Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, the 31st October, 1967

The SPEAKER (Mr. Hearman) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

JOINT HOUSE COMMITTEE

Postponement of Meeting

THE SPEAKER: I wish to announce that the meeting which was scheduled for this evening at 7 p.m. to enable members of both Houses to discuss the question of the future of Harvest Terrace has been postponed for one week, because it is not considered likely that very many Upper House members will be available this evening.

QUESTIONS (9): ON NOTICE

BRIDGES

Causeway: Traffic Density

1. Mr. TONKIN asked the Minister for Works:

   (1) Is it a fact that the Causeway is now accommodating traffic similar to, or greater than, the volume it was carrying just prior to the commencement of the building of the Narrows Bridge?

   New Bridge over Swan River

   (2) Has an estimate been made of the maximum time which can be allowed before it will be necessary to commence the building of another bridge across the Swan River?

   (3) If "Yes," what is the period of time?

   (4) Is consideration being given to the building of another bridge across the river?

   (5) If "Yes," what locations are being considered?

   Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

   (1) Yes.

   (2) No.

   (3) Answered by (2).

   (4) Yes.

   (5) Consideration is being given to the construction of river crossings both upstream and downstream of the Causeway.

RAILWAYS

Members of Parliament Travel Concessions: Reimbursement

2. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for Railways:

   What amount of money does the Railways Department receive annually from the Treasury as reimbursement for fares of members of Parliament and their wives?

   Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

   $3,000, as per item 6, Division 7 of the printed Estimates. This also covers special trains, cars, etc.

SCHOOLS

Telephones: Installation by Department

3. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Education:

   (1) How long has it been departmental policy to pay installation costs and rental for school telephones?

   (2) Does this policy apply to all schools, primary and secondary?

   Mr. LEWIS replied:

   (1) (a) Since 1961 the department has accepted responsibility for the cost of installation, rental, and official calls for those primary schools with a school bus service. Prior to this only official calls were paid.

   (b) From July, 1967, the department has accepted responsibility for installation, rental, and official calls for all primary schools where such an installation is feasible.

   (c) The department has for at least the last 16 years accepted responsibility for installation, rental, and official calls for secondary schools.

   (2) Yes.

HOUSING

Outstanding Applications

4. Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Housing:

   (1) What is the approximate number of applications with the State Housing Commission for—

   (a) tenancy homes;
   (b) purchase homes;
   (c) two-unit flats;
   (d) single-unit flats;
   (e) McNess homes?

   (2) What is the processing date for the above applicants (a) to (e) at present?

   Midland, Guildford, and Bassendean: Programme

   (3) Is it intended to build any of the above types of residence in the Midland, Guildford and Bassendean areas in the current year?

   (4) If the answer to (3) is "Yes," in what areas will residences be built?

   (5) What is the approximate number of applications pending in the Midland, Guildford and Bassendean areas?

Mr. O'NEIL replied:

(1) Applications outstanding as at the 30th September, 1967—

	Metropolitan	Country	Total
(a) Tenancy homes	6,424	1,309	7,733
(b) Purchase homes	5,866	224	6,090
(c) Aged person couples (flats and cottage flats)	86	22	108
(d) Aged person single unit flats for women	1,212	54	1,266
(e) McNess homes	Included figures above.	in tenancy (a), (c) and (d)	home
Total	13,588	1,609	15,197

Above figures include dual purchase/tenancy applications equal to approximately 12 per cent. of total.

(2) Processing date of applications at the 30th September, 1967—

	Tenancy	Purchase (Groups)	Cottage Flats	Elderly Women's Flats	McNess
Perth	Nov., 1964	Jan., 1965	Dec., 1965	(Varies with need and availability of vacant flats or houses)	
Fremantle	May, 1965	May, 1965	Nov., 1966		
Midland	May, 1965	Nov., 1965	Oct., 1965		
Kwinana	May, 1966	Mar., 1966	Sept., 1965		
Country Areas	Varies with locality	Varies with locality	Varies with locality	Not applicable	Varies with locality

With applicant's own land building assistance varies from immediate to six months.

(3) The commission's building programme for this financial year is—

(a) Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement	(R.A.A.F.)	Koongamia	21
		Swan View	20
		Middle Swan	20
(b) Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement	(Rental)	Midvale	One block of 36 flats.

The following houses are under construction :—

(a) Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement	(R.A.A.F.)	Koongamia	35
(b) Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement	(Rental)	Koongamia	10
(c) State Housing Act	(Group Purchase)	Koongamia	11
(d) State Housing Act	(Individual Purchase)	High Wycombe	2
		Swan View	1

(4) See answer to (3).

(5) Applications outstanding—Midland Area—

Category	Number
Rental	177
Purchase	77
Pensioner couples (for Cottage Flats)	6
Total	260

Includes dual applications.

BRIDGE OVER SWAN RIVER

East Fremantle: Location and Commencement

5. Mr. FLETCHER asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has there been any alteration in the decision announced on the 4th December, 1965, regarding the location of the site for a new six-lane traffic bridge over the Swan River at East Fremantle?

(2) If "Yes," where is it now proposed to locate the bridge?

(3) When is it expected that construction of the first stage will commence?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) The Main Roads Department is evaluating a report by the consultants, De Leuw Cather & Co., on the Fremantle bypass before making a decision on the timing of the construction of the bridge.

HIGH SCHOOL HOSTEL

Port Hedland: Provision

6. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for Education:

What are the latest developments regarding the provision of high school hostel facilities at Port Hedland?

Mr. LEWIS replied:

The Country High School Hostels Authority will consider the provision of a hostel at Port Hedland as a future development, but a definite date for the establishment has not been determined.

ONION MARKETING BOARD
Annual Report and Accounts: Availability

7. Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Agriculture:

When is it anticipated that the annual report and accounts of the Western Australian Onion Marketing Board for the 1966-67 season will be available?

Mr. NALDER replied:

The Western Australian Onion Marketing Board's final accounts to the date of its dissolution on the 18th August, 1967, have been prepared and are at present with the Auditor-General. As soon as the audit has been completed, the board's annual report and financial statements will be presented.

EQUAL PAY FOR THE SEXES
Extension to Government Instrumentalities

8. Mr. JAMIESON asked the Premier:
Is it the intention of the Government to extend the proposed equal pay for equal work value to semi-Government authorities such as the M.T.T., etc.?

Mr. NALDER (for Mr. Brand) replied:
Discussions have been held between the Department of Labour and semi-government authorities relative to the extension of Government policy in the matter of equal pay for work of equal value. These authorities are autonomous in industrial matters but usually follow general principles enunciated as Government policy.

COURT OF MARINE INQUIRY
Collision between "Andrew" and "Katameraire": Photographs

9. Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Were the three photographs presented as evidence to the court of marine inquiry with respect to the collision between the T.S.M.V. *Andrew* and the T.S.M.V. *Katameraire* taken before or after the collision?

(2) If the answer is "after the collision," on what evidence is such an assumption based?

(3) At what precise stage after the collision were the photographs taken?

(4) Are the photographs inconsistent with the claim by the Master of the T.S.M.V. *Andrew* that after the collision he swung away to port to get away from the T.S.M.V. *Katameraire* and then swung back on course?

(5) How do the photographs "cast doubt on Mr. Page's statement on the subject of his manoeuvring immediately after the collision"?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

(1) to (3) The photographs were taken after the first collision and were taken by witness T. Arnold who stated in evidence that the first photograph showed the second collision of the vessels. The second photograph shows the *Andrew* drawing ahead of the *Katameraire*, and the third photograph shows the *Andrew* heading away from the *Katameraire*.

(4) and (5) There is a reasonable inference that the photographs are inconsistent with the claim by the master of the *Andrew* because of the position of his vessel and the nature of the wake. The judgment of the court was that the photographic evidence cast doubts on the value of Mr. Page's evidence and the subject of his manoeuvring of his ship immediately following the collision when, he claims, he had his wheel swung hard to port.

