

the Bill, I am prepared to consider such a clause if he puts it up. Of the subject of venereal disease I have had experience right from the time when I was a youth. It is unfortunate for me—it is not pleasant for me; it is almost a misery—that venereal disease has been forced upon my notice; but I have seen venereal disease, and have seen its results. I know absolutely the danger of venereal disease, and I am trying to remedy it. I want every man in this Chamber to assist me in the matter; not to fight me, or threaten to stone-wall, or anything of that description, but to give me his help in the eradication of venereal disease. I know the danger of it, I have seen the danger of it. I did not look for it; it came to me; I suppose I was born to see it. I have seen it from Collingwood, where I lived as a boy, right to the North-West of this State, and I have seen it here only a few months ago. I will not tell hon. members all I know because if I did so, perhaps they would not believe me. But I can tell hon. members that it is the most dangerous that human nature has to contend with. There has been a good deal said about what we are going to do by forcing the people to be treated, but I would point out that all we are trying to do is to cure those who have the disease. If there are people who refuse to be cured and there are people who will not obey the request that they should submit themselves for treatment, we will compel them to undergo treatment. We will see that these people do not contaminate the rest of the community. We have submitted the Bill to the House with the sincere desire to wipe out this disease. If any hon. member knows some better method let him state it, but the man who says that our proposal is sure to fail and at the same time will not himself do anything, is no good to me. I will listen to the man who desires to help to stamp out the disease. I have studied this question; in fact the study of it has been forced on me. The member for Kanowna quoted from authorities to-night, but he did not read a sentence which I have not read over and over again. I have studied all the literature I have been able to get hold of, and I have seen the disease. Now my sole desire is to assist in eradicating it. Before hon. members finally decide how they intend to vote on the clauses, I will ask them to wait until they have heard me.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 1.45 a.m. (Wednesday).

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 10th April, 1918.

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

BILL—VERMIN BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Legislative Assembly.

BILL—RABBIT ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 4 and the consideration of new clauses.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 31:

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: My intention is to make the term in this Bill consistent with that provided for in the Vermin Bill. There is no time mentioned here as to when an inspector can go to work after giving notice. Section 30 of the principal Act provides that whenever an inspector finds evidence of the existence of rabbits, he may give to the owner or occupier of the land notice in writing to take certain steps. The next section provides that if the owner or occupier neglects or fails to comply with any such notice, he may be summoned. I propose to provide that a period of seven days shall be allowed after the serving of such notice. The section would then read, "If any owner or occupier neglects or fails to comply with such notice after seven days he may be summoned." That amendment will make the Bill consistent with the Vermin Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member might move an amendment in the form of a new paragraph, stating that Section 31 of the principal Act is hereby amended by adding the words "after seven days" wherever the hon. member desires to add those words. I would point out to hon. members that I deprecate the drafting of amendments on the spur of the moment in Committee.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: I thought it was such a simple one to move.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The hon. member may move it to stand as paragraph (a) of Section 31 of the Act.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: That will meet the case. I move an amendment—

"That the following stand as paragraph (a) of Section 31:—'After the word 'notice' in line 2 of Section 31, the words 'for a space of seven days' be added.'"

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I move an amendment—

"That paragraph (b) be struck out."

The words in this paragraph refer to the original Section 31. As we have amended the section by Clause 4 of this measure now before us, it appears to me that one of these inspectors

can go upon land and lay poison. It frequently happens that chopped up apples or fruit are poisoned and distributed on the land. If no notice is given by the inspector of this it is impossible for the owner or occupier to notify his family, and this to my mind constitutes a serious danger. The inspector may also go upon a man's property and lay baited pollard without notice, and this will endanger the lives of sheep or cattle which may be running on the place. There seems to have been some misunderstanding in regard to this provision, and I feel sure it was never the intention that this provision for giving notice should be struck out of the Act. If my amendment were carried it would prevent this provision from being deleted.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: The amendment comes with more strength than ever in connection with the amendment I am proposing to the definition of owner. My amendment is to put this Bill on an equal footing with the Vermin Bill. It is necessary that someone should represent the public bodies in a responsible position, and it is provided that the Town Clerk or Secretary shall be the person to be summoned on behalf of the board. The amendment makes the thing consistent and we know where we are.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I do not think this clause is a good one. These inspectors are armed with a fair amount of authority and they take advantage of that from time to time. I really think that the original Section 31 is a better section than it will be if this clause is agreed to as it stands. It appears to me that it is not intended to give the owner any right of appeal or redress in the matter, and I ask hon. members to further consider this clause with the idea of retaining the original section in the Act. An inspector can go upon a property and order the owner to take away a ball tap from his water supply, and his decision would have to be taken as final. The owner does not seem to have many rights left at all. The officers will want to show their authority, and I feel nervous for the holder of properties who will have no right of redress such as he now has under the Act. Objection has been raised by representatives of the pastoralists in the North that it is a difficult matter, if they are summoned to do so, to appear before the Minister. In most outlying portions if the inspector gives certain orders the owner can readily appeal to the Minister by telegraph, and would be in touch with him at once. I ask hon. members to give this clause further consideration.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Are we discussing an amendment which does not appear on the Notice Paper?

The CHAIRMAN: The question before the Committee is that Clause 4 as amended stand part of the Bill.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Is it not true that an amendment has been moved that has not appeared on the Notice Paper?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: The Committee seem to have entirely ignored your suggestion, Sir, about putting these amendments on the Notice Paper, and I think this is to be regret-

