

ber did one of the prettiest little things that has been done in this House. When he found that the strain of making a number of second reading speeches was beginning to tell upon me he got up and delivered two second reading speeches without any preparation whatever, just in order to give me a chance. That is the sort of little thing that appeals to me. My friend the member for Katanning proposes taking 20 per cent. off the pastoralists and putting it on to somebody else who does not produce. That kind of thing would puzzle a Philadelphian lawyer. How would it be possible to even dream of a serviceable method of collecting? From all this terrific taxation I am only going to get £140,000 if I get it all, exactly the same as Mr. Scaddan foreshadowed when he brought in his super tax. If the condition of the State called for sacrifices then, it calls for sacrifices now; if it called for every man starting at £157 to pay then, it calls for him to pay now. It must not be forgotten that if the proposed exemption is taken away, I shall have to recast everything. On the one hand I am inclined to agree with the member for Hannaus that perhaps I drop off too quickly after the £1,500. My friends here say that it is scandalous, whereas the man who is to be hit by it also says it is scandalous. If we are going to get this thing through we require to have taxation. That is generally recognised, if not in the House, at all events outside the House. If it had not been for the stand I made at the time, these taxation measures would have been brought in 18 months ago, and we would all have been paying under them since that time. Instead of that, we have been free from taxation during these 18 months; but our expenditure, domestic and otherwise, has been going up all the time. That is the position. It seems to me we are not yet ready for taxation, except it is to tax the other man. We passed to-night taxation of dividends, increased by 25 per cent., and taxation of insurance companies which, I am told, represents an increase of 100 per cent.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That is not taxing the other fellow.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes it is, very materially.

Mr. Green: It will be passed on, and the worker will pay.

Mr. Lambert: The producer will pay.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I have listened to the debates to-night, and I do not know which is the producer and which is the worker. The member for Kanowna tells us that the workers are the real source of wealth, while my friends of the Country party say that the producers are the sole source of wealth.

Hon. T. Walker: Are not they workers?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is the position. Where I am I do not know.

Hon. T. Walker: I know you don't.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I tell you I am dead straight in this, and I tell the House and the country the position is dead straight. When I cannot be dead straight in this respect I shall not want to be here. I want to believe in my heart of hearts that there is a desire in the country and in the

House, even at the expense of sacrifice, to get within coo-ee of paying our way. In my private or business life I never like to think that there is a possibility of cheques being dishonoured, and I do not want that possibility in our public life. The only way we can prevent that is by saying that we shall each bear some share of the sacrifice, and be prepared, even when it hits our own pockets, to say, "Very well, for the good of our State, as our sons are fighting for its future, we will fight also."

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Colonial Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Progress reported.

ORDERS OF THE DAY DISCHARGED.

On motion by the Minister for Works the following Orders were discharged from the Notice Paper:—

1. Public Education Act Amendment Bill.
2. Interpretation Bill.
3. Prisons Act Amendment Bill.
4. Criminal Code Amendment Bill.
5. Church of England Diocesan Trustees and Land Bill.

House adjourned at 11.30 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Friday, 19th April, 1918.

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

[For "Questions on Notice" and "Papers Presented" see "Votes and Proceedings."]

QUESTION—RETURNED SOLDIERS IN HOSPITAL FOR INSANE.

Mr. GREEN (without notice) asked the Minister for Works: How many returned soldiers at present remain in the Hospital for the Insane at Claremont?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: I cannot possibly furnish the information asked for at once, but will obtain it and forward it to the hon. member.

BILL—FREMANTLE ENDOWMENT

LANDS.

All stages.

Introduced by the Minister for Works, and read a first time.

Second Reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [3.5] in moving the second reading said: This Bill deals with some endowment land in the possession of the Fremantle municipality, and it is proposed to transfer some portion of it to the Melville roads board. The Bill will also confer some powers upon the municipal council, so that they may make use of the land in the way of leasing it. I may say that the measure is the result of a mutual agreement arrived at between the two bodies. I am informed that everything is in order so far as the control of the Works Department is concerned, and also so far as the control of the Crown Law Department is concerned. I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

BILL—SPECIAL LEASE (GYPSUM).

Report of Select Committee, to adopt.

Order of the Day read for resumption of debate on consideration of the select committee's report.

Question put and passed; select committee's report adopted.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [3.9]: In view of the lateness of the session, I move—

"That the House do now proceed with the second reading of the Bill."

Question put and passed.

Second Reading.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [3.10]: I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etcetera.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; Mr. Piesse in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short title:

Mr. FOLEY: The hon. member in charge of the Bill yesterday informed us that he would furnish us with information, which would enable us to decide whether to vote in favour of granting this 5,000 acres, or not. I should be glad if the hon. member would give this information to the Committee. I am not satisfied that this large area of land is absolutely necessary for the carrying on of this particular industry.

Mr. PIESSE: I am informed by the State Mining Engineer that he is of opinion that this area of 5,000 acres, although apparently a large one, is not too large when it is considered that

the object is to establish a new industry. He also said that the gypsum deposits within the State were fairly extensive, and that in his opinion there would be no fear of a monopoly being established by the granting of this area. He further stated that no expert examination had been made of this particular deposit, or lease, by the experts of the Mines Department, but he felt sure that there was an abundant supply of gypsum in this State. Mr. Montgomery saw no reason to oppose, in the circumstances, the granting of the area.

Mr. FOLEY: The Committee should not accept the opinion of the mining experts without knowing on what it is based. Five thousand acres is a very large area. If the position is that only scattered patches of the area, aggregating, say, 2,000 acres, could be used for the manufacture of gypsum, the Bill might be passed. Can the hon. member give the Committee such an assurance?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Five thousand acres represents a very considerable area to grant to one company, though the State Mining Engineer's opinion is that the area would not represent a monopoly to this company. Still, a smaller area would serve their purposes. Their reason for asking for 5,000 acres is that they may have something fairly substantial to offer to the public on flotation. Personally, I think 640 acres would suffice amply. The deposit, I understand, varies in depth from 6 inches to 10 feet. If the company could get 640 acres with an average depth of, say, 7 feet, they would have an enormous deposit. From a perusal of the files, and from consultation with people I know, I gather, however, that there is no uniformity of depth. My opinion is that 640 acres would be quite enough, and I think this opinion is backed up by the State Mining Engineer.

Mr. GREEN: Like most members, I look with a jealous eye upon the granting of any concession which may represent an industrial monopoly. But what is asked under this Bill represents something entirely different. The map hanging in the hallway shows that Lake Cowcowing has an area of fully 50,000 acres. This Bill, therefore, proposes to grant only one tenth of the lake; and I am assured that the larger portion of the lake is country similar to this. An area of 5,000 acres is asked for in order to make the proposal attractive to the public.

The Minister for Mines: And to help the pioneering of the industry.

Mr. GREEN: Yes. The proposition has so far not been rushed by outside investors, and the people concerned have spent about £1,000 on it. What this country needs is secondary industries, to help the primary industries. Therefore, we ought to make the conditions as lenient as possible. I am assured that the chain of lakes in the district is all of the same character. One of the people interested was asked, before the select committee, why so large an area as 5,000 acres was required, and the reply was—

The area is not all plaster of Paris. It is only round the edge of the lake that we can take a good gypsum. Inside the lake

it is all powder, like this. (Sample produced.)

The better quality of gypsum, and that which would naturally be worked first, is that which follows the margin of the lake. I have been in that portion of Colorado which is known as "the Garden of the Gods," and there one sees whole mountains of gypsum. These people will have to wash their product before they can treat it at all, and they will have great difficulty in getting fresh water at Mt. Marshall, and will, in fact, be able to get it only during portion of the year. Their difficulties must be recognised as great, and I think we should assist the endeavour to establish an industry with a considerable amount of capital behind it. Apart from this, there is no possibility of establishing the gypsum industry in this State.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope the Committee will pass the Bill in its entirety, though I can understand the anxiety of some members as to whether the area of 5,000 acres would represent a monopoly. However, the total quantity of plaster of Paris imported into Western Australia last year was 2,209 cwt., of the value of £964; from which it is plain that these people are taking a big risk in attempting to establish the industry. It is passing strange that whenever any concession is applied for, Parliament, with a perfectly honest and sincere desire to protect the interests of the community, becomes suspicious. Unfortunately, the result has been that in one or two instances Parliament has, quite unintentionally, prevented the establishment of an industry. This area of 5,000 acres is of practically no commercial value. The lake at present returns no revenue whatever to the State, and, unless made use of by some such company as this, is not likely to return anything for the next 50 years. The figures I have quoted as to the use of plaster of Paris in Western Australia prove that the shareholders in the proposed company are not likely to become millionaires. Our aim should be to encourage industry.

Mr. TEESDALE: While not wishing to retard in any way the establishment of new industries, and while not in any way objecting to the acreage to be granted under this Bill, I take exception to the trivial rental imposed, especially at a time when money is so very necessary to the State. According to the figures quoted by the member for Katanning, the royalty cannot amount to anything considerable. An output of 2,000 tons of gypsum would only carry £100 royalty. I have for years been paying a rental of £40 annually for 2,000 acres of salt lake, which, unfortunately, I am unable to work owing to want of capital. Why the discrepancy between the rental in my case and that proposed under this Bill? Perhaps Ministers will throw a little light on the principle governing assessment of rents.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): This is absolutely waste land, and the value of our waste lands is 1s., just the same as poison land. If this were poison land they would only pay half the rent that they are now being asked to pay.

Mr. LAMBERT: I have given a good deal of consideration to this matter, and I have

spoken to the State Mining Engineer about it. Looking up the statistics in regard to the use of plaster of Paris in this State, and the possibility of the company being able to compete with the Eastern States, I have come to the conclusion that the area they want is altogether too large. I would suggest a reduction in the acreage, and that we should add to Clause 1 a few words which would enable the company to use the product of the land for other purposes. The clause ties them to the use of gypsum, and the agreement provides that the company must continuously employ five men, but they cannot employ five men solely on the work of supplying plaster of Paris in this State. There are many other respects in which gypsum can be used, and we should permit the company to use it in every direction possible. Under the agreement I do not think it is possible for them to use the lease for purpose other than those specified, and it would be regrettable if they found that they had to come before us again to ask us to widen the scope of the agreement or if they had to throw up the lease altogether.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2:

Mr. PIESSE: The original company were granted 5,000 acres for the purpose of manufacturing manures, and if it was reasonable that they should enjoy the privilege of a 5,000-acre area for that purpose, I cannot see why the present company should not have it. I understand the member for Coolgardie is desirous of reducing the area and increasing the scope of the company's operations, but I cannot see that the State will gain very much by doing either. In the course of the evidence which was taken by the select committee, it was pointed out that the deposit did not spread over the whole of the 5,000 acres, but that it was only in patches. That was the only testimony we had as to the quantity of gypsum in that area.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I hope the Committee will agree to the Bill as it is. The select committee advised the granting of the lease. If we are to have industries established, we must treat the people generously. It is more important that we should have industries providing freight for our railways than that we should consider the question of a few pounds for rent. The rent which we get from these leases is entirely beside the question. It has been the policy of the Government to encourage those who are willing to start industries. Have we not granted hundreds of thousands of acres for the prospecting of oil? May they find it. In every way possible we should encourage enterprise.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I have been assured by the hon. member in charge of the Bill that the State Mining Engineer has declared that we would not be giving the company a monopoly by allowing them to have the area they require. That does away with the objection which I raised yesterday. But to my surprise the Honorary Minister (Mr. Willmott) states that we should be in the position of having all the files dealing with the question, and that he thought the area was too much.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I was careful to say that was my personal opinion.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: When the Minister who has to deal with the granting of these areas declares that the area required in connection with this matter is too much, it makes one wonder whether there are two reports dealing with it. We should do everything possible to encourage new industries, subject, of course, to the recommendation of our responsible officers. As we have been assured now that nothing detrimental to the State will follow the granting of this lease I have no further objection to offer.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I have gone into this matter for some time past, and the member for Northam, when Minister for Lands, also dealt with it before I did. My officers from their point of view considered that 640 acres would be sufficient. The State Mining Engineer, however, is of the opinion that if these people consider it necessary that they should have 5,000 acres to enable them to start the industry, they should be allowed to have it. If the company are prepared to work a smaller area, the State Mining Engineer thinks that 640 acres would be sufficient. The member for Coolgardie desires to give the company greater power, but there is nothing in the Bill to prevent the company using the land or the products of the land for any purpose whatever. It is quite unnecessary, therefore, for the hon. member to amend the Bill.

Mr. Lambert: I would like to have the opinion of the Attorney General on that point.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Whilst this is a special lease for a special purpose, it does not exclude other purposes. In leases of land, if it is desired to exclude other purposes it must be expressly stated. I think therefore the lessee in this case would be entitled to use this land for any legitimate purpose that other land could be used for.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule, Title, Preamble—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—DIVIDEND DUTIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—VERMIN BOARDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister—Nelson) [3.50] in moving the second reading said: The object of the Bill is to give the necessary power to deal with the rabbit pest and the dingo pest. The present Act certainly has not been rigidly enforced, for the

very good reason that it requires many amendments to render it workable under existing conditions. The necessity for those amendments has been recognised ever since 1910. During the last few months some extravagant statements have been made, and there has been amongst the people a general feeling of alarm concerning the invasion of rabbits. It has been said that the State has done nothing to prevent the rabbits overrunning the country. As a matter of fact, a great deal has been done. During the last 18 years the State has spent £700,000 in dealing with the rabbits, and we are spending to-day at the rate of £15,000 per annum. In 1916 the Government decided that the pest was increasing, and in consequence that poison should be supplied free.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: They did not have any option.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): That is so. First of all the poison was to be supplied at cost price. Hon. members know what the result was. Then the Minister decided to supply it free, and in supplying to individual settlers in many instances we found that the poison had to be sent to sidings and the freight prepaid, the freight being more than the cost of the poison. When at the Agricultural Department I decided that this was a very poor policy and that the poison should be forwarded to roads boards and other organisations in such quantities as would enable them to distribute it to the people in the locality. This meant an enormous saving in freight alone.

Mr. Maley: That poison was all fermented by the time it arrived.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The hon. member is referring to a particular kind of poison. He knows that that poison was sent out in all good faith and that the Minister controlling the distribution had no idea that the Railway Department would say it could be carried only on certain trains. The Government are fully seized with the danger of the rabbit pest, and also with the fact that if we are to successfully combat it it must be done collectively, that it is of no use leaving it to individuals. Under the Bill, roads boards have the power to form themselves into vermin boards, singly or in groups. Furthermore, in the event of a roads board declining to take up the duties of a vermin board, the Minister has power to insist upon the board's coming into line. A little time ago a conference of roads boards was held at Bridgetown with a view to seeing what could be done to deal with the dingo pest, which in that portion of the State has assumed alarming proportions. The rabbit pest is not troubling the people down there, but they are fully alive to the fact that if they do not help those whom it is troubling they will have to combat it in the South-West in the near future. At that conference it was decided that the roads boards should be allowed to constitute themselves vermin boards. The Bill gives them that power, and gives them also the right to frame by-laws, collect rates, appoint inspectors, in fact provides that the local authorities shall deal with the whole question. Groups of boards can be formed.