QUESTIONS (3): WITHOUT NOTICE

EXPLOSIVES SHIP
Fire: Details

1. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Will the Minister acquaint the House with the full details of the fire in an explosives ship at Port Hedland?

(2) Is the Minister satisfied that all precautions were taken and all regulations governing explosives ships were adhered to in this connection?

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON replied:

I cannot give the honourable member any detailed information about the incident at present, but I am expecting a report on it and will let him know the result in due course.

RAILWAYS
Members of Parliament Travel Concessions: Reimbursement

2. Mr. BICKERTON asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Further to his answer to my question (2) on today's notice paper, would not the figure be $12,600 under item 4 and not item 6 of the Premier's Estimates, because this item covers "Travelling Concessions to Members of Parliament and Life Pass Holders"?

(2) If this be so, could he tell me the reason for the discrepancy between this figure and that given in his answer?

Mr. O'CONNOR replied:

(1) and (2) I will have this question checked with a view to ascertaining the correct reply for the honourable member. I anticipated the question asked by him and I intended to give him some private information at a later stage.

STATE FARM AT DENMARK

Sale to Private Enterprise

3. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In the event of a research station being established in the Mt. Barker or Stirling area, can he advise the House whether the State farm at Denmark will be sold to private enterprise?

Mr. NALDER replied:

No decision has been reached on the suggestion put forward by the member for Albany.

Mr. Graham: There is no decision, but it is under consideration.

ACTS (4): ASSENT

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Acts:—

1. Evidence Act Amendment Act.
2. Justices Act Amendment Act.
3. Town Planning and Development Act Amendment Act.
4. Country High School Hostels Authority Act Amendment Act.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by Mr. I. W. Manning, leave of absence for four weeks granted to Mr. W. A. Manning (Narrogin) on the ground of urgent public business.

CLOSING DAYS OF SESSION

Standing Orders Suspension

MR. NALDER (Katanning — Deputy Premier) [4.43 p.m.]: I move—

That until otherwise ordered, the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be introduced without notice, and to be passed through all their remaining stages on the same day, all messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the same day they are received, and to enable resolutions from the Committees of Supply and of Ways and Means to be reported and adopted on the same day on which they shall have passed those committees.

At this stage of the session, this motion, when brought before the House, is generally accepted. On this occasion all I can say is that the Government anticipates there will be a further 20-odd Bills to be introduced. Several will relate to Budget matters, and these have already been mentioned by the Premier. Generally speaking, quite a number of the measures will be small ones, similar to those which are presented to the House at this time of the session.

I can assure the Leader of the Opposition and the other members of the House that every opportunity will be given them to debate fully any legislation introduced from now on.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [4.45 p.m.]: We on this side of the House have no objection to the motion, because it is similar to the one usually moved at this time of the session. Until the Deputy Premier spoke I felt the motion was hardly necessary, because the notice paper does not indicate a great amount of business. However, as he has intimated that another 20-odd Bills will be introduced, and in view of the fact that the Premier has indicated we will rise about the 24th November, I appreciate the need for the motion and therefore do not oppose it.

Question put and passed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Precedence on All Sitting Days

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Deputy Premier) [4.46 p.m.]: I move—

That on and after Wednesday, the 1st November, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day on Wednesdays as on all other days.

I give the assurance, given always by the Premier when moving a motion such as this, that private members will be given adequate opportunity to have their Bills debated. In the past this assurance has always been honoured, and I repeat that I give a similar assurance on this occasion.

MR. TONKIN (Melville—Leader of the Opposition) [4.47 p.m.]: As the Deputy Premier has given the assurance that private members will have adequate opportunity afforded them to have the measures already on the notice paper debated, we have no objection to the motion.

I would point out there are several matters of considerable public interest already listed for consideration, and in giving an assurance that adequate opportunity will be afforded members to have their Bills debated after all other business has been dealt with, it is to be hoped that this will not mean they will be debated at 3 a.m. or 4 a.m. I hope "adequate opportunity" means at a reasonable hour, and that this is the intention of the Government when moving this motion.

Question put and passed.

CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Crommelin, and transmitted to the Council.

ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Further Report

Further report of Committee adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Court (Minister for Industrial Development), and returned to the Council with amendments.

PLANT DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 26th October.

MR. KELLY (Merredin-Yilgarn) [4.49 p.m.]: This small measure has been introduced as a result of some slight difficulty which apparently has arisen in connection with a baiting scheme and has caused some inconvenience to one shire council. I understand that because the Fruit Growers' Association operates the voluntary fruit-fly baiting scheme within the Shire of Perth a difficulty has arisen, in that from time to time correspondence which should go direct to the existing voluntary committee is directed to the Perth Shire Council. Finally such correspondence has to be referred back to the committee by the shire. It has been found there is no machinery in the Act to remedy this situation or to enable the name of the committee to be changed, so that the Shire of Perth will not receive a lot of correspondence which does not require attention by it.

The Bill contains a further advantage; that is, in having contiguous boundaries with other shire councils the Shire of Perth will be able to institute a joint scheme in co-operation with its neighbours. There are advantages in this set-up. The particular amendment in the Bill will enable a better set of circumstances to prevail, and this will be of benefit to the Shire of Perth.

Whilst on this subject I think it can be said that the voluntary fruit-fly baiting scheme has been a decided success, more particularly at the outset when the keenness of many of the committees was manifest in many areas. I think the results which the committees have achieved can be readily seen; and wherever these schemes have operated they have been successful. To my mind the fruit-fly baiting scheme has been very successful, mainly throughout the metropolitan area, in bringing under control many of the problems which had existed in regard to the extermination and control of fruit-fly. I support the Bill.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [4.52 p.m.]: Being an old advocate of fruit-fly control, I cannot let this opportunity pass without expressing my concern at the intention of the Government to move in the way proposed in the Bill before us, to bring the fruit-fly menace under control. This Bill illustrates the complications which exist under the present system. Only a few nights ago we allowed a local authority, rather than a committee, to take the responsibility of administering schemes such as this. I thought that was a move in the right direction, because, as with the health of individuals so with the health of fruit trees in a particular district, the responsibility should rest on the local authority.

The Government seems to be shilly-shallying in trying to cope with this menace by passing various Acts of Parliament or by appointing boards and committees to bring it under control. In my view, finally the responsibility for fruit-fly baiting and control rests with the elected representatives of the ratepayers of a district.

Over the weekend I had a conversation with some people in a town in the south of the State. They complained bitterly about the fruit-fly baiting scheme. I wish to inform the Minister what they told me: They said they had not seen so much fruit fly about until the baiting scheme came into operation, and that the fruit-fly baits seem to have attracted the fruit fly from the surrounding districts. I do not know whether that has resulted from a too effective type of fruit-fly bait being used.

This illustrates the need for a universal scheme of fruit-fly baiting. In these days when fogging machines are readily available, little difficulty should be experienced in dealing with this menace. This State made a successful attack on the Argentine ant, but the fruit fly has managed to survive our attempts to eradicate it. In the life cycle of the fruit fly, the larvae fall from the tree to the ground where they were previously eaten by the Argentine ant; but when we got rid of the Argentine ant we got rid of a natural predator of the fruit fly.

Mr. Nalder: The fruit fly was well entrenched in Western Australia before the Argentine ant arrived.

Mr. JAMIESON: I am aware of that. A backward step was taken by ridding the State of the Argentine ant without at the same time taking steps to rid it of the fruit fly.

Mr. Nalder: The Argentine ant was worse than the fruit-fly.

Mr. JAMIESON: Probably it was. The ant would probably climb up fruit trees and rid it of fruit fly. We are not tackling the fruit-fly menace in an effective manner. We seem to be setting up piecemeal committees and to be passing legis-

lation to enable one authority to join with another in implementing schemes, but these actions do not adequately deal with the situation. A great deal more money should be spent on fruit-fly eradication, and the electors should be told that here is a menace before us and the job of controlling it has to be done on a large scale. With all the new chemicals that are available these days, we have been successful in controlling many other pests and menaces, so surely we could use some of these chemicals effectively in fruit-fly baiting.

