Lt.-Colonel BRUXNER: No. The Minister who piloted the amending Act of 1934 through the House was a great friend and colleague of mine. Mr. Buttenshaw said that the Government of which he was a member would not steal. That is my creed. I do not steal. That is what I say to the hon. member for Yass.

Mr. BADDELEY: If Mr. Buttenshaw was such a great friend, why did he leave you?

Lt.-Colonel BRUXNER: It is a peculiar thing that ever since this Parliament commenced its sittings it has been almost impossible for an hon. member to speak on this side of the House without Ministers persistently interjecting.

Mr. FRANK BURKE: What about the hon. member?

Lt.-Colonel BRUXNER: The hon. member can search *Hansard*. I interjected only so as to get a reply in *Hansard*.

Mr. HORSINGTON: Other hon. members do that!

Lt.-Colonel BRUXNER: Ministers say that they have a mandate for this bill. That is the most extraordinary line of argument that has ever been used. The Minister says that the Government has a mandate to do this because of a speech made in 1934 by the then leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Auburn.

Mr. TULLY: The hon. member is entirely wrong. I said the speech of the Premier, Mr. McKell!

Lt.-Colonel BRUXNER: I read what the Premier said. He did not say that he would not pay compensation. The hon. member for Auburn did say that no compensation would be paid. He also said that if Labour was returned to power, it would repeal the 1934 measure. Labour was not returned until seven years afterwards. The Government that passed the amending Act of 1934 was returned in 1935 and 1938. By no reasoning to which this Chamber has ever listened can a Government claim to have a mandate from the people because the then leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Auburn, who has been very much set aside since and whose name was hardly mentioned by the Minister, said that some day he would repeal the 1934 Act. Now, in 1941, the Minister comes along and says that he has a mandate. Some queer things have happened in this House.

Mr. LAZZARINI: The ghost still walks!

Lt.-Colonel BRUXNER: Even the Assistant Minister has to have a smack. The ghost will walk during the next few days, and will talk, too. If members in another place accept that as a mandate for a measure that goes to the very roots of all that is decent and honest in Government—the contractual relationship between the Crown and the people—and pass this bill, we will wonder what we are fighting for. We will wonder what the boys on the other side of the world, and in whose name this thing is being done, are fighting for, if this is going to be the sort of thing done in the name of a mandate.

Debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.42 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 19 August, 1941.

First Readings—Local Government (Electoral Provisions) Bill (second reading).

The PRESIDENT took the chair.

The opening Prayer was read.

FIRST READINGS.

The following bills were received from the Legislative Assembly and read a first time:

Coal Mines Regulation (Further Amendment) Bill.

Factories and Shops (Amendment) Bill.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ELECTORAL PROVISIONS) BILL.

SECOND READING.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING (Vice-president of the Executive Council and Minister of Justice) [4.36]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

This bill is concerned first with the amendment of the franchise provisions of the Local Government Act, 1919, and the Sydney Corporation Act, 1932-1940, and secondly with certain further amendments in relation to electoral matters arising under these Acts. These later amendments do not involve any great question of principle, and I propose at a later stage to give hon. members a brief outline of such provisions. At the outset, however, in view of the fact that the principal object of the bill is the amendment dealing with the franchise under the Local Government Act, 1919, and the Sydney Corporation Act, 1932-1940, I shall confine my remarks to an explanation of what is the franchise at the present time under each of these Acts, and of the manner in which such franchise will be affected by the provisions of this bill. In recommending this bill for the approval of this House, I am cognisant of the fact that many measures affecting the franchise under the Acts to which I have referred have been from time to time submitted to and approved by this House, and as a consequence the franchise has suffered alterations of some kind or other. This fact is important because it illustrates that the franchise—both in respect of local government areas and the city of Sydney—is not a franchise which has been regarded as fixed and immutable, but rather as one which lends itself to alteration as the occasion demands, and, furthermore, the experience over the years has shown that, notwithstanding any alteration or change which may take place in the franchise at any particular time, the quality of local government administration has suffered no deterioration. The franchise, I suggest, both in respect of local government areas and the city of Sydney, is one which has seen a gradual growth, and its growth has, generally speaking, been attended by a liberalisation and a widening of outlook so that the franchise which we have at the present time is something which, on the whole, is more acceptable and more reasonable than the franchise which we had at the beginning of this century, when it was in the main restricted to persons having a property qualification and these persons enjoyed what is known as "plural" voting.

The fact, however, that we have to-day a franchise both in respect of local government areas and the City of Sydney, which is perhaps somewhat more reasonable and acceptable than that which obtained fifty years ago, or which may be more liberal than the franchise which obtains in some States of this Commonwealth, is not a reason why we should regard the franchise as being fixed for all time, especially so when we consider that even under this franchise, liberal as it may be, there are certain sections of this community which are either not entitled to representation or which are only entitled to representation subject to a long qualifying period, which is, to say the least of it, onerous and one that cannot be justified. We feel that these sections of the community who are without representation at the present time are entitled to obtain this representation and to take the part in local government affairs which is their due. We live to-day in a world of flux, and we must be prepared to bring to a consideration of our problems a more liberal outlook than we have been accustomed to do in the past and we must be prepared at all times to advance in our conceptions rather than to retard. I mention these matters to honourable members before I proceed with an explanation of what is contained in this bill because I know the particular interest which many of the members of this House display in relation to franchise matters and in local government matters, and because I should like honourable members, in considering this bill, to have regard to what is taking

place daily, both here and abroad, namely, the abandonment of what may be termed pre-conceived and hard and fast rules based on something that happened many years ago and the adoption of a more tolerant and broad outlook founded on the present changing times.

It is a matter of some significance that the Minister who was responsible for the initiation in another place of certain measures intended to cut away rather than to broaden the franchise which many of our citizens enjoyed in relation to local government affairs, is now in the forefront of those persons who are asking for the adoption of a wider outlook in relation to matters pertaining to social reform. I suggest that any matter relating to the franchise, and any bill which has for its object the giving of the franchise to a class of persons who at the present time do not enjoy that privilege, can certainly be classed as a matter of social reform.

The existing franchise under the Local Government Act, 1919, is as follows: Every British subject, natural born or naturalised, of the age of twenty-one years, male or female, married or unmarried, is entitled to be enrolled on the local government rolls and to vote at local government elections if he possesses the necessary qualification (a) as owner; (b) as ratepaying lessee; or (c) as occupier. To be enrolled as an owner a person must, on the first day in June of the year in which a roll is collected, be jointly or severally the owner of ratable land (or a person nominated by a body corporate or by trustees who are such owner), or he must be the holder or resident manager of a lease, promise or contract of lease from the Crown of ratable land. To be enrolled as a lessee a person must, on the first day of June in the year in which a roll is collected, be jointly or severally the lessee of ratable land and liable to pay the whole or any part of any local government rates levied in respect of such land, or he must be a person nominated in writing by a body corporate or by trustees who are such ratepaying lessee.

To be enrolled as an occupier, a person (a) must have been continuously during the three months preceding the first day of June in the year in which the roll is collected in joint or several occupation as direct tenant of the owners or ratepaying lessees of ratable land of the yearly value of five pounds or upwards; or (b) he must, on the first day of June in the year in which the roll is collected, be residing or have his principal place of abode on land, whether ratable or not, and have continuously during a period of twelve months before such first day of June resided or had his principal place of abode in the area.

The only amendment which is being made to the local government franchise under this bill is in relation to the "occupier." It is proposed that a person shall be entitled to be enrolled as an "occupier" if, on the first day of June in the year in which a roll is collected, he is enrolled on the electoral roll for an electoral district and his place of living as described on that roll is within a ward. The sole effect of this amendment is to cut down the qualifying period of residence which people who are not owners or ratepaying lessees must possess before they are entitled to be enrolled on the local government roll. I can see no reason for the retention of a qualifying period of twelve months in the case of the class of persons I have lastly described. This qualifying period is not required in the case of owners or ratepaying lessees. It is sufficient for these classes if the property is owned on the first day of June in the year in which the roll is prepared. At the present time a person who takes up residence in a local government area in the year in which a general election of aldermen is to be held, and who is not qualified as an owner or ratepaying lessee, cannot vote at the general election to be held in December of that year, as he does not possess the qualification twelve months' continuous residence prior to the first day of June of that year. He must wait for a period of approximately four years before he can exercise the franchise at a general election. On

the other hand, an owner or ratepaying lessee is entitled to and receives immediate representation.

The amendment which is proposed by this bill in relation to the extension of the local government franchise really speaks for itself. It gives effect to one of the principles of the present administration that the franchise should be on the widest possible basis, and it is intended purely and simply to give to this section of the community a representation which at the present time it is unable to obtain except after a long qualifying period which cannot be justified. There is no attempt in the bill to amend the franchise in any other direction. Owners and ratepaying lessees and persons who are otherwise qualified as occupiers will not find the franchise disturbed. The owner and the ratepaying lessee will still be entitled to obtain enrolment in every ward or riding of an area in which he is qualified under a property qualification, and will still be entitled to exercise a vote in respect of each ward or riding in which he is so qualified. On the other hand, a person who is given the right to be enrolled under the residence qualification has one vote and one vote only to exercise.

The franchise in the city of Sydney is as follows:—Any person, male or female, married or unmarried, natural born or naturalised British subject, is entitled to be enrolled either as: (a) owner or lessee, (b) occupier, (c) lodger, or (d) in certain circumstances as a returned soldier or sailor from the last Great War. To be an owner a person must, on the first day of May, in the year in which the roll is prepared, be jointly or severally the owner of freehold interest in any property assessed at a yearly value of five pounds or upwards, or leasehold interest in any property of a yearly value of twenty-five pounds or upwards. Public companies and trustees owning property, and fulfilling the necessary conditions, are entitled to nominate a representative for enrolment in respect of such property. To be enrolled as an occupier a person must continuously during the twelve months preceding the first day of May in the year in which a roll is prepared, be in joint or several occupation of any house, warehouse, shop or other building of a yearly value unfurnished of twenty-six pounds or upwards. Public companies, bodies corporate or trustees occupying a property and fulfilling the necessary conditions, are entitled to nominate a representative for enrolment in respect of such property. To be enrolled as a lodger, a person must have continuously during the twelve months preceding the first day of May in the year in which the roll is prepared occupy jointly or severally any lodgings of a clear yearly value, unfurnished, of twenty-six pounds or upwards. Any person who was a member of the Commonwealth naval or military forces, and enlisted in active service outside Australia during the Great War, 1914-1918, or served in connection with any medical or nursing service, and who is continuously resident in a ward for a period of three months prior to the first day of May in the year in which the roll is to be prepared, is entitled to enrolment. This is the existing franchise under the Sydney Corporation Act, 1932-1940, which applies to the election of aldermen of the City of Sydney, and it will be seen that this franchise is quite a different franchise from the franchise which obtains under the Local Government Act, 1919.

