

only to any modification which may be necessary to remove the inconsistency.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That shows that the draftsman has some doubt about it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. J. Yelland, debate adjourned.

BILL—MUNICIPALITY OF FREMANTLE.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 9.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 22nd October, 1925.

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

QUESTION—ART UNION SWEEPS.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH asked the Minister for Justice: 1, What conditions apply to the granting of permission for the conduct of art union sweeps? 2, For what reason was permission recently withheld from the Al-

bany Season Committee to conduct an art union sweep?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, Objection is not taken to art unions which have for their object the raising of funds for charitable or other worthy purposes. 2, That it did not come within the scope laid down.

QUESTION—ROAD MAKING, FEDERAL GRANT.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is the Press report correct regarding the distribution of the £48,000 allotted by the Commonwealth Government for the strengthening and reconditioning of main roads? 2, On whose recommendation was the distribution made? 3, Were the claims of other main roads taken into consideration before the allotment was made? 4, What reasons were given for selecting the roads named?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, If reference is made to the report furnished by me to the Press, the answer is "Yes." 2, The Acting Engineer in Chief recommended, and Mr. Hill, Engineer for Works and Railways (Commonwealth), approved, during his recent visit to the State. 3, Yes. 4, The roads referred to constitute the main outlets to the country areas, and having in mind the relative volumes of traffic they are, by reason of their present condition, the least fitted to carry it. The condition of the grant was that work of a permanent nature should be undertaken, and to attempt to meet all the needs of the various districts with a limited amount of £48,000 would certainly result in inefficiency and loss.

QUESTION—ANNUAL REPORTS.

Auditor General and Commissioner of Taxation.

Mr. THOMSON (without notice) asked the Premier: When will the annual report of the Commissioner of Taxation for the year ended 30th June, 1925, be made available, as well as the report of the Auditor General for the same period?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Premier) replied: I will draw the attention of the Auditor General and the Commissioner of Taxation to the question.

BILL MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Municipality of Fremantle.

Passed.

2. Land Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—EIGHT HOUR.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. McCallum—South Fremantle) [4.40] in moving the second reading said: This Bill deals with the principle of an eight-hour day and a 44-hour week. It will be recognised that the world over a reduction of working hours is the burning issue amongst industrialists. There has been a world-wide demand for it in recent years. During the last three or four decades there have been such wonderful improvements in production and distribution—there has actually been a revolution—that man's power to produce has in many instances increased a hundred fold. The worker, therefore, has looked for some material improvement in his conditions. The early pioneers amongst the Australian industrialists made a magnificent effort to establish an eight-hour day. In Sydney in 1855 the stonemasons were engaged on a building which is now used as Tooth's brewery in Paramatta-road, Sydney. In that year the first demand was made for an eight-hour day. The stonemasons went on strike, and they won that fight and established the eight-hour principle. A year later the same union was able to extend the principle to Victoria. That is how the eight-hour day had its birth in Australia. It is a long way from 1855 to the present time, and yet even now strenuous opposition is offered to the introduction of a 44-hour week, notwithstanding that the eight-hour day was recognised in our early history as far back as 1855. In the past the fight for the reduction of hours has mainly been confined to the workers, to members of trade unions. They in the main have had to carry on the agitation and propaganda, and make all the effort to reduce hours and im-

prove the working conditions of the industrial workers of the world.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What they want first is work; you know that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: During recent years there has been a change. To-day amongst those who are leading the demand for reduced hours are doctors, scientists, professors and many captains of industry. These people are in different parts of the world assisting the agitation for reduced hours. The Bill I am submitting provides for a 44-hour week. It also provides for one clear day off in each seven, and that each day of work shall consist of eight hours, except under certain conditions. Provision is made that where the employer and employee in any industry may agree to 44 hours being worked in five days, this may be done. The employees may work more than eight hours in one day so that the 44 hours may be taken out in five days. The attitude of the Government is that this is wrong. Wherever we have instituted the 44 hours we have stuck to the eight-hour day principle, and provided for five days of eight hours and one day of four hours. There are certain industries in which it may suit better not to get up steam or start work on Saturday morning, and if a mutual understanding is arrived at between the employers and employees, this Bill provides for an exception being made. As a principle, however, the Government think this is wrong, and that we should stick fast to the eight-hour day.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not see why the employers should be made to get up steam. It costs them money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Bill makes provision for that if it is thought desirable in any given industry. It also provides that instead of a 44-hour week in the agricultural industry it shall be an 88-hour fortnight. The hours can, therefore, be spread over two weeks.

Mr. Mann: You have not made any provision for seasonal effects upon the farmers.

Mr. Thomson: They pay overtime then.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is a concession to the agricultural industry. If any exceptional circumstances occur in any one week, so that longer hours have to be worked, the time involved can be made good in the following week. In the continuous processes where shifts are worked the Bill provides that the average may be over two or three weeks, to suit a particular

industry. There are some industries that work the clock round, and it is impossible to work the 44 hours in each week on its own. In the majority of those industries it is possible to average the hours over a fortnight, while in some it may be desirable to have a spread extending over three weeks. The Bill is elastic to that extent, and will allow industries working shifts to spread the hours accordingly.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It would be better if you altered the hours of day and night to suit the workers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Provision is made that workers in some callings, such as watchmen and caretakers, workers on coastal, river and bay vessels, musterers and drovers of stock, workers on farms engaged in feeding or attending to stock, or such other necessary services as the court in its discretion may determine, shall be exempted from the provisions of the Bill. This measure is to be read in conjunction with the Arbitration Act and wherever the court is referred to, the Arbitration Court is meant. There may be others apart from those mentioned, to whom the court may deem it advisable that the 44-hour week should not apply, and power is given to the court to exempt them accordingly.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Only the court?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Only unionists can go to the court.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: My idea is that workers shall be placed in the position of having to go to the Arbitration Court.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The employers will have to form a union and go to the court.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They, too, can go to the court. An employer can be represented in the court, personally or through an organisation. The Arbitration Act recognises an individual employer where it does not recognise individual workers. An individual employer can appear before the court, although an individual worker cannot. The court recognises a union of workers and it also recognises individual employers or their organisation.

Mr. Mann: Do you not think that the harvesting of an over-ripe crop is just as important as droving?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have recognised that fact and have made provision for it. The 88 hours can be worked in a fortnight. We are not con-

fining the agricultural industry to one week. I doubt very much if more than 88 hours are worked in a fortnight on harvesting operations. I do not think there is any district here where it would be possible to harvest for the clear eight hours in a day.

Mr. Mann: On many occasions it is not possible to harvest at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And the Bill provides for a fortnight's spread of the hours.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They won't be employing men at this rate.

Mr. Thomson: Can you give us any idea as to what this measure will cost the State, if it is agreed to?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Although I will not plume myself on being able to convince the hon. member, I will show what history teaches in other countries and give him some of our own experiences in this State. If what I will present to members stands for anything, I hope the member for Katanning (Mr. Thomson) will keep his mind open so as to listen to what I will put before him, view the position dispassionately, and finally form his own conclusions. Overtime is permitted under the provisions of the Bill, but the court is given power to prohibit overtime in some industries if the court considers that it would be in the interests of the industry, and of the workers, to prohibit it. There is no reduction in wages to be effected. The same rate of wages shall apply for the 44-hour week as for the 48-hour week.

Mr. Sampson: The same rate per day?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The weekly amount received shall be the same as for the 48 hours.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The wages will be based on 48 hours but the man will work for 44 hours!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Under the Bill, the rate per hour and the rate per day will have to be increased, and the men will receive the same weekly drawings as now.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In future we will fix the wages on the 48-hour basis, although the men will not work those hours!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will not pride myself on it being possible for me to say anything that will affect the votes of some hon. members on the Opposition side of the House.

Mr. Thomson: Then away goes your claim for open-mindedness.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know that most hon. members on that side of the House have made up their minds before hand. I am going to content myself merely with informing the House of the position as it exists in other countries, and the facts I will present will speak for themselves. I propose to show that we are, to a large extent, dragging behind other countries and not keeping pace with them at all.

Mr. Thomson: Fancy saying that Australia is dragging behind other countries in regard to these matters!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The demand for reduced hours of work is world-wide and to-day it is a burning issue. The shorter working week has been in operation in some parts of Australia for some time. In Queensland the bulk of the industries there have been working a 44-hour week for a long time.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They have only just got it there in some cases.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It has been made the law of the land as from the 1st July last.

Hon. G. Taylor: It took some years to get it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There was a greater percentage of the workers in Queensland on the 44-hour basis prior to that than in any other part of Australia. In New South Wales a Bill was introduced in 1921 to establish the 8-hour day. The Bill was introduced after a report had been submitted by Judge Beeby, who was appointed a Royal Commissioner to inquire into the operations of industries in that State. After his report had been received, the Bill was passed through both Houses of Parliament. Later the Act was repealed by the Fuller Government, but the present Government have re-introduced it. In Western Australia we have about 10,000 Government employees who are working on the 44-hour week basis.

Hon. G. Taylor: What, already?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. By the end of the year, the whole of the railway employees, we hope, will be working on the 44-hour basis. That will just about cover the whole of the industrialists employed in the Government service. There have been two judicial inquiries into the question of working hours in Australia.

The first was conducted by Judge Higgins and the other by Judge Beeby in New South Wales. In 1920, when Judge Higgins first tackled the problem of reduced hours of labour, it arose in connection with the timber workers' case. Judge Higgins made the following statement:—

At present we have established in Australia a standard of 48 hours per week—a standard long envied by workers in other countries, a standard which is now generally adopted. But we have not established the 8-hours day. In order to get the boon of a Saturday half-holiday, the workers here have to add three-quarters of an hour, generally, to the eight hours; they purchase, it is said, the half-holiday by giving up some of the 16 hours per day which they ought to have for recreation and rest. Is this sacrifice to continue for ever?

That statement was made by the judge before he had executed his inquiries. At that investigation the employers and the trade unions throughout Australia combined to present the case. Judge Higgins examined the whole position exhaustively. In essence, the Bill now before hon. members is really an 8-hours Bill, and goes back to the position that the pioneers of the Labour movement set out to establish, namely, a clear 8-hours day. As Judge Higgins put it, the workers of Australia have really had to buy their Saturday afternoon off by working more than eight hours daily during the week. A compromise was made at the expense of the 8-hours principle, and the Bill proceeds to establish the aim of those who originally set out on the agitation. I have given the views of Judge Higgins before he started the inquiry, in which he said that Australia had long been envied by other countries, and he asked how much longer the workers here were to buy their Saturday afternoons off at the sacrifice he indicated. After making his exhaustive inquiries, Judge Higgins delivered his judgment on the 12th November, 1920. It will be seen from some quotations I will make from his judgment that, after listening to the evidence from both sides, Judge Higgins altered his views. I do not know what the effect will be on hon. members opposite, if I give them a little of the evidence that was produced before the judge.

Hon. G. Taylor: But the judge altered his views only after he had heard the evidence.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. He altered his views at that stage. During

the course of his judgment His Honour said—

I felt that I should not prescribe 44 hours for this industry—

The timber industry was under discussion—

—unless I saw my way to prescribe 44 in many other similar industries, especially in other industries which involve the tending of machines. The claim for 44 hours is repeatedly made before me, and I have always refused it unless in exceptional cases.

Then later on he said—

It is, of course, very desirable that, with suitable exceptions, and if it can be managed without serious injury to industries, the workers should have a "clean" 8-hours' day, with a half-holiday on Saturday. That is all that is claimed. At present they have to purchase as they say, the Saturday half-holiday by working more than eight hours on other days. . . . The truth is, we have not yet achieved the ideal, so much praised, of an 8-hours day with a Saturday half-holiday. I have waited for many years for the Parliaments to speak, but they have not spoken.

I want that point to be remembered by hon. members, because I know it will be said that the function of fixing the hours that should be worked should be left to the court. The judge has repeatedly appealed to the Parliaments throughout Australia to speak, but they have not spoken.

Hon. G. Taylor: If Parliament speaks, there will be no necessity for the court.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is the duty of members of Parliament to do this.

Hon. G. Taylor: Without having the evidence that the court could receive?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is for hon. members themselves to look for the evidence, and, as the judge said, he has waited for many years for Parliament to speak, but Parliament has not spoken. Later on he said—

I confess that before opening this inquiry I had no idea how widely the movement for reduced hours has spread, or of the number of undertakings in Great Britain, Canada, and the United States in which the employees have secured the maximum of 44 hours. In May last, I spoke of the 48-hours week of Australia, as long envied by workers in other countries; but there are indications now that Australia will shortly envy rather than be envied and will lose her pride of place as the leader in industrial betterment. Organised labour both in Great Britain and in man's waking hours should not be given to its policy. At the British Trade Union Congress of September, 1919, the following resolution was adopted unanimously:—"That this congress declares that it is in the national

interest that the working hours of labour of persons employed in manual labour should not exceed 44 per week and that systematic overtime should be declared illegal."