The provisions of the Bill will assist a little in controlling the fruit fly, but not to a great extent. The move to enable local authorities to co-operate with adjoining local authorities to implement schemes, and to have correspondence sent to the correct body, is justified. However, I think all local authorities should accept their responsibility for proceeding under their own schemes to get rid of the scourge that exists. The fruit-fly menace does not appear to have received sufficient attention.

Even though there is a fruit-fly baiting scheme in operation in my district, this year I have seen more fruit fly than ever before around the citrus trees, although at this time of the year there is no fruit on them. The fruit flies are flying around and are attracted by the baits which have been used. This seems to be a terrific year for them. We do not seem to be making much progress, despite the fruit-fly scheme which exists. Although countless numbers of them are killed, it seems that an equal number come from somewhere else to take their place.

My suggestion is that the Department of Agriculture should give more concentrated thought to eradicating the fruit fly by some means other than by allowing the local authorities and the committees set up under the Plant Diseases Act to deal with the problem. This is not a reasonable method of attack on the fruit fly. In the case of the Argentine ant the Government took control of the situation and moved effectively in eradicating it. The success of Western Australia in this direction was held up as an example all over the world, to show how effective can be a scheme of control if the authority concerned sets out to implement the scheme in the right way.

The Shell Oil Company made a feature film of the steps which had been taken in Western Australia. The commentary was dubbed in no fewer than 15 languages to show the peoples of the world what can be achieved in the eradication of the Argentine ant if the correct approach is adopted. In the case of the fruit fly a similar situation exists. In Western Australia we seem to have only the Mediterranean species of fruit fly, and we do not seem to have the Queensland fruit fly; therefore the job of eradicating it does not present as great a problem as it might otherwise do. The fruit fly seems to be contained in the south-west corner of the State, although it does appear in other districts. If we made a determined attack at this juncture we would have some chance of containing, controlling, or even eliminating it.

Research is being carried out in an endeavour to find ways of eliminating the fruit fly. I have read recently that sterilised male fruit flies are being used in other parts of the world in order to eradicate the menace. I do not know whether this method has been tried here. We certainly have not received any glowing reports from the Department of Agriculture to the effect that it has been successful, as it has been in other parts of the world. As far as I am aware this method of eradication is more applicable to the other type of fruit fly than to the Mediterranean fruit fly, which is the one prevalent in Western Australia.

More research seems to be carried out in the other States because the fruit fly has caused a considerable amount of damage in the fruit-growing districts along the Murray River. The life cycle of that fruit fly is different from that of the Mediterranean fruit fly, and as a consequence we would have to do our own research into methods of elimination. The sooner the department, or a section of it, makes an effort to eliminate the fruit fly, the better. This will be preferable to employing a few inspectors who occasionally prosecute someone for not having complied with the Act.

As a community we should be endeavouring to eliminate the source of the problem and rid ourselves completely of the fruit fly. I say again, that, as far as it goes, the Act probably helps a little; but it is only a drop in the ocean in comparison with the endeavour we should be making to eradicate the fruit fly from the State.

MR. MITCHELL (Stirling) [5.2 p.m.]: I would like to have a few words to say on this Bill, which is an attempt to improve the situation as far as voluntary baiting schemes are concerned. However, I have always been one who believes that with a pest such as this one, the cheapest way of dealing with it is to eradicate it rather than control it.

I think the first time I spoke in this House, I mentioned that in many countries of the world the eggs of the fruit fly were sterilised and then used quite successfully to eradicate the pest. It was said that this method was too costly for a State like Western Australia. I was interested to read recently that Southern Italy is dealing with the fruit fly by means of a radioactive substance and also the sterilisation of the eggs. I believe this treatment could be applied in Western Australia.

It is vital to the fruit-growing industry that we eliminate the fruit fly rather than

merely control it. The voluntary committees have done a very important job in controlling it, and in some districts they have actually eliminated it. However, as a whole we have not tackled the problem as we should. I believe more effort should be put into the work with a view to complete eradication so that we can assure the fruit buyers of the world that our fruit is free from any type of fruit fly. Until we are in a position to give this assurance, we are not getting the best from the money spent. I urge the Minister to ensure that his department tackles the problem on a basis of complete eradication instead of control.

MR. MOIR (Boulder-Eyre) [5.4 p.m.]: I would like to support the comments of the two previous speakers. We are certainly not doing enough to eliminate the fruit fly, and I have spoken in this strain on several occasions in this House. A good job is being carried out in certain areas. For instance, a compulsory fruit-fly baiting scheme has been in force for several years in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area. Prior to that, a voluntary scheme was in operation, the householders employing people to go around to do the baitings. That met with a certain amount of success, but not complete success because of the non-participants scattered around.

Because some people's properties had not been baited, they were breeding places for the fruit fly, and the properties which had been sprayed were being re-contaminated. Very few residents in the goldfields would not have a fruit tree of some sort in their garden. Some gardens contain many trees. I do not think there would be room for an extra fruit tree or grape vine on the whole of my quarter-acre block.

Norseman has been very successful with a scheme in its locality, and since a scheme was inaugurated at Esperance, it, too, has been successful.

It is true that a lot of infestation is caused as a result of people not knowing what fruit fly looks like. I have been to some homes and the occupants have informed me that their fruit has contained no fruit fly, but I have found the grubs in the fruit they have been eating. Yet they had told me the fruit was not contaminated.

While the problem is being dealt with piecemeal, those who are participating in the schemes, and paying for it, will go on doing so for many years because their districts are being reinfested all the time. I know that fruit for sale is brought to the goldfields from other areas and it is contaminated with fruit fly. Anyone who understands the breeding cycle of these flies knows perfectly well that if infested fruit is brought into a fruit-fly-free area, the fruit fly will multiply and breed. They can breed in all sorts of unsuspected places.

Many market gardens at Somerville, near Kalgoorlie, have high cactus plants growing around their perimeters. These are used as a windbreak. However, it was found recently that this plant was absolutely infested with fruit fly and was, in fact, acting as a host to it.

It is staggering to learn how prevalent is fruit fly in the metropolitan area. I have previously stated here that I have actually seen fruit fly walking all over the fruit in shops. I have purchased some of this fruit and it has had the grubs in it. Therefore the situation in the metropolitan area is very bad. These compulsory baiting schemes will not do any good while adjoining neighbourhoods do not participate.

An all-out drive should be made, not in one district, but in the whole of the State, in an endeavour to eradicate the pest. I have visited some areas where the trees are absolutely infested. The flies are there in their hundreds. Some people in the metropolitan area would rather buy their fruit than take it off their trees. As a result it rots, falls to the ground, and the fruit-fly grub naturally goes out of the fruit and into the ground, and so the breeding cycle is started all over again.

Until an all-embracing scheme is put into operation everywhere, we will be just playing around with the problem in a very lighthearted manner. If people are not prepared to participate in a baiting scheme, they should destroy their trees, in order that the participants in the scheme might be able to enjoy the fruit from their trees, quite happy in the knowledge that they are free from fruit-fly infestation.

Another matter I wish to mention is that when the compulsory scheme started operating in Kalgoorlie and Boulder the committee—which has always done a good job—held an annual meeting and presented a report to the number of people who attended. I think about 70 people attended, which, I think was rather good. The report and balance sheet were presented at that meeting, and everybody knew what was happening. However, we have not had such a report presented in latter years, and I think the Minister should inquire into this. The people have a right to know how their money is being spent. Of course, we can see the results which have been achieved.

Incidentally, I would like to say that when the fruit-fly baiting scheme commenced men were employed. However, of latter years women have been employed and the difference in the result obtained is remarkable. The women appear to be far more conscientious and seem to visit every property. I understand that has been the experience in other areas, too.

It is rather remarkable, but women seem to apply themselves better than the men and they realise that they must not miss any properties. As I have said, they are very conscientious.

I understand the names of the members of the committees are put forward by the various local authorities, and the Minister approves of those people. An annual report should be presented so that the people know the facts. The people concerned would not begrudge having to pay a little more because costs had risen if they knew where their money was being spent. They should not suddenly find out that they have to pay more than they paid in the previous year, without having an explanation.