The effect of the bill in relation to the existing franchise under the Sydney Corporation Act, 1932-1940, is to substitute for such franchise the franchise which is provided for under the Local Government Act, 1919, as amended by this bill; that is to say, the franchise will be given to all owners, ratepaying lessees and occupiers, and in the case of occupiers, a person who, on the first day of June in the year in which the roll is prepared is enrolled on an electoral roll for an electoral district and whose place of living as described on that roll is within a ward, will be entitled to enrolment.

I do not think that it is necessary for me at this stage to offer any further comment in relation to this proposed

new franchise. For many years it has been evident that there should be a uniform franchise both in the city of Sydney and in local government areas generally. The city of Sydney is, after all, just as much a local government area as, for example, the city of Greater Newcastle, and there is, I repeat, no good reason why there should be a different franchise obtaining in the respective areas. So far as the merits of this franchise are concerned, what I have said before in relation to the extension of the local government franchise applies with equal force to the extension of the franchise under the Sydney Corporation Act, 1932-1940. Regulations will be made in relation to the question of enrolment and fixing as the date prescribed for enrolment the first day of June in the year in which the rolls are prepared, thus bringing the Municipal Council of Sydney into line with councils of other cities and municipalities under the Local Government Act, 1919. It might be mentioned, also, at this stage that both under the Local Government Act, 1919, and the Sydney Corporation Act, 1932-1940, not only must a person possess a qualification as at a certain date before he is entitled to enrolment, but before that person can exercise his vote he must retain that qualification up to the time of voting.

The amendments proposed in relation to the extension of the local government franchise and the Sydney Corporation franchise cannot come into effect immediately on the passing into law of this bill. Action is already proceeding both in the city of Sydney and in municipalities and shires in relation to the collection of the rolls on the basis of the franchise which exists at the present time under the Acts to which I have referred, and revision courts will shortly be set up for the purpose of certifying to the correctness of these rolls. Were the amendments relating to the extension of the franchise to come into effect immediately on the passing into law of this bill the consequence would be to cast a doubt on the validity of these rolls. Accordingly, provision has been made that the new franchise will not come into effect until next year when new rolls will have been prepared, but these rolls will be prepared on the basis of the altered franchise. For the purpose, however, of the elections both in the city of Sydney and in local government areas which are to be held in December next, provision has been made whereby all persons whose names appear on the electoral roll as compiled on 18th April, 1941, and whose place of living as described on such rolls is within a ward of the city or municipality or a riding in the case of a shire, and who continue to reside at such place of living and whose names are not included on the citizens' roll or on any local government roll, shall, subject to the making of a declaration in the prescribed form, be entitled to exercise a vote.

Associated with the extension to the city of Sydney of a franchise in similar terms to that which will obtain in local government areas is an amendment under which the preparation of the rolls of citizens in the city of Sydney will be undertaken by the Municipal Council of Sydney. At the present time the work in relation to the preparation of rolls is undertaken by collectors, being members of the police force who are appointed by the stipendiary magistrates. In the case of municipalities and shires, however, the council of the area is responsible for the preparation of the roll, and the actual detail in relation to such preparation is left in the hands of the town clerk. The amendments proposed by this bill will provide in future years for preparation by the Municipal Council of Sydney of the roll of citizens. Power has been taken in the bill to prescribe by regulations the detail necessary in connection with the preparation of these rolls, and whatever safeguards may be thought necessary in this connection can be made by regulations which, of course, will be submitted to and laid on the table of both the Legislative Assembly and this Council. Amendments are made by the bill in relation to the following matters dealing with elections of the Municipal Council of Sydney and to which I briefly referred in the opening stages of my speech.

Elections of aldermen in the city of Sydney are at present held on the first Monday of December and between the hours of 8 a.m. and 7.30 p.m. In municipalities and shires the day of polling is the first Saturday in December, and the hours of polling are between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. State and Federal elections are fixed for a Saturday, and the hours of voting are the same as in the case of municipalities and shires. This bill provides that the elections of aldermen in the city of Sydney shall be held on the same day and between the same hours as elections in municipalities and shires. I feel sure that no possible objection can be taken to this particular amendment. At the present time a civil servant is disqualified from being elected to the Muncipal Council of Sydney, but this disqualification does not apply in the case of other municipalities and shires. The disqualification is being removed by the bill. The returning officer for elections in the city of Sydney must be the Town Clerk or such other citizen as the Governor may appoint. In the absence of the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk, it would not be competent for another officer of the council, unless he were also a citizen, to be appointed returning officer. The bill enables this to be done.

Considerable doubt exists at the present time as to whether more than one polling place can be provided in each of the wards of the city of Sydney. The necessity for having more than one polling place is, of course, manifest. Considerable inconvenience is caused to many sections of the community in being obliged to register their vote at one polling place which cannot be conveniently located for all persons who are on the citizens' roll. More than one polling place is provided for shire and municipal elections and for State elections. The bill requires the returning officer to provide two or more polling places in each of the wards of the city.

Under the Local Government Act, 1919, and the Parliamentary Elections and Electorates Act, 1912-1941, a person whose name has been marked off on the roll as having received a ballot-paper for the purpose of voting, but who, in fact, has not voted, may be permitted to vote subject to his completing before the returning officer a declaration in the prescribed form. Provision is made in the Acts to which I have referred for the returning officer, before accepting the vote of such person to make all necessary inquiries to ensure that in fact the person concerned has not previously exercised his vote, and provision is made for penalties in the case of a person who makes a false declaration in this regard. No such provision exists in the case of the city of Sydney, but an amendment is included in the bill to enable a ballot-paper to be issued to a person who has not voted and whose name has been marked off on the roll of citizens as having received a ballot-paper for the purpose of voting. Such person will be required to make a special declaration to the effect that he has not previously voted in the particular ward.

The only other matter in respect of which an explanation may be required is the clause of the bill dealing with the rescission of Ordinance 10 under the Local Government Act, 1919, relating to postal voting in shires. Ordinance 10, which applies to the majority of shires, provides for the holding of elections of aldermen by means of a postal ballot and relieves the council from providing sufficient polling-places within the respective areas to enable the ballot to be conducted by personal voting. It will not be possible to hold an election in December on the local government franchise and the parliamentary franchise unless action is taken to rescind Ordinance 10. There appears to be no good reason why this ordinance should be allowed to remain in force. Provision exists under Ordinance 9, under which postal votes may be issued to certain classes of persons who, on the day of polling, may not be within the area or within a distance of 5 miles from the polling-place, or who may be precluded by reason of illness from attending at such polling-place, and this, generally speaking, is also the position which obtains under the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, 1912-1941, in relation to voting by post. In addition,

there have been suggestions of grave irregularities occurring in connection with the system of voting under Ordinance 10, and the requirements of the ordinance also in relation to the witnessing of the votes has given rise to a large number of informal votes being cast—at the last local government elections the number of informal votes cast in the shires was five times greater than in municipalities. Accordingly, provision has been made in the bill to rescind Ordinance 10.

In conclusion, I think it is necessary to emphasise certain features of this bill in order to remove from the minds of hon. members any misapprehension as to its true meaning. I think this course is particularly necessary in view of the comments made on these proposals in the press. The bill is a bill to amend the franchise in local governing areas and in the city of Sydney. It does not deprive any person who is to-day entitled to vote of his rights, and does not interfere with the rights of owners and ratepaying lessees. There seems to be a little misunderstanding as to the nature of the extended franchise which the bill offers. I think it has been said that a person who has resided in the municipal area for a period of one month before an election is permitted to vote under the bill. That is not so. The residential qualifications for adult franchise conferred by this bill require that a person shall possess the parliamentary franchise on 1st June of the year in which the election is to be held. Such persons must not only have possessed parliamentary franchise as from 1st June, but must retain such qualifications on the day of the election, which, in the case of the general election for the city of Sydney and local government areas, is the first Saturday in December, which is six months after 1st June. In my opinion the provisions conferring upon adult residents the right to vote in local government elections are the logical consequence of the development of democratic thought.

The Hon. Sir HENRY MANNING [5.2]: It will be generally conceded by all members of this House that no bill is more deserving of the most careful and critical attention than one which deals with such fundamental matters as the franchise and the regulations for its proper exercise. For that reason I was very glad, indeed, as I am sure were all hon. members, that the Minister thought fit to go into the whole of this matter with such careful detail. It remains now for us to see to what extent the contentions put forward by the Minister on behalf of the Government may be accepted without question. In doing so it will be necessary, of course, to make an examination in some detail of the measure itself, and to refer to the exigencies that may manifest themselves when polling day arrives, when the franchise is exercised, and when votes have to be properly recorded. The Minister has very properly drawn attention to the fact that there are two major parts to this measure, one dealing with the extension of the franchise as such, and the other dealing with the precautions, or the withdrawal of them, that secure the proper exercise of that franchise and render difficult and, in some cases, impossible those malpractices that are likely to arise on election day.