ted. How can we be expected, without having these amendments put on the Notice Paper, to have an opportunity of properly considering them? I regret that you have no power, Sir, to refuse to accept amendments which are not dealt with in this way. In the present way of doing things it is impossible to arrive at a really sound decision. As I have said, members have absolutely ignored your opinion, Sir, and I may say that your opinion, as chairman, carries more weight with me than that of any other hon. member of the Chamber.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not know that the objection raised by Mr. Sanderson is altogether applicable to the present case. I take it that it is not customary to put on the Notice Paper a notice to the effect that a member intends to vote against a clause. I fail to see any object in putting this on the Notice Paper. I do not know that it would be in order if this was done, because the practice is to vote against the clause. If Mr. Hamersley desired to put an amendment into the clause I could understand the force of the objection. I should be sorry to see the Committee vote against this clause, because Section 31 of the Act is certainly a cumbersome method of procedure. It contemplates that when notice has been given after a period of seven days has elapsed and the party still does nothing, the only action that can be taken against him is to bring him in front of the Minister personally. To my mind that is not a satisfactory way of proceeding at all. There is a good deal in the argument which Mr. Hamersley used. I had thought that probably after last night's discussion an amendment would have been placed on the Notice Paper making provision for the clause to read, "If any owner or occupier fails to comply with any such notice after a period of seven days he shall be reported to the Minister who may instruct the inspector or any authorised person," and so the clause goes on. An amendment of that kind would not be objected to by the Government. To strike out the clause and leave the section as it stands, would interfere with the administration of the Act.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I support to a large extent the remarks of Mr. Sanderson as to members giving notice of contemplated amendments. The whole of this matter was discussed fully yesterday, and no new matter has been brought forward. It is proposed that, instead of bringing a person from a distant place before the Minister, he should be brought before an inspector or someone acting for the Minister, but the authority of the Minister must be in writing. I am alive to the dangers pointed out by Mr. Hamersley that there are inspectors who are not as considerate as they might be, but we should give the department a free hand and see what they would do. No one could act for the Minister unless authority was given in writing. It has been pointed out by the Honorary Minister that the Act would be administered in a conciliatory manner, and therefore we might leave the department with a

free hand. It will not be many months before the House is in session again, and if by then it is found that this provision was working arbitrarily, an amendment could be brought forward.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The Colonial Secretary has pointed out that it was thought that some amendment would have been brought forward to-day. It was the intention to propose an amendment, but on further consideration it was thought that this might complicate the position. I defer to the opinion of members who have had experience in the particular matters with which the Bill deals. Section 30, as framed, is very cumbersome. To bring a man, as the present section requires, from a distant part before the Minister would be rather unworkable. Therefore, it is suggested that an inspector should have authority in writing to act for the Minister. The consideration of this clause might be postponed until the next sitting, and then an amendment probably would be brought forward.

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: I move—

“That progress be reported and leave asked to sit again.”

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

Ayes	8
Noes	13

Majority against .. 5

AYES.

Hon. H. Carson	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)
Hon. J. W. Hickey	

NOES.

Hon. J. F. Allen	Hon. C. McKenzie
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. E. Ross
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	Hon. J. Duffell
Hon. R. J. Lynn	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Clause as amended put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I move—

“That the following be added to stand as Clause 2:—‘Section 3 of the principal Act is hereby amended by adding to the interpretation of “owner” a paragraph to stand as (d), as follows:—“(d) The person or body having control of any public reserve or in or by whom any public reserve is vested or held, and includes any person deriving title from or through any such person.”’

This is just to make it consistent with the provision in the Vermin Bill.

New clause put and passed.

New clause:

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I move—

“That the following be added to stand as Clause 19:—‘Section 43 of the principal

Act is amended by adding the words ‘or from eastward of No. 1 Barrier Fence.’”

This is very necessary in the interests of ordinary justice to the people eastward of No. 1 fence. My proposal is that they shall be put on the same basis as the people in the Eastern States in regard to the sale of rabbits. Personally, I am not sure that it is not contrary to the Commonwealth Constitution to prohibit people eastward of the barrier fence from selling rabbits westward of the barrier fence. There is in the Commonwealth Constitution a section which forbids discrimination between States or parts of a State in all matters of commerce and trade. Before I say anything further I would like to hear from the Minister whether he will accept the proposed new clause.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I cannot accept the proposed new clause. The underlying principle of the Bill is that we shall not treat the rabbit commercially. There is no restriction on the selling of rabbits east of the barrier fence, but if we allow trade in rabbits west of the fence, we will have to permit the same thing everywhere between the fences. It would not be wise to open up a trade in rabbits.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I support the amendment. Even at present people can sell rabbits in Perth by getting permission from the Minister. The amendment will merely eliminate the necessity for getting such permission or license.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: People of the Eastern States do not require a license.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: Why should we handicap our own people while allowing people from the Eastern States to sell rabbits here? When people are killing rabbits east of the No. 1 fence, there is no danger in allowing the dead rabbits to come down to Perth.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I will support the amendment. The Honorary Minister seems to have taken up a remarkable position in connection with this question. We have perhaps millions of rabbits east of the No. 1 fence and the attitude of the Minister means that no person will be allowed to sell those rabbits west of the fence, although he agrees that under license to be obtained from the Minister, sales can be effected east of the fence. If we are to allow carcases and skins to be sold east of the fence, we should allow them to be sold west of the fence also. The position is ridiculous. Again, we are allowing rabbits to come in from the Eastern States, and so we are fostering an industry in New South Wales and Victoria while we debar our own people living eastward of the fence from participation in that industry. We are prejudicing our own people as against the people of the Eastern States.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The principle underlying the Commonwealth Constitution is that there shall be free trade between the States, and there is in that Constitution a section which forbids discrimination in the matter of trade, not only between the States, but between parts of a State. The State cannot forbid free trade in the matter of rabbits

from the Eastern States, but the Minister desires to forbid it in respect of that section of our community which lives eastward of the No. 1 fence. On the goldfields we get numbers of rabbits when the grass is young and fresh, and at present it is an offence to kill those rabbits and bring them to Perth for sale, notwithstanding that rabbits may be brought all the way from the Eastern States on the Great Western Railway for sale in Perth. The position is ridiculous.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Your amendment discriminates between parts of States. You would allow a right to those east of the fence which is not allowed to those west of the fence:

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: I want to apply impartially the same privilege in regard to rabbits trapped wherever trapping is permissible. The law does not permit of their being trapped in other parts of the State. It is simply a matter of ordinary justice, and a very reasonable proposal.

Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom: Does the amendment apply only to the skins of the rabbits?

