

# Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 16th October, 1946.

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

## QUESTIONS.

### ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

*As to Coal for South Fremantle Station.*

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

1, What is the estimated annual tonnage of Collie coal which will be required for the South Fremantle power house?

2, At present railway freights, what will it cost per annum to haul this coal from Collie to the South Fremantle power house?

3, What is the cost per ton of mining coal at Collie in the open cut?

4, What is the cost per ton of mining coal underground at Collie?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, 65,000 tons.

2, £43,000 approximately.

3, It is impossible to give at this stage an overall average cost per ton of mining coal in the Stockton and Wallsend open cuts which will include initial development cost and expensive operation in the final stages of each open cut. These open cuts have a very limited life.

4, Costs vary with different underground mines at Collie and range from approximately 22s. to 25s. per ton.

### WHEAT HAULAGE.

*As to Shortage of Loco. Power and Road Transport.*

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary:

1, During the last season how much wheat had to be carted by road owing to the shortage of locomotive power?

2, What was the total cost of transporting that wheat by road?

3, In view of the unfortunate present shortage of locomotive power has the Government made any provision for getting this season's wheat to the seaboard for export?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, By "shortage of locomotive power" it is understood reference is made to the difficulty encountered by the Railway Department in meeting abnormal peak demands for transport of wheat. Abnormal demands occurred during two periods, namely, from July to November, 1945, when the export of wheat to Eastern States became an urgent necessity, and in April and May, 1946, when urgent shipments were required overseas. During the first-mentioned period 60,926 tons of wheat were transported by road and 10,484 tons during the second period.

2, Cost of transporting by road was £99,156 and £20,007 respectively.

3, No arrangements have yet been made for transport of this season's wheat to ports by road, but if the circumstances are such as to necessitate road transport, arrangements can be made at short notice.

### BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

### BILL—TOTALISATOR DUTY ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 10th October.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [4.40]: The objection taken to this Bill by those members who have spoken against it are on financial grounds, mainly that the financial position of country clubs will be so vitally affected that it will be impossible for them to carry on. I would like for a few moments to deal with this aspect of the case. In the first place, one would imagine that the fractions constituted the most important financial question that racing clubs have to face. Members will recall that when I moved the second reading, I referred to the total amount in-

volved in fractions over a period of years. I pointed out that if the Bill were agreed to it would mean that something approximating half the amount now received by the clubs from fractions would be paid to the successful punters instead of to the clubs. To an interjection, I replied that, so far as country clubs are concerned, the amount is very small indeed and hardly worth any notice.

I would like to draw the attention of members to the fact that this Bill does not interfere with the ordinary revenue from the totalisator, that is, the 6 per cent. revenue which goes to the club under the Totalisator Act. That is not being interfered with in any shape or form. As to the fractions, it is not possible to state any definite sum that would accrue to any particular club at any particular time. Nevertheless, I can say that, in the early stages of the operation of the Totalisator Act, the amount involved was very small as compared with the amount involved today. In the intervening years, racing and trotting have become more popular, larger sums are invested on the totalisator under both codes of racing, and through the war years in particular the amount involved has increased to the figures I quoted in my second reading speech.

I have gone to the trouble to examine the figures for country racing clubs and, apart from three or four of them, the amounts involved are really so small that I do not think any member who has raised objection to the measure would insist upon his objection were it not for the fact that there are one or two clubs in particular outside the metropolitan area that have reaped what might be regarded as fairly substantial sums from this source. When I say "substantial" I am referring to anything from £10 to £25 per meeting. I propose to quote the figures later. In the meantime, I remind the House that the Royal Commissioner who recently investigated trotting administration in this State had something to say on the matter. It would be well to quote his words which appear on page 19 of his report—

A considerable additional source of revenue to the association lies in what are known as fractions and unclaimed dividends. The latter is a comparatively small amount, but the fractions are substantial. On both these items the Government levies a further 7½ per cent. and the balance is retained by the association.

The fractions arise through dividends on the totalisator being paid only in multiples of 1s. calculated to the next lower shilling.

It is obvious that an amount, sometimes considerable, remains with the association as a result of each race. In the year I am quoting, 1938-39, fractions totalled £9,710, from which, after deducting the Government's 7½ per cent., there remained to the association a profit of £8,982. This amounted to a little in excess of a further 2½ per cent. on investments.

Though the amounts involved have varied with the war years, the percentage remains about the same. If, as in at least some of the other States, dividends were, by an amendment of the Totalisator Act, to be calculated to the next lower 6d., the betting public would benefit considerably, but naturally the association finances would suffer correspondingly. In view of its large profits, disclosed by the phenomenal improvement in its financial position since 1929, which I have earlier set out, and the fact that its profits, devoted to patriotic and charitable purposes during the war years, are now in its hands, it could, without doubt, well afford the change.

Though I have throughout referred to the association in this regard and have quoted its figures, it will be obvious that, by such an amendment to the Totalisator Act, the finances of all trotting (as well as racing) clubs in the State would be affected. The schedule furnished by Mr. Byfield, to which I have referred, contains full details of the amounts received by all clubs from both fractions and unclaimed dividends for the years 1939 to 1945.

It is interesting to note, for purposes of comparison, that by the Totalisator Act, 1930, (as amended) of the State of Victoria, dividends are paid to the next lower 6d., and only 10 per cent. of the totalisator investments are deducted. Of this amount, within the metropolitan area, the club retains 50 per cent., but outside the metropolitan area the club retains 75 per cent. In each case the remaining percentage goes to the revenue, to which is payable also the whole of the fractions and unclaimed dividends.