I would remind hon. members in passing that recently there was a postponement of the municipal elections for the very adequate reason that we were passing through a time of considerable stress and dislocation of public affairs. The Minister has dwelt upon the outstanding feature of the extension of the franchise, which brings in the parliamentary rolls for use at the forthcoming city council elections in December next. There is also the citizens' roll which will be available for such purposes as it may serve. I think the Minister will agree with me that that is

an accurate statement of the situation. The Sydney Corporation Act makes provision for the exercise of the franchise in the manner that the Minister has pointed out. This measure in clause 4 gives resort to the parliamentary rolls also for the purpose of deciding whether a person is entitled to vote. If his name is on that roll he is entitled to vote, provided he makes the declaration required by clause 4 (3). One might indulge in a great deal of destructive criticism of a provision of this kind. Nothing is more inviting to the person with a destructive genius than the contemplation of an election held on two rolls, one in which the wards are distinguished, and the other having no reference to wards at all, but simply the addresses of persons who claim the right to exercise the franchise. But when all the destructive criticism has been exhausted, the question remains as to what alternative can be suggested, and whether it is the proper thing, in the situation which has arisen, to refuse to recognise the validity of the claim that persons whose names are on the parliamentary roll should also be entitled to a local government vote. The question is whether the parliamentary roll, a very important document, can be used to decide the validity of the claim. I do not dispute for one moment that some provision should be made for the extension of the franchise to those people who frequent the city for the greater part of the week, and that if they can be cared for in no other way then resort should properly be had to the parliamentary roll.

Consequently, as far as the franchise provisions in the bill are concerned, I do not propose to offer any opposition to them. Then again the bill makes provision not only for the exercise of the franchise at the forthcoming elections, but also for the preparation of rolls which are to be used for subsequent elections. There, of course, the Minister is perhaps on ground which is less subject to criticism, although there are also drawbacks in that connection. However, the use of the parliamentary franchise is to be brought into play for the purpose of determining who is to be an occupier within the meaning of the series of provisions which form the substance of Part III of the bill. That may, at first glance, seem rather an extension that cannot be justified, but it must always be remembered that we are dealing now with two matters, first, with a limited franchise that is in existence for the city of Sydney municipal matters, and, secondly, with a franchise that has been recognised as justifiable for the election of the Parliament of New South Wales. If the proposal for the preparation of a roll based in part on the parliamentary roll is to be supported, I suppose the strongest argument in support of it is that if enrolment in that way is valid, effectual and justifiable for the purpose of electing members to the Parliament of New South Wales to govern this country, it should also be thought sufficiently reliable and justifiable to constitute an extension of the municipal franchise. One wonders, supposing one were seeking an opportunity to oppose this extension, on what ground opposition could be based, and the question is whether a person opposing an extension of a franchise in this particular way would not be met with the reply that his opposition is to qualification, which is recognised as one of the most sacred rights possessed by the electors of New South Wales. If the Government has thought fit to extend the franchise in the way suggested, it is not my intention to offer any objection at the second reading stage.

That, of course, is the substance of the first portion of the measure. The matter does not stop there by any means, and one is astonished, I should imagine, at the readiness with which one of the most important safeguards in the Sydney Corporation Act in regard to illegal voting is apparently being ruthlessly removed from the Statute Book without the slightest attempt on the part of the Minister to offer any reasonable justification. I invite the attention of the Minister to this particular matter because I propose to ask him in committee to consider seriously what is to be done about it, and if he

is at all impressed with any of the reasons that will be given for the continuance of this safeguard he might then exercise the right which the House would readily concede, of again consulting, if he has not already done so, his Government on this matter. The first thing that I want to point out is this: Clause 7 of the bill provides for the omission of parts III, IV, and IVA of the Principal Act, and the purpose is to substitute therefor part III of the bill, which provides for extensions of the franchise. If that provision is looked at without care and without scrupulous examination of the subject matter with which the Minister is dealing, it might appear to be innocent enough, but when one looks at the provisions of the City Corporation Act which are now being cut out of the legislation of the State of New South Wales after having been inserted there with the utmost care in order to provide some of the most important safeguards ever introduced to ensure the purity of election voting and the preparation of the rolls, one wonders why this action is being taken without some adequate explanation on the part of a Minister.

One of the most effective methods of securing a properly-conducted election is the making of all the necessary preliminary arrangements for the holding of the election and the preparation of clean and proper rolls; and if we contemplate for one moment the franchise in connection with the Sydney Corporation Act, we can see many things that give rise to perplexity. I accept to the fullest extent and adopt in the fullest manner the statement made by the Minister himself that constant fluctuations justify a constant revision of the franchise. These fluctuations mean that people are constantly moving from one place to another, and that consequently any claim that they may have for enrolment on one day has gone in the next. Therefore the claims of an owner, lessee, or occupier need constant attention. That was recognised after the most careful examination by this House and after the most careful advice and scrutiny by those who in the past were skilled in electoral and municipal matters and who were regarded as the depositories of the most useful information on the subject. The result of that was the compilation of part IV of the Sydney Corporation Act. So much importance was attached to the preparation of rolls that the matter was considered in the initial stages, and it was provided that on the 1st of May stipendiary magistrates and deputy stipendiary magistrates in the metropolitan police districts or any three of them could appoint members of the police force as collectors for each ward. They were chosen because the magistry of the city of Sydney is a body in which we have the utmost confidence, and of which we feel very proud. They were directed by legislation to appoint members of the police force as collectors for each ward. Members of the police force were chosen because they were the people best qualified to engage in this investigation from house to house and from place to place. They went about their work and, as far as one can remember, it was always done without there being any adverse criticism from any substantial section of the community. Not only were the police required to do that, but so important were their duties that before entering upon them they made a declaration before a justice in conformity with the fourth schedule. Not only were they the people to perform this work, but they were well qualified to do it. They were required to take the oath of office, and the reason for that was that their work should be performed without the slightest suspicion or, at any rate, be subject to all the safeguards that could possibly be imposed by legislation. The collectors were appointed for each ward, and so on. Then, when they had collected their lists there was provision in legislation for the exhibition of those lists, for objections to be lodged against people whose names were on the list, for claims to be made by people who sought to have their names placed on the list, and for the constitution of revision courts to investigate these objections and these claims. Finally, after all this scrutiny had been

carefully exercised, the lists became the roll upon which the election was to be held. Why was that done? Was it done out of mere caprice, or so that we would have a clean roll, and thus circumvent at the initial stages the designs of those people who seek to exercise the franchise when they have no right to do so? Why should all these precautions be ruthlessly disregarded, and what is the reason for it? The Parliament of New South Wales has by its statute set forth in clear language so that everybody shall know it, what is to be done in the compilation of these rolls. Part IV is to be repealed and there is a regulation making power which reads:—

181. (1) The Governor may make regulations not inconsistent with this Act prescribing all matters which by this part of this Act are required or permitted to be prescribed or which are necessary or convenient to be prescribed for carrying this Act into effect.

(2) In particular, but without prejudice to the generality of the provisions of subsection (1) of this section, the Governor may make regulations for and with respect to—

(a) the preparation of the rolls, including the fixing of times for the preparation of such rolls.

(b) The appointment and notification of days for enrolment.

Whereas in the past we have become accustomed to seeing Parliament deal with this matter specifically in its own language so that all may know exactly what is to be done, all these precautions are to be brushed aside, and, in their place is to be substituted this power in the Governor to make regulations for the preparation of the rolls. In whom is the power to be reposed by the Governor, and what safeguards are to be set forth for its proper exercise?

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON: Read subsection (5) of proposed new section 181!

The Hon. Sir HENRY MANNING: That merely gives Parliament the power at some time or other to disallow regulations or part thereof. Is the hon. member serious in directing my attention to that provision? I ask him again is he serious, because if he is, this is the position: It says in effect, "We are certainly the Parliament of New South Wales, but do not let us bother about that now. Let us wait until some future date, when, at the last moment, some regulations are framed." Then, if we wish to deal with these regulations and disallow part of them, we shall have to disallow the whole of the regulations. Is the hon. member serious in his contention?

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON: Yes, the regulations must not be inconsistent with the Act!

The Hon. Sir HENRY MANNING: In any circumstances the regulations must not be inconsistent with the Act, but nothing is said about the subject matter with which the regulations are to deal. The hon. member has drawn attention to another defect in legislation which the House should bear in mind, and the Minister should bear in mind, and refer to the Government before the Committee stage of the bill is reached. That is the matter which has to be dealt with, and that is the matter to which the House will demand some answer. I do not desire to say anything more about that aspect at the moment. This is the second reading stage of the bill, and I have dealt with the matter as a question of principle, and submit to the House that it is a matter which has to be dealt with. Some satisfactory explanation will have to be given. Hon. members must not be left in the air. The provision to which the Hon. Mr. Concannon has referred leaves a vague kind of safeguard about the right of disallowance by Parliament which might be brought into operation when elections are imminent. Then we would be told at the last moment that we are an obstructive Chamber, and that we are holding up the elections or something of that kind. What we want here and now, while there is time, is to set the matter out in black and white in the statute book.

There are one or two other matters with which I should like to deal, and the first is in respect to the two polling booths. The question of having two polling booths in a ward is put forward as a question of convenience. It has been

stated by the Minister that if the returning officer came to the conclusion in any circumstances that more than one polling booth was required he could have one or more at his discretion. Section 31 of the Sydney Corporation Act provides that for every election of aldermen the returning officer shall cause booths to be erected or rooms provided at one or more polling places. This introduces as an absolute necessity one of the very things that a cautious person would avoid. If a person is concerned about providing precautions and making necessary provision for them in legislation, he must surely be impressed with the fact that if there is to be personation at some of these elections, if some people are going to vote who have no right to vote——

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: The hon. member is very suspicious!

The Hon. Sir HENRY MANNING: I am not. There is a difference between being suspicious and being informed of the facts by people who know what are the facts. When one gets information, as we all do from time to time, it is useless to shut one's eyes to it. The whole object of all these provisions is to prevent the malpractices to which reference has been made. Some of the major malpractices would be made possible by a duplication of this kind. This is a matter that might be left to the discretion of the returning officer, as no doubt was intended originally. But why destroy that precaution by making provision that there shall be at least two polling booths? I ask hon members to consider whether it would not be entirely out of place to apply one of the sections of the Act which provides that the roll shall be prepared for each ward, and to use that roll, without provision for the polling places as in the case of the Parliamentary electoral rolls, irrespective of a number of polling places in the ward concerned. I hope that the Minister, out of respect for the past deliberations of this Chamber and another place, will consider whether it would not be to the advantage of his Government, and, above all all things, to the advantage of the proper holding of the elections, to abandon the idea of making it compulsory to have two polling booths. I ask the Minister to see whether he cannot exert his influence to have that matter reconsidered.