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: No; to the dead rabbits.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Mr. Kirwan appears to base his argument on the fact that it is unconstitutional to treat one State differently from another, or one part of a State differently from another.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: On the ground that it is not just.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The hon. member overlooks that under his proposed clause people on the east of the barrier fence would be allowed to trap rabbits and send them to the west of the fence for sale, while people on the west side of the fence would not be allowed to trap and sell rabbits.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: They can trap them now. The Government do not object to that.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The effect of the amendment must be to debar people on the west side of the fence from trapping rabbits and sending them for sale either east of the fence or to any other portion of the State.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Because of the poisoning.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The hon. member draws the line of differentiation between the east and the west sides of the fences.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I support the amendment. The objections raised by the Honorary Minister do not apply to the area affected by this amendment. The reason why a trade in rabbits is not desired is, as the Colonial Secretary has pointed out, that the policy of this measure is to poison rabbits in infested areas. If poisoning is to take place on the Eastern Goldfields, the objection would hold good. But it has not been stated that that is the intention. The objections to Mr. Hickey's amendment certainly do not apply here. I am not greatly interested in the Constitutional aspect of the question. If permission were given, as proposed by this new clause, it would not interfere with the principle of the Bill.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution Act reads as follows:—

The Commonwealth shall not by any law or regulation of trade, commerce, or revenue give preference to one State, or any part thereof, over another State or any part thereof.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I do not know that that section has any application, for it simply prohibits the Commonwealth from making discrimination.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But no State law can override the Commonwealth.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is not proposed to do so. There is nothing in that section to say that the State of Western Australia may not prohibit the sale of rabbits in one portion of Western Australia while allowing it in another. The effect of the amendment moved by Mr. Kirwan would be unconstitutional if there were any force in his contention, since his amendment discriminates between people on the east side and those on the west side of the fence. The rabbit pest is a grave menace to the chief industries of Western Australia, and we have to make up our minds whether we are going to attack it seriously or not. As regards trapping on the west of the rabbit-proof fence, I think it is agreed by nearly all competent authorities that if one encourages people to trade in the rabbit one cannot have the whole-hearted attack by poisoning, which alone will save the situation. Mr. Kirwan's amendment, moreover, will set up an utterly anomalous position. Under that amendment, the detection of offences will be very difficult. Rabbits would be coming into the Perth markets and it would be practically impossible to say whether they came from the west side of the fence or the east side. The general effect of the amendment would be to commercialise the rabbit, and so to weaken the attack which the Government propose to make with a view of checking the pest.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I think we should feel indebted to Mr. Kirwan for raising this matter. I do not think the leader of the House, or his colleague, can brush aside, as apparently they feel inclined to do, the point raised with regard to the Federal Constitution. Under Section 99 "trade, commerce, and intercourse between the States, whether by means of internal carriage or ocean navigation, shall be absolutely free." I entirely agree that if there is to be this trade between the different parts of Western Australia, or between the Eastern States and Western Australia, it is a very serious matter, and will seriously affect the administration of the rabbit question. Would a crate of rabbits be permitted to come to Perth from Melbourne?

The Colonial Secretary: Yes; and it has been so for years.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Is it permitted to send rabbits from Coolgardie to Perth?

Hon. J. Nicholson: No.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: Is it permitted to send rabbits from Coolgardie to Melbourne?

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Yes, and to re-ship them here.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: If it were worth anyone's while to test the question, one could send rabbits from Coolgardie to Perth, when the matter would be decided by the courts. To say that the Constitutional point does not enter into this discussion seems to me quite an untenable attitude. The leader of the House has pointed out the difficulty and danger of dealing with the rabbit question unless the Government get their way; but the matter will be decided, not by the Government, but by somebody else. Anyone who has read the Duncan case, in Queensland, will recognise that there is matter for consideration.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: In this respect the Government are proposing no amendment of the law whatever. The section of the Act has stood since 1902 exactly as it stands now. Apparently, during those 16 years no one has thought it necessary to contest the section on the ground that it is contrary to the Federal Constitution.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: If rabbits were trapped at Coolgardie and sent by train to Port Augusta, and if then those rabbits were sent from Port Augusta to Perth, the Western Australian Government not knowing that the rabbits had been captured in Western Australia, would not the Government permit those rabbits to be sent forward to Perth?

The Colonial Secretary: Yes.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Have the Government abandoned the country east of the No. 1 rabbit fence to the rabbits, or do they propose to go on trying to exterminate the rabbits there? If the Government have abandoned that part of Western Australia, no harm would result from permitting the trapping of rabbits there.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No attempt has been made to exterminate the rabbits east of the No. 1 fence.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: Then east of the fence is practically part of the Eastern States, and there can be no objection to the trapping of rabbits east of the fence. The danger would be in allowing trapping between the two fences. This State might as well have the benefit of the food supply represented by the trapped rabbits, and also the benefit of the trade in the skins.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I congratulate the constituents of Mr. Kirwan on the manner in which that hon. member brought this amendment forward. His reasoning was of such a sound nature that it almost convinced me to vote for the amendment, but I cannot follow it from its constitutional point of view at all. We are here to deal with a pest which we look upon as a great danger to the State, and we want to deal with it not from a constitutional but from a practical point of view. It is almost convincing when a person says that if you kill thousands of rabbits they are then out of the way, but directly we commence to commercialise the rabbit, as suggested by Mr. Kirwan, they seem to increase in numbers. I have no practical experience of that, but all the authorities I have read say, "Have nothing to do with commercialising the rabbit."

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: I am not an authority on rabbits, but when in the Eastern States

last December I was much interested in reading an article congratulating the Government of Western Australia on what it had done in the direction of exterminating the rabbit pest. The article pointed out that the Eastern States had commercialised the rabbits, and in that way caused an increase in the pest, and the general consensus of opinion seemed to be that as soon as commercialising the rabbit ceased, the pest began to decrease in numbers. I came away pleased to think that Western Australia had at least done something which was commended by the Victorian people. I intend to support the Bill as it stands.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I have been reading a circular issued by Mr. Rodier, who says that every Parliament and particularly every Minister of Lands who do not adopt the Rodier system for the extermination of rabbits should be in the lunatic asylum or in gaol. Rodier quotes various authorities to show that he is on the right line, and he marvels that no Minister for Lands has ever established an experimental station which could be run at a small cost in order to prove whether he was right or wrong. We have abandoned the country to the east of the fence to the rabbits so that really the rabbits outside that fence might be called Eastern States rabbits. Why cannot we trap the rabbits East of that No. 1 fence and allow them to be sold on the west?

Hon. G. J. G. W. MILES: I am opposed to the amendment because I am entirely opposed to establishing a rabbit industry in this State. I am surprised to hear that the Government are allowing trapping to be carried on on the eastern side of the fence at the present time. That country is going to carry a number of sheep, and we should do everything we can to eradicate the rabbits there. From what I remember of the Eastern goldfields I feel sure that the country right through to Eucla will yet carry millions of sheep. I have heard of the old days when rabbiting was in vogue in New South Wales and when rabbiters were driving a four-in-hand and the squatters were carrying their swags.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I have at last made up my mind on this subject and I am going to vote against the amendment. So far as the clause is concerned, I understand the attitude of the leader of the House and the Minister in charge of the Bill, and I think they are quite right in trying to protect the interests of Western Australia. At the same time I appreciate the position on the goldfields. Let the hon. member and his constituents test the case. If they do test it, they will beat the Western Australian Government and that is why I am giving a hint to the Minister to look into the matter.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Mr. Sommers and Mr. Miles stressed the point that the Government had done nothing outside the No. 1 fence in the way of destroying rabbits. I admit that no attempt has ever been made in that direction. Where would we start, and where would we finish? Rabbits have a clear

run from the Eastern States to the No. 1 fence.