Mr. Brown: Not under the Bill.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Yes, under the Bill. I need not dilate on the rabbit question, for many members have gone thoroughly into that subject, but I may say I think there is a consensus of opinion that to permit of the promiscuous trapping of rabbits would be highly dangerous. The select committee that dealt with the rabbit question has furnished a very excellent report. The Bill should be taken in conjunction with the Rabbit Bill, and members I think when speaking on one Bill could save the time of the House considerably by endeavouring to speak on both Bills together, and I take it they can do so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Why did you not bring in one Bill?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): We were advised by the Crown Law Department that two amending Bills were necessary. I am of opinion that one Bill to cover both matters would have been better. I would like to point out that this Bill will enable all the suggestions made by the select committee to be carried out and when I say that I cover the Bill, but it will go further. It will enable many other important phases of the situation to be dealt with which even the committee which dived so deeply into the matter did not touch. We have found in the past that farmers seem to think that the Rabbit Department is an exterminating department and all a farmer has to do is to demand that the department come on his property and exterminate the rabbits. Under the Act the powers given to the Chief Inspector are very drastic and have never been put into operation because members know every farmer would have been ruined, and the powers have not been enforced because no Minister had so little of the bowels of compassion as to attempt to ruin the farmers. I would like to point out that many land owners have been very lax indeed. The Chief Inspector pointed out to them some time ago that if in the summer time they would give two hours in the afternoon twice a week to distributing poison on their country, they could keep down the rabbit pest. But what do we find? In one case a cart was provided, free poison was provided, and then a request was made for a man to be sent up to drive the cart. We are told Heaven helps those who help themselves and I say that person or those three persons were not out to help themselves when given a cart and given the poison they would not lay it. I do not say the majority of people are like that, thank goodness they are not, but those people who have done the least to combat the pest have been the people who have made the most row, have cried the loudest.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: When your colleagues told them to get work, that remark applied to the lot of them.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Probably they have taken it to heart and have got work. You must remember that the hon. member would not say so now because a wise man changes his mind, but a fool never.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Attorney General said the same thing, only in more polite language.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Perhaps the language was too polite for the hon. member to understand. In some districts, not only have individuals refused to act, but the boards have refused to form themselves into vermin boards either single or in groups. They have selfishly stood out. They have said, "We are not affected, let the other people do all the work, let the other people protect us, but we will not put our hands in our pockets and help the people to fight the pest which, if they do not combat successfully will over-run the State." We find as far as the dingoes are concerned, people have had to form dingo clubs, put their hands in their pockets and fight this pest.

Mr. Green: Who is the president?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): There are a great many presidents of these dingo clubs, but we are not seeking glory but skins. One of the skins I had the pleasure of bringing in here, frightened members so much that they nearly ran out of the Chamber and when it was explained to them what ferocious animals the dingoes were, the member for Leonora admitted that they killed thousands of sheep and afterwards in the late hours of the evening admitted that the sheep killed the dog. That skin impressed members opposite with this fact, that we had in the South-West not only the rabbit pest, but the dingo pest.

Member: There is a dingo pest everywhere.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): There is not a dingo pest everywhere in the same ratio as in the South-West. Members have no idea of what the stock holder has to put up with in the South-West corner when dingoes will pull down a three year old bullock which is a little bit rickety; when it will kill every foal dropped on the coast, when it will kill sheep not only in hundreds but in thousands. Members can only arrive at one conclusion, that the State can well afford to spend some money in combating this pest which is costing the country thousands every year. The boards have the power to rate people.

Mr. Pickering: Does the Bill compel them to levy a rate?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): They have to levy a rate and quite right too. The Bill sets out what the rate is to be. It cannot be more than is stated in the measure. As far as dingoes are concerned, there is a bonus of 10s. in the South-West and 5s. in other parts of the State. The man who produces the scalp obtains the reward. It does not go to the roads board. There is a good living for a man and many are out at all times of the year dingo trapping and dingo hunting. We want to go further because we require united action to deal with the dingoes. As the people in the eastern districts require united action to deal with the rabbits, we require united action to deal with the dingoes. This spasmodic action will never get rid of the pest. Some few years ago the 10s. bonus was discontinued. I do not think that as the dogs decrease there should be no bonus. As the dogs decrease the bonus should be increased until the dingoes are wiped out altogether. The boards have the power to rate and they can offer a reward.

Mr. Troy: Did you not condemn the Government for reducing the reward.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The Wilson Government reinstated the bonus of 10s.

Mr. Foley: It is worth 10s. to cut a dog's head off after you have shot him.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I pointed out as far as the rabbit pest is concerned, in trying to deal with that pest the only way is by concerted action. The Ninghan roads board set a shining example as to what can be done and it would be desirable that other boards should follow and if they followed in the footsteps of that board we should not be in the position that we are in to-day. They have six poison carts going and they are doing all they can to keep this pest in check.

Mr. Green: They are pretty hot with their rates.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): It is a jolly sight better to pay a stiff rate and get rid of the pest than have to walk out of your farm because the rabbits have got it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You might have to walk out because you cannot pay the rates.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The department are providing poison carts at cost price. To approved people they are issuing carts on three years' terms and the Government are dealing, and have for some time past, been dealing with the pest on Crown lands surrounding the salt lakes and they are supplying the poison free. I think the Government have gone far enough and the time has now come when the various roads boards should form themselves into vermin boards and deal with the pest. That is the only way and the only successful way to combat this pest. The matter of subsidy will be discussed later as it is not contained in the Bill. We are spending £15,000 a year at the present time, and further, we are paying 10s. for scalps of dingoes.

Mr. Maley: How do you propose to deal with the Crown lands?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): We have already in many places exterminated or are endeavouring to exterminate on Crown lands such as salt lakes where the farmer has no chance, but that question will have to receive serious consideration before we can say that the Government shall keep all lands free from rabbits.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Government take no responsibility.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The Government are taking responsibility. The Government have in the past shirked their responsibilities.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: How do you make that out? Your colleague said the rabbits had only increased during the last two years.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): They have only increased to such an extent that they have created such public alarm and it may be that we have so many farms at the present time unoccupied which helps a bit, because the owners have gone to the Front and for various other reasons they have had to leave. There are many rea-

sons which can be given for the position of the rabbit pest to-day. We do not want to account for the increase, but we want to find some way of checking the rabbits.

Mr. Maley: Will you continue to poison on Crown lands after the Bill is passed, and its administration is vested in the local authorities?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I am not in control of the Rabbit Department but have no doubt that the Government will do what they have been doing in the past, in regard to the salt lakes and their own estates, such as the Yandanooka. I feel sure that the Government will attend to the destruction of rabbits on their own lands. I admit that complaints have been made in the past that this has not been done. It has been stated that the Yandanooka estate is overrun with rabbits. That is an absolutely false statement. People who put forward that argument do so for one purpose only.

Mr. Maley: There is plenty of stinkwort on the estate.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The Bill has nothing to do with stinkwort. The people who said the estate was overrun with rabbits, and that the Government were doing nothing in the matter, said something which they knew to be false.

Mr. Maley: Who told you the Yandanooka estate was overrun with rabbits?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The residents of the district told me that when I was there. I have visited the estate several times, and declare that it is not overrun with rabbits.

Mr. Troy: Why blame us?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I would not blame the hon. member for anything. There is at present a fair number of road boards gazetted, and about to be gazetted, as vermin districts, such as Yalgoo, Augusta, Dandarragan, Warren, Plantagenet, Lake Grace, Mullewa, Merredin, Dowerin, Kellerberrin, Black Range, Upper Gascoyne, Gascoyne, Sharks Bay, Roebourne, Williams, Ninghan, Ashburton, Gingin, York, Balingup, Northam, Beverley, Upper and Lower Blackwood, Wagin, Victoria Plains, Nelson, Sussex, and Greenbushes. This serves to show that we have boards which have arrived at the conclusion that if they want to do any good at all in the eradication of vermin they must have a Bill of this sort. The Act now in force is useless, and it is at the request of the boards, following on the conclusions arrived at in a conference of representatives of these boards, that this amending Bill has been brought down.

Mr. Maley: Some of the boards would faint if they saw this.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Some of the boards would faint if they were asked to do anything at all. Some are so selfish that they would allow other boards to carry out the provisions of the Act, and do nothing themselves. They say that they have no rabbits or dingoes, and are not affected. They would allow other people to fight their battles for them, and do nothing in return.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You said you had power to amalgamate boards.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): That is so.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I cannot find it in the Bill.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I will show the hon. member later on where it is.

Mr. Pickering: If it is not there, will you put it there?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): If this is not in the Bill, or in the parent Act, it shall be put in.

Mr. Broun: The Crown Law Department informed me that this was not embodied in the Act.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Without in the least desiring to reflect on the Solicitor General, I must say that even legal luminaries have been known to give two different opinions on the same day. Talk will not stop the rabbits. I think this Bill will help to stop them, as well as the dingoes. I would, therefore, advise members not to endeavour to stop these pests by talk, but to help me to render this measure one which, if administered as it should be, will have the desired effect, that is, the combating of the pest. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fre-mantle) [4.20]: I move—

“That the debate be adjourned.”

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [4.21]: I hope the House will not agree to this motion. What I was prepared to do was to adjourn the Committee stage until later on in the evening, and I desired, if possible, to get the Bill through to-night. I see no reason why that should not be done. The Bill has been on the Notice Paper for a long time, and every member has seen it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: I have not had a chance of seeing it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has been here long enough for members to have gone into it.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: Only a day or two.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I hope the House will not agree to the adjournment of the debate.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fre-mantle) [4.22]: I desire to explain that the Minister told me he intended to adjourn the consideration of the Bill after the second reading, and that was my reason for moving this motion. I informed the members of the Country party to that effect.

The Minister for Works: That arrangement was made without reference to me.

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

Ayes	20
Noes	17
Majority for .. .	3

AYES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Cheson	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Durack	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Foley	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Troy
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Walker
Mr. Maley	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Green
Mr. Mullany	(Teller.)
Mr. Munsie	

NOES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Johnston
Mr. Brown	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Davies	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Draper	Mr. Rocks
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. George	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Hudson	(Teller.)

Motion thus passed; the debate adjourned.

BILL—RABBIT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Mr. MALEY (Greenough) [4.27]: I welcome the introduction of this Bill. It has been long promised and long delayed. In introducing the Bill the Honorary Minister stated that the measure was nearly brought down in 1910, but that other matters were at that time deemed more important, and the Bill was shelved. That seems to me to be singularly apropos.

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Honorary Minister was quite wrong.

Mr. MALEY: He stated that it was almost introduced in 1910. I do not know whether the member for Northam was the Minister concerned at that time.

Hon. J. Mitchell: I was.

Mr. MALEY: Then the hon. member was not alive to the full sense of his responsibility. The main points in the speech of the Honorary Minister were that people were robbing the water tanks along the fence, that the settlers were mustering stock against the fence, that some unfortunate settlers were being dragged some hundreds of miles to appear before the Minister to show why it was they had not done certain things, and that people were in the habit of using the track along the fence on which to travel. The departmental policy in administering the Act seems to have been one tending rather to arouse the antagonism of settlers than, by conciliatory measures, to secure their co-operation. The Chief Inspector has repeatedly complained that people are in the habit of catching rabbits and throwing them over the fence, just out of spite, and for the same reason leaving the gates open, and doing all manner of things. But no attempt seems to have been made by the Chief Inspector or any of his subordinates to create a feeling of harmony, and to invite the settlers to join the

department in a common effort to check the pest. The introductory speeches on this Bill, both here and in another place, and also the evidence of the Chief Inspector, show that the department entertain a rooted objection to trapping. The consensus of opinion of the select committee, however, is that poisoning, while most effective during the dry months, is not altogether effective in winter, when that means of destruction must be supplemented by others in order to keep the pest in check. The select committee recommended that trapping should be permitted in winter in order to enable settlers engaged, bona fide, in exterminating rabbits and preventing the ravages of the pest, to obtain some direct monetary return for their labours, apart from the preservation of their crops. Singularly, the whole trend of the debate in another place has been against what was termed making the rabbit an industry. The main objection to trapping, stated very definitely even by the Chief Inspector, is that trapping scares the rabbits away. But is not that the effect which the settler desires? He has to protect his crop by such means as are available to him, and trapping is one of them; and if the effect of trapping is to scare the rabbits away, I should say it is a sound argument in favour of trapping, and not one against it. We are told that trapping does not permit of the rabbits congregating in one particular spot and remaining there, but causes them to travel. My experience of rabbits tells me that they are migratory, continually moving. To-day they may be fairly numerous in a certain spot, and a week later they will not be by any means so noticeable there. The fact is accounted for by our summer climate, with its occasional storms. The rains cause the growth of succulent feed, and the rabbit instinctively forages for that feed. Again, the autumn thunder storms necessarily create a fresh growth of grass. Thus the propensity of the rabbit is to be continually roaming. One of the select committee's recommendations, made after very careful consideration, is that, subject to proper safeguards, which I have endeavoured to outline in an amendment standing in my name on the Notice Paper, the rabbit should be commercialised, if only for the purpose of providing the farmer with some direct recoup of the expense of extermination. Moreover, that policy will have the desirable effect of tending towards elimination of waste. The Bill proposes to extend what the Honorary Minister (Mr. Willmott) recently described as the extensive powers of the Chief Inspector to issue notices. The powers which that official has under the principal Act can only be described as approaching the German Emperor's. The measure makes the Chief Inspector an absolute autocrat. If a trace of a rabbit is found on a property, the Chief Inspector can compel the owner or occupier to eradicate to his, the Chief Inspector's, satisfaction. If an actual rabbit, or a trace of a rabbit, was found on a property, it has been the practice for the Chief Inspector to issue to the owner or occupier a notice to exterminate. Very fair efforts to comply with the officer's wishes regarding extermination

have been made in many instances. Yet, for the sake of argument, a land holder using 5,000 traps to the acre would be liable to prosecution and fine if he failed to comply with a demand by the Chief Inspector that 5,001 traps to the acre should be used. The land holder would have no opportunity of proving to the court that he was making a reasonable effort to cope with the pest; he would have to be condemned on the say-so of the Chief Inspector. And now this Bill proposes to confer similar powers on the sub-inspectors. Some of these officials, if they set about their business with enthusiasm, and if they have any malice in their composition, which possibly might be the case, would be placed in a position enabling them absolutely to ruin any landholder in this State. In Committee I shall endeavour to shear some of these drastic powers from the Chief Inspector and also from his subordinates. The select committee made certain recommendations as to the fencing of dams and water supplies in dry areas. The corresponding clause in the Bill, however, provides that the Governor-in-Council may declare any area a rabbit infested area, whereupon every land holder in that area is to be forced to fence the whole of his water supplies, whether natural or artificial. In certain roads board districts scattered about this country, that is absolutely impossible. In my own electorate, for example, it would be impossible for land holders along the Greenough, Chapman, and Murchison rivers to fence off the water supplies. What the select committee recommended was, in effect, that there should be compulsory fencing of dams in dry areas. That course was recommended not particularly with a view to keeping the rabbits actually from drinking, but with a view to enticing them to the dams, where poisoned water would be placed in troughs. An entirely wrong impression exists in regard to rabbits and water. The consensus of opinion is that rabbits do not breed so often in the drier areas by reason of their requiring water at breeding time. But it is not necessary for the rabbit to have water at all in order to live, because the herbage, especially in our lake country, is sufficiently succulent to enable him to dispense with actual drinking. In conclusion, I desire to thank the Honorary Minister (Mr. Willmott) for his complimentary references to the work and the report of the select committee.

Mr. LUTEY (Brownhill-Ivanhoe) [4.44]: In introducing this Bill, the Honorary Minister referred to the report furnished by the select committee as a good report. On the question of trapping, however, the Government have not adopted the select committee's recommendation. At a time when there is no sufficient supply of wire-netting in the State, and when there is no possibility of obtaining a supply, the only means by which farmers can save their crops is to trap continuously, night after night and day after day. The select committee had evidence to this effect from various farmers. The son of one farmer whom I know made about £6 or £7 a week by trapping, and sending the rabbits to market; moreover, this saved the crop. Another farmer, who last year was practically eaten out, this year saved his crop by persist-

ent trapping. The position is that farmers have no wire netting. These people have their crops in and the only way in which they can save their crops during the winter months is by continuous trapping. Of course, it would be all right if we had wire, but it is not to be got. We know that farmers have a lot of time which they have to devote to saving their crops, and on this question it is interesting to read what the select committee had to report. They stated—

Notwithstanding the deep-rooted objection to trapping by the department, we recommend that no restrictions be placed on bona fide farmers and their employees in trapping and marketing rabbits, and that all fees in connection therewith be abolished. 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.