There is only one other matter to which I desire to direct attention, that is, the provision for holding the poll on a Saturday instead of a Monday. The first thing I wish to say about that is that there is a vast difference between taking a poll in the city of Sydney and in taking a poll beyond it. The difference is that those who are entitled to vote in the city consist very largely of a moving population. By that I mean their calling in life requires them to be in Sydney only a portion of their time. Take occupiers, for instance, many of whom are required to be in Sydney for the greater part of the week and to be out of it at the week-end. Property-owners may live a considerable distance from the city, and they may have important business to attend to at the week-end. Ratepaying lessees may be in a similar position. But what, if one approaches this matter in a spirit of complete fairness and with regard to the general convenience of all, is the harm in holding the poll on a Monday? Monday is the day, apparently, when virtually all those people who have acquired the right to the franchise by reason of their residence are within the city boundaries adjacent to the booths and ready to perform their electoral duties. Why is it that Saturday should be substituted for Monday? Those who are in a position to know, express the fear that a very large percentage of the population will be disfranchised. I ask the Minister to urge the Government to reconsider this matter, so that what has been considered to be a perfectly fair and reasonable procedure shall be continued. I feel sure the Minister will do that, and that, at any rate, if he persists in the views that he has expressed, he will show adequately why Saturday should be the polling day and why Monday should not, when all here know that Saturday is the day when many voters are

absent from the city. I am not speaking for those people who disregard their municipal duty and shut their eyes to the necessity for attending the polling booth; I am speaking for the large body of voters, the people who can exercise the franchise within the city area, who, by force of circumstances, are compelled to be away at a particular time and who, if they were not, would remain to record their vote.

The Hon. Sir SAMUEL WALDER [5.37]: I have listened very attentively to the detailed explanation of the bill given by the Minister. He has left no doubt in the minds of hon. members as to what effect it will have on the City Council electorate. I also listened with great interest to Sir Henry Manning, who covered the ground very fully, and dealt with what I consider are two or three objections. It is not my intention to cover the ground that has already been covered. Sir Henry Manning has clearly shown the dangers of the bill. I have had an opportunity of knowing how the present franchise has worked in regard to the City Council, and how effectively it has been controlled by that council since 1930. As far as the City of Sydney is concerned, its franchise is more liberal than that of any other city in Australia, with the exception of Brisbane. I feel sure the Minister of Justice would not like me to repeat what has happened in Brisbane as a result of the alteration of the franchise. The Sydney City Council has carried on very effectively since 1930. I feel sure that if it had not done so Alderman Shannon would have brought the matter up in another place. The City Council has always endeavoured to comply with proposals made by Labour aldermen, and it has carried out very effective schemes to assist social services, such as kindergartens and playgrounds, and has in that way spent very large sums of money, and, furthermore, the finances of the City Council are in a very sound condition at the present time; therefore, I cannot see any great need for an alteration of the franchise. In Victoria, the franchise, instead of being restricted, has been considerably extended. Since 1935 the accumulated deficit has been reduced by the Municipal Council of Sydney from £465,000 to £198,000, a reduction of £267,000. At the same time the council has given a good deal of consideration to social services. In view of these circumstances I cannot see any great reason for an alteration in the franchise at the present time. I have always maintained that the citizens who have built up this great city should receive full consideration, but the alteration of the polling day from Monday to Saturday will disfranchise 50 per cent. of the occupiers who now enjoy the franchise. Nevertheless, it is not my intention to oppose the major provision of this bill, the alteration of the franchise. I realise that there has been a general inclination in many other cities towards adopting the parliamentary franchise.

I foresee considerable difficulty in using the State electoral rolls at the elections in December in conjunction with the recently compiled roll of ratepayers. It will be very difficult to ensure a clean vote, because there are seven parliamentary rolls involved, including those of the electorates of Paddington, Woollahra, Waverley and Randwick. I do not see how the returning officer can check under that system. We should realise that most of the city boundaries are the centre of a street. A person living on one side of Cleveland-street might, quite bona fide, ask for a vote when he might not be entitled to it, whereas a person residing on the other side of the street would be entitled to it. The Hon. Sir Henry Manning has pointed out that and many other objections, and I do not wish to repeat what he has said. I feel, however, that having two booths instead of one will make it difficult to prevent personation. The position has always been safeguarded by having only one booth for a ward at City Council elections. I hope that the Minister will give consideration to that factor as well as to the effect the alteration of the

polling day from Monday to Saturday will have in disfranchising nearly 50 per cent. of the voters.

The Hon. J. B. MARTIN [5.16]: I congratulate the Government on bringing down this measure. I opposed the existing Act when it was brought into operation, and this bill embodies what I considered at the time to be the rights of ratepayers of the city of Sydney. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I support the bill. I am somewhat surprised at the attitude taken by hon. members opposite. Take, for example, the case of the absentee or postal voter, who, the Hon. Sir Henry Manning complained, would be out of the city. Outside a five-mile radius he is entitled to apply for a postal vote. Seeing that this bill aims to bring the conduct of the elections into conformity with the conduct of State and Federal elections, it is a move in the right direction. Too long have the ratepayers been misled. I do not see any valid objection to our having two booths. Is there anything wrong with the methods adopted at Federal and State elections? I have not heard any member of the Opposition voice a protest against them. The very methods contained in this measure are in operation at State and Federal elections.

I cannot understand the Hon. Sir Samuel Walder's objection to the bill. He says that the officers controlling the election will experience difficulty in defining boundaries. In State and Federal elections boundaries have to be defined. In metropolitan electorates it is sometimes difficult, and it is much more difficult in country electorates, where we sometimes find four electorates impinging on a boundary. If it has to be decided and is decided in regard to State elections, why should there be any objection to it in a municipal election in the city of Sydney? It has been said that there may be dual voting or attempts at personation. I can recall certain elections that were held in 1932 when the New Guard and such other organisations were in existence. There is no doubt that those organisations flooded the country as well as the metropolitan electorates, and, as the old saying is, their members "voted early and often." There should be no objection to the use of the State rolls for the purposes of the municipal elections. The State rolls are prepared by the Federal authorities in conjunction with the electoral officers of the various electorates. Any person who wishes to become an elector must sign an application form.

The Hon. W. E. V. ROBSON: He must make application for a vote!

The Hon. J. B. MARTIN: He must make application for enrolment before he can vote.

The Hon. W. E. V. ROBSON: He will not make any application for the election in December next!

The Hon. J. B. MARTIN: He has already made application and his name appears on the State rolls. The application forms are in the possession of the electoral officers of the various divisions throughout the State or for the municipalities in the metropolitan area. There should be no difficulty in that regard.

The Hon. W. E. V. ROBSON: That does not necessarily mean that an application must be made because a person may have lived at one address for years and been automatically enrolled!

The Hon. J. B. MARTIN: Originally he had to make application. I have lived at one address for fourteen years and automatically my name appears on the roll. On one occasion, by accident or design, my name disappeared from the roll, and I had to submit a fresh application. That application with my signature is in the possession of the electoral officer for the division in which I reside. When a person transfers to another address he must make fresh application in the subdivision to which he has removed, and, therefore, his signature is still in the hands of the electoral officer.

The Hon. W. E. V. ROBSON: There will be two rolls at the first election, one of which will include the names of many persons who are not entitled to vote!

The Hon. J. B. MARTIN: That is applicable to all State and Federal elections. I know that at a recent election the supplementary roll was very nearly of the same dimension as the original roll. That was brought about by transfers. There will be two rolls—the general roll and the supplementary roll.

The Hon. W. E. V. ROBSON: They might be regarded as one roll!

The Hon. J. B. MARTIN: The Hon. Mr. Robson knows from experience that many difficulties are encountered in respect of the general roll, and that it contains the names of a number of persons who are not entitled to vote. That is brought about mostly by changes of address. Hon. members have no need to worry so far as the rolls are concerned. The system is satisfactory in regard to State and Federal elections, and it cannot be other than satisfactory in regard to municipal elections. I have much pleasure in supporting the bill.

The Hon. C. B. BRIDGES [5.56]: This bill gives expression to the desire of the Labour party to remedy what we regarded as an evil that was perpetuated by a previous Administration in postponing the date of an election and thus disfranchising a considerable number of persons who were actually entitled to vote. The principle of adult franchise in respect of all elections is part and parcel of the policy of the Labour party. Some hon. members who have spoken seem to fear that anomolies may arise because of the operation of two rolls, but I think that sufficient safeguards have been provided to obviate that. It is possible that in connection with the State rolls there will be over-lapping respecting some divisions, but that difficulty should be overcome by the exercise of a little intelligence on the part of the electoral officers. I cannot see that that is an insoluble difficulty. The Government is to be congratulated on taking the earliest opportunity to right an injustice that was perpetrated by a previous Administration. With regard to the day for the holding of the City Council elections, it has been suggested that it should be altered from Saturday to Monday. Some hon. members have argued that the holding of the elections on a Monday would meet the convenience of the electors to a much greater extent than would the holding of the elections on a Saturday, but I would point out to them that under our present system of society the people have much more leisure on a Saturday than they have on a Monday. Any argument to the contrary is absurd. The bill provides another important facility, and that is the extension of voting conveniences. I cannot see for one moment how the provision of two booths instead of one would increase the possibility of personation. We know that it is within the discretion of the returning officer as to whether one or more booths should be provided, and I should say that if only one booth were provided it would be on the score of economy. However, my opinion is that we should provide as many conveniences as possible for the electors. I intend to support the second reading of the bill.

The Hon. C. TANNOCK [6.0]: I am very pleased to learn that hon. members do not intend "trailing their coats" to a Government that was recently returned with such a large majority. While one appreciates criticism of a helpful nature, it should be remembered that the bill exemplifies the freedom-loving spirit of the people of this country. As far as the extension of the franchise is concerned the bill will give to the workers the right to vote. These people are just as much interested as are the property owners in the return of municipal and shire representatives. It stands to reason that the people who build the houses, instal the electricity, make the bricks, and construct the buildings and the roads, should not be disfranchised while people who are possessed of sufficient capital to purchase property are given a vote. The workers are engaged in the building of this city and they are not inferior in intelligence to other people. All hon. members know that Australians in the past laid down their lives to establish the right of the people

to elect their representatives to parliamentary and municipal bodies. I am pleased that a Labour Government is giving effect to this principle. I appreciate to the full the fine work of the municipalities and shire councils. The franchise should be extended so that the people will be able to vote for the best brains available to represent them in these local governing bodies. At present the franchise is limited to a few. I did not have the pleasure of listening to the whole of the speech of the Hon. Sir Henry Manning, but what I did hear was, in my opinion, fair comment. I cannot say the same with respect to the speech of the Hon. Sir Samuel Walder. In my opinion there were inferences and innuendoes in his speech. I do not know whether they were intentional. He mentioned that some corruption or graft occurred when the franchise was extended in Greater Brisbane, and certainly conveyed the impression that he was afraid similar practices might obtain here. If that was not the inference, then it would have been much better if the Hon. Sir Samuel Walder had left it unsaid. The extension of the franchise will not mean that there will be any less business capacity on the part of those who are returned to represent the people on the local governing bodies.