Hon. C. Sommers: I did not stress that point.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The time will come, I hope, when the problem will be faced, but until that time does arrive, until we can get the land settled, no Government will make any attempt to exterminate the pest on those vast areas.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: It has been pointed out that the attempts made to commercialise the rabbit have resulted in an increase in the number of rabbits, but hon. members have failed to point out that poisoning was not allowed in those areas where it was decided that rabbits should be trapped for commercial purposes. No poisoning has ever been attempted and no restrictions have been imposed to try and decrease the number of rabbits east of the No. 1 fence, but we find that the Government are prepared to allow the people east of the fence to trade in rabbits with people east of the fence. They are not prepared to allow people to send their rabbits to the markets of the metropolitan area. I can quite understand if it were a matter connected with the meat industry, or if there was any fear of the rabbit taking the place of meat. Rabbits are sent from the Eastern States in a frozen condition, and during the winter months fresh rabbits could be caught and brought down and sold here to people desirous of purchasing them as an article of food. We know that the rabbits east of the rabbit-proof fence can be shipped into the metropolitan district and sold there as fresh food. I have lived in parts of Victoria where the rabbit has been commercialised, and the reason why rabbits have increased so was that there was no poison laid during certain periods of the year. The same thing applies to that part of Western Australia east of the fence. There is no poison laid there and nothing is being done. If arrangements were made to open up a market they should have the effect of thinning out the rabbits east of the No. 1 fence. I intend to vote for Mr. Kirwan's amendment.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I asked the Honorary Minister to state his objections to the amendment, but so far he has not done so. Apparently the Government refuse to have these rabbits commercialised where poison is being placed. So far as the rabbits are concerned, the Eastern States start with the No. 1 rabbit-proof fence. The conditions alter at that fence. Inside it, it is proposed to put the Act into operation, and to lay poison. The Honorary Minister said that the Government might proclaim infested areas outside the fence, but will not happen in our time, because all the money that is available will be required to cope with the pest inside the fence. The argument used against commercialising the rabbit on this side of the fence does not hold good so far as the eastern portion is concerned. It has not yet been shown that we shall in any way be interfering with the administration of the Act, or the principle of this Bill, by allowing the concession outlined in Mr. Kirwan's amendment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I agree with Mr. Kirwan in his statement that an illogical position has been set up. We have it now that a man on one side of the fence may deal with rabbits on commercial lines, while the man on the other side of the fence may not do so. It is questionable whether the technical points which have been raised apply to this State, but I do not intend to deal with them at this stage. Whilst admitting that the position is altogether bordering on the absurd, I realise that the Government are desirous of eradicating the pest, and the Honorary Minister fears that, if liberty be given as asked for, it will be the means of increasing the pest instead of assisting in its eradication. I am sure we all desire to assist in carrying out this purpose. Evidently members have lost sight of the fact that under Section 43 leave or license may be given by the Government to any person to sell rabbits. The Government, therefore, can give a license to certain people on the eastern side of the border fence to trade in rabbits. If such a license is given, that frees them from any further responsibility. No doubt the Government will exercise that power sparingly. It will enable them to have some control over those who are trading in rabbits, and they will be better able to know whether such people are trying to exploit the trade on the one side or the other of the border fence. The Government will probably take care that licenses are not granted to people too near the western side of the fence, or too near the border line. Having regard to the necessity of trying to eradicate the pest, I am prepared to support the Government.

Hon. J. W. HICKEY: I support the amendment. I am at a loss to find any reason for the opposition to it. Apparently the Government have no intention of adopting any method to minimise the pest east of the rabbit-proof fence; yet they are taking exception to anyone else adopting such methods. The fear is that the rabbit will increase as soon as it is commercialised, and it is said that this is the experience of the Eastern States. I admit that it is the case to a certain extent, because Commissions have put forward this view, and authorities have been quoted to that effect. Mr. Allen referred to the article published in the "Age," but I feel sure that if he visited the localities mentioned he would find that a different position existed from that which was shown in the article. It is my experience that, instead of rabbits increasing in localities where they are commercialised, quite the opposite is the case. In many districts of the Eastern States rabbits have been much minimised by the commercial element. No objection can be raised to commercialising rabbits on the eastern side of the fence.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN: I was in Gippsland last year, and noticed that rabbits there are tenfold what they were ten years ago. This is attributable largely to the fact, in the opinion of the local people, that freezing chambers have been established in the district to make a commercial commodity of the rabbit, and large holdings which were originally used for fattening cattle are now being used as rabbit warrens for the development of a trade, which is con-

sidered such a detriment in this State. I also visited districts in New South Wales where the same thing obtained. The rabbit is increasing enormously because it has become a commercial commodity, and facilities have been provided in various ways for the utilisation of the carcases. We know that once we allow the industry to grow up in this State, and rabbits are brought from the far portion of the State to the centre, this is bound to lead to an increase of the rabbits on this side of the fence. If we are going to deal with this question let us do it completely. I would make it a crime in Western Australia for anyone to deal in rabbits from the commercial point of view.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: It appears to me the great point made by the Honorary Minister is as to whether the commercial aspect when dealing with rabbits would not act detrimentally to the destruction of the rabbit pest. We are not studying the commercial aspect of the rabbits and rabbits have been coming into Western Australia for years. On looking at the interstate statistics I find that under the heading of "Meats," the number of rabbits and hares imported from the Eastern States to Western Australia during the six months from the 1st of July to the 31st December was 88,060, clearly showing that there are thousands of people in Western Australia who have a special taste for rabbits. So long as we limit the trade to the Eastern States, people in Western Australia will still have to pay the present high price for rabbits which I believe is 1s. 6d. There are tens of thousands of people in the metropolitan area who are consumers of rabbits, and I would not be doing my duty if any action of mine tended to keep up the price for rabbits. We should facilitate the bringing of rabbits to the metropolitan area from the eastern side of the fence; permits can be granted to allow this to be done. Having listened to the remarks of previous members, I shall support the proposed new clause.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN: The report of the committee appointed by another place to inquire into the rabbit pest states, "We do not think that trapped rabbits from districts where poison is being laid should be sold, although there is no evidence of any danger. The weight of evidence and the experience in other States is against the professional trapper, and we do not recommend that he be encouraged, but this remark is not intended to apply to the goldfields or outside No. 1 fence where we can see no objection to professional trapping." Therefore, the select committee has strongly recommended that persons should be allowed to trap rabbits for food which is in accordance with my amendment. The Council thought much might be gained from the inquiry being made by the rabbit pest committee of another place that we postponed the consideration of this Bill so as to have an opportunity of considering their findings. The report of a committee of this sort is worthy of consideration and should

have weight with us. No argument has been brought forward against the amendment. There is a large number of people living east of the No. 1 barrier fence and they have had to bear their share of the erection of that fence, but these people are denied the right of marketing the rabbits in this State, a right that is not denied the people in the Eastern States which is not fair.