The Minister will have to give serious consideration to this matter to see if the scheme should not be carried out on a widespread basis. There should be a determined attack made on the fruit fly similar to that carried out against the Argentine ant. That matter was mentioned by the member for Beeloo. We should not try to make a short job of what will take a long time under the present mode of operation. Even if more committees are appointed, we will still be plagued with the problem.

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [5.13 p.m.]: I am very much encouraged by the comments made by various members, and no doubt this interest lies not only with those who have already spoken, but with members generally. This matter has been discussed in the Chamber over a number of years and I believe that the public, generally, is becoming more conscious of the problem we have with fruit fly.

This amending legislation deals with the altering of the name of the fruit-fly baiting scheme and gives members the opportunity to make comments, as is the case when the Act is amended at various times. We are also given the opportunity to comment on this problem, which is a big one. I think I have mentioned before that perhaps it is not quite as easy as some members think to bring the whole of the State —or the whole of the metropolitan area— into the one scheme. There are not many country towns which have not got their own fruit-fly baiting schemes. Practically all of the bigger country towns, and most of the smaller ones, have agreed by vote to conduct schemes. Voluntary committees organise these schemes, and they do a remarkable job. I cannot speak too highly of the work which has been done by those committees.

In answer to the member for Boulder-Eyre, the local committee has the power to call a meeting of the people involved in the fruit-fly baiting scheme and they can, if they wish, publish the accounts of income and expenditure. The local committees can inform the public, generally, of the progress of their schemes. In almost every scheme progress has been made.

There is no getting away from the fact that the main problem exists in the metropolitan area, and I believe we will be able to face up to this in the not too distant future. I might say here that the department is having a very close look at the whole situation regarding the registration of orchards and the possibility of introducing some scheme so that the problem might be tackled on a face. I cannot say at the moment what we anticipate doing, because inquiries have not developed sufficiently to be able to indicate just what line of action we will take.

I can predict that the solution will be costly because a considerable number of personnel—as one would anticipate by looking at the set-up which exists in the metropolitan area where committees are operating—will be required. Quite a number of people are employed in regular spraying, and, as the member for Boulder-Eyre mentioned, the women employed in a number of the schemes are doing an exceptionally good job. The result of their work is very heartening indeed. I do not know what special qualifications they have, but their employment has proved a success. I know that quite a number of committees which have had difficulty in employing people to spray gardens regularly have turned their thoughts to the employment of women. As I have said, it has been a very successful change initiated by one or two committees. It has proved, without doubt, that women can carry out this work successfully.

Mr. Davies: Does the department supply the bait free or at a concessional rate?

Mr. NALDER: The bait is made available at cost, and the department helps with the cost of the equipment. Also, in the initial stages the Government gives some assistance to a committee to enable it to embark on its programme.

We are having a very close look at the whole system of the registration of backyard orchards to see whether some new system can be introduced which will be more effective than the present one. Again I say I am very grateful that so much interest has been shown in this problem. As I said earlier, it is not as easy as the member for Beeloo suggests to attack this problem in the same way as we tackled the Argentine ants. It is a different proposition. Even though we are not able to take the same action, the success achieved in regard to the Argentine ants encourages us to look closely at the situation to see whether or not we can evolve some scheme to lessen the time this curse will remain with the fruit-growing industry of Western Australia.

The member for Stirling mentioned the situation which has proved successful in other States. Schemes have proved successful in other parts of the world also. However, we have difficulties because of the far-flung nature of the problem. It exists

in various places. However, I wish to assure the honourable member that the department is looking very closely into this matter. Quite a deal of co-operation exists between the officers of the department in this State and those in other States and other parts of the world who are experimenting in this field. The result is that we have been able to come by the information quite freely and the whole matter is being looked at very closely in order to see whether or not schemes that have proved successful elsewhere can be introduced into Western Australia. I thank members for their interest in the Bill.

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.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture), and transmitted to the Council.

ORD RIVER DAM CATCHMENT AREA (STRAYING CATTLE) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 26th October.

MR. RHATIGAN (Kimberley) [5.24 p.m.]: Although this is a very small Bill, nevertheless it is an important one, not only to the Kimberley but also to the rest of the State of Western Australia. The soil eroded areas are now being brought back to their natural state by the Department of Agriculture and it is absolutely necessary to keep stock off the properties in question; that is, the Ord River Station and the Turner Station.

The lessees of these properties complain that the erosion took effect before they owned the properties, or acquired the leases, which was in 1916. This, of course, is debatable. I consider the Minister has given the company adequate time to remove all stragglers from the fenced-in or reclaimed areas. The termination period is the 1st January, 1969.

I agree with the Minister's remarks the other evening when he said I would quite realise how difficult it is to muster during the wet season. This is a fact. All stock make for the place where they were reared—or born, as it were. This applies to horses and cattle, and particularly to mules. Any member who has had experience with mules knows it has to be a very good fence to keep a mule out.

I am glad also to hear from the Minister that the owners or the lessees of these properties are co-operating with officers from the Department of Agriculture. I am sure the station managers will give all the support they possibly can. As the Minister has pointed out, the Crown Law Department has advised it is necessary to pass this legislation in order that there will be no loopholes or misunderstanding.

On the 9th September, 1965, the Minister for Lands tabled a schedule showing the owners and the lessees of these two stations, and it provided the following details:—

Ord River Station—913,497 acres.

Lessees—Ord River Pty. Ltd.

Absentee Holder—Lord Vestey, who resides in London.

Carrying capacity of the station—13,900 head of cattle.

Turner Station—843,846 acres.

Lessees—The Turner Grazing Co. Pty. Ltd.

Absentee Holder—Lord Vestey, who resides in London.

Number of cattle carried at this period—10,200 head of cattle.

I asked the Minister for Lands a question which appeared in *Hansard* No. 2 of 1965 at page 1568. This read as follows:—

(1) Has fencing been completed on the regeneration scheme on the soil-eroded areas of the pastoral leases held by Ord River Ltd. and the Turner Grazing Co. Ltd.?

(2) What was—

(a) the cost of fencing to the 30th June, 1965;

(b) the cost to the Government in salaries paid to departmental officers engaged on this project, and all other expenses incurred by the Government;

(c) the area of land involved, and when will the project be finished?

(3) Is it the intention of the Government to return this land to the present lessees and, if so, at what cost to them, and the total cost to the Government?

The Minister replied—

(1) Yes.

(2) (a) £110,000.

(b) Salaries and allowances £59,000.
Other £70,000.

(c) 1,200 square miles.
It has been estimated that a team of workers will need to be kept on the project for another 10 years at an annual cost of £30,000.

(3) Lessees have applied for renewal of leases, but the future long-term use of the area remains for negotiation.

I am under the impression that two-thirds of the fencing costs are to be met by the Government. I do not know whether there has been any alteration to this, and I would like the Minister to advise me

when he replies. I consider that two-thirds of the cost having to be met by the Government is a little high, seeing that the present lessees did not take the necessary action to prevent overstocking the properties and consequently have caused the soil erosion.

If soil erosion had been allowed to take place, the Ord River dam scheme would have experienced salination, and it is most important to avoid this whenever possible. I support the Bill and commend it to the House.

MR. KELLY (Merredin-Yilgarn) [5.31 p.m.]: This small Bill concerns land resumed by the Lands Department in April last and, as indicated by the previous speaker, it is part of the Ord River catchment area.

Mr. Nalder: Have you seen the area lately?

Mr. KELLY: It is 18 months or two years since I saw it. At that time I found considerable erosion had taken place and there was ample evidence that little care had been taken of the land for some time. I certainly would not subscribe to the thought that the present owners were not responsible for a great deal of that erosion which is in common with the erosion that has taken place on many other stations in the north-west. Such a policy has meant that large areas, irrespective of the land which is the subject of this Bill, have become almost irreparably eroded.

Mr. Nalder: Would you agree that uncontrolled movement of stock was a contributing factor?