At the present time I know of one shop alone in Perth which receives 300 pairs of rabbits a week from Kalgoorlie. The position I am not clear about is whether those people will be debarred from trapping those rabbits and sending them to Perth. What I wish to safeguard is the position of these people. I consider they should be allowed to continue this trade. I have it on the authority of a friend who is on the Trans-Australian line, 460 miles from Kalgoorlie, that there is a wave of rabbits coming over this way. It is possible to go out at night with a hurricane lamp and kick the rabbits out of the way. Owing to the recent rains we may therefore expect them to be around Kalgoorlie in greater numbers than ever, and the few which might be caught and sent to Perth would not make any material difference. Therefore, it would be a pity if this, what might be termed an industry, were prevented. The rabbits are being sold in Perth at 2s. a pair, whereas the imported rabbits fetch 2s. 8d. There should be no objection to the professional trapping of rabbits on the east side of the No. 1 fence, and neither should there be any objection to allowing the farmer to devote his spare time to trapping rabbits on his property. I trust that trapping will be allowed to continue east of the fence and on agricultural areas in the manner that it has been carried on in the past.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [4.50]: I welcome the Bill, but I regret that it was not brought down earlier. The neglect to introduce it at an earlier stage, however, was not wilful, because the Government of the day did not realise the extreme necessity for legislation of this character. It has been the common practice for farmers and members of Parliament to endeavour to shunt home the responsibility for the rapid spread of the pest. To my personal knowledge, however, the farmers themselves were neglectful in this regard. Very few of

them dreamt that the rabbit would assert itself and prove such a serious pest as it has done. As a matter of fact, certain members of roads boards thought it would be wiser not to insist upon poisoning, because the rabbits were looked upon from the point of view of food supply. Now the rabbit has assumed serious proportions and I venture to say that although it has destroyed a considerable area of wheat, particularly in my electorate, I am not altogether despondent of our being able ultimately to eradicate the pest. There is every prospect of that being done between the two fences if the system is adopted of cutting that area into sections as soon as wire netting is obtainable. The day is not far distant when the Darling Ranges will be so infested with the pest that whatever means may be taken to destroy it, the task will be found to be a big one. So far as trapping is concerned, I wish to support the remarks of the last speaker. Notwithstanding the arguments against professional trapping, the time will come when it will be in the best interests of the State to permit this to be carried on. The select committee had the testimony of one man who stated that a big area of his crops was saved principally by trapping. Although the pest in the Eastern States has been responsible for an immense loss, I am convinced that it is not too late to-day to take up this matter in a thorough manner so as to successfully deal with the pest.

Hon. T. Walker: Do you approve of this Bill?

Mr. PIESSE: Not in its entirety, because it forbids commercial trapping. I am in favour at the present time of commercial trapping east of the No. 1 fence. Just a word as to the responsibility or action of the Rabbit Department in coping with the pest. Reasonable efforts have been made by the department to do its duty. Notwithstanding the criticism aimed at the Chief Inspector, I found—and I speak from personal experience—that that particular official and the Minister controlling the department were ready, when sufficient proof was forthcoming that the pest was becoming serious, to deal with it in a thorough manner. The present Premier, when Minister for Lands in the Wilson Government, with the assistance of the Industries Assistance Board, then controlled by the member for Northam, was responsible for the expenditure of over £1,000 in my electorate in connection with the destruction of the pest principally by means of poisoned apples. Before the rain fell that method was successful and large numbers of rabbits were destroyed, but as soon as the rain fell and green feed became abundant the poisoned fruit was no longer taken. The effect, however, was to educate the people as to the distribution of poison, and though occasionally there were farmers who neglected to lay poison, on the whole much good was done as a result of the experiment. I am hopeful, and in fact I am convinced that with a special effort, we shall successfully cope with the pest. In saying that, I think I voice the opinion of most of the members representing agricultural districts. We are ready to agree to the proposal to allow roads boards

or vermin boards to impose taxation and in that connection I regret that the existing Act failed. I intend to support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (York) [4.56]: I desire to enter a protest in regard to the postponement of the debate on the Vermin Act Amendment Bill, which should have been dealt with concurrently with the measure we are now considering. It seems to me, on this rabbit question, ever since 1896 when rabbits were first reported, there has been a policy of laissez faire, or we might say come day, go day, God send Sunday. We have had proof of this in the adjournment of the debate on the Vermin Bill for three weeks.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You must not reflect against a decision of this House.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: If I have said anything against this House, I withdraw it, but I will retain my own opinion about the matter. I intend to go a little more fully into the rabbit question than I would have done on account of certain remarks made by the Minister and others that a section of the people have been making more of this question than they should have done and spreading alarmist rumours about the pest. Having been a member of the select committee, and being familiar with the evidence which was heard by that committee, also having had actual experience—I do not suppose any hon. member has travelled through as many badly infested districts as I have—I am convinced more than ever that whatever action has been taken to bring this question into prominence has been more than justified. The pest is a national one and should be treated as such, and I must ask the Minister whether the proposed amendments in the Bill aim at effective checking and preventing the pest from reaching the fertile regions near the coast, or whether we are to merely check the pest so as to permit of some return being obtained from the land. In the absence of wire netting, we cannot aim at anything that makes for complete extermination. We can only aim at getting some return from next season's crops. I have it from the East Avon roads board and also from the Ninghan roads board, in something like the following words, which I will read because I wish them to be recorded so that the Minister may judge of the feeling existing amongst those people who are combating the rabbits:—

These farmers cannot afford and do not consider that they should be asked to pay all the expenses involved in protecting those in the more favoured areas nearer the sea. From those coastal farmers these various boards consider that under the suggested amendment they would be unable to receive help in any shape or form as the farmers in the coastal areas would be debarred from taking action as a vermin board until such time as the rabbits appeared among them. If it is considered that the suggested amendments will effectively check the evil, then they emphatically state that it will be a failure, or at best a long and costly business. Quite recently Mr. McLellan, chairman of the Kellerberrin roads board, who has had considerable experience of rabbits not only in this

State but also in New South Wales, said that all that was required in this State in respect of amended legislation was a short amendment of the Roads Act which would enable roads boards to raise and spend money on rabbit destruction. He asked "Why duplicate expenses by the creation of two separate bodies when under existing conditions one body could do the work?" This is what the East Avon roads board had to say about it—

That an amendment of the Roads Act of 1911 be made to permit of each board inside the outer rabbit-proof fence paying a certain proportion of its annual rate collection into a general fund for the checking, towards eradication, of the pest in districts where such checking is necessary. Under such amendment every board, whether free or not, would be given an opportunity of doing something on an equitable basis towards the saving of themselves from the threatened invasion.

Those people who are fighting the pest are in very much the same position as were the settlers in the early days in Southern Queensland who were fighting the pest along the borders of New South Wales, and so protecting the people of North Queensland from the advancing rabbits. They had to bear the whole of the expense and they emphatically protested, just as the people in the Eastern districts are protesting to-day. They are acting as a barrier, preventing the rabbits from penetrating to the west of the South-West. I say it is up to those whom they are protecting to help bear the burden.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): That is the idea in providing for the grouping of boards.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. GRIFFITHS: At the last big conference held in Perth it was generally conceded that if the pest is to be effectively combated it must be done by co-operation among the whole of the roads boards or vermin boards. In the circular which I have received from the East Avon roads board I find this written:—

In the event of the suggested amendments being framed merely for the checking of the pest on lines similar to those obtaining in Victoria, so as to allow of a return being secured from the land next year, let me here state that it is the Roads Act which should be amended, and not the Vermin Act, as already the roads boards have, under Section 187 of the Roads Act, the same powers regarding the destruction of vermin as are contained in the Vermin Act, the only difference being in securing sufficient powers under the Roads Act to compel landowners to take drastic action on their holdings. Again, in the event of the Vermin Act being amended, all the expenditure made by this board thereby becomes illegal, and nothing whatever will be done by the board towards eradicating the pest for six or eight months or until such time as this board under duplicated work strikes and levies a special rate as a vermin board and collects payment; whereas if the Roads Act is amended to in-

clude portion of the Vermin Act that may be required so as to allow the roads board to carry out the provisions of such amended Act, it will thereby mean a saving of duplicated work, also the levying of due rates. At the present time the roads boards have all the machinery necessary for carrying out the work as roads boards, and the question presents itself, why cause duplication of work, also why have the same rates struck from the same farmers?

It is with this question of duplication that I am mostly concerned: If it will save those people from having to levy two separate rates they should be allowed to strike a proportion of, say, 10 per cent. on their roads rates. I am anxious to save the duplication.

Hon. T. Walker: You cannot do it under the Rabbit Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: It may be possible to do it under the Vermin Bill. That is why I regret that hon. members should have seen fit to interfere with the procedure as laid down for this afternoon.

Hon. T. Walker: Who has interfered?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: What we had set down on the Notice Paper for to-day should have been gone on with. Hon. members who thus interfered with the Vermin Bill cannot be very much concerned about the eradication of the pest. It is the same old game of postpone and put off for weeks and weeks, instead of dealing with the thing at once. I am very much surprised at the attitude of the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley), because he knows how serious is the pest and that it ought to be tackled forthwith. Some say we cannot poison through the winter. That is only ignorance. Poisoning can be carried on continuously, and it is in order to get the poisoning and the trapping going that we require despatch. I contend that the farmers between the two fences should be allowed to catch rabbits by traps and dogs, and do anything else they can to decrease the number of the pest, until we can get wire netting. Just now it is impossible to get wire netting, which is the only real remedy for the eradication of the pest.

Mr. Pickering: That is dealt with in another Bill.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Well, what if it is? The hon. member for Pickering Brook—I beg his pardon, I mean the hon. member for—

Mr. Pickering: I rise to a point of order. Is the member for York in order in referring to me as the member for Pickering Brook?

Mr. SPEAKER: I was not aware to whom the hon. member was referring, but if the member for Sussex takes it as referring to himself, and thinks it is offensive, I ask the member for York to withdraw the remark. I was quite innocent of what the remark meant.

Mr. Pickering: I ask that the member withdraw the remark.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: With the deepest humility I withdraw the remark. In regard to the matter of the rabbit pest, and dealing with it from a national standpoint, I would like, if the House will permit me, to again refer—I do not know that I should say “again refer” because I only incidentally mentioned a gentleman, Mr. C. E. Moran, who was the secretary of the first

vermin board in Queensland. I wrote to that gentleman some time ago, knowing that he was an authority, and I asked him how Queensland had treated the rabbits from a national standpoint. I asked whether the whole of the boards were called on to take their share in combating the pest, seeing that certain boards of the State were protecting other parts of the State, and those other parts were not contributing one iota towards the protection. In answer to my question this gentleman stated that, although Queensland had done some fine work in combating the pest, and eventually set the lead for the rest of the continent, curiously enough, in spite of this good work, they proceeded on palpably wrong lines, in that the people whose places were infested with rabbits and whose runs in many cases were eaten out, were formed into groups and board districts and taxed heavily for those who were not affected with the pest. That may be taken as proof positive that those affected recognised the magnitude of the danger that threatened the whole of the State, in that they consented to be taxed in manifestly an unjust way. That really bears out the contention of the people from the eastern portion of my electorate, who say, if they are acting as a buffer to the rest of the State, the rest of the State should take its share. As far back as February, 1900, the idea of dealing with the pest was considered at a conference in Brisbane and it was proposed that a general rate should be made over the whole of Queensland, not only in those parts which were acting as buffers to the northern portions of that State, so that the pest could be successfully combated, and so that those people whose land had been infested from New South Wales should be enabled to deal with the matter in an effective and, I may say, an economical manner. I am not going to deal further with the question from a national standpoint but I draw the attention of the Minister to one thing. I notice in the Bill that the definition of “water supplies” is rather sweeping. I see that it gives wells, rivers, soaks, bores, in fact every phase so far as water is concerned under that heading, and they are liable to be compulsorily fenced.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: It might be a brook.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Whether it is a brook or a tank is beside the question. I was not present when the member for Greenough (Mr. Maley) was speaking on the Bill but if he has not done so, I hope he will, in Committee, point out that, as far the compulsory fencing of water supplies is concerned, the Greenough river would present a very difficult problem, and the jam lands of this country will also constitute a problem. Mr. McLennan, the chairman of the Kellerberrin board, in writing to me a little time ago, on the matter, pointed out the fact that on his land alone there are no less than 24 soaks. He says, “I do not know how you will deal with the problem of the jam country,” and he referred to the fact that in this particular country there are oftentimes a great number of soaks. He said, “Are you going to ask me to fence round the whole of my 24 soaks?”

Hon. W. C. Angwin: You said the rabbits should be caught.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: He also pointed out that in the jam country often no water was visible. Some people saw rabbits run into burrows and they dug down and found a doe with young in one of the burrows, and about a foot deeper another hole was excavated in which there was a supply of water. It was a little underground soak. I have been called a freak, Mr. Speaker, because I think I take matters seriously—I hope that is not a reflection on the House—but the member for Greenough does not take this matter seriously. Before I leave the question of fencing in water supplies, I should like that hon. member to go into this phase of the question very carefully. There is the question of fencing water supplies in dry areas, where there are only dams. Some of these dams could be made very fine traps. In regard to trapping, I may mention that in New South Wales it is allowed under certain conditions, but the trapper has to destroy the burrows. This is one thing that concerned the select committee very much. We went into every phase of the question of trapping and the evidence was so overwhelming against encouraging the professional trapper, that we were very much concerned as to what should be done for the settlers in the wheat belt, in the neighbourhood where the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) has his holding, where the farmers trap rabbits and are making a little bit of money which helps them to pay for their poison. The question before the committee was whether it was wise to debar the people from marketing the rabbits. While I admire the Minister for taking the stand in opposing the trapping of rabbits, it has been proved a pernicious practice wherever it has been gone on with; it has meant an increase. I am not going into detail as to this question but I emphasise what we gave in our report. One member has said that we hedged on the question but we did not. We looked at the matter fairly and said that if people trapped they must not only trap the bucks but they should go round the cultivation and obtain the rabbits indiscriminately. The farmer is different from the professional trapper. If we allow the farmer to trap he will go where he can catch the most rabbits and he will catch the bucks and the does and the young ones all alike. We must allow these people, if they kill the rabbits, to be able to turn them into money. The member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe (Mr. Lutey) pointed out that a lot of money was made on the goldfields by the waves of rabbits that came from the East. At the present time millions of rabbits were coming across the goldfields by following the line of the Transcontinental railway and the hon. member said, should we not allow the rabbits to be turned into money, to feed the people of Kalgoorlie and Boulder? This does not concern the agricultural areas but these people should be allowed to trap and kill the rabbits and market them. There was a penalty in this State of £50 for anyone who had a rabbit skin in his possession. I am glad that has been cut out. We had brought before us rabbit skins, which had been treated with the red gum of this country. So good were the results that we recommended this gentleman, who had the formula for the treatment of skins with red gum, to approach the advisory council of works and

industries. I got into communication myself with that body, and I believe the Attorney General did so, too. Something is now likely to come out of this matter, and it is possible we shall be able to utilise another of our natural resources.