So, after inquiry and the taking of the best evidence procurable, the judge said he had had no conception of how the 44-hour week had spread throughout the industries in other countries, particularly Great Britain, Canada and America. In May of the same year he had declared that Australia, with her 48 hours, was the envy of the world. In giving this judgment, however, he was of opinion that Australia would shortly envy rather than be envied. Later on he said—

The feeling is that all the energies of a man's working hours should not be given to the making of a living; that he should have some energy left for other and higher things—art, education, science, literature, even hobbies or amusements, as he selects; and that where machinery is introduced whereby 5, 10, 50 times as much is produced as was produced before machinery, he should not be kept to the same 48 hours of work.

Then he gives some particulars as to how the 44 hour week has spread in other countries. This is a phase that I want to impress on hon. members opposite, because I know they have had in their minds that we are the pioneers of the 44 hour week and that if it were instituted here, our industries would be handicapped with those other countries, that we are getting too far ahead of the rest of the world and that we should be content with the 48 hour week. I want hon. members who have not had opportunity to gather this information, to know what the position is in other countries. And I want it to be understood that this was the position in 1920. Presently I will give figures to show what the position is now. The judge in 1920 said:—

But, to revert to the cases in which 44 hours or less have been actually secured. There are many trades in which the maximum hours are now less than 48, but for simplicity and brevity I propose to confine myself to cases of 44 hours or less.

And he names in Great Britain and Ireland 35 classes as enjoying the 44 hour week or less; in Canada 14 classes; in the United States the boiler makers in 11 cities, the blacksmiths in 8, the machinists in 12, moulders in 4, sheet metal workers in 35, structural iron workers in 38, carpenters in 38, bricklayers in 37, plumbers and painters in 39, plasterers in 36, plasterers' labourers in 36, builders' labourers in 10, hod carriers in 25, stone cutters and granite cutters in 37, inside wiremen in 38. In 40 chief cities most of the

linotype operators, newspapers, day work, have hours below 48, the lowest being 33. In 18 chief cities most of the compositors, newspapers, day work, have hours below 48, the lowest being 42. In New Zealand there are 42 classes of labour enjoying 44 hours or less; in New South Wales there are 21 classes, in Victoria 31, in Queensland 57, in South Australia 11, in Western Australia 24, and in Tasmania 21 classes. He goes on to explain—

Some of the returns for the several countries have not been brought up to date; but there is plenty of evidence that the movement for 44 hours, to which the organisations of labour in Great Britain and the United States have committed themselves, is everywhere advancing, never receding.

I will be able to show directly that it has advanced considerably since Mr. Justice Higgins gave this judgment and that in no country has it receded. He goes on to say—

My attention has rightly been called to the fact that there are still many more workers under 48 hours than under 44; and that in the labour clauses of the League of Nations the system of 48 hours has been strongly recommended. But it must be remembered that 48 hours have been recommended, not so in contrast with 44, but in contrast with 60, 72 hours, etc. For men who have been used to 60 or 72 hours, it is a great improvement to get a reduction to 48. The legislation and the agreements which provide for 48 hours do not indicate any disapproval of 44 hours, but disapproval of more than 48.

The Washington Conference held under the Peace Treaty declared for an 8 hour day and a 48 hour week. Hon. members will see it on the chart I gave them when introducing the Day Baking Bill. It has been ratified by a great many countries. When it is realised that the 48 hour week and the 8 hour day was adopted by backward countries used to working 70 and 80 hours per week and 12 and 14 hours per day, it will be seen that they have made wonderful progress, while we here have been standing still. Mr. Justice Higgins gives those countries as having adopted the conditions set out by the Washington Conference. He says:—

Since the Armistice, there have been laws made for a general 48-hours limit in France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Austria, Czecho-Slovakia. But Holland has now a 45 hours week; and Belgium has 44 hours for diamond workers. In Great Britain at the end of 1918, the most usual range of hours was from 48 to 60; at the end of 1919, from 44 to 48.

Then later he says—

There is surely no reason why 48 hours should be a dead end in industry, beyond which there is to be no advance in leisure. I use advisedly the word "leisure"—not "idleness"—leisure from the task of bread winning. But all the employers who have appeared are opposed to the 44 hours on the ground that the reduction proposed involves a proportionate reduction of output. This was the ground on which employers in Britain opposed so bitterly the reduction to 10 hours per day and then to 9 hours. Mr. Hume, M.P., stated that the British Ten Hours Act of 1847 would destroy industry, as there would be no profit or capital invested.

And we know that that old argument has rung right down through the ages whenever an attempt has been made at this reform. When compulsory education was introduced we were told it was going to be the ruination of British industries, because up to that time the employer had had free use of child labour. Those employers said it would be impossible for the industries of Great Britain to compete with those of the rest of the world unless they were permitted to exploit the children of the nation. However, as in that instance, the foreboding proved incorrect, so too it has done in this. Mr. Justice Higgins has shown that it has had no detrimental effect on the industries of that country. He says—

Of course, the reduction of output of goods if proved, is only a fact to be weighed in the balance with other facts; for the output of men, the chief asset of the nation—the improvement of their power and character by greater leisure and opportunities—may counter-balance it. But more production, to replace the lost wealth of the world and to meet the colossal debts, is admitted to be the crying need of the world at present; and I have asked for evidence on the question, what will be the effect on output of 44 instead of 48 in this timber industry in particular.

Then he makes this remarkable statement—

The evidence on this vital point is meagre and unsatisfactory.

Later he says—

But it is not the immediate return for on day which counts; the object is rather to get the best return for the week—the month—the year—even for life—as Lord Henry Berington points out in "Industrial Fatigue." The hours of men are now being discussed not of machines. Even the clear eight-hour day involves usually, in the city, some 10 or 12 hours a way from home, travelling, etc. It involves rising before dawn in the winter a hurried breakfast, a hurried rush to the train or tram.

I want to remind my friends representing the agricultural districts of that fact. The workers in the cities who are now working eight hours 45 minutes per day in the factories, spend 8 hours 45 minutes at work, then half an hour or three-quarters of an hour for luncheon and their travelling time, and so in the aggregate they are a lot longer away from home than are the cockies throughout the country. I want members to understand that more of the time of those workers is taken up in the earning of their living than the farmers spend in the making of their fortunes. Mr. Justice Higgins continues—

It involves rising before dawn in the winter, a hurried breakfast, a hurried rush to train or tram. Dr. Vernon does not venture to say that, so far as output is concerned, an eight-hour day is the best working period; but he says that "In all but the very light industries, and perhaps in some branches of an outdoor industry, such as agriculture, eight hours a day are as many as can reasonably be expected of the average worker." Curiously enough he adds that "the eight-hour day means as a rule a 44-hour week," for the custom of a Saturday half-holiday is now almost universal.

I give those views as having been expressed by the judge when he decided in favour of a 44-hour week, and that after a most exhaustive inquiry and the consideration of the best evidence that could be produced by the employers and the unions. But politics came into the issue after that, and the power to alter the working hours was taken away from one judge and placed in the hands of three judges. A full bench was created and Mr. Justice Higgins himself was rendered powerless. So he decided that owing to political interference he could not possibly carry on in his judicial position. Eventually he resigned the presidency of the court. There is no man in this continent who has had a better opportunity to study the position or who has devoted himself more closely to it than Mr. Justice Higgins. Having the assistance of the organised employers and unions of Australia, together with the facts relating to all the countries of the world, he was able to say that the correct number of hours for the working week was 44. Mr. A. B. Piddington, K.C., who has also had some experience in this direction, has recently contributed to the Press articles on the question of hours. Mr. Piddington cannot be considered to be a Labour man or one likely to be prejudiced in favour of

trade unionism; his life has been lived in an entirely different atmosphere. Yet he says—

It is nearly five years since Mr. Justice Higgins conducted what was virtually a nation-wide inquiry into the feasibility of this reform. Almost at the same time Judge Beeby, in New South Wales, aided greatly by Mr. Sawkins, the Statist to the Board of Trade, examined, trade by trade, the position in New South Wales. Both judicial inquiries elicited these facts: (1) That Australia is behind England and far behind America in the movement to establish 44 hours as a standard working week. (2) That in the great majority of industries there is no risk to production in the proposed standard. From these findings there followed in Federal awards and in State awards for New South Wales a practice of fixing 44 hours as the standard week.

Redressing the Balance.

Machinery has multiplied the output of the individual worker, but has left him just where he was in the command of his own hours for recreation or self-improvement or for the use of his time as he likes. It is to redress the balance that Queensland has lowered the standard week by four hours. We hear much about the distribution of wealth, but what of the distribution of the most precious wealth—the living hours of the week? We hear much about diminished production, but what about the production that ought to constitute a country's staple industry—the production of a first class population? Truth is that every legislator and every reformer ought to act upon the fundamental maxim that the real problem of industrialism to-day is to find cures not for under-production but for under-distribution. An exhaustive survey of the rate of production, such as that made by Mr. Justice Higgins in 1920, goes to show that it is by no means the case that a shorter week necessarily means less production.

The Man not the Machine.

It is not true, even of machine output. The war refuted many such beliefs. The report of the Ministry of Munitions in 1917 showed that when the week was shortened by reductions of from seven to 20 hours, there was on the average an increased output. Much can be done by management. In a Sydney business, where the whole pace of the factory depended on one revolving machine, the proprietor had the machine re-set to give a greater number of revolutions an hour when the week came down to 44 hours. He got exactly the same output as with 48 hours, and then, when the 48-hour week came back under the Fuller Government, he got four hours a week, or 9 per cent. increased production for the same wages. After all, the human machine is the one to perfect. Its driving force is the individual willingness to work. To energeise the human will is, therefore, the highest achievement of political management. And this will never be done so well as when the body and mind of the worker are relieved of the load and the exaction of

labouring to the point of industrial fatigue, and the spirit of the worker is refreshed and invigorated by increased opportunity.

Whereas in the past trade unionists had to carry on the fight for reduced hours unassisted by anyone outside their ranks, we now find that men who are not of us, either by training or sentiment, contend that this reform will mean much to the workers and to the nation. In Queensland the 44 hours has been extended to proportionately more industries and more workers than anywhere else in Australia. If it is argued that the cost of production and the cost of living will increase as a result of the adoption of the 44-hour week, we have a complete guide to the contrary in the experience of Queensland. I have taken the figures of the Commonwealth Statistician to the 30th June of the present year and shall quote the index figure upon which the Arbitration Courts base their awards. Queensland, the 44-hour State, has the lowest cost of living index figure, and has been the lowest for a considerable time. The figures for the latest statistical year are Queensland 1,482, Western Australia 1,609, South Australia 1,679, Victoria 1,685, Tasmania 1,703, and New South Wales 1,704. So Queensland is a long way below the other States of Australia. If a reduction of hours had meant an increase in the cost of living, it would have been reflected in those figures. However, the reverse has been the case. From the same source I take the figures showing the average production of each employee in the factories as follows:—New South Wales 872, Victoria 729, Queensland 871, South Australia 775, Western Australia 593, and Tasmania 622. Thus Queensland is just one point below New South Wales, notwithstanding the latter's massed production, and is a long way ahead of all the other States. The output per wage earner was the highest in Queensland in 1916 and 1917, in the next four years it was second highest, in 1922 it was again the highest, and in 1923, the latest figures available, it was equal to the highest.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Queensland has a good sugar bonus to help it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The sugar bonus would not come into this. In Western Australia there are some men working on the lower scale of hours. The miners at Collie worked the eight-hour shift from 1915 to 1920, when the tonnage output per

man was as follows:—1915, 376 tons per man employed; 1916, 658; 1917, 572; 1918, 545; 1919, 553; and 1920, 557. Then the working shifts were reduced to seven hours and the output per man employed was:—1921, 539 tons; 1922, 589; 1923, 590; 1924, 627; and for the first six months of the present year the tonnage per man has reached 347, which is a record for the State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And Collie coal is dearer than ever.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Collie miners have exceeded the output when they were working the 8-hour shift. I gave some particulars as to the number of men and trades working the 44-hour week in the different States at the time Mr. Justice Higgins delivered his judgment. Up to July of this year under Victorian wages board determinations the following were working fewer than 48 hours per week:—bag-makers 44; boot factories 44; boot repairers 44; bricklayers 44; builders' labourers 44; chaff-cutters and corn grading 46; charworkers, males 46, females 44; cigar makers 44; dental mechanics 42; dressmakers 44; engravers 46½; farriers 44; master gardeners' employees 44; straw hatmakers 44; headwear makers 44; knitters, male and female, 45; limeburners 44; optical workers 45¼; organ builders 44; painters 44; photographers 44; plasterers 44; plumbers 44; printers 44 and some 42; quarry workers 44; metropolitan sewer builders 44; shirt makers 44; shop salesmen (boot dealers) 47; shop salesmen (furniture) 47; wholesale softgoods salesmen 44; stonecutters (some) 44; tile layers 44; umbrella makers 44; and watchmakers 45. That list does not take into account those who have arrangements outside the wages board determinations. The report of the Department of Labour, Canada, report No. 7, 1925, shows that in the building trades in the following cities the 44-hour week is being worked:—Halifax, nearly all trades; St. John, bricklayers and painters; Montreal, nearly all; Ottawa, all; Toronto, all; Hamilton, all; Winnipeg, all; Regina, all excepting electrical workers and carpenters; Calgary, all; Edmonton, all; Vancouver, all; Victoria, all. The Labour Department of Canada sent out a questionnaire to employers to ascertain the number of men who were working fewer than 44 hours a week with the following result:—

Information regarding the 8-hour day was received in 1924 from 5,263 employers having 690,317 employees. The returns show that

374,274 employees worked an 8-hour day or 48-hour week or less, equivalent to 54.22 per cent. as against 43.4 per cent. in 1918.