Mr. KELLY: To some extent, but not wholly. Erosion is brought about principally by overstocking, and because ruts are deepened by large numbers of cattle constantly passing through the country until finally, the pad itself starts to run in wet weather. Following this it is not long before the tributaries which are used by stock which meet up with the stock using the main pad start to deepen also, and in these conditions the rate of erosion is increased.

Mr. Nalder: It is also because the pastures are eaten out.

Mr. KELLY: Of course that is the result of the overstocking which has been taking place in the north-west for many years. The policy of overstocking stations in the north-west dates back a long time and it is very difficult to control. The Minister would be aware of the large volume of work that has been done in an endeavour to regenerate much of that country, and he would also know of the experiments that were commenced some years ago to bring back into pasture several paddocks that were eaten out. Finally, he would also be aware of the success that has been achieved by the department.

I had the opportunity to inspect much of that country and, in fact, I have a series of photographic slides which show the vast improvement that has taken place, particularly on those stations where the ground was completely spelled for three years and even longer. The results achieved by the department were sufficient to gain the interest of many pastoralists and for them to adopt a similar method by installing their own machinery. As a result good progress is being made in the regeneration of that country which is, of course, at the same time, preventing further erosion.

I notice the Bill provides that stock have to be removed from this area by the 1st January, 1969. That is some time ahead. I wonder why the Bill is allowing such a lengthy period to this company, which has such a huge holding. I notice the member for Perth looking at me very hard, apparently because I have seen his name associated in some degree with this land. However, I am at a loss to understand why the closing date is fixed so far ahead, especially in view of the present condition of this area. The big cattle should be removed as soon as possible.

The member for Kimberley has mentioned the large areas of land available; some 900,000 acres in one case, and a large tract of land in another, and I would have thought there would be no need to retain this area of 3,500 square miles until the 1st January, 1969. Although this is only a small area in comparison with the other tracts of land available, the sooner the regeneration programme is set in motion the sooner we will reach the point of regenerating other areas, similar to this type of land, which are further removed from the watercourses.

So I would like the Minister to advise the House why it is necessary to allow such a lengthy period before the cattle are removed from this area. I have noticed from the Minister's remarks that he understood some leniency could be extended even beyond that date if this were warranted.

Mr. Nalder: By the Minister?

Mr. KELLY: Yes, by the Minister. My own feeling, in view of the circumstances I have enumerated, is that there need not be any reason for an extension beyond this date. However, an extension of time is apparently in the Minister's mind, and it is evident he is anticipating an application for an extension of time. I believe the area should be closed immediately, because it would not cause any hardship and it would enable regeneration to begin immediately.

Mr. Nalder: The area is fenced.

Mr. KELLY: Yes, but there is no need to grant further concessions in regard to it. I was under the impression that there are stock on that catchment area at present.

Mr. Nalder: Yes, there are some stock still there.

Mr. KELLY: If that is so, I cannot see the reason for any further delay. Although it is only a small area, it is the principle to be adopted that we have to keep in mind with a view to arresting the erosion not only in this catchment area, but also in other places. I also hold the belief that when this area again becomes completely grassed and brought back to a state similar to what it was originally, grazing of cattle should be strictly controlled. Unattended stock should not be allowed on these areas for any length of time. Control should be exercised in the true sense of the word to prevent the land from becoming eroded in the future and being allowed to deteriorate in the way it has in the past.

I support the Bill and I hope the people affected by this measure will, of their own volition, remove the stock from the area and give it a chance to recover.

MR. DAVIES (Victoria Park) [5.40 p.m.]: I am very inexperienced in matters which relate to the Kimberley, but when we were privileged to visit this area last year I was shocked to see the miles upon miles of arid land which in some cases looked to me rather like craters on the moon. Some of the areas did not contain a single tree, a blade of grass, or even so much as brush. I was so disturbed about this that I undertook some reasearch into the matter; and after talking to a previous Administrator of the Northern Territory (The Hon. F. J. S. Wise), and gleaning what information I was able to obtain from books, I discovered that much of this land was previously lush pasture land; that it carried a considerable number of cattle per acre, compared with what it carries now, and what it is likely to carry in the future.

When we visited Kununurra I was also impressed with the work being done at the Kimberley Research Station. I think I suggested on one occasion last year that the future of our northern areas was linked as much with agriculture as it was with mineral development. The total amount of wealth obtained from agriculture may not be as large as that won from mineral development, but when we consider the hundreds of thousands of acres of land that could be utilised profitably if there were sufficient pastures, and when we take into consideration what could be achieved by increased research being undertaken—similar to that being done by the Kimberley Research Station—it is obvious that this area could be converted into a garden on which cattle could be grazed.

This measure is obviously an attempt to further the work of the Department of Agriculture, but it seems to be a belated attempt in this direction. The member for Merredin-Yilgarn has just queried why we should have to wait till the 1st January, 1969, before the cattle are cleared from the area. From the Minister's second reading speech it will be apparent that this decision was taken in May, 1966. Even after that the company had the right to pick up stragglers during the whole of 1968. This will virtually mean that the principle will be extended till the 1st January, 1969. That is the date which has been written into the Bill.

After having read carefully through the Minister's second reading speech, I cannot see why such a period is necessary, though I would put this down to my inexperience and lack of knowledge of the subject. Perhaps the Minister will tell us the reason for this when he replies. I said that we were getting vast amounts of money from the mineral resources of the north, but the impression left with me was that the actual development and the sites being worked were very small when compared with the hundreds of thousands of acres of other land which are available and which could, apparently, be converted into good cattle land if proper attention were given to it.

I suggested last year that a certain amount of the wealth that was won from minerals could be earmarked specifically for agricultural research, thus enabling us to develop the north-west to the best of our ability. It is no good our relying on minerals alone, or on agriculture alone. I am sure the Minister will be the first to agree that the future of the entire State depends on diversification. If we could diversify our activities in these two important fields the future of the north-west would be assured.

It does seem to me that the amount of money being spent on agricultural research is certainly far from sufficient, particularly when we compare it with the vast sums we receive by way of royalties from the development of our mineral wealth in that part of the State.

I imagine that all this is tied up with the Grants Commission, and if we spend too much money in one direction we will probably jeopardise the grant we receive from Canberra. But I cannot imagine an adverse balance being applied if we utilised some of the money we are receiving to benefit not only Western Australia but the whole of the Commonwealth; and this would be the case if the money were used for agricultural research.

It was a great pity to see these huge barren areas, some of which were not capable of carrying even one head of cattle to the acre. There is obviously no short answer to the problem of regeneration, but I feel the matter is being taken too casually, and insufficient money is being spent in the direction I have indicated. Perhaps the Minister will be good enough to comment on my remarks, which may be born of inexperience in these matters. There does not seem to be sufficient agricultural activity in this direction.

MR. NALDER (Katanning—Minister for Agriculture) [5.46 p.m.]: There is a good deal of interest being displayed in the north at the moment. As the member for Victoria Park has said, the mineral development in the area has, for a long time, overshadowed agricultural production in the north-west. I do not think we can completely overlook the importance of agriculture. We in Western Australia have, of course, been existing mainly on agricultural production, and it is not our intention to overlook this production in the future. The remarks made by the member for Victoria Park should be given a great deal of thought, because I am sure members will agree—and this has been said in the House before, and repeated on a number of occasions over recent years—that when the population of the world increases, there will be a great demand for agricultural products. This is particularly evidenced by the desire of all the nations of the world, even the younger nations, to improve their living standards. This demand for agricultural products will be indefinite; it must increase.

Beef production is probably one of the surest and most reliable features of agricultural production. Its future is likely to be assured for many years to come. As we all know, of course, we get more meat from beef cattle than we do from any other animal. We know that this beef can be produced, even in the north, and it will be the duty of future Governments to look closely at this matter to ensure that we do not permit other production to overshadow cattle production.

I am convinced that there is a tremendous untouched potential in the north in connection with beef production. If we were able to harness the waters of some of the rivers in that area, I feel sure we would be able to conserve fodder. The damming of the rivers would also make irrigation possible. We cannot rule this out of our calculations.