Hon. T. Walker: To utilise another of our misfortunes.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I have dealt with the main points that I wish to bring forward, having a bearing upon the treatment of the pest as a national evil. There are other small matters which I will leave until we reach the Committee stage. There is the question of the fencing of boundaries of road boards, for instance, which can be dealt with when the time arrives. One hon. member this evening rather jokingly referred to me as the member for rabbits. I do not mind a joke, but ask members to take this question seriously. Seven years ago, when I was in the Lake Brown district, I saw a few rabbits. After having seen what ravages the rabbit could be responsible for, I have lost no opportunity from then onwards in urging people to take this matter seriously. I was approached on every hand by people who had rabbits on their land, who claimed that they would never increase in this State, and that poisoning and their natural enemies would soon kill them. Experience has shown us that even in the worst of droughts the rabbits will survive. Droughts have occurred and almost every rabbit has died, but a few have survived, and these have soon bred up again. The Chief Inspector of Rabbits in New South Wales calculated that if two rabbits were allowed to breed at four months of age, and were left undisturbed with a water supply for three years, there would at the end of that time be 13 million rabbits. We ought to think of the awful peril that lies in this direction. The idea is appalling. Many extraordinary proposals were placed before the select committee in the course of the evidence. It was suggested that the does should be inoculated with a certain disease, and one man from Cuballing suggested that they should be inoculated with syphilis. Could anything be more appalling than this? Beside these extraordinary proposals, we had several wise suggestions placed before us. I have endeavoured to bring before the House one or two of the suggestions which I considered to be most sensible. I shall reserve any further remarks I have to make to the Committee stage.

Mr. HICKMOTT (Pingelly) [5.35]: I do not agree with the remarks of the member for Toodyay (Mr. Piesse) in his suggestion that the Government have not been slow or dilatory in taking action with regard to the extermination of rabbits. He said that a good deal of the blame should be placed on the shoulders of the people concerned. That is to a certain extent true, but I would point out that the present Government have known for the past seven or eight months that rabbits have destroyed a considerable amount of the crop, especially during last season. They have had this dinned into their ears frequently, but still this Bill has been held in abeyance right up to now, when it is almost too late to do anything in the way of poisoning. We have had of late heavy rains, and the green and succulent feed

has begun to come away. It will, therefore, be difficult now to poison the rabbits, far more difficult than it would have been in the earlier part of the year, before the rain. I have had considerable experience in connection with the rabbit pest. I first went into the Swan Hill district in 1892, just prior to the time mentioned by the member for York (Mr. Griffiths) when the first vermin board was formed in Queensland. I do not know why the hon. member goes so far away as Queensland. It is from the adjoining States that we have got our supply of rabbits, and these States have been dealing with them for the past 20 years or more. When I was first in the Swan Hill district, the place was literally overrun with rabbits. At times I thought the ground was alive with them. The people there, however, have overcome the pest, and very few people have fenced in their holdings with wire-netting. It has been said that the rabbits cannot be dealt with without wire-netting. A few people in the district, to which I am referring, procured wire netting from the shire council, which was in turn supplied with it by the Government for distribution amongst the farmers on long and easy terms. Notwithstanding that wire-netting was available on these terms, very few of the earlier settlers made use of it for this purpose. I learn from my son, who has just come over from the Eastern States, that people there are now growing crops without wire-netting, or any other protection. The rabbits have been cleared out to such an extent that the people have been able to go on producing crops of various kinds. Not one dam in that large dry area has, to my knowledge, been fenced in with wire-netting in order to keep the rabbits from the water. Notwithstanding the rabbit problem, the price of land has gone up. When I was first in the district it was possible to get the goodwill of 640 acres of mallee country at 2s. 6d. per acre. It was necessary to apply for permission to put in crops, and to pay 3d. an acre for 40 years to the Government. The land could thus be obtained for 10s. an acre. Neither fencing round the boundaries nor fencing of water has been necessary to keep these people on the land, and yet the rabbits have been practically eradicated. A good deal more is made of this wire-netting business than is absolutely necessary. It is provided in the Bill that all water is to be fenced off, and in my opinion this is one of the most ridiculous, stupid, and absurd proposals that one could hear of. Imagine a man with five or six soaks or wells, or three or four miles of river running through his property, fencing off his water. He would be obliged to keep a man on continually watering the stock, and in spite of that the rabbits would still get the water. The water question, in connection with rabbits, is one which need not give us very much concern. A heavy drought in the very dry areas has no doubt had a great effect in the eradication of rabbits, but even in a drought the rabbit will live. I have noticed this particularly in the district to which I have referred, where there is not nearly the same amount of undergrowth or herbage that there is in any part of Western Australia which I

have hitherto visited. It is quite possible, in my opinion, for rabbits to live in Western Australia almost anywhere without water, and to continue to breed. We know that rabbits increase rapidly. With proper poisoning and an adequate supply of poison carts, people should be able to cope with the pest without much difficulty. A gentleman told me the other day that in his particular district, I am not sure whether it was the Avon or the York district, the rabbits were very plentiful. He said that they needed at least 300 poison carts in that district for use in the Coweewong and Mt. Marshall areas.

The Minister for Works: Send me the order and I will give you a cart as commission. We can soon make the carts if they are ordered.

Mr. HICKMOTT: This gentleman is a hard worker, and is under the Industries Assistance Board. Last year he put 2,000 bags of wheat through that board, and when a man is able to produce wheat like that in a rabbit-infested district he is worthy of assistance in the shape of a poison cart. The Industries Assistance Board have been sending out these poison carts to groups of five or six settlers. In the busy times these settlers find it difficult to send the cart from one to the other. Some times they may be separated by two or three miles of road from each other, and it is, therefore, difficult for them to poison continuously. I suggested to one of these groups of settlers that they should engage a man between them to drive the cart continuously round each of their properties. This is surely a sensible way out of the difficulty. If this could not be done, it might be possible to procure other forms of poison carts which are more reasonable in price than those at present on the market. A man in Pingelly is making little trucks, very similar to the Ferrier cart, at a price ranging from £6 10s. to £8 10s.

The Minister for Works: I have one for 35s.

Mr. HICKMOTT: Any small boy could hitch his pony on to one of these trucks, and drag it almost anywhere. It is only necessary to mix up the poison and it is automatically fed by the machinery attached to these carts. There is no great expense attached to them. If our farmers are so short of funds that they cannot afford to pay this money, it should not be a difficult matter for the Industries Assistance Board to supply these cheap poison distributors themselves. In dealing with rabbits the main thing required is for everyone to co-operate in a continuous poisoning. There is no doubt that in a short time the rabbits can be sufficiently eradicated to enable the settlers to grow their crops successfully. I was a member of the Eastern vermin board for years in the district in which I lived. This board was independent of the shire council or any other local authority. We had a secretary and inspector engaged at £240 a year. Our territory comprised an area of from 160 to 200 miles east and west, by 16 miles north and south. The business of the inspector was to furnish at each board meeting—the meetings being held monthly or at other periods.

as required—a report, and to show in that report where the rabbits were bad, and where they were not. It is necessary in such cases as we will be required to deal with in this State to have men of judgment and discretion. Many of our farmers are in such a bad way financially that, to summons them for not eradicating the rabbits on their holdings, would be to drive them off the land. Therefore it is necessary that the inspector in charge of a district should be a man of judgment and discretion. There are land holders who would not, of their own initiative, take the trouble to trap or poison or kill a single rabbit, in any circumstances. Such men should be dealt with. But the man struggling to make a home for himself and his family should be shown some leniency. If he is in such a position that he cannot employ labour to drive a poison cart, the inspector should act considerably towards him; or something should be done to help him out of his difficulty in that respect. No doubt a number of amendments will be proposed in Committee. The provision as to water supplies should either be wiped out altogether, or else materially altered. As to wire netting, where people can afford it, undoubtedly it saves all further trouble once the rabbits have been eradicated from the holding. The wire should be both sheep proof and rabbit proof, in order to dispose of the business once for all. But in order to keep people on their holdings it is not absolutely necessary to supply them with wire netting.

Mr. Griffiths: What about the vast areas of Crown lands?

Mr. HICKMOTT: As for Crown lands, the rabbits on them diminish as the land becomes alienated and settled. Any further remarks I shall reserve for the Committee stage.

Mr. PICKERING (Sussex) [5.47]: Although I represent a district not immediately affected by the rabbit pest, yet I cannot lose sight of the fact that the passage of a Bill like this will mean that its conditions apply to every district throughout the State. That being so, I consider the measure should be amended in certain respects. If a certain rate is to be levied, there must be conditions appertaining to the expenditure of the rate. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) suggested, in effect, that the roads boards should become vermin boards on the passing of this Bill. I honestly think that would be a good idea.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: The Government can compel that under the principal Vermin Act.

Mr. PICKERING: I have looked into the Act, and find it provides that the Government may unite two or more districts into one district.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That does not refer to roads boards, but to vermin boards.

Mr. PICKERING: What is not provided for is the grouping of boards. The discussion of this measure should, I consider, have been adjourned, seeing that the debate on the Vermin Bill has been adjourned, and that, as the Honorary Minister has pointed out, it is almost impossible to discuss one measure apart from the other. The Government, in

their haste to enact legislation, have brought before the House measures which will require a great deal of consideration. In fact, the Country party to-day went very carefully into the Bills now before the House, and were unable to consider them sufficiently to arrive at the views to be placed before the House. This Bill deals not only with rabbits, but also with dingoes. On the establishment of vermin boards, certain rates are to be levied. I ask, what is the regulation which is to apportion the expenditure of those rates? My district suffers from a pest which is at the moment just as serious to us as the rabbit is to our friends in the wheat areas. I refer to the dingo pest. The position was ably put before the House by the Honorary Minister (Mr. Willmott). I have had, I regret to say, considerable experience of the dingo, losing considerable numbers of sheep in my time; and the dingo also causes loss of yearling calves and foals. Therefore the Bill should define the expenditure of the rates to be levied by the vermin boards. The idea of putting the whole business through the vermin boards is an excellent one, and must tend towards economy, since the one staff would keep all the books and control the entire expenditure. At the same time, the amounts collected should be kept entirely distinct; there should be no confusion of the rates. The question of the establishment of vermin boards is very important for the South-Western district.

Hon. W. C. Angwin: That provision does not apply to a district in which there are no rabbits.

Mr. PICKERING: Of course, it would be a most difficult thing to give effect to that provision in the South-Western portion of the State. In dealing with the Rabbit Bill I feel that a member coming from a district not infested by rabbits must be imbued with the spirit of nationalism in this regard; he must not be so short-sighted as to say, "It is time to meet the difficulty when it presents itself at our doors." I have done my utmost to point out to the roads boards in my electorate, who have objected to being included in vermin boards, that it is much better to meet the difficulty at this stage than to wait for it to appear in our midst. My present wish is merely to point out the position of the boards in the South-West, and how the measure might apply to them. The Bill should clearly lay down that certain roads board districts may be amalgamated. Further, it would be advisable to have the whole of the business placed in the hands of the roads boards as vermin boards. I trust that in Committee I shall find an opportunity of giving effect to my views.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.55]: In the course of this discussion certain hon. members have evidently forgotten that they are dealing with a Rabbit Bill and not with a Vermin Bill.

Mr. Harrison: One cannot very well separate them.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Exactly; and that is where the error has been made. The two Acts should have been amalgamated, and, with the amendments, brought down in one Bill. There

is no doubt that when two or more Acts of Parliament deal with the one question, neglect occurs and important matters are overlooked. I am confident that some hon. members, among them representatives of the agricultural areas, have not perused this measure. A careful perusal of it shows that the provision to which they have taken such strong exception, to which, indeed, every member who has spoken so far, has objected, does not apply except in proclaimed areas. The member for Sussex (Mr. Pickering) pointed out that the pest from which his district suffers is not the rabbit, but the dingo. Before the South-West can be compelled to fence in rivers and other water supplies—

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): God help us if we have to do that!

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Before any such compulsion can be applied to the South-West, the district would have to be proclaimed by the Governor a rabbit infested district.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is a very simple matter.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Government will not take steps to have an area that is only troubled with dingoes proclaimed a rabbit infested area. Until rabbits get to the South-West—and the express purpose of the Bill is to prevent the rabbits from spreading—there is no need to take into consideration the matter of proclaiming it rabbit infested. I was somewhat alarmed at the castigation which certain hon. members received this evening from the member for York (Mr. Griffiths). That hon. member expressed the opinion that certain action taken here to-day was taken with a view to the blocking of the measure. At the same time he pointed out that he intended to move several amendments in Committee. In that case, if the amendments are carried, how is it possible for the Bill to become law until the Legislative Council has again met?

Mr. Griffiths: Are we to wait for that body to meet again before we begin to consider this measure?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: No. But, so far as this measure is concerned, not an hour would be lost if we dealt with it when the House re-assembles instead of dealing with it to-night; that is, unless we pass the measure exactly as it is now printed. Will the hon. member be satisfied that the Bill should to-night pass as printed in order that it may become law immediately?

Mr. Griffiths: No. There are certain things I should like to have altered.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: In that case, the Bill cannot become law until amendments made here have been referred to another place for approval.

The Minister for Works: The same thing would apply if we postponed the Bill until May.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Here is the position. The Minister for Works desires to get through as much business as possible to-night. I moved the adjournment of the debate on the Vermin Bill because there was nothing to be gained by dealing with that measure to-night. We have other important measures to deal with, measures which should not be considered at three or four o'clock in the morning. The member for York cannot gain anything if he

intends to carry out his purpose of moving amendments to the Rabbit Bill.

The Minister for Works: I do not agree with you.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: The Bill cannot become law, in any case until the Council re-assembles. Moreover, the Council will have a dozen other Bills to deal with when they meet again, and the taxation measures will be before them as well. Therefore, no time will be saved by carrying the Rabbit Bill through to-night.

Mr. Griffiths: The same old tale, postpone.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: There is no help for it in this case if the hon. member is going to move the amendments he has given notice of. Of course if he intends to drop his amendments the measure can go through to-night and become law, but if any amendments are made it will have to be returned to the Council and they do not meet for more than three weeks. So far as I am concerned the measure can go through as it is. The Bill does not interest me a great deal, although I listened very carefully last night to the remarks of the Minister when he moved the second reading. The Minister referred to the action it was intended to take. Whilst it is the intention of the Government to make every local body in the State, having under their control large areas such as commonages, clear those areas of the pest, he never mentioned a word as to the action the Government themselves were going to take with regard to the areas under their control. What is the use of a roads board clearing rabbits out of a commonage of two or three thousand acres or perhaps larger if the same class of land adjoining, and which may be Crown land, is not cleared as well.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): What do you propose?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is idle for the Government to say that so far as the Crown lands are concerned the rabbits are not doing any harm. I was under the impression that the only successful method of coping with the pest was for owners of land to fence in their holdings, but the member for Pingelly (Mr. Hickmott) has told us that that is of no use. He stated that in Victoria holdings which had not been fenced in and which had been over-run with rabbits, were now free from the pest, and that therefore there was no need to fence the holdings. Here the Government would force a roads board, having several thousand acres of commonage, to strike a rate for the purpose of clearing the rabbits out of the district, and if they failed to do so the Government will do it at their cost.

Mr. Griffiths: That is done in the Eastern States.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That might be true, but whilst the Government are doing that they are leaving their own land alone. The Honorary Minister intimated that it was his intention to amend the Bill because it would be impossible to take action against any person who did not move in the direction of reducing the number of rabbits on his holding unless the chief inspector had been on the block. I am not a lawyer but I am doubtful whether that is so. The hon. member intends to move in the direction of delegating the power of the chief in-

spector to any inspector so that action may be taken. No action can be taken except with the approval of the chief inspector, who must approve of the reports which are sent to him. Then any inspector may be given the power of the chief inspector, and if the person occupying a holding does not carry out instructions to clear that holding of rabbits, the work can be done at his expense. I want hon. members to also take notice of the proposals regarding the fencing in of water supplies. I regret that the member for Gascoyne is not here, because his views on this question would be of some importance to the House. I informed the hon. member that the consideration of this Bill was to be postponed.