Those are the remarks of the Royal Commissioner. I point out that the objections to this Bill appear to have emanated from the trotting fraternity rather than from the racing fraternity. It is remarkable that an organisation in such a good financial position as is the Trotting Association today should raise an objection of this sort. First of all, in my opinion, the question involved is one of principle—the principle of whether the punter should be entitled to get as near as possible the amount to which he is entitled under the rules of the totalisator, or whether the club should receive a benefit arising from the fact that a punter has backed a winning horse and that the

dividend cannot be declared to an exact shilling. As I have said, only half of these fractions are at stake under this Bill, and there can be no doubt that the principal clubs should not be seriously affected by the measure.

In looking at the return referred to by the Royal Commissioner, we find a long list of figures covering all the clubs associated with the Turf Club and the Trotting Association. I do not propose to read all of them because it would take too long, but I would like to give the House some idea of what the Bill will really mean to some of the country clubs. If we include the Goldfields and the Fremantle Trotting Clubs as country clubs, we find that the amount involved is fairly large; but outside of those two clubs the amount is, to my way of thinking, very small indeed. Quite a number of clubs are included in this list in respect of which the amount for the whole year is less than £20; and if this Bill is agreed to, it will affect only one-half of that sum if they have the same returns next year as they had last year.

It is not possible to predict what amount the clubs will receive from this source, on account of the varied nature of the racing, the number of horses competing and the amount invested on the totalisator, together, of course, with the fact that the correct dividend may be 1d. over the shilling or 11d. over the shilling. We cannot get away from the fact, however, that if the Bill is agreed to, the effect on the clubs will be that they will get approximately 50 per cent. of the amount they would otherwise receive.

The first club on this list is that of Bridgetown. In 1939, the total amount of fractions involved was £19. There were four meetings in that year and therefore the average was £5 per meeting. In 1940, the amount involved was £2. Apparently there was only one meeting that year and there has been no racing at Bridgetown since. I did hear of one representative from Bridgetown who took the stand that it would be very serious indeed for his club if this Bill were carried; that the club would not be able to carry on! The next one I wish to refer to is the Golden Mile at Kalgoorlie. The figures cover the period from 1939 to 1945 and it is perfectly true that they are substantial. They range from

£1,035 in 1939 to £1,226 in 1945. Speaking in a general way, according to the number of meetings held each year, the total amount involved was from £41 to £55 during that period. In regard to Harvey—

Hon. E. M. Heenan: Are you referring to trotting clubs?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. At Harvey, the figures were as follows:—1939, £8; 1940, £10; 1941, £12. Katanning is another club that has been mentioned by members representing the Great Southern district. The figures for that club are as follows:—

Year	Amount per meeting			
				£
1939	..	..	..	17
1940	..	..	..	14
1941	..	..	..	9
1942	..	..	..	6
1944	..	..	..	13
1945	..	..	..	21

At Manjimup the figures were £7 per meeting for 1939 and £10 for 1940. Again I would stress that the amount of money involved is 50 per cent. of the amounts I have quoted. Mullewa appears on the list, but the amount is too small to be considered. Narrogin is another Great Southern club, and the figures for that club are as follows:—

Year	Amount per meeting			
				£
1939	..	..	..	13
1940	..	..	..	8
1941	..	..	..	19
1942	..	..	..	8
1944	..	..	..	10
1945	..	..	..	14

I would point out that the Government will receive no benefit if this Bill is agreed to. The Government will lose a certain amount of revenue as a result of the operation of the amended Act.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: How?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Because the Government only takes 7½ per cent. of the total of the fractions. If 50 per cent. of the fractions are taken as compared with what is taken today, the Government must lose 50 per cent. of its 7½ per cent. of the total involved. This Bill was only introduced with the idea of giving winning punters—they have been described as such—a fairer deal than they have had in the past.

Hon. H. L. Roche: There are such people!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I know that in some of the propaganda that has been issued, one argument used against the Bill is that only winning punters are affected, and they can afford to allow the clubs to retain the fractions they have been receiving in the past; but nothing is said about the losing investments of the same punters. I suppose there are very few punters who attend a trotting or a race meeting who are content with one investment of 5s. The probabilities are that they have an interest in every race, and if they have only one win and receive 5s. instead of 5s. 11d., there is not much satisfaction in that. Here are the figures for Wagin:—

Year	Amount per meeting				£
1939	..	..	..	..	13
1940	..	..	..	..	14
1941	..	..	..	..	12
1942	..	..	..	..	8
1944	..	..	..	..	12
1945	..	..	..	..	20

Even Walkaway has trotting meetings and here are the figures for that district—

Year	Amount per meeting				£
1940	..	..	..	..	4
1941	..	..	..	..	4
1942	..	..	..	..	1
1943	..	..	..	..	6
1944	..	..	..	..	8
1945	..	..	..	..	19

That gives an indication of the effect on country trotting clubs. May I quote a few figures from the galloping clubs? Commencing with Albany, apparently the club there had only one meeting in each of the years 1939, 1940, 1941 and 1945, and the amounts involved were respectively £12, £10, £8 and £13. Apparently there has been no racing at Beverley since 1940. In 1939 the total for the year was £24, and in 1940 it was £9. The list contains a number of other clubs, such as that at Broomehill, in connection with which the amounts are very small. We might take Bunbury now. In 1939 eight meetings were held there and the average of the fractions involved was £26 per meeting. In 1940 there were seven meetings and the average on fractions was £31. In 1941 there were six meetings and the average was £27 and in 1945 the average jumped to £45 which seems to me a very big jump indeed. Then there were other clubs like that at Cool-

gardie which raced during the whole of the period from 1939 to 1945. I have not the number of meetings held at Coolgardie.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There was only one per year.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In 1939 the amount received on account of fractions was £17, in 1940 £23, in 1941 £20, in 1942 £15, in 1943 £31, in 1944 £99, and in 1945 £73. Then we can take the position regarding the Boulder club. In 1939 with 15 meetings the average from fractions was £30, in 1940 £33, in 1941 £39, in 1942 £36, in 1943 £64, in 1944 £77, and in 1945 £71. Then there are places like Jennacubbine, the figures for which are very low.