Mr. Bickerton: You will have to talk to the Commonwealth before you achieve your desire.

Mr. NALDER: This would be possible if we could prove to the Commonwealth that we could grow fodder and conserve it by harnessing the waters of the rivers, and if we were able to intensify our research work in this direction.

Mr. Bickerton: They demand a lot of proof over there.

Mr. NALDER: We could convince the Commonwealth if we all talked long enough and loud enough. No rock is so hard that eventually an impression cannot be made upon it.

Mr. Bickerton: A few of the rocks over there are almost at the basalt stage.

Mr. NALDER: Several points have been raised. The member for Kimberley referred to the contribution made by the company in fencing the area. It was agreed that both the Government and the company would accept this responsibility.

This was done initially in the original planning of the regeneration of the north. When it was found that this programme was too slow, and that cattle had to be removed from the area, it was necessary to return to the company the amount of money it had contributed to the fencing programme. This is in the course of being repaid. I make it clear that the contribution made by the company for the erection of the fences is to be returned to it. This was an arrangement arrived at in the initial negotiations.

With the cost of the fencing being met by the Government it became necessary to introduce legislation to make it clear that no cattle should remain on the property. The Government had to look into various methods to arrive at one which would be fair and reasonable to the company.

Mr. Kelly: What is the total area involved? I thought you said 3,500 acres.

Mr. NALDER: It is more than that. The area must be up near the 1,000,000-acre mark.

Mr. Kelly: I was not referring to the total area of the station. I was referring to the area involved in this legislation.

Mr. NALDER: It is more than 300,000 acres.

Mr. Kelly: You said earlier it was 3,500 acres.

Mr. NALDER: I think the acreage is much more than that. I will obtain the information and make it available to the House.

Mr. Kelly: All I am interested in is the area under consideration.

Mr. NALDER: I will make the information available to the honourable member. Reference was made by the members for Merredin-Yilgarn and Victoria Park to the period that is prescribed in the Bill within which the company must remove all cattle from the area. We will be into the month of November by tomorrow, and the wet season in the north will start shortly. During the wet season it is impossible for stockmen to go into the area, and it will be March or April, 1968, before they will be able to do so.

The company will, therefore, have only six or seven months in which to remove all straggler cattle. It has been engaged in removing the cattle, and there are not too many left. I travelled over that area about two months ago, and found only isolated spots where cattle still remained. There were not too many of them. I am quite satisfied that every step has been taken to remove as many cattle as possible from the area.

The company has been given another six months, after the coming wet season has passed, to remove these stragglers. We have to be practical in determining the period, and we did not specify 12 months, because all activities cease during the wet season. As from the 1st January, 1969, all cattle left in the area will become the property of the State.

In another clause in the Bill the Minister is to be given the right to determine, from time to time, how cattle still remaining in the area are to be removed. I hope the Minister will not have to resort to making up his mind. I am of the opinion that the company will take the cattle away, and very few will be left after the 1st January, 1969. What cattle are left will be disposed of in the best way possible.

Members are aware that at present we are establishing a research station in the Fitzroy district, and any cattle we might round up in the Ord area could be taken to the Fitzroy area. The Government has been very fair with the company in respect of this agreement. The plan envisaged for carrying out the regeneration of the land will proceed with no interference.

Mr. Davies: How far advanced is the regeneration programme?

Mr. NALDER: Quite a large area has been regenerated. I will find out the exact acreage and pass on the information to the House. The work that has already been done and the results achieved have been most encouraging.

Mr. Sewell: That was evident last year when we made an inspection tour.

Mr. NALDER: We have experienced an excellent season, and during the last wet period we had rain well above the average. I emphasise that the results achieved are very encouraging. This indicates that the programme will succeed, although the time taken will be longer in some places than in others. The officers of my department and other departments concerned are firmly of the opinion that the programme will reduce very considerably the erosion which exists. I am sure it will be reduced as a result of the regrowth of natural pastures, the introduction of new pastures, and the reseeding of kapok bushes. The growth of these grasses and bushes will help to overcome —although maybe not altogether—the problem of land erosion in the north.

Before I conclude I would like to inform the members concerned that I will check up on the acreages which have been mentioned, and on the work done under the regeneration plan, and will make the information available to the House at a later stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. Mitchell) in the Chair; Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

Clause 3: Property in certain cattle to vest in Crown—

Mr. DURACK: I have been particularly interested in the problem with which this Bill seeks to deal, in the area of the State affected by it, and also in the legal method which is adopted to tackle the problem. When listening to the second reading speeches, I felt I could not add anything useful to the discussion on the problem itself. However, I do not feel I can let this clause pass without making one or two observations as to the method adopted to deal with it. I agree entirely with the clause as it stands. I also agree that when there is a special problem such as this, one has to take special measures to deal with it. It seems perfectly clear, when one considers the gravity of the problem and the nature of the country in which it exists, that a provision, whereby cattle that have not been mustered by their owner after a reasonable period of time should vest in the Crown, is desirable.

This provision will be a great inducement for owners to exercise their responsibility in the matter. Secondly, while the regeneration or revegetation programme is going on it is well justified that the measures contemplated by clause 3 should still apply in order to achieve the result desired, because cattle could stray onto the area and graze.

Nevertheless, I think it would be as well for this Chamber to realise that we are vesting property in cattle, which are owned by private persons, in the Crown without payment of any compensation. That would be a political and legal principle with which I could not agree except in the most extreme circumstances. I believe those circumstances apply in this case; but the wording of clause 3 is such that its provisions will apply for ever, unless they are amended at some future time by this Parliament. It is inevitable that at some future time Parliament will have to do something about them.

We all hope the results envisaged will occur as soon as possible and that this area will be capable of carrying stock. The Minister told us it is intended to give a special lease to graziers to stock the areas when regeneration is successful. So when this is achieved, and the area again becomes valuable grazing country, the provisions of this clause could not reasonably apply, because anybody who had stocked in the terms of this clause would have the ownership vested in the Minister. However, that might be putting too nice a legal point on the clause. If I were advis-

ing any prospective lessee in these circumstances, I would certainly want to have this clause amended.

However, the matter which concerns me more than that is that in the future, circumstances will inevitably arise when cattle from adjoining stations will stray onto this area. In the peculiar circumstances that exist, it is necessary that these people should be put on their guard and given the responsibility to see that this does not happen. Once the land is back under pasture, it would be quite unreasonable to apply such Draconian measures to owners of cattle on adjoining properties. It is possible for cattle to stray, because fences do break down; and in the area concerned it would be very difficult to keep an eye on one's fences.

I feel the time will come when a measure such as this will prove to be far too severe and I trust the Minister concerned will, in the future, keep a close eye on the somewhat Draconian provisions of this clause.

Mr. NALDER: I appreciate the comments of the member for Perth. Having known some of his relatives for many years, I am aware of his very great interest in this part of Western Australia. I might just add here that his relatives were responsible for a great service rendered to this part of the north and to other parts of Western Australia as well.

I would like to make it clear that this clause was not drafted without a great deal of thought and consideration. It was believed that we would be criticised if, in connection with the various methods which could be employed to remove the cattle from the holdings, we used certain words in this clause.

The company has the responsibility to remove its cattle and I am hoping—as I think every member is—that the Government will not have to take any steps whatever to rid any part of this resumed area of the menace of cattle stalking through the properties, as the member for Merredin-Yilgarn described earlier.

I indicated during the second reading debate that it would not be the desire of any Minister to be unreasonable. If special reasons could be advanced as to why cattle had got back onto the property, then an opportunity would be given for the company to remove them.

I do not think the provisions of this Bill will adversely affect anyone. It is the desire of the Government to co-operate with the company, as it has done in the past; and a great deal of co-operation has been extended to the Government in return. I hope that situation will continue.

With regard to stock being allowed back onto the property for grazing, this will be very strictly controlled. We certainly will not allow the situation to get out of hand, because we can all quickly realise the difficulties which would arise following overstocking in an area which has been denuded of all the natural growth.