Hon. J. CUNNINGHAM: I have looked through some of the evidence taken by the committee of another place and I find that in Western Australia there is a rabbit industry on a commercial basis, especially on the goldfields. Persons have been dealing in rabbits for some considerable time. Owing to a dispute with people engaged in the industry in the Eastern States for the supply of rabbits to Western Australia, arrangements have been made locally to trap the rabbits and market them here and since the 1st May last 15,000 or 16,000 rabbits every month have been marketed in Western Australia and the trade is on the increase. The Honorary Minister has pointed out that it is not the policy of the Government to allow this business to continue. I learn from this evening's paper under the heading of "Crop and Stock returns," that Constable Donovan of Menzies points out that the season has been a good one and that rabbits were plentiful everywhere. The policy of the Government is not to restrict the rabbits in these districts, yet we are expected to disallow people who are prepared to do trapping in these areas, to market their produce. That is the position. They can trap and sell rabbits on the goldfields, but we refuse them the right to send rabbits to the market in Perth. Sufficient has been said in favour of the amendment to lead me to believe that it will be carried. What harm can be done by trapping rabbits in an area in respect of which the Government propose to do nothing in the way of combating the pest? Evidence was given before the select committee by a returned soldier desirous of entering into the avocation of rabbit trapping. We should not put obstacles in the way of a man who wishes to trap rabbits in an area where nothing else is being done towards their extermination. I hope the new clause will be carried.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I trust the Minister, when replying to the remarks of hon. members, will give us the answer of the department's experts to the paragraph in the select committee's report referred to by Mr. Kirwan. I also hope that the Minister will explain to us the nature of the special leases which may be issued by him for the trapping of rabbits.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: My reference was merely to a provision in the Act that no person shall trap rabbits west of the fence without a license from the Minister.

New clause put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	7
Noes	..	..	..	9
Majority against				2

AYES.

Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. H. F. Colebatch	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. J. Nicholson	(Teller.)

New clause thus negatived.

[The President resumed the Chair.]

Bill again reported with further amendments.

As to recommitment.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [7.53]: I move—

“That the Bill be recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 4.”

Hon. W. KINGSMILL (Metropolitan) [7.54]: I am not going to support the motion, although, at the same time, I will not oppose it. I have seen the amendment which the hon. member wishes to move to Clause 4 and I thank Mr. Sanderson for the remarks he made in regard to the habit hon. members are getting into of not putting amendments on the Notice Paper. In regard to simple amendments, of course, it does not matter, but when we come to an amendment such as that proposed by the hon. member, it is essential that such amendments, which require the very careful consideration of hon. members, and comparison with the parent Act, should appear on the Notice Paper. As an officer of the House, I will not oppose the motion, but I think it is an absolutely wrong course to recommit the Bill for the purpose of dealing straight away with an amendment of the nature of that proposed by the hon. member.

The PRESIDENT: I advise the hon. member to withdraw his motion and move to recommit the Bill on the consideration of the report at the next sitting. This would give him time to put his amendment on the Notice Paper.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I shall be pleased to do that. I withdraw my motion.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

BILL—EMPLOYMENT BROKERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. J. E. DODD (South—in reply) [7.57]: In moving the second reading I refrained as far as possible from saying anything likely to antagonise any section of the community. I relied on the simple justice of the measure to commend it to hon. members. The opposition to the Bill has come principally from members who say that employees are very indifferent as to their engagement, and will not stay a long time in their positions. I would like to point out that it is not altogether the employee who is to blame. I could quote a number of cases

where the employer is equally to blame with the employee, and where the employee is not always served as he should be by his employer. I am not going to detail any number of cases of victimisation on the part of employers, but I could, if necessary, refer to quite a number. If any hon. member desires to test the truth of this statement, he can appeal to the chief inspector of factories, who, I am sure, would bear me out. I believe the employment brokers at the present time are endeavouring to carry out their business very fairly. At the same time, that does not get over the fact that it is only an act of simple justice to make the employer and the employee jointly pay these fees. I have here the corresponding Acts of all the other States of the Commonwealth except Tasmania, and in every one of those States the employer bears an equal share, or more than an equal share, of the fees charged. In New Zealand the employer bears a much greater share of the fees charged than the employee does. In one of the other Australian States—I am not sure which—the same thing obtains. But in all the other States the employer and the employee jointly pay the fee. I shall not labour the question. I think the Bill will commend itself to all hon. members when they come to look at it fairly and squarely. It will at least render a certain justice to a large section of the community who have been seething with discontent—as I may inform those hon. members who think there has been none—for a considerable time. I have been connected with labour organisations and have attended labour congresses ever since the principal Act came into operation in 1909, and I can assure hon. members that at every representative conference which I attended this matter has been brought up and instances have been given of grave injustices taking place. I hope that the second reading of the Bill will be carried and that the measure will become a law.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	..	6

Majority for 6

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. A. Greig
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. H. F. Colebatch	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. E. Rose
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. J. Nicholson
	(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. W. Kingsmill in the Chair; Hon. J. E. Dodd in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 15 of No. 57 of 1909:

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I intend to oppose this clause. I have listened very carefully to all the arguments which have been used, and I have heard nothing which has convinced me of the necessity for this Bill. The measure seems to me a wholly unnecessary interference with private enterprise. It is not as though there were no alternative to the employment brokers. Three avenues are open to the workers seeking employment. If there were a monopoly I would support this clause. But those dissatisfied with the employment broker can go to the State Labour Bureau, or else proceed by way of an advertisement costing 1s. At present there is no difficulty whatever for the ordinary worker to obtain employment. I hope hon. members will acquit me and other opponents of this clause of opposing it because it is going to cost the employer something in the way of employment brokers' fees. The cost to the employer is merely infinitesimal. A man who engages 50 employees per annum would under this clause have to pay one-half of registry office fees amounting to £25, or £12 10s. annually. How would such an amount affect the employer of 50 employees? Frequently employers who go to employment bureaus tell the broker that they will pay him a special fee if he obtains them good workmen. It has been termed a hardship that some employees have to visit the employment broker several times a year. But that is, in the great majority of cases, the fault of the employee, who probably accepts employment in a distant part of the State and then resigns really out of desire for a change. Mr. Millington in rather an interesting speech quoted the legislation of other States where the principle of this Bill is in vogue. But he did not assert that there were free Government Labour Bureaus in those States.