At Kondut the returns were £2, £3 and £3 in successive years; at Leonora the returns were £4, £5 and £2; at Moora for 1944 the return was £11 and for 1945, £3; at Mt. Barker in 1939 the return on fractions was £3 and in 1945, £6. At Narrogin in 1941 the return was £6. Coming to Northam we find that in 1939 with eight meetings the average return from fractions was £26 while in 1940 with eight meetings the average was £15; in 1941 the average was £14 and in 1942, £12. With regard to Pinjarra, in 1939 the return was £9, in 1940 £10, in 1941 £9, and in 1942 £4. Then I may take an illustration from the North-West.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That would be interesting.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will cite the position with regard to Port Hedland. In 1939 the return from fractions was £11; in 1940 £11, in 1941 £10, in 1942 £10, in 1943 £6, in 1944 £13 and in 1945 £14. Then with regard to the Victoria District Club in 1939 the return was £5, in 1941 £1, in 1942 £3, in 1943 £18, in 1944 £45, and in 1945 £84. That serves to show the big increase that has taken place in the last two or three years. These clubs could carry on before and even secure increased returns, yet we are told that if the fractions are reduced 50 per cent. they will have to close up, increase the charges for admission or decrease the stake money.

As a matter of fact it seems to me that a lot of hoocy has been talked about this matter. I have a mass of other details and I do not wish to read them all but during the debate the position of the York Trotting Club was mentioned. I find that in 1939

that club had reached a return of £10, in 1940 £11, and in 1941 £10. We now come to the metropolitan clubs and I propose to give members a few more details than were presented when I introduced the Bill. The W.A. Trotting Association, for instance, for the year ended the 30th June, 1939, received from the fractions a total of £9,710. In 1940, the association received £9,841, in 1941 £7,992, and in 1942 £7,337. By the way, in that year no less than £1,026 came from unclaimed dividends. In 1943 the association received £10,487, in 1944 £18,307 and in 1945 £13,828 or a total of £77,900.

Then with regard to the Fremantle Trotting Club for the same period during portion of which that body conducted its racing at Gloucester Park, the returns received by the club from the fractions were in 1939 £1,686, in 1940 £1,548, in 1941 £1,372, in 1942 £1,645, in 1943 £603, in 1944 £2,112, and in 1945 £1,014 or a total of £9,980. These figures disclose that between Gloucester Park and Richmond Park a total of £87,880 was collected during the years mentioned from fractions derived from the totalisator.

Then so far as the galloping clubs in the metropolitan area are concerned, I will deal first with Belmont Park. In 1939 that club received £689 from the fractions, in 1940 £567, in 1941 £595, in 1942 £628, in 1943 £464 and in 1944 £426. Next there is the Canning Park Club whose receipts were in 1939 £596, in 1940 £531, in 1941 £532, in 1942 £405, in 1943 £304, in 1944 £356, and in 1945 £908. Then with respect to the Goodwood Club, in 1939 the receipts from the fractions were £831, in 1940 £697, in 1941 £617, in 1942 £645, in 1943 £845 and in 1944 £326, there being no racing there in 1945. In connection with the Helena Vale Club, in 1939 the returns amounted to £740, in 1940 £702, in 1941 £635, in 1942 £641, in 1943 £903, in 1944 £401 and in 1945 £453.

Next we come to the W.A.T.C. and we find that at headquarters the receipts were in 1939 £3,048, in 1940 £2,945, in 1941 £2,864, in 1942 £2,690, in 1943 £5,944, in 1944 £15,117 and in 1945 £27,496. These are Treasury figures and I think the House can rely upon them as being accurate. In view of these details and the fact that in earlier years the clubs were receiving much less than today, owing to the increased popularity of the sport I suggest it is absolutely futile to

argue that if the Bill becomes law the clubs must go out of existence.

Further I draw attention to the fact that considerable publicity was given recently to the success of the sport of trotting in Western Australia. In recent weeks in particular the announcement was made that last year the stakes paid by the W.A.T.A. represented an all-time high. In order to be quite correct in that respect I propose to read a statement from the annual report as follows:—

For the first season since 1940-41 we have been able to conduct the full number of meetings allotted. The stakes paid for the season had reached the magnificent sum of £101,246, the highest amount ever paid in stakes by any racing organisation in this State.

This is the association that claims that if half of the fractions were taken away from it and given to winning punters the necessity would arise either to increase the gate money or decrease the stakes paid or both!

I think it is too ridiculous for words, especially when we remember that the W.A.T.A. and W.A.T.C. are the controlling authorities in their respective forms of racing in this State and accept the responsibility for encouraging country clubs by means of subsidies and in other directions. It is too ridiculous altogether for such organisations to say that because the Government proposed to enable the winning punter to have a little better deal than he has received for years past, the effect will be serious upon the sport and that some of the clubs may not be able to exist any longer. I am afraid I cannot subscribe to that point of view.