That shows the wonderful improvement made during those years. I know it is often argued that in places where machinery is used it is impossible to get as much work done in 44 hours as is done in 48 hours. The machine, it is said, governs the man, and the machine runs at a given pace, and if the hours are reduced there cannot be any likelihood of the output increasing at all. I have here, however, a statement from a large American employer, made at the Eighth Annual New York State Industrial Conference, held in December, 1924, under the auspices of the State Department of Labour. The statement was made by Mr. N. I. Stone, general manager of the Hickey-Freeman Company, Rochester, New York. Mr. Stone is a man of high standing in America, and, in view of his occupation, of course cannot be regarded as in any way biased in favour of the workers. He said—

I want to pass over these cases, and take up the other groups of industries in which week work prevails. I want to cite one case with which it was my privilege to come in personal contact, because it strikingly illustrates what can happen and what will happen under favourable conditions under a shorter work-day even under the week-work system. I have in mind the paper and pulp industry, which is a continuous process industry. Paper mills work 24 hours a day. Up till 1908 they had a two-shift system of 12 hours to the shift. In 1908 the Papermakers' Union presented a demand for a three-shift system of eight hours each, with the same pay for eight hours as they had received for 12 hours. The employers refused the demand, and the union called a strike. It was a very stubbornly fought battle, and lasted somewhere between eight and ten months. The unions finally won. The largest concern in the industry—the International Paper Company—which operated at that time and still operates a large number of plants, adopted the eight-hour day with the same pay, which was at that time about four dollars per day, and considered a very high wage in 1908. Just about this time, or early in 1909, the newspaper publishers started an agitation for the admission of paper and pulp free of duty from Canada, and the agitation became so strong that Congress finally appointed a committee to study the subject. Representatives of the paper industry appearing before that Congressional committee pointed out the experience they had just been through with the strike, and said that the admission of paper free of duty from Canada would ruin the industry. Soon after that the Tariff Board was instructed to take up the study of this subject. I was at that

time connected with the Tariff Board as Chief Statistician in charge of investigation into costs, and we tackled the paper industry first in preparation for our negotiations with Canada for the Reciprocity Treaty, as the Canadians were very anxious to have free paper and pulp. After a very careful study of the subject in the case of some of the largest plants, where we had seven accountants working over their books for something like six weeks transcribing and tabulating the data, we were astonished at the results. We found that this change in hours which resulted in a 50 per cent. increase in hourly wages, when reduced in terms of labour cost of making a ton of paper, the pure labour cost, instead of going up 50 per cent. or anything like it had gone down. It was four dollars 35 cents in 1908, the year preceding the strike, and it went down to three dollars 73 cents per ton under the eight-hour arrangement.

That is a marked decrease following on the change from a 12-hour day to an eight-hour day—a reduction from 4 dollars 35 cents to 3 dollars 73 cents per ton.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: A man cannot work 12 hours.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But these men were working 12 hours right up to 1908.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Men could not work 12 hours satisfactorily.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Stone proceeds—

Although the 1908 figure was the highest in 10 years, at no time during the decade preceding the strike was the cost as low as it was the first year after the strike, and I need not tell you that when a plant resumes operation after eight or nine months of idleness its cost is not going to be the lowest. It takes time to tune up a plant and get it back to real efficiency. When we got these results, we wanted to explain them and wanted to be sure we had not made a mistake. The figures were checked, and submitted to the manufacturers, and they could not find any fault with them. They were as astonished at the results as we were. We thought there might have been some change in the machinery, that new and improved machinery might have been installed; but there was no change at all in that respect. Neither was there any change in management as far as I could find out, and I went through a great many plants to try to unravel this mystery. One day I was at a paper mill. I do not know whether many of you are familiar with paper-making, but you see something like a river of milky fluid flowing until it reaches a huge paper machine, where it strikes the first cylinders, which are covered with felt. As this river is caught on that felt, the water goes through it, and then you observe the first film of paper forming. It passes over cylinder after cylinder, some of which have highly polished surfaces, and are very hot, and quickly dry and smooth the

paper. Then you see it rolled up at the end. It is then in the form of these huge rolls that you may have seen in front of newspaper establishments. Most of the time you see these skilled papermakers watching the machine with their arms folded. The machine is absolutely automatic; it is a huge affair, and the individual workman standing in front of it does not seem like much of a factor. As I said, this particular day I was in a paper plant when something suddenly went wrong. Then I saw the men scurrying to do something, and finally the machine had to be stopped. They spent something like two hours trying to locate the trouble and to unravel the paper, picking out the pieces that had been caught in the gears, wheels, and cylinders. Then I got my first inkling of what the function of a papermaker was. The time he makes money for his plant is when he stands with his arms folded watching the machine and apparently doing nothing, but the time when he proves very costly to his employer is when he is working hard trying to get the machine in operation after something has gone wrong. When a machine like that is shut down for an hour or part of an hour, or a morning, that is when there is interruption in production and consequent loss—loss not only in labour, because the men are paid whether the machine is producing paper or standing idle but a tremendous increase in the overhead costs. It stands to reason that when these men are working 12 hours a day and get to the last three or four hours, they are tired out, each hour being worse until finally the twelfth is reached, when they are completely exhausted, you might say, because they have to be on their feet all day. When you change those hours from 12 to 8, the four hours of greatest fatigue are eliminated, and added to the period of rest. Those four additional hours of rest certainly made a tremendous difference and added greatly to the efficiency of the workers. They were able to detect things much more quickly and prevent breakdowns of the machine, while under the 12-hour system they were probably half asleep part of the time, and things easily escaped their attention. That was my explanation, and I discussed it with a great many people in the paper industry, and they agreed with me.

Where the production depends almost entirely upon machinery, where, as Mr. Stone says, the machine is almost automatic, the man standing with arms folded looking on—

Hon. G. Taylor: I saw a machine in Perth do exactly what is described there, the man standing with folded arms by the machine.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is a decision given by a man who cannot be regarded as influenced by Labour politics or the trade union movement. Now I want to deal with one or two points discovered during an investigation carried out in

Great Britain when, as we know, Mr. Lloyd George was appointed by the Imperial Government to conduct a campaign for increased production, particularly of munitions. His first action was to urge that longer hours be worked, and the hours of men and women working in munition factories especially were materially increased. Finally, however, it was found that production was falling off under the increased hours, and a committee was appointed to investigate the whole position, with a view to scientifically arranging the working hours and the application of labour so as to increase the output. I propose to quote one or two extracts from a book written by Dr. Vernon, a member of that committee, appointed by the Imperial Government. In almost every country where the question of hours has been discussed, Dr. Vernon's book has been quoted. He is accepted the world over as an authority. Undoubtedly he played a leading part in the British inquiry. His work is entitled, "Industrial Fatigue and Efficiency." On page 34 he states—

In the first 18 months of the war it was the general custom to impose very long hours upon the workers in order to obtain the biggest possible output, but it was gradually discovered that these long hours did not pay. Owing to the over-fatigue induced, output fell off, and progressive reductions of hours were instituted.

It is not claimed that the amount of production is always the same under a 44-hour week as under a 48-hour week, but it certainly does not follow that a reduction in hours results necessarily in reduced output. Dr. Vernon gives some statistics showing marked improvement as the result of shorter hours. In the case of the Zeiss Optical Works he shows the effect of a reduction of hours from 9 to 8 daily. In that instance we are getting nearer home. I do not wish to deal largely with cases of reduction from 12 or 10 hours to eight. At the Zeiss Optical Works the reduction of hours from 9 to 8 in the case of lens-setters resulted in an output increased by 16.6 per cent.; in the case of microscope grinders the increase was 9.4 per cent.; in the case of grinders and centerers, 16.7 per cent.; workers in adjusting room, 17.1 per cent.; polishers and lacquerers, 17.7 per cent.; engravers, 19.3 per cent.; moulders, 14.9 per cent.; case makers, 12.7 per cent.; workers in mounting room, 17.9 per cent.; carpenters, 20.3 per cent.; machine grinders, 18.8

per cent.; men turning and milling, 18.1 per cent.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is why the cost of everything goes up and up and up!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It shows clearly that a reduction of hours is not a factor in increased cost.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then why do we get the increased cost?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not expect anything but nonsense from the Leader of the Opposition. At the outset, before quoting these figures, I said that it would be impossible to convince him. I know he is so prejudiced against anything in this connection that I do not expect him to keep an open mind or even listen to an authority like Dr. Vernon, who gives the definite statistics that I have quoted. If hon. members think that I am not quoting the facts correctly, I will hand over to them the book from which I have obtained the information. Dr. Vernon adds this footnote—

It will be seen that on an average the output of the men engaged entirely on hand-work increased 16.0 per cent. That of men engaged on work which was done partly by machine, but chiefly by hand, increased 17.0 per cent., and that of men entirely on machine work increased 18.4 per cent.

Hon. G. Taylor: These men would all be on day work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I take it that would be so. Dr. Vernon gives this information regarding hours and output—

The output of a large number of women employed on the turning of aluminium fuse bodies for a period of 93 consecutive weeks, during which period the hours were reduced, was studied with the following result:—

In the 74.5 hour week—Output = 100.

In the 63.5 hour week—Output = 100.

In the 55.3 hour week—Output = 113.

These figures show that though the women averaged 18½ hours' work less per week or three hours less per day, they could nevertheless achieve a greater output.

It is remarkable that where the hours are reduced by 18½ a week, there is an increase in the output of 13 per cent.

Mr. Griffiths: It would be a great thing if you could apply that to harvesting.

Mr. Davy: Where do you say the line is drawn?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At an 8-hour day, and that is all that the Bill is asking for. He would be a bold man who

would attempt to take the Saturday half-holiday away from an Australian.

Mr. Davy: It applies to more than eight hours a day in the case of some people.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Government entirely disagree with working more than eight hours in any day. We want to stick to the eight hours a day. Dr. Vernon goes on to say—

A similar study was made of a number of men employed sizing fuse bodies with the following result:—In the 66.7-hour week, output 100; in the 60.2-hour week, output 105; in the 55.5-hour week, output 119; equal to an increase in production of 19 per cent.

Under the heading of "output" Dr. Vernon makes these comments—

When the hours of work are reduced, the speed of production does not as a rule show any change for the first week or two. Then it begins to mount up very gradually, but it may be several months before it attains a steady level, in equilibrium with the shortened hours. A striking instance of this slow response to reduced hours is indicated in Fig. 10. It relates to the output of the steel melters employed on ten 40-ton open hearth steel furnaces. For the first two years of the statistical period the men were on 12 hour shifts, and for the last two, on eight-hour shifts. The output of the furnaces was averaged over monthly periods, and the relative monthly values, in the form of output per hour, are recorded in the figure. They are rather irregular, and the dotted line, which represents a rough average, shows that for some unknown reason, the output fell gradually throughout the 12-hour shift period. When the hours were reduced there was no definite improvement of output for two months, but then it began to mount up slowly, and it attained its maximum 13 months after the shortening of hours. Another gradual fall of output then ensued (perhaps due to a deterioration of plant), so steady production was never attained, but the fact remains that the full response of improved output to shortened hours took over a year for its attainment. It amounted to an 18 per cent. increase.