Hon. J. E. DODD: There are free bureaus in Queensland and New South Wales.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: But is there in South Australia? The alternative of the free Government Labour Bureau is the great principle of Western Australia in this matter. It has been stated that the employers here always apply to the employment brokers in preference to the Government Labour Bureau, and that therefore employees have to visit the private offices in order to obtain employment. But the employers are only too glad to go wherever they get the best labour; and it seems that, for some reason inexplicable to me, the best labour does go to the private employment broker instead of to the Government Labour Bureau. I see no necessity whatever for this Bill at the present time. It represents an undue interference with private enterprise, and there is no hardship imposed on the workers, who have open to them three avenues for seeking employment. I hope hon. members will reject this clause.

Clause put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	6
Majority for	..	..	..	6

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. A. Greig
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. J. W. Hickey
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. Nicholson	Hon. V. Hammersley
	(Teller.)

Clause thus passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 28:

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: I cannot consistently allow this clause to pass. Indeed, I think this clause is more mischievous than the preceding one. This enables the Government to actually fix the scale of charges, and they can do that in such a way as to make it impossible for the employment brokers to live. I am not prepared to say that the Government would do that, but the Government would be empowered to do it by the clause. If that does not give a monopoly to a Government running a bureau in opposition, I do not know what does. We are asking people to start in businesses and to help to make the country a thriving one, yet we find that the Government try to block them by means of legislation.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I am always opposed to government by regulation, and I would ask the hon. member in charge of the Bill why he cannot give us the specific charges, and no allow them to be fixed by the Government. I would hand over this matter to the Government to arrange by regulation we do not know what they will do.

Hon. J. E. DODD: I do not know whether or not it would have been better to have fixed the charges as suggested by the hon. member rather than leave the matter to be arranged by regulation. In South Australia the charges are in the Act, but in the other States they are fixed by regulation. This is a private Bill and it simply aims at removing an injustice. All regulations, as hon. members know, must lie on the Table of the House, when hon. members are able to see the manner in which they are framed. We need not take any exception to the Government being the framers of these regulations. The Government do not desire that employment brokers go out of existence. If the Government wished to do away with employment brokers they would do so without resorting to such practices.

Hon. C. SOMMERS: I am going to oppose the clause. There is no doubt that a previous Government would have done away with employment brokers if the opportunity had been given them. I think that the object of making the fees low is that the employment brokers may not live. Why it is proposed to aim a blow at these people I do not know. They are only six of them, and they are all women and now at one stroke it is proposed to take their living from them. The system has worked well in the past, although we hear remarks about people being victimised. I have had a good deal to do with them, and I have always

been well treated and always heard them well spoken of.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: After the reasonable attitude adopted by Mr. Dodd, I hope he will take the assurance from me that I have not any hostility to the Bill. If we allow the clause to pass we will simply hand over to the Government what is practically a blank cheque. The hon. member might report progress and in the meantime consult the registry offices, see what is a reasonable and fair thing to charge, and include it in the Bill.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I am rather inclined to adopt the same attitude as Mr. Sanderson. I do not know, however, that there is any need to fix the fees. If there is, it is more satisfactory that the maximum fee should be fixed in the Bill rather than it should be left to regulation. It has been suggested that although this might be done by regulation, there is protection in the fact that the regulations have to be laid on the Table of Parliament. A number of Acts recently passed have made provision that when regulations are laid on the Table they can, within a certain period, be disallowed by either House, and that is a right provision, because it implies that whereas it requires both Houses to make a law, it should require the concurrence of both Houses to sanction a regulation. This measure is not one of those passed since it became customary for the Legislative Council to insist, where it gave power to make regulations, that this House or the other House should have power of disallowing such regulations. The clause gives no power of disallowance by Parliament, and consequently the matter is dealt with under the Interpretation Act, which requires the disallowance of both Houses before a regulation becomes ineffective. For that reason I think it would be better to have the maximum fees fixed in the Bill.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The words of the last speaker are somewhat remarkable, taking into consideration his action on almost every occasion when a measure has come before this House in which the question of regulations was involved. He has pointed out that the regulations will be laid on the Table. Hon. members will have the opportunity of perusing those regulations, and if the regulations do not meet with their approval they may make amendments to them.

The Colonial Secretary: I have just pointed out that this is exactly what you cannot do.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: We have precedents in the Acts of the various States, and the regulations appertaining to those Acts, and these should be sufficient to guide us in any action we may take, and also enable us to rest assured that the fees which will be prescribed will be equitable and of a nature suitable to the positions which are being obtained by those seeking employment. I support the clause, and think it would be a step in the right direction.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We have gone along very well without a Bill of this kind. The clause under consideration is, in my opinion,

a dangerous one. A lot of trouble will occur unless the scale of charges is fixed as suggested by some hon. members. I do not think the object of the clause is to get rid of half a dozen employment brokers, but to have a centre established at which all employees shall meet in order that they may get employment. When we get a body of employees together we usually find amongst them some agitator, and conditions are obtained which would not otherwise be obtained.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the clause.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The clause prescribes a scale of charges, and I am trying to place the objects of it before the Committee.

Hon. J. E. DODD: We certainly are close to the end of the session. This is a private Bill introduced by an hon. member in another place, and we have been asked to take it up here. The hon. member in question I know considered the Acts which were in force in the other States when he brought his Bill forward, and based it upon these particular measures. Almost every one of these Acts gives the same power that is being asked for here. I was under the impression that all these regulations had to be laid on the table of the House, and were subject to disallowance by either House, despite the fact that this is not laid down in this particular Bill. To wipe out the clause altogether would be to destroy the efficacy of the measure. The suggestion of Mr. Holmes as to an agitator is an unkind one, considering the manner in which the supporters of this Bill have placed their views before the Committee.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: I ask hon. members to note the appeal which we have just heard, and must appreciate. We are getting near to the end of at least a part of the session. The hon. member thinks that with a little push he can get this Bill through. This particular clause is more objectionable than ever from the opponents' point of view. If the hon. member will agree to report progress and get the whole thing down on paper and we adjourn for a month, I shall be ready to give the measure my support if I am here to do so. If an attempt is made to force it through I shall vote against it.

