each year to the local authorities to maintain it. I cannot understand why the Minister wants to further worry his head by taking over a department like this. It would be far better to put into the hands of his professional men, of whom he thinks so well, the work of putting this road in

order and to allow the various authorities to continue as under the existing Acts, and then there would be no trouble whatever. Except it be that the Minister is imbued with such a tremendous lot of energy, I cannot understand why he is desirous of having this business to look after and superintend. There is not much more to be said about the Bill, because the matter was so fully discussed last session. I find myself to a large extent on the horns of a dilemma. I want sympathy and I cannot find it. I want to vote for these roads to be placed in good order, but I am not prepared to abandon a universal principle until I am informed as to how the innovation will work. In those circumstances it makes my position in regard to the Bill extremely difficult, and I shall await with interest the reply of the Minister in charge of the Bill, who, no doubt, will be able to convince me as to which is the right way. There are a number of matters which will require consideration in Committee, and one amendment that is necessary is that vehicles used only on farms should not be taxed at all; only those vehicles that go on the roads should pay a wheel tax. It is not a big matter, but persons who use many vehicles on the farm for carting hay and for other work may only use one vehicle on the roads.

Hon. F. Davis: There is no tax now for a vehicle on a farm.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I can see nothing in this Bill to exclude such vehicles. I see that agricultural machinery is omitted, and very properly; also that the width of tyres is dealt with well in Clause 31, and made six inches. That is a fair width. Clause 38 is an important one, and one which has my entire support. It deals with licenses for motor drivers. I think it is quite right that drivers should be licensed. I am one of those who is absolutely opposed to seeing women driving motor cars. I am not saying that some women do not drive as well as men, but I think so many drive motor cars that licenses should be issued. It is all right for women to drive motor cars so long as all goes well, but the natural condition of women unfits

them for motor driving when they get into critical positions.

Hon. F. Connor: What do you mean?

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: When there is going to be a collision. I know of a case in England where a lady was driving a car and she went over to one side and nearly killed two or three persons. Of course that may happen when a man drives, because there are careless men. I think this Bill will do a great deal of good in connection with roads, especially main roads. Although I hardly like to mention it, it would have been much more advantageous if the Government had turned their attention to making the main roads and other roads instead of running steamers. Roads are a corollary to railways and we must make the railways pay by giving facilities to those developing the land. The Government should therefore not be niggardly, and not be too careful, when money is required for roads. When the Government are always wanting money they are inclined to be cautious in connection with the expenditure of money on roads. I shall say no more. I shall support the second reading, but I hold myself quite free as to how I shall vote on the various clauses.

Hon. F. CONNOR (North): I have very little to say in connection with this Bill. A short time ago I introduced a motion here which dealt with this question in some degree, that is in connection with the main roads as they exist to-day. I am not an advocate for the placing of all powers granted by various Acts of Parliament in the hands of Ministers. I think that is a system which will not pan out, I think it is a system which will be in its effect very pernicious and not in the best interests of the country. Having said that much I come to this particular Bill, and I would draw some of the sting out of my first remarks by saying that I do not care who is in control of these roads, I do not care who runs the system, provided the roads are made better than they are to-day. But from what I see we shall not have proper roads under a proper system until some other method is estab-

lished whereby we have main roads, particularly the one between Perth and Guildford, put in repair and kept in repair so that it will be an advertisement to the State. In all Acts of Parliament, in irrigation bills, traffic bills and other bills which it is the province of Parliament to pass, we do not give all the powers to an individual, and I am opposed to the system of ministerial control, but in this particular instance, I do not care who has control of the roads so long as the roads are made and are kept in good repair. I pointed out the state of the road between Perth and Fremantle the other day and I also pointed out that in all new countries which are being opened up and developed that I know of and have travelled in, the first advertisement given to that country is to show people who go into the country, whether they are tourists or people who intend to settle there that the Parliament and the Government of the country are responsible for the good state of the roads. That does not pertain here because we could not have a more disgraceful state of affairs on the face of the earth than is seen in our roads. In any new place where an advertisement is required it should be a new road where motors or automobiles, to use an Americanism, can run over it without trouble, but it is impossible to bump over the so-called road between Perth and Fremantle, it is a disgrace.

Hon. F. Davis: What do you call it?