The Minister for Works: He knew it was not going to be postponed.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I told him it was to be postponed. The hon. member was not very well and left the Chamber. I know that he desired to deal with this question of water supplies on pastoral areas. In the North-West there are many running streams from artesian bores on the pastoral areas. How is it possible to fence in those streams?

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Before tea I was endeavouring to point out the difficult position in which an owner of a holding would be placed if the Bill becomes law. It is here provided that no person shall draw any water from a water supply and permit the same to be discharged into any place to which rabbits can have access. The only person who should be held responsible for a breach of this provision is the person occupying the holding upon which the water was drawn and discharged. However, not only is the occupier held liable for the offence, but the owner, who might be residing in Perth, is also held responsible for what his tenant has done.

Mr. Maley: If you prevent rabbits from getting water, how are the stock to get it?

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: That is another matter altogether. My point is that the owner, residing in town, should not be with the occupier jointly liable to the penalty. It does not appear to be fair, because, of course, the owner has had nothing to do with the drawing of the water, or the discharging of it where the rabbits could get it. It shows that due consideration was not given to the Bill before it was submitted to the House. A number of the clauses will be found to be unworkable. I think the best thing we could do would be to throw out the Bill and ask the Government to bring down a consolidating measure. Until we get that the law will not be administered in a manner beneficial to those following agricultural pursuits and to the State in general. I think a great mistake was made in introducing two Bills instead of one.

Mr. HARRISON (Avon) [7.35]: I agree with the contentions of the hon. member in regard to this measure. In the first place, we cannot refer to this Bill without speaking of the Vermin Bill. We should have a consolidating measure. Up to the present we have had the Roads Board Act, the Vermin Act and the Rabbit Act, and under all three we must fail to

deal with the pest in the manner desired. To my mind the Bill is unworkable. Its authors seem to have had in mind only the land and conditions east of No. 2 fence, whereas we know that we have rabbits to the west of that fence. If we are to fence all water supplies west of No. 2 fence, it will involve an enormous capital outlay.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): It will be only in proclaimed areas.

Mr. HARRISON: Those proclaimed areas will be areas where rabbits are found. Rabbits do not travel far for water, but naturally follow the succulent herbage which is found only in moist places during dry seasons. I have a water trough and I have rabbits, and I know from their tracks that those rabbits do not travel 20 chains to get at that water. Rabbits will develop and propagate on succulent herbage and the bark of trees. The Bill will only serve to place a lot of unwarranted restrictions and obligations on the settlers.

Hon. T. Walker: Or, rather, on the local authority.

Mr. HARRISON: Yes. Under the Bill the roads boards will become vermin boards and will strike rates. The roads boards ratepayers will become ratepayers under the vermin boards, and will be penalised for the destruction of rabbits for the protection of other boards, in addition to which they will have to go on paying for the maintenance of the two fences equally with those who get the protection of those fences. The whole of the taxpayers of the State ought to be called upon to assist in the combating of the pest, for if the pest be not effectually dealt with all in the State will suffer, directly or indirectly. I trust the Government will withdraw the Bill and draft another one with the assistance of those who know the infested areas. Just consider the varying conditions. Down the Great Southern only permanent water would be fenced. On the eastern side of the fence we get casual water from thunderstorms, and to the west of the fence we have soaks. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) was perfectly right. In our eastern areas we have dams, and those dams fenced in and equipped with proper traps would constitute excellent rabbit traps. In nearly every case there are appliances for drawing water from those dams without taking stock into the enclosure. To occasion landholders the expense that the Bill will impose is wholly unwarranted. I, like all in my electorate, was most anxious to have something done by the Government in the earlier part of the season so that the rabbits might have been destroyed by poison. I am glad to say that where poison carts have been used, the destruction of rabbits has been greater than was anticipated. What we require to do is to stimulate those farmers who are not yet suffering from the pest, to induce them to work in conjunction with the farmers whose holdings are over-run by rabbits, so that the operations can be carried on collectively and continuously.

Mr. TROY (Mt. Magnet) [7.43]: I also am going to appeal to the Minister to withdraw the Bill. In my opinion it is badly conceived, wretchedly drafted, and will not achieve its purpose. Also I protest against a Bill of this kind being introduced alone, when it might

have been introduced in conjunction with the Vermin Bill as a consolidated measure. We ought to have the two Bills in one. If that were done, people who have to operate under both Bills, and who are liable to be penalised under both Bills, would know where they stand. The average person in this State is so surrounded by pains and penalties for neglecting to carry out certain things that he does not know where he stands. We have hundreds of Bills overlapping each other, and the ordinary person is lost in confusion. These two Bills are so akin. We should have a consolidating measure. We cannot discuss one Bill without discussing the other. It is not long to wait until next session. Could not the Government then bring down a consolidating measure providing for all that is desired, and it would receive the sympathetic consideration of the House. It appears to me this is an officials' Bill. It does not embody the opinions and experience of members of the House, and if members wish to embody in the Bill proposals which from their experience they think are necessary, it is too late, at this hour of the session, to begin discussing it. If we amend it, it cannot be passed until it has received the assent of another place, and the other House cannot meet for some time to come. I appeal to the Minister to withdraw the Bill. There are clauses in it which are unworkable, which are ridiculous and absurd. It is in the interests of the department to have a consolidating Bill. If a measure is desired by this House which will meet all the circumstances, it is too late now to have the fullest opportunity of reviewing it, and of embodying in it the expressions of the opinions of members, probably having more experience than the officials who have given the data when the Bill was drawn up. They have looked at it from an official's standpoint. Those who have had experience meet with difficulties that officials do not meet with. There are provisions in the Bill that no settler could carry out without considerable hardship and disadvantage. The ordinary settler will not know where he stands with the imposts provided. Remember what we have been doing recently. There are imposts such as the land tax and the income tax, there are road board imposts, stamp rates, road board rates and penalties and a thousand and one other penalties which compel the settler to take certain action, and further penalties if he does not carry out those provisions. This Bill is not going to secure the success that the Government desire. It is too harsh, and will embitter the settler who refuses to carry it out. And the Government cannot compel him, and as a result the whole system will break down. I am most desirous of seeing the rabbit pest exterminated. I have a personal interest in seeing the pest exterminated. I am one of those who will be affected by the depredations of the pest in the near future, and it is because of that I want to see introduced a measure which will give us the fullest opportunity of devising a workable scheme by which the Government will be assisted and the settler helped. I might discuss the formation of vermin boards,

because one Bill is contingent on the other. Whilst the boards have power to impose taxation, there is no compulsion on the boards themselves to do any of the work. The compulsion is on the individual settler.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): The board can do it if the settler does not. The board has the power.

Mr. TROY: The board will not do it. In addition to the penalties imposed by the Bill the board can impose penalties. There will be a further staff required, and the cost of this will be on the settlers of the country. If the board is compelled to carry out the work and utilise the taxation imposed in doing the actual work, there might be something to be said in support of the Bill. My experience is that it will create another staff. There will be inspectors, some officers, and they will be imposing taxation which will mean another burden on the community. I do not want to see that kind of thing.

The Minister for Works: Cannot we start on it in Committee?

Mr. TROY: I do not think we have the time to give fair consideration to the measure and create a workable Bill.

The Minister for Works: Cannot we make a start?

Mr. TROY: I want to point out some of the absurdities. The settler is compelled to fence in all water-courses or water supplies which are not of a transient nature. That means that the settlers alongside rivers must fence in those rivers. Settlers alongside areas that are rivers. Settlers alongside areas that are watered by artesian bores must fence off that water.

Mr. Harrison: Lakes have water in them sometimes.

Mr. TROY: As the member for Avon points out, the lakes have water in them at times. Take the disabilities mentioned by the member for Greenough. In his electorate there is the Greenough river, the Chapman river, and other rivers. These rivers are often the water supplies of the flocks and herds, and the settlers must fence them off. If they have to do so, where is the fencing material to come from? The committee which inquired into the rabbit pest knows that there is no fencing material in the State. The work cannot be carried out because the material is not available.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Are you not going to legislate any more, then?

Mr. TROY: The Bill is badly conceived, and it would not do any harm to withdraw the measure and introduce another a few months hence. We cannot get the fencing material, and the most important and vital clauses in the Bill provide that settlers must fence off the water. The material is not in the State, and cannot be procured in Australia.

The Minister for Works: Then no penalties can accrue.

Mr. TROY: Another provision says that no person shall draw or permit to be drawn any water from any such water supply or any other source and discharge the same or permit the same to be discharged, or to remain into or in

any place to which rabbits can have access. What does that mean? Take a personal example: If I fenced in my dam and put a wind-mill on that dam, I must draw the water from the dam into troughs to water my sheep, and the Bill says that if I do that I shall be penalised. Is not that ridiculous and absurd? It is absolutely stupid. Any settler who fences off his dam at once prevents his stock from having access to the dam, and the only way is to draw the water off into troughs. The Bill says if he does that he will be liable to a heavy penalty.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): Another settler says the rabbits will not come near the troughs.

Mr. TROY: That remark does not apply. This Bill says that if a settler draws the water off from a dam into a trough he will be penalised. That is not a mere assertion, that is what the Bill provides, and it is absolutely stupid. Suppose one did shut off his troughs, the result would be that he would have to come in at certain times and give his stock water, and no stock will do any good under those conditions. If one wants to do well with sheep the sheep must have water whenever they come in for it. No settler should be compelled by penalties to shut off his water, leave his ordinary occupation and come in and water his stock at inconvenient times. I guarantee that no such provision exists anywhere else. If I had no other experience than what I have—but I have not the experience of some members, still I represent one of the largest pastoral constituencies in Western Australia—

The Minister for Works: I understood you to say you had no experience.

Mr. TROY: I admit not having the experience of other members, but God forbid I should have the egotism of some members. Anyone who has had experience must consider it to be suicidal to shut water off and to send men at specified times to water stock. Take some of the Murchison stations, consisting of half a million acres, divided into paddocks of 20,000 or 50,000 acres. Consider the position of having a man at the wells to turn the water on and off. The operation of the clause itself would raise not only serious complaint but an uproar in those portions of Western Australia where people are living by flocks and herds. I appeal to the Minister—I think he will realise the wisdom of it himself—to withdraw this measure and bring in another next session, if he does not want a ridiculous Bill. I do not blame the Minister for the Bill, because it is purely an official's measure. If the Minister withdraws this measure and brings in another, it will receive the endorsement of members of the House. The Minister thinks he can improve the Bill in Committee. I say it will take too long, and I do not want to see the time of the House wasted unnecessarily over it. I have a word to say in regard to trapping. The intention of the Government, apparently, is to discourage trapping. The select committee went into that matter, and I think have had more opportunity of acquiring knowledge in this connection than even the Chief Inspector of Rabbits. We came to the conclusion that east

of the fence there should be no discouragement of rabbit trapping, and that there should be a limited amount allowed in the agricultural areas, so that the people of the State might have an opportunity of securing the rabbit as an article of food if they want it, and at the same time enable those who desire to go in for trapping to obtain a livelihood. West of the fence, we hold the opinion that although trapping should not be encouraged for commercial purposes, no objection should be raised to the settler or the owner of the land trapping rabbits during the winter months, at a time when he cannot be poisoning, because of the plentitude of green feed. Such settler or owner should in the opinion of the committee be allowed to trap the rabbits on his block and make commercial use of them, more especially as he would do this at a time when he cannot successfully carry on poisoning operations. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths) gave this matter very earnest consideration, and I am sure he would not do anything which, in his opinion, would be contrary to the best interests of those operating in the agricultural industry. I ask the Honorary Minister to withdraw the Bill. We are not opposing it in any spirit of hostility, but I want to see a thorough and workable measure introduced. This measure does not either please me or suit me. I hope that a consolidating Bill will be introduced, by which adequate provision can be made for securing the interest of the settler and stamping out this pest for ever.

Hon. T. WALKER (Kanowna) [8.3]: I should like to know who is responsible for the drafting of this Bill. Surely the Honorary Minister was not responsible for it, and I am positive that the draftsman of the Crown Law Department could not have been responsible, on his own initiative. The material must have been supplied from somewhere, and I very much desire, for the sake of curiosity, to know who put this compilation of impossibilities and absurdities together under the name of a Rabbit Bill.

Mr. Griffiths: It is well not to be too sweeping.

Hon. T. WALKER: It is the absurdity of one or two good points being mixed up with a number of points which are quite the contrary which will render this an entirely unworkable, ridiculous, and oppressive measure. It is on that ground that I am objecting to it. The amateurish nature of the draftsmanship can be seen almost as soon as we commence with the clauses. Clause 2 says—

Section 21 of the principal Act is hereby amended by inserting the words "At the prescribed rate" in place of "Four pounds per centum" in the first paragraph thereof. With this amendment we get these words—

"With interest at the rate of at the prescribed rate."

Mr. Maley: It is a good departmental phrase.

Hon. T. WALKER: Exactly. All the way through we find similar absurdities in the measure. This only shows the lack of care which has been taken in the draftsmanship. That is not the worst feature of the Bill. I am positive that whoever drafted it knows nothing about the condition of the farmer in the East-

ern belt, or the pastoralist in the North. He knows nothing about what has to be done in order to water sheep and cattle. He knows nothing about the practical work, and appears to care as little. There is another clause.

Mr. SPEAKER: I hope the hon. member is not going to discuss the clauses.

Hon. T. WALKER: I merely desire to show the absurdity of accepting this Bill, so imperfect from beginning to end. The Bill says that Section 30 of the principal Act is amended by adding the following words: "And he shall instruct and demonstrate to such owner and occupier the proper means to adopt to carry out their destruction." The section itself reads—

Whenever an inspector finds evidence of the existence of rabbits on any land he may give to the owner or occupier of the land notice in writing to take such steps and such means—

Point of Order.

Mr. Foley: I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is discussing the clauses of the Bill, and it is not permissible to do this on the second reading.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member is not discussing the clauses of the Bill before the House but the parent Act, and reading a section from that Act to show how it would apply.

Mr. Foley: My point of order is that the hon. member has read a clause in the Bill, and is discussing that clause as it affects the parent Act.

Mr. Speaker: It has been laid down in this Chamber that on the second reading an hon. member is not allowed to refer to clauses of a Bill. I made that clear, I think, in the early part of the session, and my contention was that it was necessary to perhaps read a clause or two, which contained the principles of a Bill, to enable the hon. member to place his views clearly before the House. The member for Kanowna has read a few lines of a section for that purpose. It is not my intention to rule him out of order, unless he is reading the clause for some other purpose.

Mr. Foley: I wish to say, Sir—

Hon. T. Walker: The hon. member is questioning the Speaker's ruling. He is out of order.

Mr. Foley: I only wish to say, Sir, that I was not in the House when you made that statement, and I wish to bow to your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Kanowna may proceed.

Debate resumed.

Hon. T. WALKER: The section goes on—To suppress and destroy rabbits as may be specified in the notice.

Now we are to have added to this, "And he shall instruct and demonstrate to such owner or occupier the proper means to adopt to carry out their destruction."

The Minister for Works: A sort of travelling lecturer on rabbit destruction.