Hon. G. W. Miles: How will the Treasury make up the deficit on account of the revenue it will lose?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amount involved is really very small. However, it would not matter what the amount might be because the Government believes, more particularly since the Royal Commissioner drew attention to the fact, that the so-called winning punter is entitled to be treated a bit better than he has been in the past. A good deal of attention has been given to this subject recently and I think every member of this House has received some correspondence on the subject. Members have been told by a well-known accountant who apparently had been asked to deal with this matter on behalf of the W.A.T.A.,—I am quoting the

last paragraph in the letter that that gentleman sent out—

It is obvious that the totalisator fractions play an important part in keeping the sport going in Fremantle, Kalgoorlie and in the country districts and should the Totalisator Bill now before the House have the effect of putting an end to this source of revenue the clubs will have no alternative but to increase prices of admission which would only tend to hasten an early termination of their activities.

Next I would draw attention to the fact that Sir Hal Colebatch put a question to me at the conclusion of his speech. He said—

I hope that the Minister, when replying to the debate, will answer a question for me. He may find it difficult, because it has always been recognised that frequently Acts of Parliament have had different effects from those anticipated. I would like the Minister to answer this question: Will this Bill encourage and increase gambling on racecourses or will it discourage and decrease gambling? His answer will help me a good deal in coming to a conclusion as to whether or not I can vote for the second reading of the Bill.

I suggest that Messrs. Duff and Macaulay, public accountants and auditors, have given the reply upon which Sir Hal Colebatch might act. As a matter of interest, I have quoted the figures for the metropolitan and country clubs so far as fractions are concerned. I have quoted from the annual report of the Trotting Association, which shows that the association claims that last year it was able to provide the largest amount in stake-money that has ever been provided by any racing club in this State. Yet the association went on to say—withstanding its balance sheet shows such an extremely healthy position and notwithstanding the figures which I have quoted—that the taking away of the fractions would jeopardise the maintenance of the sport and the high standard which it has achieved in recent years. I refuse to believe that.

The argument has also been used that it will tend to jeopardise the amount of money which might be devoted by these organisations to patriotic or charitable purposes. In that regard I would point out one significant fact. On page 14 of the report of the Royal Commissioner we find the following:—

**Patriotic Funds and Charities.**

During the war years, partly in pursuance of a resolution, which I have already referred to, that its profits for the duration of the war should be paid to patriotic and charitable

funds, the association made a notable contribution to those funds. Though the resolution was not passed till September, 1940, I give the totals for the six years ended 31st July, 1945. They are as follows:—

	£
To Sportsmen's Council ..	70,237
To other charitable objects	6,111

The association submitted to me a statement differing to an extent from the above, but a careful dissection of details later supplied shows the above figures to be correct.

I draw the attention of members to the amount, £76,348 in all, and would ask them to compare it with the amount, which I have already given to the House, of the fractions received by the Trotting Association for the years 1939 to 1945. That figure was £77,900, a sum greater than that distributed to patriotic and charitable funds by the association. On top of that, there was the additional £9,980 from the Fremantle Trotting Club, mainly arising from that club's racing on the Gloucester Park course.

How can one reconcile these figures with the statement that if half of the fractions are denied to the association, it will find it difficult to carry on, or at least find it exceedingly difficult to give support to the country clubs, which support is really one of the objects it must comply with in accordance with its constitution? There are numerous other points I could deal with, but I think I have said sufficient to indicate that there is not much merit in the argument used against this Bill. The time has arrived when we should come nearer to the Eastern States' practice in this matter. I have already pointed out that in the Eastern States the totalisator pays to the nearest 6d. or to the nearest 3d. and, according to the Royal Commissioner's report, in the Eastern States the whole of the fractions go to revenue, not to the racing clubs, whereas in this State not less than 92½ per cent. of the fractions is paid to the respective racing clubs. I hope the House will agree to the Bill without amendment.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

**BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £2,200,000.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

# **BILL—CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT.**

## *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 11th September.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.23]: I hope I will be pardoned for remarking that it is quite refreshing to find at least one old member of this Chamber with such progressive ideas as are included in this Bill. I would like to say to Sir Hal Colebatch that, while I am supporting the measure, I consider it is only good in parts. He has made a start, but has not gone far enough, in my opinion. I do not propose to speak at great length on the measure, but I am hopeful that it will reach the Committee stage, when no doubt we shall have considerable discussion on the various points included in the Bill.

By the first amendment, Sir Hal proposes that claimants for enrolment should provide proof to the Chief Electoral Officer of their eligibility under the Act. I have referred the Bill to the Chief Electoral Officer, who advises me that if the wording of the clause remains as it stands it will prove rather difficult to work. It is assumed, of course, that Sir Hal Colebatch refers to documentary proof, such as the production of certificates of title, etc. That is the only proof that could be accepted by the Chief Electoral Officer in a case of this kind. We all recognise that such documents are not always readily available, and even if they are, it is quite understandable that many people would prefer not to have to go to that trouble in order to ensure enrolment.

At present, it is necessary for claimants to make a declaration if they believe they are entitled to and desire enrolment; and, of course, that declaration is subject to check from time to time by the Electoral Department. So we reach the stage with regard to that aspect of the Bill that more difficulties might be created than those which now exist, and the clause would not have the effect that I believe the hon. member desires. The Bill also provides for an extension of the franchise to wives of resident occupiers. This is a very progressive step, one that is in accord with democratic principles? It is some-

thing which I have advocated in this Chamber on numerous occasions and naturally I support the proposal.