It will be seen that it was a year before there was a decided steady improvement, and then it amounted to 18 per cent. I find that nearly all those who were engaged on this committee have written articles for magazines, or have published books on their experiences, and nearly all hold the view that it was some time after the reduction had taken place that an improvement in the output occurred. Dr. Vernon continues—

A striking proof that an increased speed of production is attained unconsciously is furnished by the fact that it applies to workers on a time rate no less than to those on a piece rate. In 1893 Messrs. Mather and Platt reduced the length of the working week from 53

hours to 48 hours at the Salford Iron Works, a factory engaged in general engineering work. As the result of a very careful and accurate comparison of output in the year before and the year after the change, it was found that production was slightly increased, though the amount of increase is not stated. The output of the piece workers, however, was .5 per cent. less than in the preceding year, so it follows that the output of the time workers must have improved to a greater extent than that of the piece workers.

Even where the men were paid by results, where they were not tied to given hours, it was shown that where the hours were reduced and the men had every incentive to a big output, prior to the reduction their increase was not so great as that of the men who were on day work. Dr Vernon argues that the increased output came about unconsciously with the workers. On page 66 of his book he states—

The practical application of the results of the experiment to other industries may now be referred to. Sir William Mather laid them before various Government Departments, and in consequence the hours of labour of 43,000 workers in Government factories and workshops were, in 1894, reduced to 48 hours a week. The 18,600 workers in the ordinance factories, and the departments of ordnance stores, army clothing, inspection and small arms inspection, had their working week shortened by 5½ hours, and it was subsequently stated that the output was not diminished. The man on piece work earned as much as before, and those on a time rate, who were paid as much as for 48 hours' work as for 54 hours, maintained their output likewise.

There we have the evidence of an impartial investigator, holding the responsible position that he did and an appointee of the Imperial Government. He carried out his investigations just at the time when the nation was at death grips with others, and on the very output regarding which he was holding an investigation, the nation relied for success. Dr. Vernon and those associated with him made a careful and exhaustive examination before they committed themselves to a reduction of hours. They were obliged to do that—the issues at stake were so great. I find that in Great Britain there has been a considerable extension of the 44 hours, particularly since the war, and whilst I have quoted the figures that indicated the position when Judge Higgins made his inquiry in 1920, the figures I now have are the latest and show a marked improvement over those that were previously disclosed. We find that the co-operative societies led the way, particularly the British and Scottish—in the reduction of hours. To

give some indication of the advance in this direction, the statistics forwarded to the department may be quoted.

Year.	Number of Societies working 53 hours or less.	Number of Societies working 48 hours or less.
1913	223	63
1914	295	96
1917	458	134
1924	All	770 *

* Including 128 societies with a 44-hour week for all employees; 368 with a 40-hour week for clerks; 169 with a 44-hour week for clerks; and 70 with a 46-hour week for clerks.

In a period of 10 years the number of societies working 48 hours increased from 83 to 779. These societies in the statements of the department make this comment:—

We believe that through the reduced working hours the efficiency of labour and hourly output has increased on the whole in recent years.

The British Trade Union Congress last year made inquiries from their affiliated organisations as to the numbers that were working eight hours or less. No fewer than 133 trade unions, with a membership of 4,688,609, sent in their replies, from which the following statistics were compiled:—

24,300 trade unionists work 40 hours per week.					
800,000	"	"	42	"	"
305,687	"	"	44	"	"
3,500	"	"	46	"	"
11,590	"	"	48½	"	"
964,224	"	"	47	"	"
1,409,612	"	"	48	"	"

That means that 3,524,714 trade unionists worked 48 hours or less per week, that is to say, three-fourths of those covered by the inquiry are working 48 hours or less, and a very large percentage of them are working 42 hours. Therefore I think the statistics clearly indicate that we in Australia are a long way behind Great Britain. There is nothing like that percentage of our trade unionists here working less than 48 hours. It is no wonder that Judge Higgins said that instead of Australia being in the van, we were now behind. We used to regard Great Britain as being behind us in the vanguard of progress. There is no doubt that to-day Great Britain is a long way ahead of us in this regard. Let me show the progress that has been made throughout the United States. In 1909 the number of workers who were working 48 hours or under was 7.9 per cent., whereas in 1919 the number was 48.6 per cent. There was this enormous increase in 10 years from 7 per cent. to 48 per cent. Those who were working under

60 hours were 30 per cent. in 1909, and this had dropped to 13 per cent. in 1919. Those who were on 60 hours and over, numbered 30 per cent. in 1909, but they had dropped to 8 per cent. in 1919. This discloses the wonderful advance in the shortening of hours that has taken place in the United States. They have, with Great Britain, certainly left us entirely behind. These are the two big manufacturing countries of the world, and it cannot be argued that in considering the 44 hours here we shall be placing our industries at a disadvantage as compared with the industries in those two countries. Let me now refer to the so-called backward nations of the earth, where the system has usually been to work anything from 11 to 14 hours a day. Even there, there has been a marked improvement. I am now quoting from a publication issued by the International Labour Office in 1924. Before the proclamation of independence in 1918 the territory of Czecho-Slovakia was largely controlled by the republic of Austria-Hungary. The statutory hours of work in factories in that country were 11 per day with two hours overtime. This amounted to practically a 13-hours day. In the coal mines it was 9 hours, with the right under the Act passed in June, 1901, to work three hours overtime, which practically amounted to a 12-hour day. In cases of necessity it was possible for even that to be waived. This was one of the first of these so-called backward countries to effect a change. In December, 1918, soon after this nation received its independence, an eight-hour day Bill, providing for a 48-hour week, was introduced. This has been adopted in that country ever since and ratified by Geneva in August, 1921. This country has shown marked improvement, from a 13-hour day to an 8-hour day, and this has been done in one jump. The country has lived up to it ever since. If these backward countries can make such wonderful progress, when we as far back as 1855 secured an eight-hour day, and from then on have stood still without making any improvement while the rest of the world has gone ahead, there is no doubt we have been absolutely left. I have a reference here of local application, which will show what has been done in the Midland Junction workshops since the 44-hour week was introduced there. Mr. Broadfoot, the works manager, in his 1924 report, says:—

The necessity for new machinery and plant generally was brought about by (1) Obsolescence of plant. (2) Increased rates of pay. (3) Shorter hours. (4) General expansion of the railway system. (5) The desire of the department to manufacture railway requirements previously imported. Even to-day most of the machine tools in the works are those transferred from Fremantle or purchased when the shops were built at Midland Junction (1904) and are therefore from 20 to 30 years old, and in many instances of obsolete types. The increased rates of pay during the last few years, and the advent of the shorter week could only be combated by improved machinery and the methods of manufacture, and the reduction of these increased costs has been the department's objective in installing new plant. The gradual increase of mileage open to traffic and expansion of the system generally necessitated more rolling stock. This calls for greater effort on the part of the workshops; and plant is required accordingly. The general desire to make ourselves self-supporting as far as possible and the great advance made in engine-building, boiler manufacture, and in many other directions, all call for more plant. To compete with private enterprise, such plant must be of modern type and the highest class obtainable. The cost of new plant installed during the past five years for the foregoing purposes is approximately £30,000, and a conservative estimate of the number of men saved by its installation may be taken at 56. These at an average rate of £250 per annum would entail an expenditure of £14,000 per annum. Allowing interest and depreciation at 7½ per cent. on capital expenditure (£2,250), the annual saving would be £11,750 and it would be fairly claimed that new plant and improved methods are saving expenditure at this rate. A perusal of the workshops staff register indicates how largely machinery has influenced this section during the past few years. In 1912 the staff was 1,309, including 110 apprentices; in 1924 the staff is 1,355 including 203 apprentices. The stock in 1912 was 359 engines, 337 cars, 9,530 wagons (equal to four wheel). The stock to-day is 406 engines, 478 cars, 12,106 wagons (equal to four wheel). The increase over 1912 was—engines 13 per cent., cars 23 per cent., wagons 27 per cent., and the decrease in working hours was 8 1/3rd per cent.

In addition to this the workshops have taken over the electrical work on the petrol and motor trolleys, besides training 10 men all the year round and doing the work in connection with the tramways and the power house. In 1912 the staff was 1,199, and in 1924 it was 1,152. As Mr. Broadfoot says, most of the tools and plant were what were brought from Fremantle, and they are still obsolete. With this reduction of 47 men, the workshops have been able to cope with all the increased work, all the additional mileage of railways, and keep all the machinery in running order.

Mr. Teesdale: Did he say the tools were obsolete?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. He said that in spite of the obsolete tools, this record had been accomplished. There had been a reduced number of men, but the workshops had added extensively to the number of engines and wagons and had kept the rolling stock in complete order. That is the answer to any question that may be asked as to what has happened locally. That is the result of four hours less work per week. With regard to the other section to which we have extended the 44 hours, namely the timber mills, it is too early to speak. This has been in operation only a month, and we are as yet hardly able to form an opinion. There is, however, every indication that the output would be at least equal to what it was under the 48 hours, if not more. If the authorities are to be accepted as reliable, as time goes on the output will probably be increased until it is greater under the 44 hours than it was under the 48. Not only Dr. Vernon, but all the experts who have investigated the matter, have agreed that some months, generally 12 months, must elapse before there is any marked improvement in the output. I hope I have given sufficient information to show that this is not a revolutionary proposal, that it is not put forward with the idea of placing this country a long way ahead of the rest of the world.

Mr. Teesdale: You said the same about the 48 hours.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: From 1855 onwards for many years, we led the world. The old pioneers, with their experience of the older world, put up a battle in the early days and established the eight-hour day. Whilst the rest of the world has marched forward, we have since stood still. As Mr. Justice Higgins said, "America and England have left us a long way behind." As we have boasted that we have been in the vanguard of progress, I hope we shall continue to occupy that position. This Bill is to bring Western Australia not ahead of, but up to the countries to which I have referred. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—NEWCASTLE SUBURBAN LOT 88.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [7.30] in moving the second reading said: The Bill does not alter in any way the position regarding the land to which it refers. Many years ago, like several other blocks of land throughout the State, this block was vested in certain trustees. In those days the names of the trustees were mentioned on the title, and the land was left to them and their heirs and successors. The land at Newcastle, which is now known as Toodyay, was transferred to Mr. J. T. Monger, the Rev. Charles Harper, and Mr. William J. Clifton. Their names appear on the mortgage. Two of the trustees are dead and it is impossible to locate the surviving trustee, if there is any. For some considerable time efforts have been made to have new trustees appointed. For that purpose the Bill is introduced so that the land may again revert to His Majesty the King thus enabling new trustees to be appointed. A building has been erected as the result of public subscriptions, and it is used as a library and as a mechanics' institute. There is no one really in control of it and the names of several gentlemen have been submitted to the Government for appointment as trustees. We have no power to appoint them. While they have acted as a committee in charge of the land and the buildings, they have no legal powers. It will thus be seen that the Bill will not involve any change regarding the land or the purposes for which the building is used. Immediately the Bill is passed, the Government will be able to comply with the request of the people and appoint new trustees. There are many places in Western Australia where a similar situation has arisen. Many years ago I looked into a similar case in which the land had been granted to a certain society and it had been vested in trustees who were named in the documents. Under that system it was vested in those trustees and their heirs and successors for ever. Thus that particular society had no claim whatever regarding the land. I know there is another society in Newcastle in the same position now. During the time Sir James Mitchell was Minister for Lands

the people there made a request to him that this land should be sold and the money used for the purposes of a hospital. Sir James Mitchell disagreed with that proposal. There is no question raised now regarding the sale of the land. I ask the House to pass the Bill so as to give the Government the power to appoint new trustees. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [7.35]: I presume that when the grant is made to the new trustees, precautions will be taken to avoid a position arising similar to that which the Bill seeks to overcome. I understand that originally persons were appointed as trustees and that there has been no machinery for substituting other trustees in the event of the death or resignation of the original trustees.

The Minister for Lands: The trouble has been that the land was granted to the heirs and successors as well.

MR. DAVY: I take it that is why the Bill is necessary.

The Minister for Lands: That sort of thing has not been done for a number of years, and land is not vested in that way now.

MR. DAVY: I presume that power will be given in the transfer to enable other trustees to be substituted in the event of the death or resignation of any trustee who may be appointed.