Hon. T. WALKER: What I complain of is the looseness, and want of thought and care, in the preparation of this measure. It has not been prepared by anyone with experience of the conditions prevailing in the farming district, or those places in which the rabbits are

making their intrusion. It has been prepared by someone sitting in his office, possibly by the Honorary Minister, who may be trying his prentice hand at law making. At all events, the Bill has not been compiled by anyone treating the subject comprehensively.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott (Honorary Minister): You flatter me.

Mr. Griffiths: The Honorary Minister suggested it had been prepared by the lawyers.

Hon. T. WALKER: A lawyer could not compile it without the necessary information being supplied, and the necessary ideas. It is the ideas, and the combination of them, which make this Bill, taken as a whole, an absurdity, and worse than that, an oppression to the settlers. If the Bill were put into force, as it is now proposed, it would make the lot of the men on the land almost intolerable. I am not going over the ground which has been covered by previous speakers as to the impossibility of fencing in rivers and creeks, and watering the stock when a dam has been fenced in. My object is to suggest that the Minister should withdraw this measure. If he will not consent to state, at the conclusion of the second reading debate, if the measure is not lost on the second reading, that he will do this, I intend to move that the Bill be referred to a select committee with a view to carrying out the suggestions which have been made of amalgamating the Vermin Bill with this Bill, and making them so that they may be read in conjunction with our Roads Act, and in that way avoid having a lot of conflicting legislation upon the Statute-book. We are dealing almost precisely with the same subject, and covering in a large measure the same ground, and dealing with different bodies and different authorities, although at the same time dealing with practically the same topic. It makes the law not only oppressive but conflicting and confusing to those who have to obey it. If we are to deal with the subject it would be wise to do so in a workmanlike manner. If my suggestion is followed, we may be able to get a workable measure in which all this material contained in the Vermin Bill may be incorporated with this Bill, and which measure shall be framed, keeping in mind all the provisions of the Roads Act. This could be done during the recess, and whilst we are waiting for another place to meet again. Then, having taken care of that and evolved a practical and workable measure, I do not think it would take either Chamber long to go through it and place it on the Statute-book.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. J. George—Murray-Wellington) [8.14]: I have paid grave attention, and listened with great care, to the remarks of the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker). I am pleased indeed that he has been able to place before us for consideration, a proposition which, from the tenor of the debate, indicates that it is entitled to receive respectful attention from us. There is no doubt a necessity for a Bill to deal with the rabbits, and there is also no doubt that we want a proper Bill to deal with the vermin which exists in this State. Seeing that those two matters are so closely interwoven, it certainly does seem a good sugges-

tion to consider them with the view of having one measure dealing with them. I know perfectly well about the fencing question. Take the Darling Range; take a place like my own. I have on my property about 10½ miles of creeks, mostly running all the year round, and, besides, there are smaller creeks and swamps and so forth. If the rabbits were to come on my property, fencing would be utterly out of the question, having regard to the roughness of the Darling Range country. Moreover, in forest country there are always falling trees; and whatever fencing one puts up, the trees come down and smash it, and then the country lies open and unprotected. Country members have expressed themselves as desirous of obtaining an Act, and a number of them have pointed out what amendments they want. I think the best course would be to let us have the second reading of this Bill, and then to adopt the suggestion of the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker), or a modification of it, so that, when the House meets again, we may have the views of members with knowledge of the conditions of life of the people upon whom will be cast the responsibility of paying for this measure. I thank the hon. gentleman for having placed the matter in that light. The Minister in charge of the Bill will make his own announcement.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister—Nelson—in reply) [8.18]: When I first perused the two Bills which have been under discussion this afternoon, it struck me that each Bill was absolutely interwoven with the other. I made that statement when speaking here yesterday. The way indicated by the member for Kanowna (Hon. T. Walker) has my entire approval. I trust that, if the House sees fit to carry the second reading, a select committee will be appointed to submit to this House views which we can embody in a comprehensive measure.

Hon. T. Walker: The committee should draft a Bill.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): They should draft something that will fill the bill. I was more than surprised, I was horrified, to learn from the debate that we have on these benches men who strongly favour trapping. Let me warn hon. members against trapping. Trapping means commercialism; trapping means that in a short time huge vested interests will grow up; that the rabbits will be here, and that the farmers and sheep growers will be out; that eventually the rabbits will be left in sole possession. That will be the result of trapping here, as it has been the result of trapping in those portions of New South Wales where poisoning is prohibited and the rabbit trapper is allowed full sway.

Mr. Maley: That is nonsense.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): It is not nonsense. It has been proved beyond the shadow of doubt. I am pleased that some hon. members are aware of the grave risks involved in the trapping proposition. The member for York (Mr. Griffiths), with some other members, seems to be in favour of letting the roads boards have

the full and complete right to be vermin boards in themselves. But that would be an absolutely impossible position.

Mr. Griffiths: The roads boards already have the necessary machinery.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): It is absolutely necessary to have vermin boards, which in many cases would include several roads board districts. That course will save expense, and is the only way to handle the question. Otherwise, we shall have selfish boards refusing to administer the Act. While the boards all round them would be carrying out the Act and taxing the people within their boundaries, these selfish boards would do nothing until the Minister came along, under this measure, and said, "If you do not do it, I will." It may be that one roads board here and another there should be a vermin board; but the House should not insist that each roads board shall be a vermin board. I listened with the closest attention to the remarks of the member for Pingelly (Mr. Hickmott), because if there is one member of this Chamber who can speak authoritatively on the subject it is that hon. member. I personally have had no experience of rabbits. I do know that very many years ago rabbits were imported to Busselton from England, at great trouble, and that false warrens were built for them. But, thank goodness! those rabbits died before they became acclimatised; otherwise the South-West would today be in a parlous condition. They were tame rabbits, and not the species of rodent that is devastating so much of our fair country today. The member for Pingelly says that during the wet season the results from poisoning are not commensurate with the trouble; and experience backs up that assertion. One can always poison rabbits with certain poisons, but in order to get the best results it is essential to poison in the dry season. Our Eastern districts have a long summer, and if people there will act collectively they have a much better chance of dealing with the pest by poison than have the people of any other part of Australia, so far as I know. The member for Pingelly objects to the clause requiring the fencing of water supplies, and I acknowledge that he has supported his objections with very good reasons. Other hon. members have also pointed out that the fencing of all our watercourses and dams, as provided by this Bill, might possibly create very great hardship.

Mr. Hickmott: It is impossible.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): But that clause can only be applied to a proclaimed area. It cannot be applied, as various hon. members have suggested, in any portion of the State without regard for the circumstances of that portion. Just fancy the idea of fencing off the water in the neighbourhood of the Gascoyne! It is too absurd. But if the settlers in the rabbit-infested areas will poison, the result will not only justify the expenditure, but we should not have Western Australia held up as nothing but a rolling rabbit warren, which some hon. members have tried to make the public believe it is. Every thing that is said against this

State simply plays into the hands of those in the Eastern States who miss no opportunity of using such statements to advise all and sundry to avoid Western Australia as a plague-stricken, sandy desert. It is most inadvisable to create a feeling of alarm. The best is bad enough, in all conscience; but it is not half as bad as some hon. members make out.

Mr. Harrison: I object to the Honorary Minister saying that members representing the eastern districts belittle the State.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): Hon. members, on turning to the remarks made by the Minister introducing the Bill in another place, will see that he commented on the results of poisoning on Mr. Hedges' farm. Those results were most satisfactory. The member for North-East Fremantle (Hon. W. C. Angwin) has said that the Rabbit Act and the Vermin Act should be amalgamated. I quite agree that they should be, if possible. But I am not a lawyer; I cannot frame these measures; I am not expected to do so. I can only put up my views, and the Minister for Agriculture can only put his. Those views are submitted to the Crown Law Department with a request for the framing of a measure which will give the desired results. If the Crown Law Department say that it is impracticable to draft a measure embracing both the Vermin Bill and the Rabbit Bill, am I to set my opinion against that of the professional men who are paid to advise the Government on such matters? The idea was put up to the Crown Law Department, who said it was impracticable. I hope that if a select committee is appointed, certain hon. members will prove to the committee that the proposal is practicable. If they can prove it, I for one shall most readily do all in my power to have the two measures amalgamated and have the necessary Bill brought down. I would go even further. I would repeal the two existing Acts; I would not bring in an amending Bill, but one comprehensive measure which will save the trouble of referring from one Act to the other until, as the member for Kanowna has said, we do not know where we are.

Mr. Griffiths: But did not the Crown Law Department tell you that the objection to your proposal was that it would render necessary the repeal of the other two Acts?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): The Crown Law Department put up so many objections that, rather than combat those objections any longer, the Government agreed to accept these two Bills. There has been great divergence in the opinions expressed to-night, and I trust that those members who have so freely voiced their views will take the opportunity of laying them before the select committee, if appointed, so that, out of the multitude of counsellors here and counsellors outside, there may come wisdom in dealing not only with the rabbits but also with the dingoes. Let not the dingo be forgotten. The dingo question is also most important.

Mr. Maley: What about the sparrows?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I was asked to deal with the sparrows when they were 900 miles away from Western Australia.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is dealing with the Vermin Bill.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (Honorary Minister): I was about to say that sparrows do not come under this measure. If they did come under this measure, I would observe that I was asked to deal with them when they were not in this State, and that I could not do so because this Parliament has no authority outside the boundaries of Western Australia. The member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Troy) suggests that this Bill should be withdrawn. To that I say, "No; let us put the Bill through the second reading, and then, if hon. members think fit, let us appoint a select committee in accordance with the suggestion of the member for Kanowna, which has been supported by the leader of the House."

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

Hon. T. WALKER: I wish to delegate the task of moving the motion for the appointment of a select committee to an hon. member who is immediately interested in the matter of rabbit extermination. I would ask that the motion be made by the member for Toodyay.

Bill referred to Select Committee.

Mr. PIESSE (Toodyay) [8.30]: I move—"That the Bill be referred to a select committee."

Question put and passed.

Ballot taken and the following appointed a select committee, namely:—Messrs. Griffiths, Lambert, Thomson, Troy, and the mover (Mr. Piesse) with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to report on Tuesday, 14th May.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for resumption from the 17th April of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Foley in the Chair, the Colonial Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

Mr. BROWN: In moving the second reading the other night the Colonial Treasurer informed the House that he had interviewed a number of people connected with horse racing and inquired whether the race clubs could exist without the aid of the bookmakers and was informed that they could not. I think he might also have asked those people whether the bookmakers could exist without the racecourses, because I contend the greater part of the book-making business is done on the racecourse, though some is done on the streets and a good deal in the shops. Everyone will agree that the instinct of gambling is universal. In Western

Australia we have even a greater difficulty than in any other part of the world. The people here are a sport-loving and gambling community. We have legalised what is known in the Criminal Code as an instrument, to have, use and play with, on the racecourse, an instrument known as the totalisator. That is one form of betting which I think should meet all the requirements in connection with the gambling instincts of the people of the State. If we are to continue gambling we should make a monopoly of the totalisator. New Zealand has proved that the racing club can exist and flourish without the bookmaker, and if we were to apply the same principle in Western Australia the same results would follow. None of the Governments of Western Australia have had the courage to put into operation Section 209 of the Criminal Code, which makes betting a misdemeanour. The present Government—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the interpretations. I cannot allow second reading speeches such as the hon. member is undoubtedly making.

Mr. BROWN: But the subject of betting is dealt with in the clause. Where, then, am I out of order?

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 10, when we reach it, will give the hon. member the opportunity he desires.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I think your ruling is wrong. The interpretation clause deals with "backer," "bets," "betting tickets," and "bookmaker."

The CHAIRMAN: If any hon. member thinks my ruling is wrong, there is a prescribed procedure for him to follow.

Dissent from Chairman's ruling.

Mr. Munsie: I move—

"That the ruling of the Chairman be disagreed with."

I contend that the hon. member for Subiaco cannot discuss bookmakers and the totalisator under Clause 10, which provides for duties in respect of bets, whereas I maintain that the hon. member can discuss betting and book-making on the interpretation clause. However, with the permission of the House, I will withdraw my motion.

Mr. Thomson: I object to the motion being withdrawn, for I think the stand taken by the hon. member was entirely correct.

The Chairman: The Standing Orders provide that in the event of any member objecting to the withdrawal of a motion the motion must stand.

Mr. Munsie: Well, I will not go on with it.

Mr. Thomson: Seeing that apparently the Committee desires that the motion should be withdrawn, I will withdraw my objection to that withdrawal.

Motion by leave withdrawn.

Committee resumed.

Mr. PICKERING: Should there not be an interpretation of country racecourses? Only metropolitan and goldfields racecourses are included.

The Colonial Treasurer: All others are outside the tax fixed here.

Mr. BROWN: In view of Section 209 of the Criminal Code, I should like an explanation of the word "betting."

Mr. MONEY: I should like that question to be answered.

Clause put and passed.

Taxation 3—Substitution of "Commissioner of Taxation" for "Colonial Treasurer," etc.:

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I suggest that the clause be struck out. I do so in accordance with the wish of hon. members generally expressed that nothing shall interfere with the control of these measures by the Colonial Treasurer. Of course, in any circumstances the Commissioner would be under my direction.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 4—Charge of duties:

Mr. MUNSIE: If we pass the clause as it stands shall we afterwards be at liberty to amend any item in the schedule, will it be possible to reduce the amount the Treasurer intends to have placed on cheques?

The Colonial Treasurer: I am going to get somebody to move that it be reduced.

Mr. MUNSIE: But I want an assurance that it can be done even after we shall have agreed to the clause.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: What we did the other night in a similar instance, in connection with the Metcalf agreement, was to specially accept it, and agree to take the agreement in detail. The Government have no wish, under a clause like this, to pass the schedule as a whole; indeed, it is desired that the Committee should have opportunity of discussing every item of the schedule if they wish.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: What we did the other night was to approve an agreement. This does not become the schedule until Parliament has approved of it. In the other case we had no right to deal with the agreement.

Mr. Pilkington: It is not a schedule until passed.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5-8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Penalty for accepting unstamped receipt:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: How would this clause apply in the case of a person receiving an acknowledgment of payment which did not contain a stamp, because that person had not a stamp available at the time? Is it necessary that the stamp duty should be paid twice over in such an instance? It is often difficult to obtain a stamp when it is required.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is almost impossible to insist on getting receipts. When money is posted to a man in the country it is not easy for him always to get a revenue stamp. It seems to me wrong that we should impose a penalty of £10. I do not think the Treasurer would get a penny more revenue through the insertion of this clause in the Bill. We had better vote against it. At any rate, I move an amendment—

"That all the words after 'duty' in the third line be struck out."

The Attorney General: This amendment would render the clause meaningless.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: There are firms which only obtain receipts through the medium of endorsed cheques received through the bank.

How does the Treasurer intend to deal with that class of business, which has been perpetrated by large firms issuing hundreds of cheques a day, in which cases no receipts are given?

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the intention of the member for Northam to substitute other words if his amendment is carried? Otherwise, the clause will be meaningless.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 10—Duties in respect to debts:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: In effect, it is proposed here to license bookmakers and charge them a fee for betting. A few days ago we imposed an additional tax upon the totalisator. Betting, I would point out, is illegal.

Mr. Munsie: Not on the racecourse.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: It is absolutely illegal.

