

(11)

SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT,  
LANDS AND HOUSING, INCHE ABDUL HAMID BIN HAJI  
JUMAT, IN MOVING THE MOTION TO ADOPT THE REPORT  
FROM THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE LOCAL GOVERN-  
MENT ELECTIONS BILL, AT THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY  
MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, JULY 17TH, 1957

As Honourable Members of this Assembly are aware, the Local Government Elections Bill is complementary to the Local Government Bill. With the enactment of these two Bills, it will then be possible under the new local government organisation to proceed with elections at the earliest opportunity which in the case of the City Council will be December this year and in the case of the District Councils about March 1958.

Members will have observed from the Report that only a few written representations were submitted and that no oral representations were made. Members will wish me to draw their attention to the main amendments to the Bill in Select Committee. This I will proceed to do.

Concerning clause 5, a new paragraph (c) has been included to enable citizens of the United Kingdom or Colonies or person born in the Federation of Malaya, Sarawak, North Borneo or Brunei to vote after one year's residence. The reason for this is that while the Bill has extended the right to vote to alien nationals provided they have five years residence, adult persons who are citizens of the United Kingdom or were born in Malaya, etc. were barred from voting because they have less than five years residence. Nevertheless, those same persons with only one year's residence can vote in the Legislative Assembly elections. By this amendment they can now also vote in the local government elections after one year's residence.

With regard to the machinery for elections, amendments have been made to clause 9 to meet representations which have been made, advocating improvements to polling arrangements. Sub-clauses (3), (4) and (5) give discretionary powers to the Returning Officer regarding the number and kind of polling stations and, for guidance in the exercise of his discretion, the provision of one polling station for every two thousand electors is expressly recommended.

The main amendment to clause 10 is a little technical. Briefly, the purpose of the new sub-clause (1), being a telescoped version of the old sub-clause (1), (2), (3) and (4), is to enable arrangements to be made for preparing the Local Government electoral rolls corrected up to 1st April, 1957, instead of up to the 1st April, 1956. In anticipation of City elections in December, electoral rolls corrected up to 1st April, 1957, are already under preparation. Claims and objections will, of course, follow the procedure given in Clause 11.

Turning to clause 66, the purpose of the provision which has been added to paragraph (a) of sub-clause (1) is to make it clear that either payment for, or contract to pay for, any petroleum used for vehicles which may be lawfully used for the conveyance of electors to the poll is NOT an illegal practice. It expressly provides that such payment shall be regarded as expenses within the meaning of clause 65 which limits the total expenses which may be incurred by candidates.

/Apart from ...

Apart from the amendments which I have already described, Members are aware that I have a number of further amendments to make as given in the Notice of Amendments. These are all minor amendments except those to clauses 22 and 34. The purpose of the amendment to clause 22 is to rectify an omission by making express provision for filling a casual vacancy within two months. Concerning the amendment to clause 34, it is simply designed to ensure that the date on which the poll is taken is not less than 16 days from the date of the notice of election.

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July 17, 1957.

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