Another progressive move—I will say a democratic move—is the proposal to abolish plural voting. Some members have been a little cynical on the question of plural voting. Because it was not possible for me to state the number of electors who were entitled to plural votes, the suggestion was made that the number must be so small as not to be worth bothering about. Even Mr. Thomson quite recently—I think at the last sitting of the House—had something to say on this matter. Although it is not possible for the Chief Electoral Officer to furnish that information without making a most exhaustive search of all the electoral cards, I think we can take it for granted that the number runs into many thousands. If I should attempt to hazard a guess, I would say that at least 40,000 to 50,000 persons would be involved. That guess would be based on my own experience of the rolls for the Legislative Council in the metropolitan area.

Hon. A. Thomson: That means 50 per cent.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** The guess is the number for the whole State. I am referring now to people who may be residing in Perth and own a property in some other part of the metropolitan area. People residing in the country might also possess qualifications to vote for provinces other than that in which they live.

Hon. H. Seddon: What is the total enrolment for the Legislative Council?

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** I do not know at the moment.

Hon. H. Seddon: You quote 50,000 persons as having more than one vote.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** I hazarded a guess and said that the number might be 40,000 or 50,000.

Hon. H. Seddon: Out of a total enrolment of 87,000?

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY:** I am giving my impression. Probably I exaggerated when I said 40,000 or 50,000, which was merely a guess. It cannot be said that the figures are so small that we need not take any notice of them.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Probably every member of this Chamber has a plural vote.

Hon. G. Fraser: Not guilty!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The next amendment to which I shall refer is the proposal to extend the franchise to flat-dwellers. This amendment is another step in the right direction but to my way of thinking it does not go far enough. We know that at present flat-dwellers are not entitled to enrolment unless they have a separate entrance from the street. Sir Hal Colebatch is endeavouring to alter that position and has gone a certain way. I suggest, however, that there is no difference between the people whom he desires to cover and many other residents in the metropolitan area who are occupying flats which do not quite comply with the conditions laid down in the Bill. While I am dealing with this amendment might I say that I agree entirely with Sir Hal Colebatch when he used the following words:—

I stick to my contention that the franchise should be open to everyone who has assumed the full responsibility of citizenship. But I do not agree, and never have agreed, that the man who has the most property should have the most votes. I do not believe in that. I believe in equality of opportunity when there is equality of responsibility. A man whose qualification is that he has a wife and, happily, a family has a responsibility as great as that of a person with a lot of money, and he is just as much concerned in the good government of the country as is the wealthy person.

I also suggest that that statement does not coincide with the amendment in the Bill. Sir Hal has gone only half way along the road if his desire is to put into operation the sentiment he expressed in those words.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Half a loaf is better than no bread.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The next amendment deals with the reduction of age in connection with nominating for the Legislative Council. That is another creditable move, and I hope the House will agree to it. It will not affect very many people, but I never could understand the reason for a person having to be 30 years of age before becoming eligible to nominate for this Chamber. Many public men in the history of the Empire have played prominent parts in its political life long before they reached the age of 30 years.

On the question of deadlocks between the Houses, I would say that the proposals con-

tained in the Bill are commendable, but they will not provide an adequate means of fully solving the problem. It would be preferable for the amendments to be more in line with the English Parliament Act of 1911. In order to bring that about, I have placed certain amendments on the notice paper which, I have no doubt, members have fully considered. The Bill contains another provision to ensure that a money Bill will become law within a month of being sent from the Legislative Assembly whether or not the Council has given its consent. This will prevent any possibility of a money Bill lapsing in the Legislative Council, or of its being rejected by the Council, which are eventualities that the Act does not at present prevent because it simply states that the Council shall not amend a money Bill.

It is proposed by Sir Hal that, in the case of Bills other than money Bills, there shall be a general election between the second and third sessions. That is not at all satisfactory to me, and neither is the provision that on the third passage the second and third readings shall be passed in another place by an absolute majority of members who shall also be representative of at least half of the electors enrolled for the Assembly. There again I believe that the English Parliament Act of 1911 is a pattern that we might well follow. I suggest that what is good enough for the House of Lords should surely be good enough for this House.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Do you suggest we should be elected for life?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have, therefore, placed on the notice paper amendments dealing with that phase of the Bill. As I have already said, this is a measure on which we can have quite a lot of discussion, and I have no doubt that varying points of view will be expressed not only on the contents of the Bill but on the amendments I have put forward. I hope that the House will agree to the second reading of the measure so that we may debate it thoroughly in Committee and improve it to a greater or less extent because, as I have said, I look on the Bill as a progressive move on the part of members of the Council. I trust it foreshadows an alteration in the outlook of many members. I support the second reading.

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



# **BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.**

## *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. H. SEDDON** (North-East) [5.38]: We are all agreed as to the necessity for providing something in the way of hostels, or other accommodation, for students attending our high schools. Members representing country districts realise the difficulty and anxiety confronting parents who wish to give their children a higher education. They must be prepared to allow those young people to leave home at a tender age to attend a high school or some other school for this purpose. While the private schools do, to a large extent, make provision for boarding and supervising the students to such a degree as to allay the anxiety of parents, unfortunately, children attending our high schools are largely dependent on the good offices and nature of people living in the areas in which the high schools are situated.

I know quite a number of people who have been approached to take care of children who have been sent from outback districts. While there is need for something in the nature of hostels, a great deal depends upon the way that they will be established and equipped, and particularly how they will be supervised. When one considers the Bill this question arises: Is a road board the best authority to deal with this matter? When I say that I am not in any way disparaging the personnel constituting our road boards today, but I do suggest that there is involved here a problem that is far beyond the type usually brought under the notice of road board members.