Hon. F. CONNOR: I do not know what to call it. The other day I had the misfortune to drive in a motor car over that road and I may say that from what I know of it for the last two years it has been getting worse and worse. But they actually started to repair it and the repairs consisted of two whole dray loads of gravel, one of white gravel and the other of red; one whole wheelbarrow, one whole shovel and one whole man. I drove over the road the next day or two to see what had been done. The gravel had disappeared, the shovel had disappeared, the wheelbarrow had disappeared and there was no man working on the road. I moved a motion the other day in regard

to this matter and I knew what I was talking about. Some action should be taken and taken soon to put this road in repair. Although I do not like Ministerial control in the way it is set out in the Bill, sooner than nothing being done to obviate the bad advertisement that this road is to the State I will agree to any Bill that is brought before the House no matter what is its nature and what is in it so that the road may be put in proper repair and kept in repair. If we want to advertise the State we must do so by having good roads. We have most magnificent drives and beautiful scenery, but we cannot bring the tourist to view these things without passing over very bad roads. It only wants a few yards repaired here and a few there, but the main road between Perth and Fremantle requires attention nearly the whole of the way. There are some good patches, but there are places where the road requires taking up and re-making. Take the Darling Ranges! What an advertisement it would be to the tourist who was staying here for a day or two, to take a circular drive, leaving Fremantle and coming to Perth, and if we completed that little bit of a road two miles towards Welshpool, the tourist could get through the Darling Ranges and view the scenery. The people in the Darling Ranges have made perfect roads, they are really billiard tables.

Hon. J. Cornell: They were easily made.

Hon. F. CONNOR: Indeed they were not, they were expensive roads to make. In regard to the Perth-Fremantle road, the roads board have been blamed, the Government have been blamed, the Perth and Fremantle municipalities have been blamed. Of course somebody must be made responsible, still it is a bad advertisement for the State and should be altered. There are certain parts of the Bill I do not believe in, but I shall not dispute the measure on the second reading. We can deal with many of the clauses in Committee. What I call almost a pernicious system which has been adopted in the Bill—ministerial control—I shall not oppose. I will support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley debate adjourned.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:

- 1, Supply (Temporary Advances) £223,145.
- 2, North Fremantle Municipal Tramways Act Amendment.
- 3, Wagin Agricultural Hall Transfer.
- 4, Fremantle Harbour Trust Act Amendment.
- 5, Roads Closure.

BILL—FREMANTLE IMPROVEMENT.

Received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time.

MOTION—ELECTORAL ROLLS, LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Debate resumed from the 2nd October, on the following motion by the Hon. H. P. Colebatch:—"That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that instructions be given to the Chief Electoral Officer that in compiling new rolls for the Legislative Council provinces the names of all persons appearing on the existing rolls, and who are shown by the municipal or roads board lists to possess the necessary qualification, be retained on the new rolls," and on the amendment moved by Hon. J. F. Cullen—"That in line five the words 'appearing on the existing rolls, and,' be struck out, and in line eight the word 'retained' be struck out and 'placed' be inserted in lieu."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew): Under the Electoral Act the Chief Electoral Officer is responsible, and he alone, for the preparation of a new roll, and his first duty is to see, in connection with the preparation of that roll, that every person whose name appears on it is thoroughly qualified. He does so

by reference to every available source; by the municipal and roads board lists, the Taxation Department records, and also by reference to the Lands Department and Mines Department rent lists. It is a very tedious process, taking a considerable time, but he has decided to follow it notwithstanding. He does not rely on this solely. He has decided that it is necessary, in order to secure as perfect a roll as possible, to appeal to those on the roll themselves. He asks for information, and that is what is done in this case. The circular about which so much comment has been made was sent out for inquiry purposes and nothing more. It is not an objection in the sense of an objection under the Electoral Act, but a letter asking the elector to fill in a form in order that the proper qualification may be lodged at the office of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Hon. J. F. Cullen: He says he will strike him off if he does not send it in.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: He cannot strike a name off unless he sends a formal notice of objection. That formal objection will come if the Chief Electoral Officer discovers the person is not qualified, but in order to discover that he will first have access to the municipal and roads board rolls and also to the returns in connection with the Land Taxation Department, and also the land rents list and a list of leases which exist at the Mines office. So there is no fear that any person will be removed from the roll until full investigation has been made and a formal notice of objection has been submitted to him. In order that the House may more fully understand the position I will read a minute addressed to me by the Chief Electoral Officer on the subject. It will place the position much more lucidly than it would be possible for me to do so with the short notice I have had. I only got these papers this afternoon. Mr. Stenberg says in regard to the arguments of the Hon. Mr. Colebatch—