Mr. Pilkington: It is not illegal to bet. It never has been illegal in any part of the British Empire.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The law says that every person betting on any race course or any public place shall be liable to conviction and to a penalty. This is a monstrous proposal in my opinion, and I cannot understand how the Government came to submit it. I do not know what they expect to receive from these betting tickets. Even if it were legal to bet, we should be doing a wrong in imposing such a tax. A bookmaker could make a bet, and discharge a debt of £100 by the payment of one-half penny. This simply means that so long as one buys one's ticket from the Treasurer one would be safe from prosecution. I take it, if the Bill is passed, no magistrate would convict any person so long as he used a betting ticket, and contributed either one halfpenny or twopenny to the revenue. The main objection I have to the Bill is that it recognises the bookmaker. If the Government desire to do this why do they not bring in a Bill legalising betting? If we establish a licensing court for bookmakers we could collect the fees that are now paid by them to the clubs. There is already far too much racing and gambling in the metropolitan area. I hope the Committee will not agree to this means of recognising the bookmaker. Racing can go on quite satisfactorily without the bookmaker, as is shown in South Australia.

The Colonial Treasurer: Are there no bookmakers in South Australia?

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I have never seen one there.

The Colonial Treasurer: The wealthiest club in South Australia is Tattersalls Club in Adelaide.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Bookmaking is carried on in a quiet way there, and only to a limited extent on the race courses. On the one hand the Government say that the bookmaker must be prosecuted for betting, and on the other hand they say that they will impose a fee upon the bookmaker who bets in the street, or in a shop, or on the racecourse. I do not intend to recognise the bookmaker in this way. If we are going to legalise him let us control

him and get a decent fee from him. Under this clause the bookmaker can make 480 bets for a penny.

The Colonial Treasurer: We anticipate receiving, under this clause, £11,000 a year; and we tax the bookmaker on his profits as well.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Assuming the Treasurer's estimate to be correct, we had better wipe out the bookmaker at once, because there must be tremendous waste of money in betting.

Mr. Pilkington: We do not encourage the bookmaker by taxing him.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: Parliament will stultify itself by passing this clause, in view of the law which makes the business of the bookmaker illegal. I hope the committee will strike out the clause. I am indeed surprised that the Government have proposed it. If we are to pass legislation legalising the business of the bookmaker, let us do it by a special Bill for that purpose, with provision for substantial license fees and proper regulation.

Mr. PICKERING: I agree with the views expressed by the member for Northam. The bookmaker is one of the worst parasites we have in the State to-day. I shall vote against the clause.

Mr. BROWN: I enter my protest against the legalising of the bookmaker, as I understand that the Criminal Code makes betting anywhere illegal. We know that people are frequently fined for betting in the streets or in shops. I consider that betting is equally illegal on the racecourse; apart, that is, from betting through the totalisator. Any Government making a proposal such as that contained in this clause must fail to realise the bearing it has on gambling, which has been and is the cause of much crime and misery. The clause proposes to obtain revenue from one of the very worst of vices. If the proposal were a good one, would it be limited to the racecourse? No; it would be extended as widely as possible in order to secure taxation of as many bets as possible. I trust the clause will be rejected.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Let us look at the clause from a practical point of view. Betting exists, and will exist. The House has already during this session admitted the legality of betting. The Government of which the member for Northam was a member introduced a measure seeking larger revenue from betting—a measure amending the Totalisator Act.

Hon. J. Mitchell: That is quite a different thing.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: It is betting, all the same. Where is the line to be drawn? Betting cannot be stopped. Children, before they can speak, are taught gambling, through prize packets, by some of the very people who object to such a provision as this. The bookmaker ought to pay something towards the revenue of the State, and on that ground I support the clause.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The member for Subiaco spoke of betting being illegal under the Criminal Code. Section 21 of the Code, however, deals with betting houses, and makes people who keep them liable to certain penalties. A bet qua bet is not illegal. Section 2 of the Police Act, which was referred to by the member for Northam, was repealed in 1898 by the Statute 62 Victoria, No. 21. It is not

illegal, in a particular place, to make a bet. Even if betting on a racecourse were illegal, a bet in itself is not illegal qua bet. This clause merely provides that when a bet is made it shall bear a tax. Under the Criminal Code bets may not be made in any betting house. Those bets, whether stamped or unstamped, would be illegal. Otherwise the law relating to betting will not trench on this clause.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Is betting illegal?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: It is not declared illegal by that section.

Hon. J. Mitchell: It is illegal.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think it is.

Hon. J. Mitchell: Betting in the street is illegal.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Betting in the street is a different thing. When this particular section of the Police Act was repealed in 1892, power was given to the police to prosecute for a breach of municipal by-laws or regulations. The city council had made by-laws dealing with betting in public places or streets. All prosecutions since 1902 have been under those by-laws. As all lawyers know, it is difficult to secure a conviction, owing to the peculiar wording of "public place." Therefore street betting is allowed to go on. If it is ever desired to stop street betting, the by-laws will require strengthening by being made a Statute. There is no doubt that the section quoted by the member for Northam has been repealed, and therefore what is proposed by the Bill is perfectly in order.

Mr. PILKINGTON: The position, as I understand it, is this: Making a bet is not, and never has been, illegal. Making a bet at a time not very far remote historically was making a contract; a bet could be enforced in the courts as an ordinary contract; it is, in fact, an ordinary contract. Then it was made illegal in the sense that it was a contract which could not be enforced by a court of law. Then legislation was passed in England, I think about 40 years ago, in which it was made illegal for a person to keep a place for the purpose of bets being made between the keeper of that place and the person resorting thereto, and it was held on that legislation that there was nothing illegal in a racing club keeping a portion of their enclosure for the purpose of bookmakers resorting thereto for the express purpose of making a bet with the public. It will be observed in that case that the keeper of the place was a racing club and a racing club does not bet. That was decided by the House of Lords in a well known case brought by a member of the Kempton Park Racing Club. The same Act was adopted in Queensland and words were introduced in it deliberately which made it illegal for a person to keep a place in order that the public resorting thereto might bet with bookmakers. That, too, by the merest chance, was adopted in the Criminal Code of this State in 1902, so that, by a sort of chance, it became illegal for the racing clubs to do that which they have always done ever since, that is, to keep a place in the enclosure for bookmakers to bet in. In my opinion, betting by bookmakers on

racecourses, as it is carried on, is illegal, but that does not alter the fact that a bookmaker may carry on his trade without breaking the law. A great deal of bookmaking is carried out without in any way breaking the law, because it is not illegal to make a bet. Illegality arises when you keep a shop, a house, or a place, for the purpose of persons resorting thereto and making bets with one another. As I stated, that particular section in the Code was adopted without Parliament in this State knowing what it was doing, and it has been deliberately ignored for many years by everyone.

Mr. Brown: Has it ever been repealed?

Mr. PILKINGTON: No, it is the law today. It was the law 15 years ago when the original Criminal Code was passed, but the whole community, the racing clubs, this House and all Governments who have been in power have been perfectly satisfied that the proceeding should continue as in the past. That statute has been in existence for 15 years and it has never been enforced. If it should be the law, it should be enforced; if it should not be the law, it should be repealed. In the present case we are not really dealing with illegal betting. We say to a bookmaker, "If you choose to carry on your calling you have to pay a certain charge in regard to every ticket you issue." The legality or illegality of betting still remains; the position is as it was before. If a prosecution takes place, it will not be affected by the Bill. There are very few people who are in the habit of going to racecourses who are not subject to be prosecuted for doing these very things. We will not by this class of legislation stop gambling. The law as it stands has been in force for 15 years, and so far as I know, there has never been a prosecution of any bookmaker or any racing club, or of any of the many persons who bet on racecourses.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: We know that betting exists and we know that it exists where it is not supposed to exist. The member for Northam says it does not exist in Adelaide. I can assure the hon. member that every time I have been to Adelaide I have been made a member of Tattersall's Club, which is one of the finest clubs in Australia, and on the last occasion when I was in Adelaide I happened to be there at about 10 o'clock on Saturday morning. If the hon. member had been there at the same time he would have come to the conclusion pretty quickly that betting does exist in Adelaide, and in a big way, too. If the bookmaker is to exist I want to see what money I can get out of him for the State. The amounts of the tax, 2d. and 1½d., may appear small, but I hope to get about £11,000 in one year by this means. In addition we tax the bookmaker on his profits, just as anyone else. It is said that that may be immoral. The Commonwealth are so moral that they stop men going to Tattersall's, Tasmania, but if anyone wins a prize, the same Commonwealth takes 10 per cent. of it. It is a sham morality.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: The clause should receive very earnest attention. I had thought

the Committee would be shocked when the Treasurer made this suggestion. Imagine the Taxation Commissioner going to the racecourse to check the betting tickets! In no time the Commissioner will himself become a punter. If it is desired to license the bookmaker, let us license him.

The Colonial Treasurer: If we license him we to a certain extent will be guaranteeing his solvency.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: No, I do not think so, but his bets will then be recoverable. On the whole, it will be a disadvantage to the bookmaker. I do not know how the Committee can approve of bookmaking on a racecourse and disapprove of it in a shop. As a matter of fact in every town in the State are to be found shops where bets can be made. Only recently we have had prosecutions for shop betting. It is ridiculous to penalise a man for betting in a shop while allowing him to bet in the street or on the racecourse. If we carry the clause the name of the Treasurer should be painted in large letters on the bookmaker's bag conjointly with the name of the bookmaker. I move an amendment—

“That the following be added to the clause:—‘No ticket shall be issued to any bookmaker who does not produce a license from the Western Australian Turf Club issued in his name conjointly with that of the Colonial Treasurer for the time being.’”

Mr. DRAPER: We are dealing with a Bill to further amend the Stamp Act, and not with the conditions of betting. Is the amendment in order?

The CHAIRMAN: I was just considering whether this amendment could stand as an additional subclause to Clause 10. I do not think it can stand there. It may have a chance in Clause 11, which deals with betting tickets, but under Clause 10 I must rule that the amendment is not in order.

Hon. T. WALKER: I cannot understand the assumption of morality in connection with betting as shown in the attitude of some hon. members. The member for Perth has pointed out that betting is legal. I may go further and say it is so natural that in some form or other none of us can avoid it. It is one of the stimuli to activity in life. It has received the consideration of very able lawyers, and I could not better put into language the thoughts I am trying to convey than has been done by Anson in his “Law of Contracts.” I am going to show that it is proposed to tax an occupation that is analogous and practically on all-fours with other enterprises that we do tax. Anson says—

There is, however, a kind of contract, the wager, which needs special attention. Its peculiar character calls for analysis, and the modes in which it has been dealt with by the Legislature require to be traced. Confusion has arisen from the use of the word “wager” as a term of reproach; hence some contracts not permitted by law have been called wagers, whilst others precisely similar in nature but enforced by the courts under certain conditions, are not so called. A wager is a promise to give money or money's worth upon the determination or ascertainment of an uncertain

event; the consideration for such a promise is either something given by the other party, or a promise to give upon the event determining in a particular way. The event may be uncertain because it has not happened, or because it is not ascertained, at any rate to the knowledge of the parties. Thus a wager may be made upon the length of St. Paul's, or upon the result of an election which is over though the parties do not know in whose favour it has gone. The uncertainty then resides in the minds of the parties, and the subject of the wager may be said to be rather the accuracy of each man's judgment than the determination of a particular event. But the parties must contemplate the determination of the uncertain event as the sole condition of their contract. One may thus distinguish a genuine wager from a conditional promise or a guarantee.

Then he gives a number of illustrations on the point and goes on to say—

It is obvious that a wager may be a purely gambling or sporting transaction, or it may be directed to commercial objects. A man who bets against his horse winning the Derby is precisely in the same position as a man who bets against the safety of his own cargo. Yet we call the one a wager, while the other is called a contract or marine insurance. A has a horse likely to win the Derby, and therefore a prospect of a large return for money laid out in rearing and training the horse, in stakes and in bets; he wishes to secure that he shall in no event be a loser, and he agrees with X that, in consideration of X promising him £4,000 if his horse loses, he promises X £7,000 if his horse wins. The same is his position as owner of a cargo; he has a prospect of large profits on money laid out upon a cargo of silk; he wishes in no event to be a loser, and he agrees with X, an underwriter, that in consideration of his paying X £—, X promises to pay him £— if his cargo is lost by certain specified perils.

Every one of us in our lives are making bets as it were, running risk, speculating, doing something with a hope of making a big return every day of our lives. Betting itself is not illegal. We have made certain types or forms of betting under certain conditions illegal, specifying those only. All the rest of betting is legal and I can see no reason why it should not be legal there. I do not see why a bet should not be legal in Tattersall's Club or the Celtic Club and not legal in a certain enclosure on the racecourse. In fact, it is already recognised by the citizens, the Government and the authorities. Betting is, by the connivance of the authorities legal, although it is declared by the Criminal Code to be illegal. It is custom that makes the law. We have not altered the custom, notwithstanding the introduction of the Criminal Code. We retain the old customs, therefore we are giving the sanction of authority and custom, and to that extent the law, even on the racecourse itself. If we go so far, I see no reason why we should not put a stamp on a contract, for it is a contract, with the bookmaker for doing

that which in the case of life insurance or registration of a transfer or the giving of a receipt for money is legal. They are all contracts; they are of the same character. Therefore, I see no reason why we should not help to get some revenue for our depleted revenue. I shall not vote for the amendment suggested by the member for Northam (Hon. J. Mitchell) because I do not believe in giving a monopoly to the Turf Club. If a bet is legal and a man pursues the avocation of making a bet whether he belongs to the Turf Club or not, he should give something to the State for the privilege.

Mr. ROCKE: I support the clause as it stands. I have been under the impression that betting of all kinds was illegal. Now I find it is not. Several have spoken of the immorality of gambling. If it is immoral, and I think it is, it is also injurious to the community and if it is injurious, that is all the more reason why it should be taxed. It may be urged that because we legalise the liquor traffic we should not accept taxation from it; I say all the more reason that it should pay something into the coffers of the Treasury.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11—Tickets to be written out and cancelled for each bet:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: If the Treasurer is desirous of getting revenue from this occupation there are other businesses to which he should apply taxation.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is entirely out of order other than in discussing tickets to be written out and cancelled for each bet.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: There are many serious offences for which the fine is not so large.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow the hon. member to proceed only under the conditions set out in the clause.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: This penalty is too great compared with the penalty for more serious offences. I am sorry the Committee is inclined to pass the clause to authorise the Treasurer to deal with the question of the bookmaker; since I realise the frame of mind of members, they are willing to get revenue from any source, although that source may be declared to be wrong. As a result of passing this clause, no doubt a Bill will be submitted to the House legalising the bookmaker.

The CHAIRMAN: We discussed in the previous clause legalising the bookmaker. This only deals with issuing and cancelling tickets.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I shall content myself by suggesting that the colour of the tickets be yellow. I think the minimum penalty for the first offence is rather high. The penalty ranges from £100 to £10, and is left optional to the court.

The Minister for Works: If the minimum is reduced it might pay the people to run the risk.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: They would pay the full penalty next time. I move an amendment—

“That in line 8 the word ‘ten’ be struck out and ‘five’ inserted in lieu.”

The Colonial Treasurer: Very well.

Amendment put and passed; the clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Return by racing clubs:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: By whom are the bookmakers to be licensed?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I think under the Act the W.A.T.C. do the licensing. What we want under this clause is that the racing clubs shall send in returns as to what bookmakers have been licensed. We want this power to ensure that no one escapes.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I think the W.A.T.C. should license the bookmakers. This clause seems to imply that licenses may be issued by any race club. There is no authority to-day under which the W.A.T.C. can license bookmakers, except that they can refuse to grant racing dates to any racing club if they allow unlicensed bookmakers to bet.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14—Enforcement of penalties in case of racing club:

Hon. J. MITCHELL: What would happen to the secretary or chairman of a racing club under this clause? I happen to be chairman of a club myself, but not a gambling club. What penalty could be enforced against the secretary or chairman?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: This is only a machinery clause and £10 is the maximum penalty provided for.

Hon. J. Mitchell: What is the offence?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: For not sending in returns.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: If the club mentioned by the member for Northam does not license bookmakers it would have no returns to send in, and would not come under this clause.