The Minister for Lands: Yes.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.37]: I support the second reading of the Bill. I regret that the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) is absent on other duties. I know this particular block of ground, which was shown to me by the member for Toodyay when I was in his district. So long as the precautions indicated by the Minister for Lands are taken, the House will be wise in passing the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.40]: For many years it has been felt that a Bill of this description is required. There have been many conferences held and requests made indicating the necessity for uniform legislation dealing with the dingo pest. The existing vermin boards are doing excellent work, but an unfortunate position that has arisen has led to the demand for uniformity in the legislation. It arose from the fact that one particular vermin board would probably pay a bonus of 10s. per scalp while an adjoining board, considering the dingo a more serious pest in their particular area, paid a bonus of £2 per scalp. As a result, some districts have received many scalps because of the higher bonuses paid. With the object of overcoming that difficulty, many conferences have been held and it was suggested that there should be some central body to fix the rate to be paid per scalp for the destruction of dingoes. I congratulate the Government upon their desire to assist in that direction. They have agreed in a small degree to the requests that have been made. Unfortunately, measures that have been introduced lately have imposed restrictions, increased the powers of the Government—that will apply to future Governments as well—and imposed additional imposts upon those already existing. Last year the Government introduced a land tax which has returned a considerable amount of money. While the Government have stated that they are quite willing to introduce uniform legislation, I regret that they have not seen fit to provide Government assistance as well.

MR. TEESDALE: But the Minister promised that assistance.

MR. THOMSON: When?

MR. TEESDALE: Last night. He did not mention any amount, but he promised Government assistance.

MR. THOMSON: That may be so, but I believe in having that sort of provision in a Bill. For instance, when the Minister introduced the Bill dealing with noxious weeds, it contained no clause setting out that the Government would deal with Crown lands, nor did they contribute anything towards that work at all. I maintain that the Crown lands are the breeding grounds for dingoes and foxes.

Mr. Teesdale: Undoubtedly.

Mr. THOMSON: In my electorate the land is mostly cultivated, but when, unfortunately, the dingoes make their periodical attacks upon the flocks, it is generally found, when the dingoes are followed up, that they can be traced to abandoned blocks or the virgin bush.

The Minister for Lands: That is only natural.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so, but the point I wish to make is that it should be part and parcel of the duty of the Government, taking into consideration the fact that Crown lands are the actual breeding grounds for the pests, to provide assistance on a pound for pound basis.

Mr. Marshall: There is nothing provided in the parent Act, notwithstanding which the Government have contributed to the expense of vermin eradication.

Mr. THOMSON: I am discussing, not that, but the amendment before us. The pastoralists and the Road Boards Association have approached the Government with the idea that in view of the fact that 80 per cent. of the dingoes are bred on Crown lands, the Government should grant a £ for £ subsidy. Since the Minister acceded to our request in respect of the Noxious Weeds Bill, I hope he will be considerate also in respect of this Bill. The Bill provides for the imposition of a levy of 1d. on pastoral lands, and ½d. on other holdings. It is provided in the Bill that the term "holding" includes timber leases or concessions, and land held under sawmill or other permit, but does not include any holding under the Mining Act. From my examination of the annual report of the Commissioner of Taxation I am not sure whether timber leases come under the new land tax and have contributed. If not, the figures supplied by the Minister will be very much inflated, and he will get considerably more money than he estimates. The Minister said that under the imposition of 1d. and ½d., he estimated to get £34,000. A committee representing the pastoralists and agriculturists was appointed to go into this question, and the figures supplied by them in April last and based on the unimproved value, as available then, showed that the value of the farming areas was £18,000,000, and of the pastoral areas £6,000,000. The committee estimated that the charge on farming lands should be at the rate of one-eighth of a penny, and on the pastoral lands one farthing. Those

charges would return from the farming lands £9,375, and from pastoral lands, £6,250, or a total of £15,625. The committee considered that was ample for a start, providing the Government gave a £ for £ subsidy, which would bring the total up to £31,250. Unfortunately the Government have not seen fit to accede to that proposition. The proposed rates of 1d. and ½d. are much too high. Figures given to the House last session by the Premier in answer to the member for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) showed that the farming lands were approximately 19 million pounds, and that the pastoral lands were approximately 2½ million pounds. If we work it out on those figures, we find that the agricultural lands represented £39,533, and the pastoral lands £10,416, or a total of £49,949. Hope springs eternal in the human breast, and I am hoping that when the Bill reaches the Committee stage the Minister will see fit to accept a reduction in the proposed rates. No doubt he will say that the 1d. and the ½d. are maxima. But we should reduce those maxima to one farthing on agricultural lands, and ½d. on pastoral lands; that would give us an average income of £25,000, and the Government should subsidise it.

Mr. Angelo: You are an optimist.

Mr. THOMSON: When the Land Tax was before the House, the figures supplied by the Treasurer in all good faith were very much below the sum he eventually achieved. Something like £130,000 was collected last year, which was considerably above what the Treasurer estimated to receive from the land tax. The unimproved value of our agricultural lands is increasing very much. In the Bruce Rock area the Taxation Department has fixed the unimproved value at £2 per acre for taxation purposes, and in my own district the average has been very considerably increased.

The Minister for Works: In Spearwood the unimproved value reaches £20 per acre.

Mr. THOMSON: It shows that the Government will derive a very much greater revenue from the land tax than was expected.

Mr. Teesdale: It will all come off the railway freights.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope the Minister will accept a substantial reduction in the proposed levies, for £25,000 is a very fair sum to start with, and if it be not sufficient there is nothing to prevent the Government from coming to the House to get an increase.

Irrespective of which Government may be in power, I hesitate to give the Government the right to impose additional taxation, more particularly when we see that this taxation cannot be passed on. Dingo clubs have been formed in various districts. They are not always successful. My own brother-in-law had a visitation from dingoes one night, and as a result lost 48 valuable sheep, his holding being a buffer to many others. The Minister will say that is so much justification for the imposition of the tax.

Mr. Angelo: The value of those sheep would have paid his contributions for 70 years.

Mr. THOMSON: But that would not have given him any guarantee against further losses. There are quite a number of abandoned farms in his locality, and a large area of virgin country, so even if he had paid 1s. in the £, unless proper vermin-proof fences were erected, he would not be saved a brass farthing.

Mr. Lamond: It would minimise the risk.

Mr. THOMSON: No, because as it was the people in the district had banded themselves into a dingo club, and were paying £2 per scalp. They were doing all that was possible: traps were set in every direction, but unfortunately that particular dog was never caught. The object of the Bill is to provide entirely for the payment of bonuses for dingo scalps. If the Bill had been so framed that vermin-proof fencing could be erected in various districts as the rabbit-proof fencing was originally erected, we would be in a position to see that the tax imposed produced beneficial results. Under the Bill, however, the people who provide the money will have no say in the administration. All the rates are to be paid to the credit of an account in the Department of Agriculture, and the expenditure will be under the direction of the Minister. The whole object is to collect funds from which a uniform bonus might be paid. Section 107 of the Act makes it clear that present conditions will not be altered, but that this will be an additional bonus. The Minister, in reply to an interjection, said that this Bill would do away with the payment of bonuses by the vermin boards. Section 107 of the Act, however, will remain, and it reads—

A board may grant bonuses for the destruction of vermin, except rabbits, within its

district at such rates and subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by regulation.

If I were suffering serious loss from vermin, I would willingly pay as much as £10 to get rid of the dogs that were doing the damage, just as many settlers have done. The dingo is a very serious pest and is causing loss to an extent that cannot be calculated. I hope the Government will accept an amendment to place the control in the hands of a board. The pastoralists and farmers have asked for this legislation, and they are entitled to say how the money shall be spent. In some districts it might be wise for the board, in view of the serious depredations of the dogs, to offer as much as £2 for the eradication of the pest. If the Government insist upon the present scale of rates, on my calculation they will receive a sum of £50,000. A central board would be quite willing to act in an honorary capacity, and it should consist of two representatives of the pastoralists and four representatives of the farmers. That representation would be fair, seeing that the pastoralists will not contribute anything like so much as the farmers.

Mr. Angelo: I have been assured that the pastoralists would contribute within £1,000 of the amount provided by the farmers.

Mr. THOMSON: There is £19,000,000 worth of farming land which, at a half-penny rate, would yield £39,533, and the £2,500,000 worth of pastoral land at a penny would yield £10,416. Consequently the pastoralists will be contributing only one-third of the amount provided by the farmers.

Mr. Angelo: The pastoralists and the farmers should pay the same contribution.

Mr. Chesson: You are not taking the Minister's figures.

Mr. THOMSON: The Minister estimated the revenue at £34,000.

Mr. Angelo: The pastoralists' figures are totally different.

Mr. THOMSON: I am using the figures supplied by the committee.

Mr. Angelo: The figures we got to-day showed only £1,000 difference.

Mr. THOMSON: I can deal with only the data before me. It is a matter of indifference to me whether the pastoralists and farmers are represented on the board in the proportion of three to three, but it is not fair to suggest that the farmers should contribute thrice as much as the pastoralists. If the Government accept the proposal for a board, they will be acting consistently with the

policy laid down in the Primary Products Marketing Bill. It is proposed that if any rates remain unpaid, interest to the extent of 5 per cent. shall be charged on the arrears. I do not know whether I am optimistic, but I shall oppose that provision. Whatever the rate imposed might be, there is power under the Act to recover it. If a man is in the unfortunate position of being unable to pay his rate, he is to be loaded with another 5 per cent. Yet the vermin to be exterminated might be in a district hundreds of miles away. A man in arrears could be compelled by law to pay the rates due plus costs.

The Minister for Lands: That would cost him more than the 5 per cent. interest.

Mr. THOMSON: But he may not be in a position to pay. If he really cannot pay, why impose an additional burden of 5 per cent. on him? It is merely pushing the under-dog lower down. This man who is in a position to pay does pay.

The Minister for Lands: Not always.

Mr. THOMSON: Then he can be made to pay. I recognise that the Bill represents an honest endeavour by the Government to meet to some extent the wishes of the farmers and pastoralists, but it does not go so far as was desired by those who need this legislation. They first desired a uniform rate of bonus fixed for the whole State, which they suggested should be 30s. per scalp. Secondly, they suggested a rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. for pastoralists and $\frac{1}{8}$ d. of a penny for farmers. The Minister, unfortunately, has quadrupled those amounts. They requested also that a central board be appointed on which they would act in an honorary capacity, but the Government have made no provision for that. If the Minister had followed his personal desires, I think he would have embodied the requests in the Bill.

Mr. Teesdale: Who would block him?

Mr. THOMSON: These Bills are prepared by departmental officials, and it is typical of them to desire departmental control. Under this Bill a sum estimated by the department at £34,000—I think the minimum will be £50,000—is to be collected, and the departmental officers desire to spend it under the direction of the Minister. Ministers have plenty of work to do: I suppose that 80 per cent. of the work done by Ministers is done on the recommendation of the departmental officers.

The Minister for Lands: If the Minister could do everything, we could sack all the officers.

Mr. THOMSON: That is so. The Bill provides for the raising of this amount of money, and I agree that the method of collection proposed is reasonable and sensible. In the North there are areas where it would be difficult for the local boards to make proper assessments and to collect the rates. The Commissioner of Taxation, therefore, should collect the money. The Government are not contributing one penny under the Bill, and yet they are retaining the whole control. I believe in representation, particularly where a man has to pay; and therefore I hope the Government will accept an amendment in that direction which I propose to move in Committee. I shall not oppose the second reading because it is the desire of many of the people interested to obtain uniform legislation. Therefore, I hope the attitude of the Government towards reasonable amendments will be conciliatory. Next year, if more money is required, a Bill can be brought down to increase the rate. Finally, those who find the money should have a say in the control.

MR. C. P. WANSBROUGH (Beverley) [8.17]: Though I shall not oppose the second reading, I am keenly disappointed with the Bill in its present form. When all is said and done, the dingo menace, which has been the chief subject of discussion, is not a general menace. Many of the older districts have already fought their dingo troubles. My electors do not object to being taxed in order to help other districts, provided the rabbit pest, with which alone we have to contend, is brought under the Bill. The measure mentions only dingoes and foxes. I look upon the rabbit as a greater menace than the dingo. I may say that I have had a long practical experience of the dingo, dating back to the nineties, in the Kellerberrin district, which then had not anything like the same trouble with dingoes as is being experienced to-day. There were not so many people in the district then.

The Minister for Lands: And not so many sheep.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: There were more sheep, because all the settlers there at that time were dependent upon the wool industry.