1. Section 15 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899, specifies the qualification for Legislative Council enrolment, and contains, *inter alia*,

a provision that the person is eligible for Legislative Council enrolment "if the name of such person is on the electoral list of any municipality or roads board in respect of property within the province of the annual ratable value of not less than £17, provided that the names of all persons who have been struck off any municipal or roads board electoral list on the ground merely of the non-payment of rates shall be deemed, for the purposes of this Act, to be on such lists respectively." 2. There is no provision in the Constitution Acts Amendment Act of 1899 providing for automatic transfer of the names of such persons to the Legislative Council rolls. 3. In the 1904 Electoral Act, however, Section 34, the following provision was contained—(1.) The clerk or secretary of every municipality and roads board shall, in the month of December in every year—(a) make out separately for every district or portion of a district within the boundaries of the municipality or roads district, a list containing, in alphabetical order of surnames, the names of every person on the electoral list of such municipality or roads district in respect of property situated within the electoral district and of every person whose name would appear thereon but for non-payment of rates; and (b) transmit such list in the form and containing the particulars required in form F in the schedule, certified under his hand to the registrar or registrars of the electoral district or districts within or partly within the boundaries of the municipality or roads district, as the case may be. (2) The registrar shall enter on the proper roll for the province the name and particulars of the qualification of every person who appears by such lists to be entitled to be registered. 4. On account of the unsatisfactory results obtained by these automatic transfers, this provision was deliberately eliminated from the new Electoral Act of 1907, and a new provision made whereby new names may be added to the rolls by the registrars pursuant to claims. 5.

From the above extracts it will be apparent that the automatic transfer to the roll of ratepayers is not provided for by the Constitution Act, but was contained in the Electoral Act of 1904. As that Act, however, was repealed by the 1907 Act, there is at present no provision in existence for automatic transfer of ratepayers.

There is another minute in reference to this matter, as explained by me in my introductory remarks. It states—

1. Section 37 of the Electoral Act, 1907, provides that new rolls are to be prepared under the supervision of, and issued by, the Chief Electoral Officer. 2. There is, therefore, no ambiguity as to the responsibility in this matter; I am personally responsible for the preparation of every new roll. 3. In the absence of any specific instructions in the proclamation, or in the electoral regulations, the provisions contained in Section 40 of the Electoral Act apply, and I am directed therein to inscribe into the new roll, from the existing roll, the names of all electors who appear to be qualified and to omit to inscribe the names of electors who appear to be disqualified in the manner specified in Section 40, subsection (1) (b). 4. My first duty is to satisfy myself as to the electors who appear to be qualified, and those who appear to be not qualified, or, in other words, I must take steps to ascertain which of the electors do, and which do not, retain the qualification for which they are enrolled. This duty is performed by comparing present enrolments with—(a) municipal and road board electoral lists; (b) Taxation Department's list of property owners; (c) Lands and Mines Departments' rent lists, and other available official lists; whilst "householder's" enrolments are compared with Legislative Assembly enrolments, in order to detect removal from the province in which the householder is at present enrolled. This is, as can readily be realised, a tedious operation, and takes a long time to faithfully accomplish. 5. In view of my previous experience of the very un-

satisfactory conditions of those Legislative Council enrolments which date back prior to the coming into force of the 1907 Electoral Act, viz., March, 1908, and with the aim and object of—(a) securing those electors in the possession of their franchise rights, and also (b) satisfying myself as regards the correctness and validity of their qualifications for the purpose of immediate transfer to the new roll, I adopted an auxiliary method of circulating these electors, and I took this course all the more readily as it was a line of action which could be commenced at once, and would be doing its good work whilst the other more tedious procedure was being prepared for and carried into execution. 6. Out of a total enrolment on the 10 province rolls, of 47,646, there were found to be no less than 15,086 enrolments, equal to 32 per cent., dating back prior to March, 1908. The circulars (copy attached, marked “a”) were posted between the 8th August and 2nd September—a commencement being made with the North Province. Each circular contained particulars of the qualification referred to therein, and full information as to the object of the inquiry, together with instructions as to the procedure. There is no mention in the circular of any objection to the elector’s qualification; it is an inquiry pure and simple, the object of which is explained in the last few lines in the circular, viz.:—“In order to enable me to at once transfer your name to the new roll now in course of compilation, please give the foregoing immediate attention.” 7. The exceedingly satisfactory work done by means of these circulars, and the ready response by the electors concerned, will be realised when I mention that, although on an average the circulars have been issued only six weeks, already by Saturday last, the 4th instant, 5,958 completed claim forms had been returned—being at an average rate of 1,000 per week, and we have yet over six months to run prior to the issue of the writ. 8. If any vin-