With regard to the alteration of polling day from Monday to Saturday, every owner of property may be able to vote on Monday but the workers cannot do so because most of them will be at work. Most of our workers take a great interest in the development of the city, an even greater interest than is exhibited by the owners.

The Hon. Sir HENRY MANNING: Is the worker not enabled to vote if he can do so until eight o'clock at night?

The Hon. C. TANNOCK: By this measure the franchise will be greatly extended and most of those to whom the franchise will be given will be at work on Monday. The question has been asked whether they will not have sufficient time to vote if the poll does not close until eight. A great proportion of the working people are at present extensively engaged in the war effort and are working right round the clock. There are three shifts—twenty-four hours a day. Every opportunity must be given to these people to vote. It would be futile to introduce this bill if it did not substitute Saturday for Monday as polling day. I fail to see how there can be any opposition to the extension of the franchise proposed by the bill. Business people will have every opportunity to vote on Saturday. Some objection has been taken to the provision of additional polling booths, but they will be necessary if the franchise is extended. I do not think that the provision of extra booths will result in personation. We must remember that electoral reform under the Local Government Act was promised by the Premier in his policy speech, and it is not the function of hon. members to oppose the decision of the people, as expressed in this measure.

The Hon. Sir NORMAN KATER [6.10]: There is one matter on which this House is entitled to an explanation from the Minister, and it is contained in the policy speech of the Premier, to which reference has just been made by the Hon. Mr. Tannock. I listened to the Premier's policy speech, particularly to the paragraph that deals with this matter. I have read it since, and my interpretation of it is perfectly clear. It appears to me that the Premier has departed from it entirely. He used these words:

> In addition to the Greater Sydney Bill, with which is tied up the question of town planning, our objectives for local government reform include the giving of greater powers to local government bodies and the reform of the Sydney Corporation Act to bring it into line with the Local Government Act, so far as the latter applies to adult franchise, the system of voting, hours of polling and the fixing of Saturdays as polling days.

I should like the Minister to note that the Premier used the present tense, "applies." Anyone reading that would

naturally consider that he referred to the Local Government Act as it then stood. He did not say—

> to bring it into line with an amended Local Government Act so far as the latter applied to adult franchise . . .

If he had it would have been quite obvious what he meant. In spite of that statement we have a bill that amends the Local Government Act, and, at the same time, brings the Sydney Corporation Act into conformity with it. Whether the Premier meant what he said I do not know, but his words are perfectly clear. Unless the Minister can give some clear explanation in respect of what has been said by other hon. members, I cannot bring myself to vote for the bill. With regard to the general question of franchise, all I have to say is that the municipal franchise has differed very much from the ordinary electoral franchise by reason of the fact that it might so happen that the majority of the voters at municipal elections who pay no rates would be able, by a majority of members returned by them, to levy rates on the minority—the ratepayers. I do not think that accords with common fairness. The matter that I referred to first is of very considerable importance.

The Hon. W. E. V. ROBSON [6.16]: I am not in opposition to the general principle of the bill in so far as it extends the franchise. It was clearly stated that it extends the franchise of the municipality of Sydney so as to include those who are entitled within that area to vote at a parliamentary election. The only objection I have relates to the rolls on which the first election will be conducted. There is nothing more vital in the government of a country, either in connection with the election of its Parliament or in the minor work of the election of representatives to muncipal councils, than that the rolls upon which the election is conducted shall be clean rolls, and that only persons who are entitled under the law of the country to be enrolled upon those rolls are so enrolled. What is proposed in connection with the first election is that there shall be a sort of hotch-potch roll. It is proposed to have two rolls, first, the existing municipal roll which embraces property-owners, lessees and residents, who are in some cases lodgers, and side by side with it another roll, the Parliamentary roll, which covers the ward in which the elections are to be held and areas beyond it. I think everyone must admit that a roll such as that is entirely unsatisfactory, and in numerous cases may lead to personation, and even double voting. Surely, rather than take a risk of that kind, it would be better to postpone the election until March, and to compile proper municipal rolls on the basis of the existing law as to owners, lessees and residents who are entitled to enrol on the Parliamentary roll for the area covered by their particular ward. That would result in clean, straightforward rolls. Is there any need to rush the elections in December next on rolls that must, by their very nature, be entirely unsatisfactory? The same names will appear on both the rolls, and that in itself lends to the possibility of personation.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING: Good reasons can be shown why the elections should be held in December!

The Hon. W. E. V. ROBSON: It is proposed to alter the whole basis of the elections. An entirely new body of electors is coming on to the rolls for the first time for the election of the aldermen of the Sydney City Council. It is a vital and drastic change. A first essential is that we should have rolls which, like Caesar's wife, are beyond suspicion.

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON: Why not the parliamentary rolls, only?

The Hon. W. E. V. ROBSON: For the simple reason that in those circumstances I would not be given a vote in the city of Sydney. I am doing something towards the payment of the expense of governing the city. The hon. member proposes that a man who does not contribute anything to the cost of local government should be entitled to vote.

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: He is paying indirectly all the time!

The Hon. W. E. V. ROBSON: He may be, but there are many people paying high rentals in the city and directly contributing to the cost of local government who would be entirely deprived of any voice in the management of the affairs of the city of Sydney. I think that is a fair and reasonable answer to the hon. member's remarks. There is a good deal to be said against a franchise of this kind. However, it is part of the formulated programme of the Government. I was opposed to it at the outset, because I thought that people who footed the bill should have a voice at an election. Evidently no great mischief has arisen, and now the time has come to try the experiment in the city of Sydney itself. That being so, I am not opposed to the extension. I do claim, however, that we should put our rolls beyond doubt, and should not employ the hotch-potch method proposed under this bill for the forthcoming elections.

The Hon. P. M. McGIRR [6.23]: I congratulate the Government upon bringing forward this measure at such an early date. It stood pledged to the country to do so, and I am sure that the people are waiting for the measure to be enacted. The Hon. Mr. Robson has suggested that the election should be postponed for another six months. We had to witness the pitiful sight of the last Government postponing the municipal elections for twelve months. During that time much damage has been done. Aldermen have been left in office and ratepayers and people concerned have had no opportunity to vote them out of office. There are many councils that would have gone out if the people had had the opportunity to elect proper representatives.

There has been much said about the rolls. The Hon. Sir Samuel Walder has on many occasions made representations in this House in regard to personation. For all that, he is still a member of the City Council, so it cannot affect him much—unless he knows something about that sort of business. The wider the franchise, the better the legislation. I am quite sure that local government throughout the State has virtually failed for the sole reason that the franchise has been too narrow. Take the case of the pastures protection boards, which are elected on a "sheep-and-goat" franchise. A man with a few goats and a few sheep has the right to vote, but the elected representatives have become tyrants and so persecute the farmers that the Government that brought in that system is sitting in opposition to-night. That Government brought down so heavily upon itself the wrath of the people, that it is not likely ever to again go back to office. I am sure that the position as regards collection of the rolls will be rectified, and that there will be no practical difficulty. In days gone by, the police collected the rolls, and they may do so again in the future.

The Hon. Sir HENRY MANNING: Would the hon. member be in favour of restoring Part IV?

The Hon. P. M. McGIRR: No. I think that the bill is quite in order. I suppose it has been drafted and prepared by men who understand the matter well. They have given great thought to it, and I am sure the bill represents a big improvement. The franchise should be still wider. I would wipe out the five-pound provision. Everyone should have a vote, the workers and citizens who are paying indirectly, just the same as are the men who own the property. It was outrageous for the last Government to postpone the elections. Members of that party can blame themselves for now having to sit in opposition, and this was one of the things that brought it about.

[*The Deputy-President left the chair at 6.30 p.m. The House resumed at 7.55 p.m.*]

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY [7.56]: I view this measure as a bill to amend the Sydney Corporation Act and the Local Government Act for the purpose of including in each of those Acts a principle which was set out in the Premier's policy speech and which has already been referred to by two hon. members. Stated in that way, this is a very simple proposition, and if the

bill were merely for the purpose of altering the city franchise to bring it into conformity with the franchise as set out in the Local Government Act when the Premier made his policy speech, I venture to suggest that, from the remarks made in this Chamber to-night, the bill would go through very quickly and unanimously. I suppose that nearly every hon. member will agree that, if an amendment of that kind is intended, it should be done simply and clearly, and there is, therefore, no reason for us to adopt a method that can only be described as cumbersome and unwieldy. I use those words with every respect to the principles attempted to be set out in the bill and to its drafters. This is a short bill and the matters to which attention has been drawn are not more than three or four in number.

For some few years I have had experience in municipal work in the city of Sydney, and in consequence I could not help being impressed by the remarks of my Council colleague, the Hon. Sir Samuel Walder, as to the harmony that has existed in the Council over the years during which I have been a member of that body, and the efficiency that has been displayed by my fellow-aldermen in carrying out their duties. That applies in every direction for the efficient municipal government of the city and country, as well as for the various industrial matters that have to be considered by the local governing bodies.

With respect to Mr. McKell's policy speech, what was said by the Hon. Sir Norman Kater is the plain literal reading of what the Premier said. If that was all that was intended, does there seem to be any necessity or reason for first of all altering the local government franchise? An examination of the sections of the Act shows that in the main there are three groups qualified to vote—owner, lessee and occupier. It is simple and plain, and in my association with public bodies no criticism or complaint of the existing local government franchise has been levelled. In order to bring the statutes into conformity, there does not seem to me to be any necessity at all to alter the existing local government franchise but merely to alter the city franchise to bring it into conformity. That is all that is required.