The Minister for Lands: But the sheep were not scattered throughout the State.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: There were not so many settlers, but those in that area then confined themselves to sheep. The rabbit pest did not exist at that time, and the settlers were able to deal with the dingo. It was a very rare thing then to discover a nest of young dingoes numbering more than five; but to-day in the same district, in the very same hills, one finds dingo litters of as many as 10. The change is due to the fact that the rabbit is the dingo's chief source of food. The dingo of to-day is not the dingo of past times. To-day, nine-tenths of the dingo trouble is due to the fact of the dingo being crossed with the domestic dog. That applies to the area I have in mind. The position may be different in the North and on the goldfields, where I have seen packs of dogs numbering 50 and not one of them the colour of a dingo. The country in question has been under cattle until recently, and consequently no attempt was made to deal with the dingo. Now that country is under sheep, and the dingo will no doubt meet his Waterloo. I have no objection to the tax proposed. My electors do not desire to shirk their reasonable responsibilities, but the rabbits should be brought under the Bill. I hope the measure will be amended in Committee by the inclusion of the rabbit.

Mr. Angelo: We have plenty of rabbit Act already.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: And we have plenty of Vermin Acts. Where shall we stand if the rabbit is not included?

Mr. Thomson: You will still carry on, but you will have two taxes.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: We shall not object to the tax if we get a reasonable cut out of it; but I object to the Bill taxing us for dingoes when the pest we have to contend against is the rabbit. The rabbit is in small numbers now, but in time we shall have to face him. Outside the fence farmers are being practically ruined through the depredations of the rabbit.

The Minister for Lands: The Agricultural Bank trustees have altered their opinion considerably as to that since they have been in the country.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: My opinion has not been altered. The rabbit has ruined farmers in my electorate so far as this year's crop is concerned. I look upon the combating of pests as a national work, and consider that the necessary taxation should be borne by the community generally. The Opposition leader made reference to the fact that we

have been fighting the dingo for many years. In that connection the old settlers have not only increased the capital value of their land, but also its unimproved value; and consequently they will be most heavily taxed under the Bill. In some of the older districts the revaluations have not yet come into force. When that unfortunate position is reached—

The Minister for Lands: Unfortunate because your values have gone up?

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: The Minister said last night that at Bruce Rock values were up to £2 per acre.

The Minister for Lands: That was said by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: In the Avon Valley the values will be considerably higher. We are prepared to help our unfortunate brothers, but they should not be so selfish as to refuse to give us any benefit, as will be the case if rabbits are excluded. The Minister will remove the objections of the area affected in the central and south-western parts of the State if he will accept an amendment to include rabbits. In my opinion, fencing is the one remedy for pests. If the Minister will proceed on those lines, he will produce a more beneficial effect than can be derived from the payment of bonuses. I should like to know what constitutes a fence under the Bill? Is it a rabbit-proof fence, or a rabbit and dingo-proof fence?

Mr. Thomson. Rabbit and dingo-proof.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Then another great injustice will be done to the district I have in mind. It is absolutely essential for the farmers there to fence against the rabbit, but they have no occasion to fence against the dingo. A phrase to which the member for Avon (Mr. Griffiths) will presumably make reference is the protection of areas by cross fences between the No. 1 and No. 2 rabbit-proof fences to the east of the more settled districts. That would be a highly effective means of dealing with the pest. I shall vote for the second reading, in the hope that the Minister will accept reasonable amendments in Committee.

MR. GRIFFITHS (Avon) [8.27]: I notice that the Bill contains a provision that if a holding is fenced against vermin to the satisfaction of the inspector, the owner of the holding is not to be liable to pay rates under the measure. Doubtless members have seen a good deal of newspaper correspondence and journalistic comment as to

a scheme propounded by settlers on the east side of the No. 1 rabbit-proof fence. The Westonia-Walgoolan people have put forward a scheme which I have already mentioned to the Minister for Agriculture, who has agreed to go into the details which I have in my possession. The endeavour of those people is to get a vermin board established in their own particular district, more especially to deal with dingoes, as the rabbit, strange to say, is almost non-existent outside the fence, whilst inside the fences he swarms in his millions. When it was suggested by a member of this House that the rabbit-proof fence should be pulled up, the people on the east side of that fence said to me, "For Heaven's sake, do not have the fence pulled up, because that will let the rabbits in on us." The scheme to which I have alluded shows a spirit of self-help. The people want to form themselves into a board to fence in a certain section of their country, which they themselves will be able to control. The money utilised in the fencing of the area would be repaid within 20 years. To make the matter quite clear, and so that justice may be done to the people concerned, I will read out the details of the scheme, which the Minister for Agriculture will then be able to see in "Hansard." Unfortunately, the hon. gentleman is unable to be present and hear the details for himself. The Westonia-Walgoolan estimate of costs is as follows:—the total area to be enclosed is 200,000 acres; the total area of first class land, 90,000 acres; total area of sheep land, 110,000 acres; number of holdings, 120; capital cost, £9,480; capital cost per thousand acres of first class land, £106; average annual payment, £9. As a matter of fact, the amount comes to a little more because there has not been included the cost of maintenance. The length of the proposed new fence is 50 miles and the proportion of rabbit-proof fence to be raised is 32 miles. The costs in connection with the new fence are as follows: costs of posts per mile, 480 at 1s., £24; rabbit netting, £48 7s. 6d.; dog netting, £20 9s. 6d.; five plain wires, £10; binding wire, 5s.; arms, three to the chain, 240 at, say, 1s. each, £12; clearing fence line at 3s. per chain, £12; labour, £25; incidentals, gates, survey fees and supervision, £20, making a total of £172 2s. The costs in connection with raising the rabbit-proof fence are these: arms, three to the chain, 340 at 1s., £12; one plain wire, £1 17s. 6d.; binding

wire, 2s. 6d.; labour, £7; rent, 25s.; total £22 5s. That is the scheme that has been set out. It is argued that this is not an unusual scheme, but it is very common in South Australia where it has worked well and where, by an arrangement to pay annually, it will, in 20 years' time, become the property of the originators of it. I have here a letter from the secretary which gives what he requires, as follows:—

We require the Act amended to allow the area proposed to be proclaimed a vermin board area irrespective of any existing road board area, the new vermin board to have statutory powers to inflict fines for leaving gates open etc.

I had an interview with Mr. Arnold in connection with this scheme and I sent the estimates to the secretary of the movement. He estimated that the rents from the fence would run out at 25s. per mile. He has provided for this, but the maintenance costs were not included. With the maintenance it would run out at about £13 10s. The secretary's letter continues—

Mr. Arnold has estimated the rent of the rabbit-proof fence at £1 5s. per mile. That is provided for in the estimate but maintenance costs were not included. Putting these down at Mr. Arnold's estimate, viz., £400 per year, the average annual payments per 1,000 acres will be £13 10s., or a rate per 100 acres of £1 7s. The Act will need to be amended to enable this rate to be levied. I should say the amendment would be worded so as to give the Minister power to approve of any rate that may be necessary. As the 110,000 acres of sheep land is brought into use the rates per settler will decrease from year to year and consequently a new rate will be struck each year. The estimate provides for the payment of the capital cost over 20 years. Any shorter period would make the payments too heavy. The new Vermin Board would also require power to levy an additional rate on holders of land along whose boundaries the proposed fence will run, sufficient to cover the cost of a standard sheep-proof fence, as they would have to provide this themselves if the proposed dingo and rabbit fence were not in existence. This rate will reduce the rates of those whose holdings do not abut on the new fence. The last issue of the "Primary Producer" contains a letter from a Mr. Halford, of Mt. Barker, South Australia, in which he describes the system in vogue there, which is just what we are asking for. Any number of farmers or pastoralists, from three upwards, can apply to the Government to be proclaimed a Vermin Board. The cost of a vermin-proof fence is then advanced by the Government and the board rates itself sufficiently high to pay off the capital cost in 20 years. This system has been in force for many years, and the wild-dog is practically non-existent in South Australia.

In conclusion the secretary states, and I agree with him, that it will take years to wipe out the dingo by trapping. Individual fencing is prohibited, but you must combine the two, and once you get the fence erected then you can deal with the dingoes you have inside it and exterminate them.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will cost about £90 a mile.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: They estimate the cost at £172 a mile. The capital cost will be £9,480. The point is that while it will be practically a never-ending business, that of exterminating the dingo, the fence must be erected, and it can be erected at a cheaper rate if paid for by the 120 settlers.

Hon. G. Taylor: What will be the length of the fence?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Fifty miles, and there will be 32 miles of rabbit-proof fencing.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is more fencing on the eastern goldfields than anywhere else.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I believe that; there has been a great deal of it done recently. The outback goldfields are rapidly being converted into sheep-growing areas.

Mr. Panton: The prospectors say they cannot move for the fences.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: The Walgoolan area is one of the most continuous of good belts of forest country that I have seen. To the north there is very fine grazing land, and you get into broken country towards Bullfinch. What is being asked is that the proposed board should be constituted on the lines of that of South Australia. I regret that the Minister is not here this evening, but I intend to supply him with all the data I have. A little while ago I made a statement with regard to rabbits. Some of the figures given to me were inaccurate. A lot of farmers west of the fence were not included, and within a mile and a half of the station I found that one farmer had 100 acres of crop completely destroyed, while another had 50 acres eaten off, and within half a mile again another 100 acres were destroyed. I sent all the information I had to Mr. Gregory, M.H.R., to assist him in his efforts to get netting, but I was called very much to account.

The Minister for Lands: Did you get the netting?

Mr. GRIFFITHS: A lot has been sent over.

The Minister for Lands: It was sent before you communicated with Melbourne.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: No, the netting at that time had not left the other States.

The Minister for Lands: It was only a small proportion.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Whatever the quantity was, it was badly wanted. It is still required, and the sooner we get more the better it will be for all parties. I hope the Minister will seriously consider the proposal submitted by these people. It is an attempt at self-help, and with the assistance of the Federal grant for wire netting. I do not see why something should not be done.

The Minister for Lands: All the netting the Federal Government provided has been sent out.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: Three millions sterling has been provided for wire netting.

The Minister for Lands: That is only an electioneering dodge.

Mr. GRIFFITHS: I am looking forward to the future, and if something is provided for the scheme to which I have referred, we shall have other districts following on similar lines, and in that way we shall to some extent cope with the trouble.

MR. CHESSON (Cue) [8.43]: I intend to support the second reading of the Bill because of the help it will be likely to render both pastoralists and agriculturists. I have been present at deputations that have waited on the Minister to ask that legislation should be introduced to deal with these pests. The people interested have provided the nucleus of a fund to deal with the pest, but there is necessity for the Government to submit legislation to provide control of the funds by the State, and to secure the payment of a uniform bonus. At present many of the vermin boards and road boards pay different rates, and very often the dingoes destroyed in one board area are described as having come from another area where the rates are lower. If we had a uniform bonus, that difficulty would be overcome. The pastoralists have put up a big fight to stem the invasion of the dingo. These dogs come across in waves. They come along the Great Western railway line from the Nullabor Plains. The rabbits also come that way and the dingoes have followed them because they feed on them. In the Eastern Murchison the squatters have not waited until the dingoes reached their holdings. Every time they have gone out they have taken

poison baits with them. The Bill will be of assistance to those who are now going in for sheep. Some provision should be made whereby the cattle owners should be compelled to lay baits. The cattle runs have been big breeding grounds for dingoes. Most of the squatters in my district have fought the pest for years. Had it not been for the people further out, those inside the ring would have had to do a great deal more. Many dingoes have worked their way through into the agricultural districts, but they are not so bad as they would have been were it not for the work which has already been done by the pastoralists. We know what harm dingoes will do to a flock of sheep. It has been said that a tax of 1d. on pastoral holdings, and of ½d. on agricultural holdings is too high. The Minister says that this will bring in a sum of £34,000. Some members think it will bring in much more.

The Minister for Lands: I think it will bring in less.