dication of, or justification for the action taken be considered necessary, I wish to emphasise the fact that—with very few exceptions—all the new claim cards forwarded show more or less serious alterations when compared with the old enrolments—many of such alterations being indeed serious enough, if not corrected or amended, to jeopardise the elector’s franchise. The receipt of these claim cards containing the original signatures of the claimants revealed also numerous duplications on the present roll, where names had been automatically transferred from wrongly spelt names on the municipal and road board lists, and these could not have been detected except upon personal application to, and inquiry from, the electors themselves. 9. In addition to the 5,958 claim cards received, 761 names of these old enrolments have been finally removed from the rolls at the request of the electors themselves, in reply to my circular, on account of the qualifications being no longer retained, or on account of duplications revealed by correspondence, whilst others were removed on account of the death of electors, etc., etc. 10. A further 1,044 circulars have been returned unclaimed through the post, and are now waiting to be subjected to further investigation. 11. I can, therefore, at present account for 7,763 out of 15,058 circulars issued, or 52 per cent. in six weeks, whilst 7,295 replies have yet to be received. 12. During this month all those who have not replied will again be applied to, and similar action will once more be taken in December. 13. By that time it is expected that the tedious examinations of municipal, road boards, and all other lists, will have been completed, and only those electors for whom I have been unable to find any verification of their qualifications will then be objected to, and as the task of comparison proceeds all persons who appear to be qualified, but who are as yet not enrolled, will have claim cards forwarded to them, to enable

them to claim enrolment under Section 41.

With reference to the Hon. Mr. Cornell's statement in connection with the North-East and South province rolls, that he "did not think that at the last election all the effort had been put into the work that might have been put into it"—referring to the department—the Chief Electoral Officer writes as follows:—

With reference to this statement, I beg to refer to the statistical particulars contained in my second annual report, from which it will be seen (see return on page 5) that the Council rolls for those two provinces contained the following number of enrolments:—

	1911	1912
	(March.)	(April.)
North-East province	2,748	3,183
South province	3,342	3,227

The following action was taken by the department in connection with the preparation of the 1912 roll:—

Removal notices sent to—	North-East.	South.
Householders	521	855
Ratepayers	303	264
Lessees and freeholders	260	148
Totals	1,084	1,267

Claim cards forwarded to non-enrolled apparently qualified electors—

	North-East.	South.
Mineral leaseholders	49	101
Crown lessees and ratepayers	226	357
Freeholders	984	764
Totals	1,259	1,222

In addition to this, 3,440 claim cards for the North-East and 4,355 for the South province were posted, addressed to the householder of every house in the provinces within letter-carrier delivery, in order to give an opportunity to anyone thus approached to claim, should he possess a qualifica-

tion, and not be already enrolled.

In all, therefore, the following action was taken by the department:—

North-East.		South.
Total removal notices issued	1,084	1,267
Claim cards posted to enable qualified electors to enrol	4,699	5,577

I think it will be admitted, upon presentation of these facts, that if the rolls were not complete as could have been desired the blame may fairly be laid at the door of the electors themselves, and a system of compulsory enrolment is the only efficient method to adopt in order to wake up the elector to his responsibilities. In connection with the 1912 election the department took the following action for all provinces:—

Removal notices issued to—	
Householders	4,266
Ratepayers	2,924
Lessees and freeholders	1,726
Total	8,916

Claim cards forwarded to apparently qualified electors—	
Mineral leaseholders	212
Crown lessees and ratepayers	8,339
Freeholders	11,529
Total	20,080

Claim cards forwarded to all householders of houses served by letter carriers	35,739
Total claims posted to assist claimant to enrol	55,819

So it will be seen that every effort was made to secure a good and pure roll.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew) moved—

That the House at its rising adjourn until 4.30 p.m. on Thursday next.

Question passed.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.