**Hon. H. Tuckey:** It does not stop them from providing a building.

**Hon. H. SEDDON:** Exactly. A point that I want to stress is that there is a great difference between local government administration and what is necessary to ensure the success of a hostel for young children, such as is outlined here. Not only are the acquisition of a building and its adaptation for these purposes involved, but far bigger problems. A hostel, once established, has to be staffed and properly equipped with bedding and whatever else is necessary in a boarding house. Once it is equipped the problems of food and service arise and, more particularly, the supervision and dis-

cipline of the young people so as to ensure that they will be properly looked after. The next question that would have to be dealt with is that of the charges to be made so as to maintain the young children.

If members go carefully into the matter they will see that it is not a simple problem, but one that might have been approached in a different way from that indicated in the Bill. All sorts of young people go to the high schools, yet the proposal is that they are to be more or less gathered together to live and work in these hostels. It is not the association in school, but that after school hours which is very important. So, in approaching a problem like this, we might go far beyond the proposition of allowing these hostels to be handled by road boards, and determine whether they could not be better handled by people who have, perhaps, approached the question in a different spirit.

Another important aspect of the Bill is that the people most concerned are those living in the more remote areas. Mr. W. R. Hall, when discussing the measure yesterday, pointed out that parents in Leonora, Menzies and Laverton—to say nothing of the more remote districts—are sending their children down to attend the high schools and they, therefore, would be the people most concerned in the provision of this accommodation. If a hostel were provided in Kalgoorlie it would, I take it, come under the supervision of the Kalgoorlie Road Board. A considerable difficulty arises there because we would have to get the outside road boards to co-operate with the local authority in whose area the school is situated. That co-operation is necessary in order that the parents may be confident that their children will be properly taken care of. The same thing would occur in other districts such as Bunbury and Geraldton.

If we are going to tackle this problem let us do it properly and approach it through those people who have shown the greatest interest in our schools and scholars, and also get some sort of expression of opinion on co-operation from the Government. Other members have pointed out that this is really a governmental responsibility, rather than of the local authorities, but I think those who have shown most interest in the activities and welfare of our scholars are members of the parents and citizens' associations,

and of that other organisation that is doing so much good for country people, the Country Women's Association. Of all the organisations in the country, for the carrying out of a scheme for the establishment and running of hostels such as are outlined in the Bill, I would have most confidence in the two bodies I have mentioned. From them would come persons of the type most likely to provide hostels and equip them properly, and to see that they are satisfactorily run. That is the angle from which I would like the matter approached.

If the present Bill does nothing else, it will, if passed, take from the Government what should be its responsibility, and will place that responsibility on the local authorities. While the Bill sets out that a local authority may do this or that in the establishment of hostels, the fact remains that the existence of this measure on our statute-book will give the Government the opportunity of saying—I can well imagine the Minister saying it—that this is the responsibility of the local authorities, being protected in that view by the fact that the measure was placed on the statute-book. If there were any indication that it would be a co-operative concern and that the Government would take the initiative in the matter, the difficulty might not arise but, as the Bill stands at present, it offers an opportunity to the Government to pass the buck to the local authorities to enter a field of which at present they have no experience.

I am in full accord with the objectives of the sponsor of the Bill, but would suggest to him that, in order to achieve his object on a basis which I think will offer a greater chance of success, community consciousness regarding education and youth being greater today than it has been for many years past, there is therefore greater need for a well thought-out scheme. With the amount of interest that is being shown by the parents and citizens' associations and the Country Women's Association, I think there will be any number of people in those organisations prepared enthusiastically to support the scheme for providing hostels.

Incidentally, the present condition of our schools leaves a great deal to be desired. They have been allowed to get out of condition, possibly due largely to the exigencies of war, and the accommodation

is far short of what it should be. We know that a considerable amount of expense will devolve upon the Government in bringing the schools up to a reasonable condition, particularly in the outback areas. There have been repeated complaints from all parts of the State about the congestion in classes, and in schools generally, and also about the lack of adequate accommodation. The response to those complaints has, unfortunately, been by no means satisfactory. As an instance, during the whole of last winter a class of infants was held, in one school on the Goldfields, with the children sitting on a cold cement floor. That state of affairs existed in an important Goldfields school, which at present is in urgent need of extra classrooms, but there has been no indication of any steps being taken to remedy the position. That is not an isolated instance; it occurs all over the State, and is associated with the welfare of our children and the need for providing hostels for those who are away from their own homes.

I would have liked to hear from the Government some indication that it will be behind the movement, and of how far it is prepared to go in the establishment and equipment of hostels. I would suggest to Mr. Loton that, instead of going on with the Bill at present, he might ask the House to assist him by appointing a Select Committee to inquire into the best methods for providing and equipping hostels. Then, the committee having agreed on a scheme and an estimate of the expenditure involved, he could come to the House with a Bill that would set out the scheme and entitle him to the support of members and the confidence of the people most concerned—the parents of the children who would be affected by the scheme. If he approaches the two organisations I have mentioned, I believe he will not only receive enthusiastic support from them but will find they are willing to help him formulate a scheme that will recommend itself, and which the Government will be compelled to support, with the result that the children will be properly provided for when away from home.

**HON. G. BENNETTS** (South) [5.52]: I support the Bill and, being a member of the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council, do not see that if the Bill were passed that council would be compelled to erect hostels if it were not necessary. There may be buildings in

Kalgoorlie that would be considered suitable for conversion into hostels for children coming to Kalgoorlie from outback districts. When I was travelling from Kalgoorlie four weeks ago, two little girls from Bulong were placed on the train to be sent to Midland Junction, because their parents could not obtain a house in Kalgoorlie. They were aged about seven and eight years. On the previous day, their two brothers also were sent to Midland Junction for schooling. I belong to the Kalgoorlie Parents and Citizens' Association, and to the kindergarten movement.