It might be said in answer to what I am putting, "Well, there are exceptional circumstances at the present time because the city rolls are in course of preparation." The machinery to which the Hon. Sir Henry Manning has drawn attention has been in existence for a number of years. I ask hon. members to consider those sections to which the Hon. Sir Henry Manning drew attention, because I cannot see any reason in the world to alter them. Do we not want the elections to be conducted fairly and accurately, so that there will be no criticism by anybody or anyone when the elections are over? Is that not the ideal and proper way to do it? If that is the proper way, why are we not adopting a plain method of effecting this alteration in a simple way? One objection may be that in order to do that we will have to stop the present collection of the State roll, start, as it were *de novo* and collect it all over again, including in the roll the names of the citizens entitled to vote by the extension of the local government franchise. That may be so, but is it too great a price to pay? It will be only a matter of a few weeks. Why should we not start *de novo* and make the city rolls so accurate that when the citizen comes along to vote there will be an accurate roll with the safeguards that Parliament has laid down for a number of years? As against that, is there any real necessity at the present stage to adopt—I cannot use any more suitable word—the cumbersome system proposed. What is the practical effect of using these two rolls if the elections are held as contemplated by the bill. Suppose a person goes to vote and the rolls are in process of compilation, under the present Act there will be no difficulty on the part of the citizen or the officials.

There is the question of identity, as the Hon. Sir Henry Manning has reminded the House, and that applies to

some extent to parliamentary elections, too. I make bold to say that we have never had the volume of criticism with respect to personation at parliamentary elections that we have had with regard to municipal elections, and that is not confined to one municipality or to any special area. There must be some special reason for it, and it should be looked into by Parliament. The bill with which we are dealing recognises not only the possibilities, but the probabilities of personation or, in plain words, fraudulent voting. Are we going to say that our machinery is such that we have to admit that there is no way of preventing it? That is one matter with which I intend to deal. As a comparative newcomer to this Chamber it does give me a shock to find that we are considering a bill which not only recognises the possibility but the probability of personation, and that the only remedy that can be suggested is that when the genuine voter comes along it will be said to him that he can have his vote, but that there is nothing at all that can be done to prevent personation. I ask the Minister to consider this matter. A man comes along to vote. The bill as it stands says that if he is on the parliamentary roll he can vote by making a declaration as set out in the schedule. There is no way of checking up till the moment the man arrives to vote.

As the Hon. Sir Samuel Walder pointed out, the city is surrounded by seven or eight other municipalities, commencing somewhere about Pyrmont or Annandale, and going right around to Paddington. If one side of a street is on the boundary of the city, probably the other side is in a municipality. The officials who are taking the ballot must make a check, and that, as I have stated, makes the bill cumbersome. The intending voter says: "I am not on the municipal roll, but I am on the parliamentary roll." The official must then look at a map to check up on the street or area for which the voter claims to be enrolled to see whether the name of the intending voter is on the roll. I am now speaking solely of the city. Is it a fair thing to give the gentlemen who are conducting the ballot the cumbersome and difficult task that is set them by this bill? I submit for the consideration of the Minister that that is not a fair way to conduct an election. Surely we are not so rushed that we cannot put the bill in proper order now. In five minutes it could be made to conform with the remarks of the Premier. As it is, it is cumbersome and unsatisfactory. The next matter to which I shall refer relates to the holding of the municipal elections on a Saturday instead of on a Monday.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING: The poll is held on a Saturday now, except in the city of Sydney!

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY: Clause 3 of the bill amends the Local Government Act, too.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING: It amends only the Sydney Corporation Act!

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY: It is all a matter of convenience. It is a well-known rule that the balance of convenience in most affairs of life should predominate. Can anyone seriously say that the new group of voters would be seriously inconvenienced by having to vote in the city on a Monday? Most of the workers in the city, persons whose business takes them to the city every day, reside elsewhere. With voting from, say, 8 in the morning until 8 at night, it could not be said that any real inconvenience would be caused by voting on a Monday. Most men finish their work between 5 p.m. and 5.45 p.m., and very few live sufficiently far from the city to be inconvenienced. Applying the same principle of fairness it must be admitted that it would be inconvenient for certain owners or lessees to vote within the limited time available on a Saturday. If there is no real harm done, and the principle of the balance of convenience is recognised, then is it not a fair suggestion to leave the day for voting as it is? It is impossible to iron over every affair of human life in order to obtain the uniformity that is suggested. We cannot all work during the same eight hours of the day. As the Hon. Mr. Tannock has reminded us,

many persons are now working round the clock. Moreover, in these times of national emergency, many voters, both in the country and the city, must be absent from their ordinary place of abode. Thousands of them are overseas. In the circumstances it would be reasonable for polling day to be left as it is. I ask the Minister to give consideration to that suggestion.

Another matter that has already been referred to concerns the duplication of polling booths. I suppose the real test is what is necessary and what is convenient for the voters. Several hon. members have directed attention to the divisions under the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act. I suggest to the Minister that the wards be divided into divisions, and that each division be given its own polling booth. In that way the voter would have a polling booth almost at his front door. The suggestion is a practical one. The Hon. Sir Henry Manning referred to the methods proposed for the preparation of the rolls. I ask the Minister whether he has heard any complaint, or any substantially good reason, for abolishing the present system. After the rolls are collected they are checked. The revision court can check them thoroughly. What is wrong with that?

The Hon. J. CULBERT: It would give the legal profession too much work!

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY: It might be a good thing if one never had to seek advice in either Phillip-street or Macquarie-street. For instance, we do not like government by regulation. We put up with it under war conditions, but it is a principle that lawyers did not originate that if you do not know anything about regulations it is no excuse if you innocently break them. It is good to have a legal friend living not far away, whose job it is to keep himself acquainted with the regulations promulgated nowadays in such large numbers, whom you can ask whether you are inside the law or outside it.

The Hon. J. CULBERT: It is expensive!

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY: Many of these things can be dealt with as between friends. So far as the collection and revision of rolls is concerned, I recollect that in the city in years gone by the hon. member's party had a solicitor specially retained for this work. If it saves time and helps the magistrate to decide whether or not a roll is properly compiled, none of us would begrudge the little time or money involved in getting the matter cleaned up. Is it not a good thing for the whole community if when legislation goes through we can say, "We did our best to make it fair and to make it fool-proof"? I ask the Minister carefully to consider the remarks made by the Hon. Sir Henry Manning. It seems to me it would be to the benefit of everybody if those provisions were retained in the Act. I invite the Minister to tell us, if he knows of it, any real reason why they should be taken out and some other system substituted. I have heard no criticism of the existing system or any suggestion that it has failed.

It seems that the bill asks us to make up our minds first that we cannot get rid of the personator, and then that we must protect the man who has been personated. As a newcomer to this Chamber, it gives me great surprise to see proposed new section 35A in this bill. There is a similar provision in the Parliamentary Electorates and Elections Act, but I have no recollection of hearing much about personation at parliamentary elections.

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: They bring them from under bridges to vote!

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY: I have never heard of it myself. In these days of propaganda and of mechanical voices I am loath to believe that "the voice of the people is the voice of God." The people do not get the opportunity to express their real voice. Yet we ought to be able to feel, when we have considered a measure of this kind, that we have dealt with it fairly and efficiently. How else are we to answer a non-Parliamentary friend outside who says,

"What is the idea of putting section 35A into the bill? Someone votes fraudulently, and when the real voter comes along and convinces the electoral officer that he is the genuine voter, the bill gives him a vote, too." It seems that we are not taking any drastic means to abolish the personator. Nobody wants him.

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON: Has not every elector to subscribe a declaration?

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY: Those on the Parliamentary roll who will be entitled to vote at the forthcoming election will be required to make the declaration set out in Schedule 1. Nobody knows anything about him until he comes along to vote. I have drawn attention to the difficulty that will face us with two rolls. We ought to have one carefully prepared roll. The declaration merely sets out that so and so is the person whose name appears on the electoral roll. Is that going to deter the personator? Under the proposed new section 35A there is nothing to hinder personators from filling in the schedule and voting. That name is then ruled off.

The Hon. E. C. MAGRATH: If the name were "Bradley," does the hon. member think that Mr. Bradley should be deprived of a vote?

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY: I am dealing with the matter step by step, and I am suggesting not that we should deprive the real voter of his vote, but that we should determine to do something about fraudulent voting. The bill deliberately recognises the fact of personation, not only admitting its possibility, but also admitting its probability. Surely with a little more care and thought and a little more co-operation we could draft a bill that would give full effect to the principles enunciated by the Premier in his policy speech, and at the same time avoid this cumbersome method of dealing with difficult and dangerous matters?

The Hon. A. A. ALAM [8.30]: This is the first bill that has been introduced by the Government in this Chamber, and I should like to congratulate the Hon. Sir Henry Manning on the very able and intelligent manner in which he conducted his criticism of its provisions. The standard of the debate has up to the present been quite in keeping with that set by the hon. member when he led this House, and if I criticise any points that he has made, I hope that he will take it not personally but as a matter of policy. What struck me forcibly was his statement that one polling booth was sufficient and there was no need for two booths, and that we should not take away the discretionary power of the returning officer. He has evidently forgotten a debate that took place on a previous local government bill, in respect of which an opinion was obtained from Mr. Hammond, barrister, to the effect that the returning officer could not provide two booths, because it would be ruled in court that there could be only one marked roll. It therefore followed that as there could not be two marked rolls, there likewise could not be two polling booths in the same ward. That decision, of course, tied the hands of the returning officer. We have heard a lot about the personation and dual voting that would take place if two booths were provided. Since the inception of municipal elections we have had to put up with the possibility of personation. Take, for instance, the booth at Phillip. If two booths were not provided, the electors in order to cast their votes would, because of petrol rationing, have to walk from Camperdown, where the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital and the Children's Hospital are situated, and also from Pyrmont, which would be a little over 2 miles from the booth. I do not think that the question of the provision of two booths would agitate very much the minds of hon. members. The candidates are mostly honourable men, and would make no attempt to encourage personation or dual voting. I think that cases of personation are more or less isolated. I know that personation did take place on the question of the abolition of the Upper House;

when members of the New Guard voted at various places from Mudgee to Coonabarabran. The Government of the time was sympathetic and took no action against them. Certain hon. members are perturbed about the selection of names for the municipal roll. The only roll collected by the police is the municipal roll for the city of Sydney, and the councillors who sit in this Chamber know very well that the police have made it very obvious that the sooner the work of collection is taken out of their hands the better it will suit them. In connection with the parliamentary roll, the applicant signs a form and forwards it to the returning officer. The officer at the Town Hall who is responsible for the municipal roll can go to the electoral office and check the names of persons in the municipal council area, and if it is found that any person is guilty of misrepresentation he is liable to penalty. If this bill is passed the dual roll will be used at the next election in December, and after that personation and dual voting will be prevented to a great extent by the municipal officer checking the names of persons in his area with the rolls supplied by the electoral officer. That will make the municipal roll as perfect as human ingenuity can make it.