Hon. J. Mitchell: The Government have stopped the tote by imposing an impossible tax.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 15—agreed to.

Schedule:

Mr. PILKINGTON: I move an amendment—

“That under ‘Agreement—exemptions’ the following words be added: ‘or for the hire of gas meters or stoves, or electric meters or stoves.’”

If this amendment is not made there would be a hardship in the case of municipalities who hire these meters to their various consumers.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Before this amendment is put I would like to hear from the Minister how this paragraph will affect those persons who travel round the country selling goods on time payment and make agreements with people who do not know anything about them.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: All hire purchase agreements are taxable.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. DRAPER: I should like to hear from the Colonial Treasurer what instruments this tax will affect. The exemptions say it shall not apply to any appraisal or valuation made for the information of one party only, and not being bound as between parties either by agreement or by operation of law. It does not apply, either, to an appraisal for and on behalf of the Government. It appears that the

only appraisement which would be binding would be that in the nature of an award.

The Colonial Treasurer: That is so.

Mr. PICKERING: I move an amendment—
“That the following words be struck out: ‘Betting ticket—on every betting ticket issued by a bookmaker (a) within the grandstand enclosure of any metropolitan or gold-fields racecourse 2d.; (b) or elsewhere within the ground of a racecourse or outside a racecourse 1½d.’”

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

Ayes	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	30

Majority against .. 24

AYES.

Mr. Harrison	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Veryard
Mr. Mitchell	Mr. Brown

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Maley
Mr. Broun	Mr. Money
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Davies	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nairn
Mr. Durack	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. George	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Green	Mr. Roche
Mr. Hickmott	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Walker
Mr. Jones	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Hardwick

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. DRAPER: I move an amendment—

“That under ‘Bill of exchange or promissory note payable on demand or at sight’ the figure ‘2d.’ be struck out and ‘1d.’ inserted in lieu.”

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

“That under ‘Bill of exchange of any other kind whatsoever, and promissory note of any other kind whatsoever,’ after ‘Western Australia,’ there be inserted: ‘Where the amount or value of the money for which the same is made or drawn does not exceed £25, 6d.’”

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

Ayes	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	19

Majority against .. 8

AYES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Money
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Harrison	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Johnston	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Maley	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Mitchell	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Brown	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Chesson	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Draper	Mr. Roche
Mr. Durack	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Walker
Mr. George	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Mullany	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. MONEY: I move an amendment—

“That under ‘Bill of exchange of any other kind whatsoever, and promissory note of any other kind whatsoever,’ after ‘Western Australia,’ there be inserted: ‘Where the amount or value of the money for which the same is made or drawn does not exceed £10, 3d.’”

Hon. J. MITCHELL: May I suggest to the member for Bunbury that he withdraws this amendment, and, instead, moves that the figure “1s.” opposite “£50” be struck out, with a view to the insertion of “6d.”?

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

Ayes	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	21

Majority against .. 9

AYES.

Mr. Broun	Mr. Pickering
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Plesse
Mr. Harrison	Mr. H. Robinson
Mr. Johnston	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Maley	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Money	
Mr. Nairn	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. Mullany
Mr. Brown	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Pilkington
Mr. Draper	Mr. R. T. Robinson
Mr. Durack	Mr. Roche
Mr. Gardiner	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. George	Mr. Walker
Mr. Green	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Jones	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Hardwick
Mr. Lutey	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Will the Treasurer explain Exemption 3, which reads “Letter of credit granted in Western Australia authorising drafts to be drawn out of Western Australia payable in Western Australia”? How is it possible for a letter of credit to be taken from Western Australia outside Western Australia and to be used and repaid in Western Australia without bearing a stamp?

Mr. Thomson: The stamp duty is collected by the State in which the cheque is drawn.

The Attorney General: This is an ordinary letter of credit on which drafts can be drawn outside the State.

Mr. JOHNSTON: Under the heading of exchange the proposal is to increase the stamp duty on the exchange of properties. A good

many properties are exchanged through the Agricultural Bank. Does not the Treasurer think that this will press harshly in those cases where the Government are continually changing people from one block to another on which exchange at the present time the stamp duty is only 10s.?

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: This applies only to exchanges of private properties. I desire to add another exemption and I therefore move an amendment—

“That the following words be added to the Exemption under ‘Bill of Exchange of any kind whatsoever, and Promissory Note of any other kind whatsoever drawn or expressed to be payable, or actually paid or indorsed, or in any manner negotiated within Western Australia’: ‘A mortgage certified by the Commissioner to have been given on or after 1st March, 1918, for the sole purpose of securing repayment of money advanced for investment in War loan bonds or stock.’”

Amendment put and passed.

THE COLONIAL TREASURER: With reference to ‘Policy of insurance’ the clause which appears in the schedule was found to be unworkable, and I propose to substitute another for it. I therefore move an amendment—

“That all words under ‘Policy of insurance’ be struck out and the following inserted in lieu: ‘Policy of Insurance.—Any policy of insurance or instrument of guarantee or indemnity by whatever name called which operates in Western Australia in whole or in part as an insurance, and whether issued in or out of Western Australia—(a) Against loss of or damage to property by fire: for every year or part of a year during which such policy or a cover note on which premium is paid operating in lieu of and not replaced by a policy, continues in force—for every £100 and for every fractional part of £100 so insured, 6d. (b) Whereby any insurance is made upon any ship or vessel, or upon any goods, merchandise, or other property on board of any ship or vessel, or upon the freight thereof: for every £100 and for every fractional part of £100—(i) if the premium does not exceed 2s. 6d. per centum, 1d.; (ii) in any other case (for voyage), 3d.; (for time) not exceeding six months, 3d.; exceeding six months, 6d. (c) Against accident, or incapacity from sickness or personal injury: for every £100 and for every fractional part of £100 so insured, 3d. (d) Against employer’s liability under the Employers’ Liability Act, the Workers’ Compensation Act, or at common law: for every 10s. of premium or fractional portion thereof, 1d.; but not to exceed 1s. (e) Not otherwise specified: for every year or part of a year during which such policy, or a cover note on which premium is paid operating in lieu of and not replaced by a policy, continues in force: for every £100 and for every fractional part of £100 so insured—(i) if the premium does not exceed 2s. 6d. per centum, 1d.; (ii) In any other case, 3d. For the renewal of any policy under (a) or (e): for every £100 and for every fractional

part of £100 insured, 3d. Exemptions.—Policy of life insurance. Renewal of any policy under paragraphs (b), (c), or (d). Exemptions to receipt:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: Can one give an interim receipt without stamp duty, provided the proper receipt, duly stamped, is supplied afterwards?

The Colonial Treasurer: No. The Commissioner of Taxation says that an interim receipt is dutiable, that it is in the same category as a duplicate receipt. The question was tested in the courts.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I do not think that either an interim or a duplicate receipt should be taxable. Once the taxation is paid it should be sufficient.

The Colonial Treasurer: Some people would write “duplicate” on what was really the original receipt. The duplicate receipt is open to abuse, and there should be no occasion for an interim receipt.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: At the same time you run a risk of losing money which you would otherwise get. I move an amendment—

“That the following be added:—‘An interim receipt, provided a stamped receipt can be produced.’”

The Colonial Treasurer: There is no objection to the amendment.

Mr. HARRISON: I understood that an interim receipt could be given where a stamp was not available, provided a properly stamped receipt was sent along immediately. I question whether the phraseology of the amendment meets the case.

Mr. LAMBERT: I think it is inadvisable to pass the amendment. If a man receives money he should be in a position to give a proper receipt for it. The provision contained in the amendment would in my opinion be abused, and properly stamped receipts would often not be given. I hope the Committee will support the Treasurer in his attempt to see that receipts are stamped.

Mr. HARRISON: This amendment will inflict hardship upon many people living in the country. It may necessitate a man travelling a distance of 20 miles in order that he may procure a stamp to legalise a receipt.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: I support the amendment. Quite recently I took exception to the Taxation Department victimising several Perth firms, which had their travellers out. These travellers were in the habit of issuing interim receipts and on the following day issuing stamped receipts. At the same time, right under the nose of the Department, dozens of firms were issuing cheques without any receipts being given at all. The Department was fully aware of this.

The Colonial Treasurer: Why do you say that the department knew this?

Mr. H. ROBINSON: If the officials concerned did not know they should make room for those who would make it their business to find out. I brought the matter under notice, but nothing has been done to rectify it. If I sat elsewhere in this Chamber more notice would be taken of my remarks.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must discuss the question before the Chair.

Mr. H. ROBINSON: Duplicate receipts are often given by firms, and stamped receipts posted the next day. If that is not sufficient for any Government I do not know what is.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This may not be the proper phraseology to use, but if the Committee established the principle of these interim receipts, the phraseology can be altered in another place if necessary. My desire is to deal with persons who would act honestly, but are not in a position to give a stamped receipt at the moment.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: When one of my officers is in the Chamber I do not like an hon. member to take advantage of that fact, and say that there are dozens of cases in regard to which no action has been taken. It is only recently that the Commissioner of Taxation had power to put his officers in for inspections. There has not been a case reported to him in which he has not taken action. If the member for Albany knows of other cases, let him report them, and I will see that action is taken. There have been cases in which I have refused to prosecute. If I had prosecuted in every instance the courts would have been kept going for a year. The Stamp Act will be posted in every public place for the future, and no one will be able to say that he does not know the law on the subject.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MONEY: The principle of exemptions which is laid down is that if an agent pays money to his principal, or the principal to his agent, no stamp is required. When one draws money from one's agent, say the Government Savings Bank, no stamp duty is required.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is dealing with something that has already gone past.

Mr. MONEY: I do not at all wish to deal with what is past. I am speaking now in support of an exemption which I propose shall be made.

The CHAIRMAN: In supporting his point, the hon. member must not discuss a part of this Bill which is already passed.

Mr. MONEY: I move an amendment—

“That under ‘Exemptions’ the following be added: ‘(13.) Receipt given by agent to principal, or by principal to agent.’”

The Colonial Treasurer: Why?

Mr. MONEY: I will give an actual instance in support of my amendment. I have received a substantial sum as agent. I have given a receipt, duly stamped, to my principal. Then I have remitted the money to my agents in Perth, and they have sent me a receipt, also duly stamped. Thus the stamp duty has been paid twice. But the duty on the transaction is intended to be paid on the conveyance. The conveyance provides the duty payable on the transaction. It was never intended that the duty should be paid two or three times over. I took the opinion of the Solicitor General on the point, and he said it was not the spirit of the Stamp Act that a person should pay duty when paying money to an agent, that is, to himself, or that duty should be paid two or three times over. The amount of the receipt stamps has been

refunded. The case is not expressly exempted here, and it ought to be.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The ruling given by the Solicitor General to the hon. member exactly discloses the position. There was no occasion for those stamped receipts; and there is no occasion to insert in this schedule an exemption which is so evident to everybody.

Mr. MONEY: Some people think otherwise, and insist on receipts.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: True; but when the hon. member got in touch with the proper authority he was told there was no duty payable.

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: I would like the member for Bunbury to inform me how his amendment would operate in this case: Say I were manufacturing a special line of goods, and appointed some person in a country town my sole agent. When my agent paid me for goods supplied to him, ought not the receipt to bear stamp duty? Yet, under this amendment, it could be claimed that it was my agent paying me.

Mr. MONEY: He would have given stamped receipts to the persons who purchased the goods from him.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. NAIRN: I think that receipts for moneys received in connection with charitable matters should also be exempt. I have had some experience in this direction lately, and I have been definitely informed by the Taxation Department that it is necessary to stamp documents for money raised for charitable purposes. Under the heading “Receipts given,” I therefore move an amendment—

“That the following paragraph be added to ‘exemptions’:—‘Receipt for money received for charitable purposes.’”

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The attitude of the hon. member is unfair. The Bill has been before hon. members for the past three weeks, and it is not right that an amendment of this nature should be sprung on the Committee at a moment's notice. I know that good motives are behind the action of the hon. member, but it is exceedingly difficult on the spur of the moment to determine the character of a charitable purpose. There are many things which may be designated charitable, and their exact nature should be defined. I have already allowed exemptions in the cases of those objects which I considered were really charitable, but the Lord knows where these charitable things are going to begin and where they are going to end. I want something more definite from the member for Swan.

Mr. NAIRN: I am the honorary treasurer of a charitable movement known as the Woorloo comforts fund, and I assure the Colonial Treasurer it is purely charitable. Someone else has suggested other charitable movements which have been authorised by the War Council, and there are many others of a similar nature. The Taxation Department ought to have anticipated that these questions would be raised and made provision accordingly.

Mr. LUTEY: There are unions on the gold-fields which have a friendly societies side, and they pay hundreds of pounds in the shape of

accident contributions. Will the Colonial Treasurer explain whether these payments will be exempt?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: A union is not a friendly society and therefore will not benefit by the exemption. With regard to the proposal of the member for Swan, I will go into the matter, and if exemption can be allowed, I will arrange to have the exemption provided for in another place.

Mr. NAIRN: In view of the Colonial Treasurer's promise I will withdraw my amendment. It has been suggested to me that the Treasurer has no desire to prevent what I have in view, and that he is prepared to see that the provision is made and considered in another place. I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. LUTEY: I propose to move an amendment providing that all moneys paid into the sick fund and death allowance fund of a union be exempt. On its friendly society side a union has just as much claim to consideration as has any friendly society.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I cannot tell off hand how this will affect us. If the hon. member will see me and convince me that it is all right, I will do in his case what I have promised to do in the case of the member for Swan.

Schedule put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Bill reported with amendments, and the report adopted.

BILL—LAND AND INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day.

Mr. Stubbs in the Chair; the Colonial Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 16; income liable to taxation:

Hon. W. C. ANGWIN: This provides for wiping out the exemption of £200. An exemption is provided in every other State of the Commonwealth. I think we might well follow the example set in the other States. In view of the abnormally increased cost of living, the man on low wages cannot afford to pay any further taxation. When it was previously proposed to interfere with the exemption there was no Federal income taxation. A man earning less than £200 is not at present in a position to pay further direct taxation. It is not only the direct taxation he has to pay, but the indirect taxation also, which falls very heavily on him. The average wage for all industries in Western Australia is £3 7s. 10d. per week. So that there is a possibility of a man earning considerably under £200 a year being taxed if the exemption is wiped out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Owing to the lengthy sittings we have had the strain has been very great not only on members but on the Government, and to sit longer now

would mean considerable disarrangement and disorganisation in the different departments, therefore it has been decided that the House at its rising shall adjourn until the 14th May. I hope members will look through the different Bills that have to be further discussed and study them so that when we meet again they can be got through without undue debate. I move—

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

Motion passed; progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

“That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday, the 14th May, at 4.30 p.m.”

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.53 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 14th May, 1918.

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

[For “Question on Notice” and “Papers Presented” see “Minutes of Proceedings.”]

BILL—GRAIN ELEVATORS AGREEMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th April.

Hon. J. F. ALLEN (West) [4.36]: I desire first to congratulate those members who have sought re-election at the hands of their constituents and been returned to this Chamber for a new term of six years. In moving the adjournment of the debate on the Grain Elevators Agreement Bill, I did not intend to be antagonistic to the project of bulk handling of wheat, nor did I desire in any way to prevent the Government from doing something which they earnestly believed to be in the interests of the State. Neither was I actuated by any desire to hold up that which was considered by the Government to be urgent business. But the question raised by this agreement is one of such magnitude and of such far-reaching importance to this State that in my opinion it would be unseemly for members of this Chamber to allow the measure to go through in one sitting, as was desired by the Government. To my mind it is a matter for regret that a mea-