When coming by train from Kalgoorlie about a fortnight ago, in company with Mr. Seddon, I met a member of the Norseman Road Board, who gave me some figures and mentioned the situation at Norseman regarding boarding-school accommodation. I have a list which he gave me of the children at present in the Salmon Gums area. There are 10 between the ages of three and five years, coming on to school age. From birth to three years of age there are 19, and there are 50 children of school age. That is the number for that district alone. People in that area are wondering how they are to provide boarding-schools for their children, as they want to send them to Norseman to be educated. If this Bill is passed, the people of Norseman might work on some scheme to provide a building and to get some organisation such as the Country Women's Association, to take it over. Alternatively, the local parents and citizens' association might be able to do it, or the matter might be handled by the people of the town. There are many ways in which the difficulty could be overcome.

The other night a member mentioned the smaller country schools. A good scheme is being carried out in the Merredin district where there were formerly many small schools. It was difficult to get teachers to go to those schools. I would mention also the position on the Commonwealth railways, where it was very difficult indeed to get suitable teachers to take charge of the schools, as they were so isolated. People from the Merredin district have told me that since there has been a bus service running out in three different directions, to bring the children in to Merredin, a better class of education has been provided and it has been easier to get suitable teachers, as they are more

agreeable to going to a centre like Merredin than to outlying districts.

I am a member of the Fresh Air League movement, which is having a building put up at Esperance at an early date. When it has been erected, it will be used by children of the Goldfields who go to Esperance on holidays, but, while it is not being put to that use, the children from in and around the mallee district might be housed there, during the winter months, using the building as a hostel. That is what I am trying to arrange. If local governing bodies are given power to build such hostels, it will be a step in the right direction and we may, at a later date, be able to show the Government that though we have made a start we are unable to continue, through lack of funds, and in that way approach the Government, which might then enter the field and provide the funds necessary for the hostels and to keep the teaching staffs going. I think the Bill contains a very good suggestion and I hope the House will give it full consideration.

**HON. H. L. ROCHE** (South-East) [5.57]: I have difficulty in understanding much of the opposition to this measure, because the circumstances that gave rise to it are somewhat exceptional. It is not likely that those circumstances will be confined entirely to the Gnowangerup district, where a consolidation of schools is taking place. That consolidation will entail children travelling from 40 to 50 miles daily, to and from school, unless accommodation can be found for them in the town. It is a comparatively small district, as far as the township and population go, and the school is not a high school, as Mr. Seddon's remarks led me to believe he thought it was. Unless a measure of this nature is agreed to by the House, I cannot see what alternative there is. We all subscribe to a better deal for the children of this State, and particularly our country children, in the matter of education. There is no possibility that we can anticipate, within measurable time, of the children to whom I refer being able to avail themselves of better education unless some provision of this kind is made.

It has been suggested that the Education Department should accept responsibility for the provision of hostels such as are dealt with in the Bill. Perhaps that is so, but the

department says it cannot do this. Quite likely, in view of the tremendous amount of money needed to bring schools, school fittings and requirements up to date and more in keeping with the times, the department cannot do this. If that is so, why should this House object to the people concerned, whose children would be the ones to suffer and whose properties are the ones that would have to carry the rate, providing a hostel for themselves? I would like to see the Education Department undertake the provision of hostels and also do much more for the advancement of education, but if the department maintains that it is not in a position to do so—and the officials can advance a fairly good argument by quoting the amount of money needed and the limited amount at their disposal—these people and others in country centres should not be compelled to wait for years for children of a future generation to get the better type of education we all agree they are entitled to.

In some ways I think the road board might be a better authority to build and supervise one of these hostels than a Government department, with the management centralised in Perth, would be. These hostels are to accommodate children in the locality in which they are provided and the financing of them will be the responsibility of the people of the locality. I believe that the expenditure on and supervision of hostels would be far more closely attended to by the local people and that they would maintain conditions as they should be far better than if the control were centralised in Perth, as would be necessary if the provision of hostels were the sole responsibility of the Education Department.

I am not dismissing, nor does the Bill dismiss, the possibility of some local body such as a branch of the Country Women's Association or the parents and citizens' association relieving the road board of the responsibility of running these hostels. There may be a branch of the Country Women's Association in Gnowangerup strong enough to undertake this work, and I am sure there is a strong branch of the parents and citizens' association in that town. The members of those organisations would be keen enough and education-minded enough, I am confident, to undertake the supervision, and the local road board would have very little difficulty in arranging for interested people in

the district to attend to the general control of affairs in the hostel, once power were granted under the Act, as the Bill would provide, for the local authority to establish it.

This Bill is designed to deal purely with local needs in a town like Gnowangerup against the needs of towns like Bunbury and Kalgoorlie where there are high schools. I do not consider that Mr. Seddon's suggestion would be very helpful. It would mean tying up this proposal with other proposals for a new deal in education, and if those matters were submitted to a Select Committee and we had to await the report especially if the committee inquired into buildings, equipment and standards of education in country centres, the delay would be considerable. The Bill represents an effort to assist local authorities who wish to help their own people to get the children an improved standard of education. These authorities are the representatives of those people and form part of the people, and they could be relied upon to ensure that there was no extravagance and that the supervision and conduct of the hostel were in the best interests of the children. I hope the House will approve of the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—ANATOMY ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [6.5] in moving the second reading said: The necessity for the introduction of this Bill has been brought about by the fact that the Melbourne and Sydney Universities can no longer accommodate medical students from Western Australia. In the past these students have attended the University of Western Australia for the first year of their medical course and have completed the balance of their training at either Melbourne or Sydney. Unfortunately those universities are now finding it difficult to cope with the flow of students from their own States, and they have been compelled to refuse any more admissions from Western Australia.