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON: Whiter than snow!

The Hon. A. A. ALAM: I hope so. The Hon. Sir Samuel Walder wants the polling day to be on a Monday and not on a Saturday, as proposed by the bill, He said that if the elections were held on a Saturday, 50 per cent. of the electors would not vote. I would point out to him that there is in this bill a provision which will enable any person who wishes to vote at a municipal election and who will be on the day of election 5 miles or more from the booth, to have a postal vote. For that reason I do not think that the holding of the election on a Saturday would disfranchise 50 per cent. of the electors. An applicant for enrolment at municipal elections has to make an affidavit on the prescribed form, which is consistent with the form that a person has to fill in when applying for enrolment for State and Federal elections. At the following election the rolls will be as perfect as it is possible to make them.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING (Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister of Justice), in reply [8.40]: I thank hon. members for their reception of the principles contained in the bill, and I greatly appreciate their readiness to agree to those principles. I desire to make brief reference to one matter apart from the specific questions which have been raised. The Hon. Sir Norman Kater and the Hon. Mr. Bradley drew attention to the wording of the reference in the Premier's policy speech dealing with this matter. I would like the House to appreciate that in the hour allocated to a national broadcast of a policy speech the whole of the speech cannot be broadcast. In my brief experience in this Chamber I have not heard the Hon. Sir Norman Kater raise a similar objection while the previous Government was in office. A Government elected by the people always has a mandate to carry out a general programme. The principles contained in this bill have been generally accepted.

I am indebted to the Hon. Sir Henry Manning for his analysis of the bill. He has seen fit to examine the measure in great detail. The Hon. Sir Henry Manning has drawn my attention to several matters, and because of his experience and ability due weight must always be given to the suggestions of that hon. gentleman. I wish to stress that the Government, in common with every hon. member, is extremely anxious that every safeguard should be taken to prevent malpractice and personation such as has been suggested by hon. members. Several of the objections have been dealt with quite adequately by my colleagues. One matter raised by the Hon. Sir Henry Manning related to the preparation of the rolls for the city of Sydney. This bill proposes that, instead of the provisions at present contained in Part IV of the

Sydney Corporation Act, there should be imported into such part provisions under which the preparation of the rolls shall be entrusted to the Municipal Council of Sydney and power is taken to provide by regulation all the necessary machinery and safeguards that may be considered necessary in order to ensure that the roll of citizens collected under such part will be as pure as the roll that is collected at the present time. Rolls of electors are prepared in every municipality and shire by the council of that area and also by the Greater Newcastle Council, and I understand from the Local Government Department that there has been no suggestion of any tampering with those rolls. The bill will make provision for a better roll than does the system at present in operation in the city of Sydney. Supplementary rolls will be provided in each year other than in which the original roll is prepared. Cannot the Municipal Council of Sydney be entrusted to do as thoroughly something which is entrusted to the municipalities and shires? The rolls will be as clean as any roll that might be collected by the police. I was somewhat surprised that the Hon. Sir Henry Manning should have mentioned this matter, because I am reliably informed that in a bill he introduced in 1934 a provision for taking away the collection of these rolls by the police was included and was defeated in this House. Whatever reasons might have existed at that time which might have influenced the Government, of which the Hon. Sir Henry Manning was a member, to introduce that bill, the position as it exists to-day provides much stronger reasons for the introduction of this provision at this time. I am informed it takes thirty police officers forty-five days each to collect these rolls. The position is that the police are called upon to perform many war duties. They have extra duties as a result of co-operating with the military and Commonwealth authorities, and the Government considers, and the Police Commissioner has always felt, that this work places an extra burden on the police force. There is no ground for any suspicion that the alteration of the method may result in the insertion in the rolls of some names that should not be there.

The next matter raised by the Hon. Sir Henry Manning was in respect of the provision of two or more polling booths in the wards of the city. Section 31 of the Sydney Corporation Act, which was referred to by the Hon. Sir Henry Manning, seems to imply that there is already power in the Act at the present time for the Town Clerk, as returning officer, to appoint more than two polling places. In 1930 the late Mr. Hammond, K.C., gave an opinion to the effect that this section could not be acted upon, and as a result of that opinion only one polling booth has been used with its resulting inconvenience.

The Hon. Sir HENRY MANNING: My suggestion was that that could be corrected by legislation!

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING: It is only in the city of Sydney that such an inconvenient method of polling exists. It cannot be shown that the mere provision of two or more polling places at Federal, State and local government elections has resulted in abuse by way of personation and double voting. The mere fear of such a contingency arising in the case of the city of Sydney is not sufficient reason for depriving the people of a convenience which should be theirs. The possibilities of double voting are less likely in the city of Sydney because citizens must make a declaration before they are permitted to vote.

Penalties are provided for in the Sydney Corporation Act to meet personation and double voting. The next matter raised by the Hon. Sir Henry Manning relates to the holding of the poll on Saturday instead of Monday, as at present. The balance of convenience in relation to the holding of the election undoubtedly points to Saturday as the most suitable day. That is recognised in connection with State and Federal elections, and in connection with elections in other local governing areas. If any of the class of people referred to by hon. members is

desirous of recording a vote, the provision that enables him to do so if he resides more than 5 miles from the polling booth gives him ample opportunity to afford himself of the benefits of the franchise.

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON: He has ten days in which to make up his mind under section 36 of the Principal Act!

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING: That is so. The bill provides that every person whose name is on an electoral roll compiled on 18th April, 1941, and whose place of living as stated in such roll is situated within a ward of the city, and who continues for the time being to reside at such place of living, and whose name is not included in the citizens' roll for any ward of the city, shall be permitted to vote at the general election of aldermen of the city. Every person so permitted to vote must make a special declaration and must retain his qualification by residence. He will by election day have at least nine months qualification by residence.

It has been alleged that the use of the electoral rolls and the citizens' rolls for the forthcoming general elections will be confusing, and will assist double voting and other electoral offences. The request has been made that the general elections due to be held in December next should be postponed in order to permit of fresh citizens' rolls to be prepared which would include the names of the persons on the electoral rolls. A postponement of the general election is impracticable and the results of such postponement from the point of view of the preparation of new rolls would be valueless. The use of both electoral and citizens' rolls for the next general elections will not be confusing. Certainly many people whose names were on the electoral roll on 18th April, 1941, will by the time of the election have left the addresses shown on the rolls. They will be no longer on the rolls. These people cannot vote at the election. The declaration is the safeguard. Key copies of the rolls can be obtained showing omissions from the rolls from 18th April, 1941, to say, the beginning of November. The Local Government Association and the Shires Association, which speak for more than 300 councils, have not voiced any objection to the proposed use of the two rolls for the next elections. The elections cannot be postponed. Last year the elections were postponed for twelve months, and a further postponement is not warranted. Any contemplated postponement would have to be either to March or June of next year. Apart from the objections that can be offered on principle to any question of postponement, it is impracticable to postpone elections for a broken period. This was recognised by the Hon. Sir Henry Manning, the representative in this House of the Government of the day, when the bill to postpone the municipal elections was before the Legislative Council last year. The suggestion was made that instead of postponing the elections until December, 1941, they should be postponed until June, 1941, and in the meantime action could be taken to collect rolls to enable the elections to be held during that month.

The Hon. Sir Henry Manning emphasised that this would be impracticable for many reasons, including rating and administration. A postponement for a short term now would likewise be impracticable. The collection of new rolls would be an added and unnecessary expense. The whole ground would have to be again covered and the results would be valueless. At present the rolls are collected in June in the country and in May and June in the city, and are revised by the beginning of October. From the time of revision until the holding of the elections many changes occur, but the rolls cannot be corrected. The Acts recognise this and provide that not only must a person be on the roll, but that he must retain the qualification under which he was enrolled before he can vote. If elections were postponed to enable new rolls to be prepared there would have to be a gap between the time of revision and the time of election, and changes would inevitably take place. One can never get a perfect roll, either in the city or in the local government areas.

There has been a suggestion that the roll will lead to personation and double voting. I do not think that anyone will disagree that a person who may not have been personated, but who may have been incorrectly struck off the roll, is entitled to vote. Such a person is entitled to vote under the Local Government Act and at both State and Federal elections. The penalties provided for this class of offence are fairly severe, and the fact that this system has operated in local governing areas and shires where ballots have been conducted without there being any serious objection, makes groundless the reasons advanced by hon. members why this provision should not be contained in the bill. On the statement by the Hon. Mr. Bradley that the only suitable day for the City Council elections is the first Monday in December, I am informed that the provision for the holding of the election on that day was embodied in the Sydney Corporation Act in 1934, and that prior to then the Act provided for balloting on the first day in December. If that is correct, it does not seem to me that voting on the first Monday in December is so long-standing a practice as I was led to believe. The bill is an honest attempt by the Government to bring about an extension of the franchise, and the Government is anxious that there should be no opportunity for personation or malpractice. Every matter put forward by hon. members in this House during the debate was given full consideration when the bill was being drafted. The Government's advisers are satisfied about the measure of protection afforded by this bill. The Government asked that the bill should be drafted in such a way as to embody provisions in accordance with its general policy and at the same time to incorporate every possible safeguard. We feel that the bill meets those requirements. I might suggest that there is an ordinance under the Local Government Act, Ordinance No. 14, which prescribes the conditions under which rolls are prepared in municipalities. It is proposed to make regulations on similar lines under Part III of the Sydney Corporation Act. The effectiveness of that ordinance has not been questioned by any of the authorities operating under the Local Government Act. If any suggestion can be put forward in respect of that ordinance, that will make for the safeguarding of the ballot against malpractice or interference, or will make it, if possible, more effective in that respect than at present, I can assure the House it will be incorporated in those regulations. In conclusion, I repeat that I am indebted to hon. members, and to the Hon. Sir Henry Manning in particular, for their analyses of the bill and for their contribution to the debate.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

(The Hon. G. S. ARCHER in the chair.)