Mr. CHESSON: If we had the taxation figures here showing the amount raised on pastoral holdings and agricultural lands we should be in a better position to understand the question. The Minister is to be complimented on introducing this Bill. It is long overdue. At one time sheep could not be run on the Murchison. To-day one can go through Wiluna and Lawlers and into the Leonora district and find sheep everywhere. This is due to the activities of the pioneers in keeping down the pest. These people have sought greater assistance than has so far been given by the Crown. They have received up to 10s. per scalp, and have been taxing themselves through the road boards for a long time in order to make it safer for settlers who are within the outer circle. These people are a safety valve so far as this menace is concerned. Had it not been for them there would not be anything like the number of sheep in the agricultural districts that we see to-day. In the pastoral areas it is generally accepted that one sheep is run to 10 acres. This applies only to places where there are wells, windmills and troughing. Many pastoral holdings are not equipped in this way and sheep can only be run on them during the rainy season. From tests that have been made it is certain that water cannot be found there. Notwithstanding that, these people are to be taxed in the same way as others are to be taxed. The pastoralist who

goes outback and opens up the country, and stems the invasion of the dingo would be sufficiently taxed at 1d. in the £. I am not altogether wedded to the tax. If any arguments can convince me that it will bring in a greater amount than is anticipated by the Minister I will support a reduction. The member for Beverley (Mr. C. P. Wansbrough) said that the menace is not a general one. It would have been general had it not been for the people outback. Many of the holdings down here are practically clear of dingoes.

Mr. Teesdale: That is so.

Mr. CHESSON: In Committee I may have something further to say. I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [8.54]: I do not intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. Sleeman: Why not?

Mr. BROWN: Because the Government are making an honest endeavour to deal with the dingo pest. I do not think it will although it may work out in theory. The dingo has caused great depredations. Some time ago I visited the South-West and called at Nannup. Some of the settlers told me that the dingoes were very bad. They said they were not able to offer any solution of the difficulty, but hoped that a Bill would be introduced that would lead to the pest being coped with. Dingoes have been particularly bad in the extreme eastern end of my electorate. This Bill seeks to impose another tax upon the farmer. I will explain what the man on the land already has to bear. He has land rents.

The Minister for Lands: He has no land rents to pay.

Mr. BROWN: Most decidedly. He has road board rates, local government rates, road rates, cart and motor car licenses, land tax without exemption, and income tax if he has any income. He has to pay vermin rates, which include rabbits only, and vermin boards have also power to rate. Now another vermin board has been sprung on the man on the land, with power to rate up to 1d. in the £. In nine cases out of 10 probably the man on the land is paying heavy interest rates.

Hon. G. Taylor: No wonder he is round shouldered if he is carrying such a load.

Mr. BROWN: Most of them are carrying that burden. This Bill will suit the North-

West, but not the South-West or certain parts of the agricultural areas. Around Nannup some of the settlers are surrounded by thousands of acres of heavily timbered country.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Which it is proposed to tax.

Mr. BROWN: Vermin boards will not do those settlers any good. The only solution of the trouble will be to provide farmers with dog-proof fencing. The Government are not going to do anything with the millions of acres of Crown land which are not included in the Bill. They will be breeding grounds for dingoes. No one who holds land on the fringe of the forest will be able to keep sheep. One man tells me that he started with 260 sheep 12 months ago and now has only 60 left. The only way to keep sheep is to yard them at night, but then, sheep will not do any good if they are yarded.

The Minister for Lands: You need only go along the Dowerin line to find that.

Mr. BROWN: I have been told that the dogs are killing calves up there, and that in one case they killed a 3-year old heast.

Hon. G. Taylor: I think they were pulling your leg.

Mr. BROWN: If a dingo pack is hungry it will not hesitate to kill a weak beast. Along the Great Southern and in the closely settled districts there have been no dogs for years. If the tax is made uniform it will apply to those who have no dogs. It may be said that the outside settlers have kept the dogs from coming in, but the other people had to bear the burden before the new settlers went out there. I have had as many as 40 sheep killed in a night, but I did not look to the Government to help me. I did my best to eradicate the pest myself. As settlement occurred the dogs were driven further east. The eradication of the pest should be left to the various road boards. Some want the Bill and others do not. In my district the Western half has no dogs, but the eastern half has. There are various road boards in my district. The Bill could well apply to those in the eastern half. Those settlers who have no dogs to contend with should be exempt until they find that the foxes have become a nuisance.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Why should the outback road boards contribute for the protection of others?

Mr. BROWN: It appears to me that settlers in the North-West are working under

entirely different conditions. They have large holdings in those parts and the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) informed us that on one holding over 1,000 dogs had been killed in one year. It looks as though they are to depend upon money from the farming districts to kill the dogs in the North-West.

Mr. Marshall: That is unfair.

Mr. BROWN: I am glad to hear the hon. member say so.

Mr. Lamond: Does not the North-West pay for the rabbit-proof fence?

Mr. BROWN: But they benefit because the fences go into the North-West as well. If there were only 3ft. or 4ft. of dog-proof fencing on top of the rabbit-proof fence, it is possible that the dogs would be kept back.

Mr. Marshall: What about putting up a chicken-proof fence as well?

Mr. BROWN: The course I suggest has been adopted in my own electorate, rabbit-proof netting being used on the lower parts and dog-proof netting on top. The result was that I have seen sheep depasturing on holdings where they could not have been kept a little while ago. I was told that there was a dingo trapper in the district and that the dogs had diminished considerably. I realise that something should be done as the dingoes are responsible for great economic loss. We must be careful, however, that we do not inflict hardships upon certain people. I trust the Minister will see his way clear to exempt certain districts that do not require to come within the scope of the Bill. If it is carried with that improvement, the Bill will give satisfaction to the people generally.

MR. LAMOND (Pilbara) [9.3]: I support the Bill, which is long overdue. It is one that will be much appreciated by the pastoralists in the North-West. During last session I made representations to the Minister at the request of three vermin boards in my electorate. I asked that euros should be declared vermin. The Minister informed me that under the Act, he was unable to do so in any one portion of the State. Under the Act it would have been necessary for him to declare the pest to be vermin all over the State. A proviso is embodied in the Bill that will give the Minister power to declare a pest vermin in a section of the State. The euro has been increasing for many years past in the North-West until it is now a menace

to the pastoral industry. We realise that the presence of so many euros tends to lessen production. I, therefore, have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [9.5]: I support the Bill, although I do not entirely endorse the measure in its entirety. For many years past there has been an agitation by people interested in production throughout the State, in favour of the Act being amended so as to secure a more efficient organisation to deal with the extermination of vermin of various descriptions. I have listened attentively to the remarks of hon. members regarding the Bill. Some of the arguments have been highly inconsistent. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Brown) contended that there was no occasion to apply the Bill to the South-West, and that the only vermin troubling the settlers there were the rabbits. In dealing with legislation we must take care that it does not operate harshly or inequitably in different parts. People in the South-West are said to be troubled with rabbits only, and in the North-West the dingoes represent the main difficulty. If that be so, we would naturally think that the members representing those parts would endeavour to secure a Bill of a comprehensive character that would apply to the whole State. Particularly would one anticipate action of that sort, because both pests are invading us from the Eastern States. If the Bill before us were more comprehensive and took into consideration the whole of the pests to be dealt with throughout Western Australia, it would be more satisfactory. In those circumstances it would be just as important for the pastoralists in the North-West to do their quota towards stemming the invasion of the rabbits, as it is now their duty to stem the invasion of dingoes in order to protect their own properties. That is the deficiency in the Bill that appeals to me most. If the Minister had realised the position clearly, he would, after making provision for the financial requirements of the work, have brought in a Bill to apply to the whole State. The rabbits come from the northern and eastern parts of the State just as the dingoes do. I do not think we should separate the pests unless there are just grounds for doing so. I have heard a great deal said about the battle put up by the pioneers of the State. I believe there was a time when pioneers, particularly

those who are now regarded as squatters, had a very trying time in dealing with the dingoes. It is obvious, however, that the development of the more remote parts of the State has actually been instrumental in aiding the progress and the multiplying of vermin. I am not a very aged person and I have not been in the State for 50 years or more, but I can remember when it was impossible to see a kangaroo on the other side of Mullewa. It was impossible for them to live there, because the country was too dry. The kangaroo was able to advance until the natural water supplies gave out, and then the marsupial died. As development has progressed, however, the provision of water supplies and feed has enabled the dingo, the rabbit, the emu, and the euro to spread and multiply. That, in my opinion, is the reason why to-day we are more than ever concerned about the dingo pest. Under our present conditions, whereby one pastoralist is able to hold a million acres, it is impossible for one family to cope with pests all through holdings of that size. It is impossible for them to carry on a vigorous policy of destruction. The provision of wells and improvements in the feed means that they cannot stem the onward progress of the pests. It is rather anomalous that the very good fortune of the pastoralists is their greatest misfortune. If there is a good season, that is the time when the pests breed and multiply most, the result being that when the season is most profitable to the pastoralist, he has to get out and endeavour to destroy the pests. For members sitting on the Opposition cross benches to argue that it is not fair to pay their quota of the tax in order to give financial assistance to those who will be compelled to accept the responsibility for the destruction of the pest, is hardly right. The people in the South-West are broadminded enough to appreciate the fact that if it had not been for the efforts of people living in the more remote parts, to cope with the pests, their troubles with the dingoes would have been greater and they would not be able to boast that to-day there are as many sheep in the south-western portion of the State as there are in the North-West. They could not have accumulated those sheep but for the people who stemmed the rush of the dingoes. I do not ask any special consideration for those on the land in my own electorate. I do not want to lead the House to believe that they are the only people who have tried to do something for themselves and for the development of the country, but I ask the House to appre-

ciate their efforts and to give them credit equal to the credit given to those in the South West.

Mr. J. H. Smith: It is in the South-West where the dingo is.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, the hon. member has come from there. It is of no use members saying that the South-West is where the dingo is. The habitat of the dingo is far removed from the South-West. Apart from the dingo, the Bill deals with vermin such as the emu, the euro, and the kangaroo.

Mr. Teesdale: The 1918 Act covers all those.

Mr. MARSHALL: But they are a trouble and expense. The Bill is not sufficiently comprehensive. We should have a board to systematise the destruction of all forms of vermin. It would be more economical if we dealt with the rabbit on his progress towards the South-West. The State rabbit-proof fences have proved an absolute failure and in good seasons rabbits are to be found in abundance throughout the agricultural areas. I do not know what the tax will bring in. We should not impose any further taxation on the citizens.

Mr. Teesdale: They are agreeable to paying this.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, but the House should not be too willing to further tax the people. However, this can scarcely be called a tax. It is a premium in return for services rendered, and those who pay it will be recompensed a hundredfold. The loss suffered through vermin is incalculable. I approve of many of the provisions in the Bill. On the other hand, I cannot subscribe to certain other clauses. I am glad that the timber concessions are to be brought under the measure. Those concessions, like Crown lands, form ideal breeding places for vermin. I am also pleased that certain vermin are to be defined within certain areas. I would have been better satisfied if the measure had been more comprehensive, if a central board had been created to set up an efficient organisation to cope with all forms of pest throughout the State. We are not doing justice either to the people who pay the tax, or to the State itself by handling the matter piecemeal. I hope that when in Committee the Minister will accept certain amendments for the improvement of the measure. How far the development of the wool and sheep industry has been retarded by vermin it is difficult to say, but from statistics compiled in other States it is seen that for decades past we have been

losing hundreds of thousands of pounds. The measure will go to make up a deficit that has accrued through lack of sympathy in past Governments, who should have brought down such a Bill years ago. I compliment the present Government on having brought down the Bill. The request for such legislation was no sooner made than it was granted. The Minister for Agriculture has advanced a great deal of money to vermin boards in my district, all of which has been repaid. As a result of those advances, the district has been rendered almost immune from depredations by dingoes. The Leader of the Opposition unwittingly testified to the necessity for the Bill when he said that there had been no dingoes in the Northam district for the past 35 years. It is proof positive that the people in the outer areas are protecting the more central areas from the ravages of dingoes. The Bill is long overdue. I welcome it and I congratulate the Minister on the liberal assistance he has afforded to vermin boards in my district. I hope the Bill will prove most effective in the destruction of vermin.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [9.28]: The Bill is badly wanted. When the Minister came into office last year he intimated that it would be one of the first measures he would introduce. We all believe that every sheep or beast destroyed is a national loss. On that theory the Minister, possibly, has not gone far enough. The tax should be general throughout the State. All should be made to contribute to the expense of dealing with pests of all forms. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) was a good deal astray when he declared there were no dingoes in the South-West. He said that he was pleased to know that we in the South-West were agreeable to assisting the people of the North in doing away with the pest. If he had made inquiries, he would have found that in the South-West the dingo problem assumes much greater proportions than it does in the North. That is where we require this Bill to operate. The member for Cue quoted the older settlers, and the member for Pingelly was inclined to think that the older settlers should not be penalised; he said they had had their fight 40 years ago. We agree that they had their fight 40 years ago, but the people who have gone out beyond them are having their fight to-day, and others who go beyond them and place a ring around them in the future will have their fight. I welcome the Bill. I could

quote instances of the national loss resulting from the dingo pest. The member for Pingelly did not exaggerate when he said that the dingoes were killing yearling calves. I know of 40 or 50 having been sent down to the coast for a spell and quite a number of them did not return. In the past we have only tinkered and messed about with vermin boards. It has been an absolute farce that while one section has paid another section has not. We had seven or eight road boards that formed a vermin board and paid up to £2 per scalp. Other districts adjoining the vermin area were not vermin districts, and the trappers were killing dingoes outside and bringing them into our board. The vermin board soon became broke and had to go out of existence. I hope that country and metropolitan members will support the Bill. A measure introduced by the previous Government proposed to subsidise the amount raised by taxation. I hope the present Minister will do likewise.