In order to overcome this difficulty the university authorities in Adelaide have agreed to take students from Western Aus-

tralia provided that bodies can be supplied from Western Australia for purposes of dissection. The available supply of bodies in South Australia is not sufficient to meet the increased demand that will eventuate when Western Australian students commence at Adelaide. The Anatomy Act of Western Australia does not include any provision by which cadavers may be transported out of this State for dissection, and it is to provide for such a practice that this Bill has been submitted.

The Anatomy Act was passed in 1930 for the purpose of authorising the practising of anatomy at schools established for the purpose under license in Western Australia. The only school that has been licensed to date is that at the Royal Perth Hospital. A thorough knowledge of dissection is necessary for a person desirous of qualifying as a medical practitioner, and to a lesser degree for one who aspires to become a dentist and who must have a complete knowledge of the anatomy of the head and neck. A person who in the course of his or her profession has to operate on living people must obtain necessary experience from the dissection of the dead. For this reason cadavers are an essential part of the equipment of medical schools.

During the last century many unsavoury subterfuges were availed of to obtain bodies for dissection, and all members will have heard of the devious methods adopted by resurrectionists or body-snatchers and similar ghouls, who illegally provided bodies for anatomical purposes. These practices were brought to an end in Great Britain in 1831 by the passing of legislation regulating the methods by which cadavers were obtained for dissection, and in due course the majority of other countries followed Britain's lead.

Under the Western Australian Act, cadavers for dissection can be obtained under license from any public institution supported wholly or partly by the Government, or from the executors or any persons, other than undertakers, having lawful possession of the body, unless the deceased during his lifetime instructed in writing that his body be not used for such a purpose or orally requested this during his last illness before two or more witnesses, or unless objection is raised by the surviving husband or wife or any known relative of the deceased.

Provision is also made in the Act for those persons who instruct that their bodies shall be used for anatomical practice, but I should imagine that such instances would be most infrequent.

Since the 1st June, 1943, nine cadavers have been used at the Royal Perth Hospital School of Anatomy, which, as I have mentioned, is the only school in this State, and they have all been those of patients from the Claremont Mental Hospital. There is no evidence that cadavers have been obtained from any other source in this State for many years. The requirements imposed by the Act have been strictly adhered to, and after the anatomical examinations have been completed, the cadavers have been returned for burial.

The Bill provides that the Commissioner of Public Health may make, revoke or vary agreements with the person in charge of any legally constituted school of anatomy in another State for the despatch of bodies to that school. An important part of these agreements will be the provision requiring the proper burial of the subject, advice of which must be tendered to the Commissioner of Public Health within 12 weeks of the body being received in Adelaide for examination. All necessary authorities have been consulted in regard to the transport to Adelaide of the bodies. Pending the consideration by Parliament of the measure, preliminary arrangements have been made with the railways for the carriage of the bodies, and the health and university authorities in Adelaide and in this State are in full agreement on all aspects of the proposals.

There is another amendment of a minor nature in the Bill. In the Act reference is made to the Commissioner for Health, and the amendment provides for the alteration of this designation to "Commissioner of Public Health" which is that officer's correct title and the one to which he is referred in the Health Act.

I repeat that the Bill has been introduced for the purpose of providing medical students from this State with the means to carry out a very essential part of their training. It does not alter the Act in any way except to authorise the transport of bodies from this State to schools of anatomy within the Commonwealth. In connection with the supply of bodies for this purpose, all the restrictive measures of the

Act will apply, and means have been taken to ensure that the remains are accorded decent burial within a reasonable period. The Act was not hastily passed in 1930. It was the subject of consideration by Select Committee of this Chamber, several members of which still occupy seats in the House, namely, Mr. Drew, Mr. Seddon and myself. Members may recall that the late Mr. A. Lovekin was chairman of the committee. I trust that the Bill will receive the favourable consideration of the House and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 16th October, 1946.*

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

### QUESTION.

#### FIELD EXPERIMENTS.

*As to Transport Facilities for Farmers.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Is he aware that many farmers are prevented, through lack of transport, from viewing field experiments conducted periodically by the Department of Agriculture?

2, Does he know that for that reason farmers will be prevented from seeing on Saturday next the experiments carried out at Mr. Whitehead's farm at Hines Hill?

3, Will he arrange for the running of a Diesel car from, say, Narrogin to Merredin and back, so that farmers desirous of so doing may attend the field day on Saturday next?

The MINISTER replied:

1, I have heard statements made to that effect, but I have no information concerning the number of farmers who would have availed themselves of a special train service had one been provided.

2, No.

3, The Railway Department will endeavour to make special arrangements for persons desirous of attending the demonstration at Hines Hill, for whom no suitable train service is already scheduled, if there are sufficient intending passengers to warrant such action.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for one week granted to Mr. Cross (Canning) on the ground of urgent private business.

### BILL—LAND ALIENATION RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands and read a first time.

### BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

### BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

### BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

*Second Reading.*

MR. HILL (Albany) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: Of recent weeks there has been a campaign for greater safety on the roads. That movement naturally had the whole-hearted support of this