Clause 3 (Day of election).

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY [9.5]: It is my intention to oppose this clause. Am I in order in proposing to move that it be struck out?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (the Hon. G. S. ARCHER): The most practical way for the hon. member to oppose the clause would be to vote against it.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING (Vice-President of the Executive Council and Minister of Justice) [9.7]: I would respectfully ask the Committee and the Hon. Mr. Bradley to withhold any opposition to this clause. We meet on common ground here because the Hon. W. J. McKell, in his policy speech, said:

> In addition to the Greater Sydney Bill, with which is tied up the question of Town Planning, our objectives for Local Government reform include the giving of greater powers to Local Government bodies and the reform of the Sydney Corporation Act, to bring it into line with the Local Government Act so far as the latter applies to adult franchise, the system of voting, hours of polling and the fixing of Saturdays as polling days.

I think that the Committee would not be paying due respect to the Government if it rejected this clause, which simply carries into effect in detail the principle outlined in the Premier's policy speech.

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY: I adopt the Minister's suggestion and withdraw my opposition to the clause!

Clause agreed to.

Clause 7.

Clause 7 (1) The Principal Act is amended by omitting Part III, Part IV and Part IVA and by inserting in lieu thereof the following Part:—

PART III.

Qualification of Citizens and Preparation of Rolls.

. . . . . .

Division 4.—Rolls of Ratepayers.

18E. A person shall be entitled to be enrolled as a ratepayer if—

. . . . . .

(b) his enrolment on that roll is as owner, or as ratepaying lessee, or as lessee of Crown lands, or as tenant of lands vested in the Railway Commissioners for New South Wales, or as tenant of lands vested in the Maritime Services Board; and

. . . . . .

The Hon. Sir HENRY MANNING [9.10]: In view of the Minister's very laudable profession of desire to introduce all possible safeguards, it has occurred to me to ask whether he might agree to the deletion of the words "Part IV." That would have the effect of not repealing the provisions of the Principal Act in regard to the collection of lists in the Sydney area. I suggest to the Minister that the present method of collection by the police should be allowed to continue.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING [9.11]: The position is that the police force is a reserved occupation. Its members have many arduous duties to perform, including co-operation with the military intelligence and Commonwealth authorities, and they should not be called upon to perform this work. It takes thirty policemen forty-five days a year each to collect the rolls, and the Government feels that there is no reason why the local governing and municipal authorities should not carry out this work. I think that the fears of the Hon. Sir Henry Manning are groundless, and I suggest for his consideration the need to bring the city area into line with other parts of the State in connection with the collection of the rolls.

The Hon. Sir HENRY MANNING [9.14]: I have turned over in my own mind the matters referred to by the Minister, and if it takes thirty policemen forty-five days each to collect the rolls, it would certainly take thirty other persons forty-five days each to do the same work. On the other hand, the efficiency of the police is so great that in all probability the thirty other people instead of taking forty-five days, might easily take ninety days. The Minister said that the duties of the police are so arduous at the present time that they should not be called upon to collect the rolls. But the answer is that only recently this Parliament passed a measure amending the Police Regulation Act and authorising the Government to appoint a reserve police force. I, therefore, suggest that the Government, in order to allow this work to be performed as at present, should appoint the necessary additional police. In those circumstances, the Minister might consider the wisdom of eliminating the words "Part IV." and thus allow the rolls to be collected as they are at the present time.

The Hon. R. MAHONY [9.16]: In 1934 the Government of which the Hon. Sir Henry Manning was a member introduced a bill to amend the Sydney Corporation Act, clause 8 of which provided for the elimination of the requirement of the collection of the rolls by the police, so that by this bill the Government is asking precisely what Mr. Spooner asked for in 1934.

The Hon. Sir HENRY MANNING: That proposed amendment was turned down with the acquiescence of the Government!

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING [9.17]: It is necessary that this bill should be passed quickly, so that the elections may be held, and, if the amendment suggested by the Hon. Sir Henry Manning were agreed to, considerable delay would ensue. For that reason the Government does not feel disposed to accept the hon. member's suggestion. There is

one matter that I forgot to mention previously. It is the fact that the police have not always collected the rolls in the municipality of Sydney. That practice originated in 1902. Prior to that the rolls were prepared by the mayor and two aldermen. There was considerable criticism of that method, because the mayor and the two aldermen in question were interested parties in the election, and because of that the police were entrusted with the collection of the rolls. The position now is entirely different from that which existed in 1902, and the Town Clerk, under the regulations, will prepare the rolls. I hope that the Hon. Sir Henry Manning will not press his suggested amendment.

Amendment (by the Hon. R. R. Downing) agreed to:

That in proposed new section 18E (b) the words "Railway Commissioners for New South Wales" be struck out and there be inserted in lieu thereof the words "Commissioner for Railways."

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 8 (Amendment of Act No. 58, 1932).

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON [9.22]: Under section 24 of the Sydney Corporation Act, the following persons among others are disqualified from being elected to hold the office of alderman (a) a Supreme Court judge; (b) a District Court judge; (c) every person holding any place of profit under the Crown or the council. It is proposed under paragraph (a) of this clause to omit from paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of section 24 the words, "the Crown or." It would be logical to go further and strike out the words "or the Council." Under this clause an employee of the City Council can not be an alderman of the City Council. Why should employees of the City Council, who may be occupiers of residences in the city, not be qualified for the office of alderman? I can recollect a case where an employee of the City Council had to resign his position in the council in order to contest a seat. Officers of the City Council have the right to stand for the Commonwealth and State Parliaments. They should also be qualified to submit themselves for election as aldermen.

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY: And retain their employment in the council if elected?

The Hon. J. M. CONCANNON: If elected, of course, they would not hold their position. I was for two years—1925 to 1927—on the staff of the Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board, and at the same time a member of this Chamber. At that time the Constitution Act had not been amended to exclude anyone holding an office of profit under the Crown from membership of this House. I would suggest to the Minister that he should strike out paragraph (c) of section 24 (e) of the Sydney Corporation Act.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING [9.25]: I appreciate the reasons advanced by the Hon. Mr. Concannon, but this alteration cannot be made without some consideration. I would suggest to the hon. member that it will be necessary later to make several amendments to the Local Government Act, which is now regarded as a hardy annual, and I will bring his remarks under the notice of the Minister for Local Government. They will be considered in relation to any future amendments to the Local Government Act.

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY [9.26]: Paragraph (b) omits from subsection (1) of section 18 (d) of the Sydney Corporation Act the word "citizen" and inserts in lieu thereof the word "person." Is that to make provision for the absence of the Town Clerk through illness?

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING: As the law stands the Town Clerk is the returning officer. If he is absent through illness and the Deputy Town Clerk is also absent it is proposed that the Governor should be able to appoint the next senior officer.

The Hon. W. J. BRADLEY: That is the object of the amendment.

The Hon. R. R. DOWNING: That is its sole purpose. In the absence, through illness, of the Town Clerk and the

Deputy Town Clerk another officer of the council will be able to act. This amendment is approved by the Sydney City Council.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 11. (1) For the purposes only of the preparation in the year one thousand nine hundred and forty-two of the supplementary rolls required by the Principal Act to be prepared by the council of each area and of matters necessary for or incidental to such preparation, section twelve of this Act shall be deemed to commence upon the first Saturday in December, one thousand nine hundred and forty-one.

. . . . . .

Amendment (by the Hon. R. R. Downing) agreed to:

That in subclause (1) the words "the supplementary rolls required by" be struck out and there be inserted in lieu thereof the words "any rolls required by or under."

Clause as amended agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments; report adopted.

House adjourned at 9.31 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Tuesday, 19 August, 1941.

Questions without Notice—Water Conservation—Farmers' Relief (Amendment) Bill—Western Lands (Amendment) Bill (second reading).

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair.

The opening Prayer was read.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

RAILWAY CONCESSIONS TO R.A.A.F.

Mr. SANDERS: Will the Minister for Transport make representations to the Commissioner for Railways with a view to granting to married men in the R.A.A.F. a railway travelling concession of 3s. a week, similar to that given to single men and men in camp, since married men in the R.A.A.F. should be just as much entitled as are single men in the A.I.F. to this concession to enable them to visit their homes?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: On Saturday last I met a deputation consisting of members of the Air Force, including those mentioned by the hon. member, and I think that nearly every hon. member received an invitation to join the deputation. These men seem to have a genuine complaint and I propose to take up the matter with the Government with a view to seeing whether it is not possible to grant the concession.

WHEAT IN STORAGE.

Mr. NOTT: I ask the Minister for Agriculture whether it is a fact that at the present time large stocks of wheat are stored in New South Wales? If so, will the Minister inform the House of the number of bushels stored in this State and also in the Commonwealth, if such figures are available?

Captain DUNN: It is not a fact that a large quantity of wheat is stored in this State and is free for use by millers or for export and other purposes. It is a fact that there is plenty of wheat stored but it has been purchased by the British Government and is its property. No doubt it could be made available for use here if necessary. Almost all the wheat grown in New South Wales has been disposed of and there are ample supplies for the millers right up to next December, and, of course, the new wheat will be in before that. The only real carry-over in this State is about 12,000,000 bushels of wheat which is stored here, and which, as I have said, has been purchased by the British Government.

SHIPBUILDING: SHORTAGE OF BOILERMAKERS.

Mr. TREATT: I ask the Premier whether it is a fact that the construction of naval and merchant ships in yards which have been in operation for years is being held up on account of insufficient boilermakers? Is it further a fact that, although suitable tradesmen are available in industry and from the Technical College, the Federated Society of Boilermakers has failed for a long time and is continuing to fail