The Minister for Lands: That was not in the previous Bill.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: But the then Minister practically promised to do it.

The Minister for Lands: No, he did not promise.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Our greatest difficulty is with Crown land in the undeveloped portion of the State where the dingo is born and bred and protected. Right through the State forests extending from Manjimup to Albany and beyond are hundreds of thousands of acres of Crown lands that form breeding places for the vermin. It is proposed to tax pastoral and timber leases, but the Crown lands are the principal breeding places, and the Minister will have to grant a subsidy to make the measure a success. Fencing against rabbits can be dealt with in another way. The member for Pingelly suggested that we in the South-West should fence against the dingo. In the heavily timbered portion of the South-West it is almost useless to fence against the dingo, because trees so often fall that gaps would be made in the fences and three or four dingoes might gain access in the night and deplete a whole flock before morning. I know of 100 sheep having been killed in one night, and it was impossible to trace the dogs. Though one or two amendments may be required in Committee, I assure the Government that on this measure they have the whole-hearted support of the people of the South-West.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret [9.35]: I offer no opposition to the second reading of the Bill. I have listened carefully to the debate and I am bound to say that if I were a pastoralist I would receive this Bill with open arms. Still, I fail to see why those people in the old settled districts should be so enamoured of the measure. It has been stated by the Leader of the Opposition that on the rating fixed some of the land will pay as much as £4 per acre, while in the pastoral areas the rate will be something under 2s. per thousand acres.

The Minister for Lands: It must be very good land if it has to pay £4 per acre.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: On the values set out, it is quite possible. The areas may be small. The Minister will realise that the people who have fought the dogs for at least half a century may not have been visited by a dog for years.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They would be fighting the dogs to-day but for the people farther out.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Those people are not here for the good of their health and the people who are opening up the country are not doing it for the good of their health. They are doing it for the same reason that the pioneers tackled the old settled districts. They saw an opportunity to make homes for themselves, and they settled there as the new-comers are settling in the outer areas to-day. To fence against dogs in my district costs up to £90 per mile. If the Government would relieve the Eastern goldfields pastoralists by reducing the railway freight on wire netting, they would be conferring a great favour. These people are prepared to keep down the dingo pest and they are paying dearly for it. They are all fencing. There is more fencing going on in the Eastern goldfields areas to-day than in any other part of the State. People who have been not three years in the country have miles and miles of dog-proof fencing erected, and it has been done at the cost I mentioned and even more. The Bill introduced by the previous Government was objectionable to the very section that this measure will protect, namely, the pastoralists. Because it was considered necessary under the Bill to insist upon water supplies in the cattle areas of the Kimberleys and the North-West being fenced to keep out the dingoes, the Bill met its fate in another place. Water supplies could not be fenced in that way without difficulty and expense,

and another objection was that the fencing of them would keep the stock away from the water at night. This Bill has removed that objection, but it will impose a burden upon people who will not derive any benefit. Still, every head of cattle or sheep destroyed represents a national loss and, that being so, we should insist upon a national contribution to remove the menace. While we talk of these national problems, we deal with them in a very piecemeal and parochial fashion, but it is the best we can do. I have been informed that as the outcome of an interview with the Minister this afternoon, he is prepared to make considerable alterations to the measure in Committee. That being so, I feel sure the Bill will be made a more workable measure by the time it leaves this Chamber to go to another place. When we consider the value of our flocks, the Government should not be too niggardly. Even if this Bill becomes law, the Government should make some contribution from the Treasury towards the work of exterminating the dog pest. I hope the Government will consider this point and will augment the revenue to be collected by way of rates. The Minister estimated that the revenue collected would amount to £34,000 per annum. The Leader of the Opposition is perfectly satisfied that the amount will be nearer £60,000.

Mr. Angelo: And another authority says £41,000.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: And others have put it down at £50,000. If we are going to collect £50,000 a year under this measure, the farming areas will contribute at least £35,000 to £40,000, while the pastoralists will contribute the balance.

Mr. Angelo: That is absolutely wrong.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for Gascoyne represents pastoralists and he does it admirably, but some consideration should be shown for other people. There are no small holdings in my district; the leases are all being turned from cattle to sheep stations. From that point of view I welcome the Bill, but we cannot dismiss the argument that this Bill will press heavily upon people who will get no direct benefit from it, apart of course from the national benefit. That being so, those people deserve some consideration, and the members who have spoken on their behalf should not be treated too lightly. Though I am not representing any of them, I feel the justice of their claims. I hope that in Com-

mittee the Bill will be amended in such a way that we shall have no reason to be ashamed of the form in which it is presented to another place.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [9.44]: There seems to be a difference of opinion amongst members as to how this money should be dealt with. Some members desire the appointment of a board. One member suggested a board of three agriculturists and two pastoralists. With a board so constituted the agriculturists would have a majority straight away, with the result that there would immediately arise arguments as to how the money could be best expended, and the majority would carry the day. If the administration were entrusted to an independent body such as the Minister and his officers, one part of the State would receive equal treatment with another and the money would be expended to the best advantage. While the Minister would have control of the funds, vermin boards would still exist in the various districts, and the views of the vermin boards would be taken into consideration when dealing with the funds.

Hon. G. Taylor: But you have power under this measure to declare anything to be vermin.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am referring to vermin boards. The member for Mt. Margaret pointed out that some people would have to pay by way of rates as much as £4 per acre.

Hon. G. Taylor: I meant that to apply to each thousand acres.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member said that a halfpenny in the pound would bring in £4 an acre by way of taxation. Several members have pointed out that almost every Bill this session has been for the purpose of increasing taxation. I would point out that the Government have not introduced any Bill this or last session that effected any increased taxation for the benefit of the funds of the Government.

Hon. G. Taylor: All taxation Bills should be for services rendered.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Members have given their views with regard to what this tax will bring in. If they will refer to the current Estimates, they will find that the total sum received by way of land tax last year was £113,867.

Mr. Thomson: The estimate this year is £150,000.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We were told last year that valuations had been put up considerably by the Commissioner of Taxation. Last year the Premier did not take into his Estimates the increased tax, because it was not going to the general revenue of the State. The total amount received last year over the previous year, with all the increased values, was £41,368, or £38,867 over the Premier's estimate. That included the whole of the metropolitan area and all the townships throughout the State.

Mr. Thomson: The valuations are still being increased.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Furthermore, this particular tax does not include the metropolitan area or the townships, and does not include any person's holding which has been protected by the owner against the vermin that this Bill proposes to eradicate. There will be a large reduction so far as taxation is concerned. The Leader of the Country Party stated he considered that the taxation under this Bill was too high. This is only the maximum.

Mr. Thomson: I said you would make that reply.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What a ridiculous argument to put up that, if the tax was not sufficient we could bring down another Bill next year. In other words, the hon. member suggests that the dogs should be allowed to increase in numbers until further legislation had been introduced to provide funds for their eradication.

Mr. Thomson: The Minister's estimate is £34,000.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think his estimate is too liberal, and that this amount will not be realised, according to the sum raised by increased taxation last year.

Mr. Thomson: I am game to bet you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Is it likely that any Government would put on taxation over and above what was required? Would it not be preferable, if the losses that are at present being made by the pastoralists and agriculturists with regard to stock could be minimised, that those people should pay a higher rate in the first year, even if they had to pay a lower rate in the second year? They might save more money by paying the higher rate in the first year, than if they paid the lower rate then and lost a good deal of their stock. Members say that

the agricultural districts do not want this Bill. I was at Dowerin a little while ago. That is not far inland. Settlers there informed me that they had to yard their sheep at night time because of the dogs. The Leader of the Country Party has stated that in the Great Southern the settlers have to do the same thing, or put a fence round the stock for their protection. The agriculturists are losing money owing to the destruction that takes place amongst their stock. It is not intended to go into the Committee stage of this Bill in a hurry. Arrangements have been made by the Minister to postpone that stage for the purpose of ascertaining the views of those it will most affect. This Bill has been introduced at the request of those who are affected by the dingoes and who have lost large percentages of their flocks.

Mr. Teesdale: That is a fact.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Bill is not introduced for taxation purposes. Of the so-called increased taxation that is proposed this year and was brought in last year, not one penny has been for Government purposes.

Hon. G. Taylor: This goes into the Treasury.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I should like to refer to a remark made by the Leader of the Opposition when he dealt with the question of additional taxation on water supplies. At present the Government have power to impose a rate for water from the goldfields main up to 5d. in the pound. Many of these settlers are paying only 3d. By a Bill that was recently passed the Government will be able to increase that rate from 5d. to 1s. Members have asked why, if the Government have power to rate up to 5d., they have not done so. The reason for that is that in some districts there may be one or two persons who will stick out against the other settlers when it comes to a question of laying the water on. In all probability they are aware of the fact that so long as the water runs past their holdings, in the event of a drought or a scarcity of water they can immediately be connected with the main. The other people, however, without waiting for any scarcity of water, have been paying the rates on their own behalf and on behalf of the others. It is, therefore, necessary to provide for an increase in the rate.

Mr. Thomson: You are imposing the rate wherever the pipe passes.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: In districts where agreements exist, that cannot be done, and it is for that reason power was sought to go up to 1s. In some cases it would not be necessary to charge 1s. if every person in districts, where agreements do not operate, had joined with the others. Once rating power is given, all can be brought within the scheme, but that is not the case where water is supplied under agreement. As things are, some people are able to reap the benefit that others are paying for. It was therefore, necessary to bring in a Bill giving power to make a rate that would apply generally for the benefit of the whole district. The Bill will not be rushed through the Committee stage. Every member will be afforded an opportunity to deal with the question, and to obtain the views of the various associations concerning it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 27th October, 1925.

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

QUESTION—STATE HOTELS.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND asked the Honorary Minister: 1, What are—(a) the gross receipts, and (b) the net profits from each of the State Hotels, including the Caves House Hotel, for the year ended 30th June, 1925? 2, What clerical or office assistance is provided at each of these hotels or hostels, and at

what cost? 3, What is the number of staff attached to each hotel or hostel? 4, What salary is paid to—(a) each manager, (b) each manager's wife; and what concessions are granted to such manager, or wife? 5, Does any of these managers receive any bonus pro rata to profits made? 6, If not, is there any objection to the bonus system being adopted; if so, why?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, (a) The gross receipts from State hotels, including Cave House, for the year ended 30th June, 1925, amounted to £86,060 0s. 7d. (b) The net profits for the same period amounted to £3,069 16s. 2d. It is not considered advisable, for trade reasons, to disclose the gross receipts or nett profits of any particular hotel or hotels. 2, Clerical and general assistance is provided at Cave House during the busy period of the year. Last year's expenditure was £69 9s. 3d. No clerical assistance is provided at any State hotel, excepting at Bruce Rock, where partial clerical services are given in return for board and lodging. 3, Number of staff attached to each hotel or hostel, exclusive of manager and wife:—Bolgart, 5; Bruce Rock, 16; Corrigin, 9; Dwellingup, 8; Gwalia, 6; Kwolyin, 4; Wongan Hills, 7; Cave House, 13. 4, (a) All managers receive £7 per week; (b) manager's wife at Bruce Rock receives an allowance of £1 per week, and Caves House £1 10s. per week. All managers receive free maintenance for their families; three weeks annual holiday; and free transport to Perth for themselves and families. 5, No. 6, Yes. 7, It might conduce to practices which should be foreign to the trading of State hotels.

QUESTION—POLICE CONSTABLE LAMBERT.

Hon. G. POTTER asked the Chief Secretary: Will he lay on the Table the file relating to the dismissal of Constable Lambert?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Yes. File laid on the Table herewith.

QUESTION—ESPLANADE FAIR GROUNDS.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Who are the present lessees of the Esplanade Fair grounds, known as the "White City"? 2, When does the existing lease expire? 3, At the expiration of the