Mr. Gayfer: Is there not still a clause which states that if the property cannot carry one beast to 20 acres, it will revert?

Mr. NALDER: No. That was part of the original legislation but this wipes out any previous agreement with the company. I hope I have fully explained the situation.

Clause put and passed.

Schedule put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Nalder (Minister for Agriculture), and transmitted to the Council.

SUPPLY BILL (No. 2)

Returned

Bill returned from the Council without amendment.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Council's Message

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Assembly.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

PETROLEUM (SUBMERGED LANDS) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 18th October.

MR. KELLY (Merredin-Yilgarn) [7.30 p.m.]: This Bill covers a very wide field of operations. At the commencement of my remarks I would say that the Minister's explanation was, in the main, couched in very understandable language. As a matter of fact, I think the Minister performed something of an endurance feat in so far as his notes consisted of 45 double-sized sheets—which was equivalent to 90 ordinary sheets of notes. The Bill itself contains 161 clauses, and in some respects would be regarded as rather frightening. I think the measure covers something like 147 pages which means that in size it is getting towards the proportions of the Local Government Act. I think the Minister did extremely well in being able to hang onto it for so long.

Mr. Bickerton: Almost as though he knew something about the subject!

Mr. KELLY: Yes. I did have some sympathy for the Minister when he was introducing the Bill, but I had a lot more sympathy for the rest of us

who had to listen to him—particularly as it was getting to the hour when we should have been knocking off for the day. Of course, we did not know how long the Minister intended to speak, or how long he intended to speak to the second Bill.

In the main, the measure follows legislation which already exists in a number of oil-producing countries, although the rate of royalty differs from that applicable in some parts of the world. However, I feel that the royalty provided for in this legislation should cover satisfactorily the situation in Australia when all factors are considered.

It can be claimed that offshore exploration for oil around the Australian coast is taking place on a very difficult coastline. Each State has varying interests connected with offshore drilling, and this has made it difficult for the six States and the Commonwealth to agree on this legislation. I understand it took four years to reach this stage and one could readily believe that, because three or four of the States have very little knowledge of the search for oil.

The search is carried out on the continental shelf and it would be very difficult to iron out matters which were at variance and which would be encountered. However, that seems to have been achieved in quite reasonable order.

Whilst there are a number of points on which I will touch as I go through the Bill, they will mainly be points on which I would like some explanation. The measure deals extensively with contingencies and I think we can be pretty sure sufficient provision has been made for machinery to handle those contingencies without a great deal—or a great possibility—of litigation being necessary.

The Bill projects a oneness of purpose inasmuch as it covers the Australian national interests combined with the outlook of the individual States. It is moulded on world experiences, and it is, I think, in harmony with the oil industry itself.

On reading through the Bill I came to the conclusion that it was an admixture of legal protection; necessary precaution; and a calculated gamble, because there is always a gamble in this type of venture; and it also bears a very optimistic outlook with regard to exploration know-how and experience which has been gained in other countries where offshore drilling has been prominent. The Bill also has a fairly close resemblance to many of the laws which apply to drilling operations already being undertaken on dry land in Western Australia.

It is universally agreed that offshore drilling presents a very distinct challenge to oil men throughout the world. It is a section of the industry in which costs can, and do, escalate very sharply. Also, recovery and handling difficulties are many and varied, and I notice that most of these contingencies have been taken into account in the Bill. In this instance circumstances render necessary a new look when dealing with this class of operation legislatively. This can well be said, because in combining the rights of the Commonwealth and the interests of the separate States much ground had to be covered to arrive at a satisfactory agreement. Of course, it is fully understood that rewards from this class of drilling can reach gigantic proportions.

On the other hand, if the company or companies that are investigating the incidence of oil offshore fail, their experience can be costly and disappointing. It can be agreed that the oil companies take the greater risk and naturally reap the greater percentage of reward.

In 1956 I was privileged to spend several days flying in a helicopter when I made a full and thorough examination of offshore operations in the Gulf of Mexico. I was shown every known method of offshore oil recovery and search, and all of the attendant operations that were needed in offshore drilling for a distance of 70 to 80 miles out to sea. Numerous types of rigs were used, and these differed from dual rigs to rigs associated with L.S.T. vessels. Various other methods had been adopted in carrying out this work.

I was very interested in one section which covered diagonal drilling. I observed this in both the Gulf of Mexico and at Long Beach, California. I mention this particularly, because there is no mention whatever of diagonal drilling in the Bill which is under discussion. This type of drilling has even been used by the Mines Department in Western Australia; not for the purpose of drilling for oil, but in an endeavour to prove gold reefs at depth, and in a diagonal sense. I know that a number of problems have been encountered in this regard, but I just wonder whether it was an oversight or whether the matter was not discussed at all in connection with this legislation.

Where contiguous leases are concerned, there is a distinct possibility that one company, although it is not allowed to drill closer than 1,000 feet to its boundary, might undertake diagonal drilling from 1,500 to 2,000 feet away from its boundary. In some cases, it could still make contact with the adjoining leases without any difficulty. At different times diagonal drilling has extended over very long distances and sometimes it is rather difficult to control the exact direction. I think there should be some mention in the Bill of the possibility of this work being carried out and the law that would govern an occurrence of that kind. It is understood, of course, that any oil company which drills closer than 1,000 feet from its own lease boundary is liable, and that it can be stopped. However, I do not know what check would be possible if the company was allowed to drill on a steep angle.

It could go beyond its own territory quite easily and perhaps enter another lease or license area which might have a greater potential than its own.

When this has occurred in other parts of the world, I think it is referred to as underlapping. There is quite a possibility of the boundaries being breached and a legal challenge would be a certainty.

The contents of this petroleum legislation would lead one to believe that the Government has been quite generous in its treatment of the oil companies. Undoubtedly, it has. On the other hand, if one delves further, one finds that the costs in carrying out offshore exploration are heavy, the job is hazardous, and most difficult to carry out, and finally the results are more unpredictable—if one could use that term—than the drilling for oil on the mainland. Therefore, it is only natural that the operating companies will seek from the Government assurances of firm policy and tenure of security of leases held. This does not mean that the Government is obliged to fall over backwards in being super-generous. In fact, there are indications in the Bill before the House that perhaps the Government has extended some leniency in certain directions where I consider it should not have been so lenient, but could have been a little more strict so that the State would benefit more than it will do under the present provisions.

Another outlook is that many encouraging factors have emerged in Western Australia over the years and, as a matter of fact, it is realised overseas that Australia presents a worth-while field of investigation for oil search. The new techniques and know-how have promoted a scientific background that Western Australia is fast gaining a reputation for possessing. I think it can be said that the companies are vying with one another to join the search cavalcade in Western Australia, whether it is on the mainland or offshore. This feature has been very noticeable in the past 12 to 18 months. Even as far back as nine or 10 years ago, the same circumstances prevailed and many companies were desirous of coming to Western Australia. I think they would have been prepared to come here on the State's terms, as has been proved over recent years.

Another important factor is that new territory for exploration is becoming scarce all over the world. To meet the demands for petroleum and associated products, companies are not going to lose a single potential, whatever country it appears in.

It is very refreshing to remember that Australia, and particularly Western Australia, has a good industrial record, and its reputation for reasonable employment conditions is freely acknowledged. These are the factors which should be very strong bargaining powers in regard to company agreements with Western Australia. We are in a vastly different position now from what we were in 1951 or 1952 when oil search was probably at its lowest ebb in Western Australia and when it was very difficult to get any foreign countries interested in oil search. Of course, the picture has entirely altered today and this country is sought after because of the experience that Wapet has had in Western Australia. That company's reward under this present legislation is no more than it should be, because of the great and sustained effort that it has put into Western Australia, and because of its tenacity in hanging onto oil search during eight or nine very disappointing years.

So taking all these factors into consideration, the State's bargaining power should not be overlooked or discounted and, wherever possible, a higher royalty should be the keynote of any negotiations made between the State and new companies operating either onshore or offshore in this State.