Hon. J. A. GREIG: I cannot support the clause as it stands, or any clause specifying the amount which these brokers are to charge. We will be doing away with that open competition, which I am pleased to see at present existing amongst these people.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I am rather surprised that the Colonial Secretary objects to the Government taking the responsibility of drafting a schedule of charges. I agree that we have not time to make the necessary inquiry, and to get expert evidence on the question. On the other hand the Government, with the assistance of their departmental officers, should be able to draft the schedule of charges. I do not think the Colonial Secretary wishes to shirk his responsibility in this respect. To say that hon. members of the Chamber can frame this schedule themselves by fossicking around a registered office is, to my mind, preposterous.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: What is the hurry for a month?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I want to know why there is any necessity for delay. I object to the Bill being postponed and possibly jettisoned. No reason has been advanced for postponing it. If the Bill does not work out as it is thought it will, the Government will have to take the responsibility of drafting a schedule of charges.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I merely rise to assure the Committee that, after refreshing my memory, the statement I made before is absolutely correct. Although a number of Acts, recently passed, gave power to either House of Parliament to disallow regulations this Employment Brokers Bill gives no specific power of disallowance, and consequently it falls under the Interpretation Act, which says that regulations shall continue in force unless repealed or altered under the powers given by the Act or disallowed by both Houses of Parliament. Consequently it might be possible for the Government to frame regulations which were entirely hostile to the wishes of members of this Chamber.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: It is only a matter of a few weeks when another session of Parliament will be commenced. It will then be an easy matter to bring in an amendment, and get both Houses to agree to it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I must strongly object to the clause. If the scale of charges be fixed, then let it be fixed and determined by the measure. The difficulty, as pointed out by the Colonial Secretary, would then be overcome. I must vote against the clause.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: It seems to me absolutely superfluous to make any scale of fees because we have the competition of the employment brokers and we also have an institution where servants can go without payment of a fee, the Labour Bureau. Therefore, it will right itself by the competition. If the rates are too high, or not fair enough, there is the Labour Bureau to which these servants can go for nothing.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The fact of the previous clause fixing clearly an equal rate for the employer and the employee does away with the necessity for fixing a scale of charges. That, coupled with the fact that there is competition between the brokers, does away with the necessity for the clause at all.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Under the Employment Brokers Act, an employment broker must deposit with the Minister, and also post in a conspicuous place on his premises, a copy of the scale of payments for the time being chargeable for the hiring of servants, and if the broker does not do that he is liable to a fine of £20, and on any broker charging a fee in excess of that of which notice has been given there is a like fine imposed.

Hon. A. SANDERSON: We have had no indication from the member in charge of the Bill of what he is going to do. Practically there is a scale of charges at the present time, which is half a week's wages. If the member in charge of the Bill will have a scale of charges fixed, or have a minimum, we can then discuss that.

Hon. J. E. DODD: The debate shows how impracticable is the suggestion of Mr. Sander-

son. If the Committee attempted to fix the fee, we might sit here for a week and I do not know how long it would be for the Bill to get back to another place. It is impracticable to fix the fees. As to the point raised by the Colonial Secretary, I am aware that the rate of fees has to be deposited with the Minister, but that is simply to give information to the Factories Department.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: The principal objections emanate from those who are in a position to pay an equal share of the fee prescribed by the regulations. The employment brokers derive their livelihood principally from those in the metropolitan area who engage domestic servants. No argument brought forward convinces me that the person purchasing the labour is not entitled to pay one-half of the fee charged.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: In fixing a scale of fees to be charged, we would wreck the Act already in existence, which up to the present time has worked satisfactorily.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	..	13
Majority against					7

AYES.

Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. J. Duffell	(Teller.)
Hon. J. W. Kirwan	

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. E. Ross
Hon. C. McKenzie	(Teller.)

Clause thus negatived.

Clause 4—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

[The President resumed the Chair.]
Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—WHEAT MARKETING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [9.0]: The extension of the Wheat Marketing Act we must all applaud, because it is still practically impossible to market our wheat by the methods of the past. It is regrettable that we were not able to make this extension some months earlier, because we have almost arrived at the time when an extension should have been already proclaimed for even a year later. The growing of wheat extends over a very long period, and last year, from June to October, when the farmers were engaged in making preparation for their new crop they were very uncertain as to what expense they were warranted in going to in sowing another crop for this year, because

until they had some assurance that there was a chance of the wheat being acquired they were faced with a grave possibility of its being left on their hands. Just now we are almost on the eve of a similar position. The Bill gives a guarantee for the 1917-18 crop, which has been harvested already, and at present we are seeding our areas for a new crop which is also covered by the Bill. Within a few months the whole of the farmers will be making preparations for seeding operations 12 months hence. These matters should not be postponed, because already there exists the tendency to put in smaller and smaller areas of wheat owing to the uncertainty of the disposal of the crop. The farming community throughout Australia have to thank the respective Governments and the people who are giving an undertaking of this nature. By an agreement adopted throughout the different States, a system has grown up by which the farmers are assured of some reasonable return for the asset they are creating. A great many people believe that the farmer is a fearful burden upon the State. Such people fail to realise the good work the farmer is quietly doing in producing wheat which we had sincerely hoped we could put on the markets of the world, and which, of course, will be immensely valuable the moment the war is over. The asset which is being created is of the utmost value, and we earnestly hope that the war will soon end and that we shall then have a ready means of placing the wheat on the world's markets. Because to-day it is unrealisable all the farmers are in an unfortunate position. A great deal of money has been borrowed by the several Governments and distributed, but I am quite certain that the wheat produced will fully justify this as soon as the war is over. The Bill has far-reaching effects. A very great change has taken place since the inauguration of the scheme. There are in the measure agreements which I think have only just been entered into. Certainly they are quite new to hon. members, and they require very careful consideration. Therefore I advise that we should not rush this measure, that ample time should be given us to consider it. Farmers all over the country are feeling very much concerned as to their position. One question frequently put to me by farmers is in regard to the costly storage accommodation now being provided at Spencer's Brook, Midland Junction, and other centres. Tremendous sheds have been constructed at the expense of the wheat pool. Those sheds are on Crown land, and the question arises, to whom will those sheds belong when the wheat pool no longer requires them? Personally I regret that a great many of those works were not carried out at the inauguration of the scheme.

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister): You do not suggest that it is too late now.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It is a great deal too late this year. Thousands of bushels of wheat are being destroyed now. Negligence has been responsible for that. When we know that the cost of those sheds is to come out of the wheat pool the farmers should be told to whom the sheds really belong, and

what chance there may be of realising anything like their fair value, or if it is really intended to realise on them when bulk handling shall have been inaugurated. I regret extremely that bulk handling was not put into operation by the Commonwealth Government when the various States declined it. Had a scheme of bulk handling been entered into in the early stages of this wheat undertaking we should not have heard of the fearful ravages of mice and weevils. We know that a professor has been brought out to Australia to advise in connection with this, and to see that we do not send rubbishy wheat to the Old Country. In spite of his statement that the weevil trouble can be coped with, a great many of us doubt it. Under a proper system of bulk handling the weevil would have very little chance of getting in his deadly work.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: What would bulk handling cost?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I have not the figures at hand, but they have been computed by the department. I believe we are to be asked to agree to an initial system of bulk handling under a Bill which is now before another place. Errors have been made in the past, and in view of this we should not rush through a measure of this kind. We thought we were thoroughly safeguarded in some of the past agreements under which the acquiring agents entered into contracts. Those agents were receiving what I regarded as an extremely high price as compared with the previous costs of handling wheat for shipment. We understood that they were taking full responsibility for all the losses. It now seems they have taken none of those responsibilities. I understand that they have practically ceased to control the wheat they previously handled, and that it has been taken over by a committee specially appointed. It seems clear that the whole responsibility for losses is to fall upon the wheat pool.

Hon. C. F. Baxter (Honorary Minister): That is not so; we are being indemnified for some of the losses.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: But it only goes to show that members of this Chamber and of another place should give these measures the most careful consideration. I find no fault with the new agreement, although there are members who have criticised the action of the Government in that respect. Personally I hold that the new agreement represents a very wise move, and certainly will bring about a huge reduction on the costs obtaining hitherto. The saving should amount to almost one penny per bushel, and that represents a very considerable amount on the quantity of wheat coming into the pool. I also know of various abuses which have grown up at the sidings and at the wheat producing centres. With five wheat acquiring agents, who again each had their separate representatives, competition sprang up which was unhealthy. Members of this House did not become aware of the abuses which arose, but those who saw the competition going on realised that it was not a good thing for the wheat pool. Therefore it is

wiser that one control should handle the whole of the wheat, and I am convinced that the farmers generally realise that the move was a good one. I am satisfied, also, that as time goes on there will be still further reductions in the cost of handling wheat at the various sidings. In connection with such a system, there are hide-bound practices which grow up, and those practices we may be able to abolish by having only one agency for the wheat. Undoubtedly, at many sidings where wheat was sent off by the truck, much unnecessary expense was incurred. We might well revert to the old system whereby farmers loaded their wheat into the trucks for themselves, and weighed it by a weighbridge instead of arriving at the total by weighing each bag separately. At a large centre like Dowerin, there is a system of weighing the whole load in one operation, a system adopted quite freely by the municipalities of this State, and also by the Railway Department at all important stations. That system, inaugurated by the farmers themselves to minimise handling, has absolutely been closed down, and each bag of wheat is being weighed separately. The result is that large staffs of men are employed at the various centres just to handle wheat a bag at a time. A further result is that when the farmers come in with their wheat they frequently have to stand aside for hours waiting their turn. It all takes away from the opportunity the farmers have of carrying on their industry. I am confident, however, that the new agreement will have a tendency to rectify some of those errors. The wheat scheme represents a big experiment, and no doubt there are some surprises in store for the farmers. I regret exceedingly that the farmers have not been able to obtain further advances from the pool, and that the Minister does not hold out too bright hopes of further advances. There is, of course, the difficulty arising from the shortage of shipping tonnage, but I trust the farmer will soon receive a further cheque on account of the assets which he has been building up for the wheat pool, and for the State as a whole. With general commendation of the measure I support the second reading.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM (North) I move—

“That the debate be adjourned to this day week.”

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): Surely the hon. member will be prepared to go on with this debate to-morrow. It is hardly fair to hold up a Bill of this importance for a whole week.

Hon. Sir E. H. WITTENOOM: We want to delay it for a week on account of its importance.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER (Honorary Minister): Let me refresh the memories of hon. members by remarking that the carrying of this motion will mean practically holding the Bill over for five weeks. I move an amendment—

“That the debate be adjourned till to-morrow.”

Amendment put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	7

Majority for .. 5

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. J. Holmes
Hon. H. Carson	Hon. J. W. Kirwan
Hon. H. P. Colebatch	Hon. H. Millington
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. C. Sommers
Hon. J. A. Greig	Hon. J. Duffell
Hon. V. Hamersley	(Teller.)
Hon. J. W. Hickey	

NOES.

Hon. W. Kingsmill	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. C. McKenzie	Hon. Sir E. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. W. Miles	Hon. A. Sanderson
Hon. J. Nicholson	(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the debate adjourned to the following day.

ADJOURNMENT—STATE OF BUSINESS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. P. Colebatch—East) [9.27]: With your permission, Sir, I would like to make a brief statement to hon. members. On Thursday last a resolution was carried to the effect that this House should not sit within one month of the biennial election. In terms of that resolution it would be necessary for us to adjourn not later than Saturday next. I have no doubt that if hon. members saw that by sitting a day or two longer they could bring the session to a close, they would be quite willing to do it; but I am certainly not now in a position to suggest that that could be accomplished. However, I think hon. members will agree with me that if we are to adjourn for a month it will be at least necessary for us to pass the Appropriation Bill, which I hope to have early to-morrow, and also that it will be desirable, if it is the will of hon. members, that those Bills of which the consideration has been practically completed should be finished with and passed on to another place. In the hope that that may be accomplished, I desire to give hon. members notice that to-morrow I shall move that for the remainder of the current week so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable Bills to be taken through all their stages at one sitting, and to enable messages from the Legislative Assembly to be taken into consideration forthwith when received. I shall also move to-morrow that the House at its rising—that is, when we have completed what business we may have to-morrow—shall adjourn until three p.m. on Friday, the 12th April. I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 9.30 p.m.