The Bill provides a simple two-stage system for offshore operations. In the first stage a permit will be issued to a company and in the second stage a license will be granted. The permit will cover all stages of operations and will include drilling. This is a much simpler system than has been achieved for onshore drilling operations over a period of time. A permit could cover 400 blocks, which represents roughly 10,000 square miles. This is a large area of ocean and should be sufficient to keep any company busy for some time.

A fee of $1,000 shall accompany each application for a permit. I ask the Minister to take particular note of the comments I am now about to make. For some unknown reason, if an application is refused the company making the application is to be refunded only $900. I am wondering how the Government can justify holding an application for a permit for two or three weeks—especially when there could be seven, eight, 10, or 20 applicants each lodging a fee of $1,000—and how it can justify its effrontery in taking $100 for each application refused. Surely it is not worth $100 to peruse each application!

Mr. May: The Government is very short of money.

Mr. KELLY: I know that; I also know it is having difficulty in financing the activities of the State. I do not know, however, how the Government can justify clipping $100 from the fee lodged by an applicant who has not been successful with his application for a permit.

Mr. Bickerton: An applicant for a mining lease has to pay a survey fee.

Mr. KELLY: Yes: but I do not think the payment of a survey fee is comparable in these circumstances, because the com-

pany, working on a grid system, makes out the application for a given area. The Government does not conduct any survey. A survey of the area will have been at the Government's disposal for a number of years and it will be there for all time, and therefore I do not think there should be any further outlay required by an applicant company just for the Government to say "Yes" or "No" to an application that has been made.

Still speaking of permits, I point out that at the end of the six-year period allowed for in the original permit, it is competent for a company to apply for a further five years' extension. If it does so apply it has to lodge another $1,000. Such a condition does not exhibit much confidence on the Government's part, because surely it is not a great matter merely to have the form stamped, or whatever procedure is necessary in Government circles.

At the end of the six-year period, when an application is made for a further extension of five years, the Bill further provides for the surrender of half the effective area held under permit, and the Government is entitled to half the permit area on each application being made for an extension of the period. It can be easily seen that if applications for extensions are made over a period of 35 to 40 years, and if the original area granted was 200 acres, it would not be long before the company would finish up with nothing. However, this seems to be the normal practice in other parts of the world, so I suppose we cannot take umbrage at that condition.

What strikes me as being rather odd is that nowhere in the Bill is there an obligation on a company at any stage to completely explore the area, nor does it have to extend its investigations to any great extent by the time it is necessary for it to apply for the permit to be extended for a further five years. I would have thought that the amount of work carried out by the company during the original period of its permit would have some bearing on whether the five-year extension would be approved.

If it is left to a company to do as much, or as little work as it wants to do under its permit, it could quite easily be that at the end of the first six-year period the area covered by the permit would disclose that not much work had been accomplished. I therefore consider we should seek some clause in the Bill which would cover such a circumstance.

Definitions comprise about seven-eighths of the Bill, but at this stage I wish to discuss the part which provides that everything done in the State is done under what is known as a designated authority. I am not too keen on this provision, because great authority is placed in the hands of one person. The Minister for Mines for the time being in each State is the man who is regarded as being the designated authority. There is no doubt that no matter what the activity might be, many circumstances arise and, when a decision is called for, several heads are far better than one.

I fully realise that in all probability the Minister for Mines would have at his fingertips a great deal more knowledge of the mining industry than would perhaps any other member of Parliament or of the Government, as a result of his having had to deal with many circumstances in that direction. It seems to me, however, that he would not at any time have had to deal with so many contingencies in the mining industry as would arise in the case of offshore drilling.

I refer to this, because right at the top of the appointment of the designated authority we find there is no statutory limitation on the number of permits which may be granted. We could reach a situation where a permit is issued for 10,000 square miles to company "A", while at the same time it would be quite competent for the Minister to grant one more permit, or half a dozen extra permits all covering areas of the same dimension. He is the only one who has any say in that regard.

Undoubtedly the Minister would take the matter to Cabinet—at least I should imagine he would—before making such an important decision. It does appear a bit loose, however, that before the permit for one area has completely expired a number of other permits can be granted. I feel there should be more rigid control over circumstances of this kind.

It is possible that the Minister might say that during the period Labor was in office we granted a large territory to Wapet. At that time, however, nobody wanted the land. An application was made for an area that had previously been held as a prospecting area, and we granted this. It was not until eight or 10 years later that other people began making inquiries for leases and, of course, they had to make do with what proved to be, to a great extent, second-class opportunities.

Here, however, we have a brand new situation where there are thousands of miles of coastline involved, and where no great difficulty would be entailed if even 50 companies operated in the area—if the Government was disposed to allow them to operate—and where one company, as a result of there being no statutory limitation on the number of permits that can be held, could be granted any number of permits by the designated authority.

That strikes me as being rather loose. A further clause in the Bill deals with the question of applications for permits. Again, such a permit covers an instance where a previous applicant has been re-

fused, or where a permit area is handed back to the Government for further allocation. It may be only a fortnight before the application is refused, or the applicant may not have held the area for very long, when the second person makes application, pays the $1,000 deposit—and you cannot tell me, Mr. Speaker, that there are survey fees involved in connection with this, because that would not hold water—and, if the permit is granted, the $1,000 remains in the Treasury; but if it is refused for a second time—and it may be the same person involved—the Government refunds only $900. This could go on *ad infinitum*, and could provide a very handy nest egg for the Treasurer, particularly if he kept in circulation a number of refusals.

I think this is red hot in one case if not in the other. Another factor which intrudes itself into the Bill is that the designated authority has no obligation whatever to supply reasons in justification of his refusal to grant a permit. In a matter as important as this, reasons should be stated as to why a person has been refused a permit. The designated authority has very wide and sweeping powers covering practically four-fifths of the Bill. The power possessed by the designated authority is very noticeable in the 20 clauses covering permits.

Although this has been agreed to by the six States and the Commonwealth, to my way of thinking it appears a little too open for a decision to be made which could possibly not be in the best interest of this State.

I now come to the question of licenses. After having held a permit for some time, the company, because there is an indication of oil—or if oil has been struck, or for some other reason—would want to convert a permit into a license and it would then get complete cover over the production of petroleum in every detail. That could be granted on the basis of 50 per cent. of the permit area held and there would again be a fee of $200.

It is little wonder that a separate Bill was called for to ratify this legislation, particularly as it relates to license fees, reserves, and so on. It is not surprising that a second enactment was necessary to cover all the fees mentioned in the Bill. I have not counted the number of times they are mentioned, but there are a lot.

A license can be granted for 21 years, with a 21-year extension at the discretion of the designated authority. The designated authority can refuse to grant a renewal of the license even though the company might have discovered oil on its permit holding; even though perhaps it had gone further and converted a holding into a license. It might finally have even produced oil, but it could still be refused a renewal of the license without any explanation being given by the designated authority. The company would have no redress whatever.

In connection with exploration and recovery, there is a requirement for the expenditure of an amount not less than that arrived at by a multiplication of $100,000 with the number of blocks in respect of which the license is in force. This is a little difficult to understand. I read the provision through a number of times, but was not able to fathom what it endeavours to do in this regard.

In addition to that obligation, in each subsequent year the programme of works has to be approved by the designated authority; and it is imperative that these works be carried out. I can understand that when an obligation is imposed on a license holder who wishes to carry out a given programme, it would be competent for the designated authority, on behalf of the Government, to require that certain other conditions be complied with. We reach the point where the designated authority might consider that certain other works should be put under way. In these circumstances he would have the power to direct the company to undertake such works, and if those works were not carried out—I can find no clear indication of the time limit—a fine of $2,000 could be imposed. This would be a very stringent condition to impose on a company, and perhaps it would have a harsh effect if the works directed by the designated authority were not practicable.

In the measure the royalty covering the first 21-year period is fixed at not less than 10 per cent. I am not quite sure whether it is 10 per cent. or 11 per cent., but I notice in the Bill it is 10 per cent. This 10 per cent. is the total which can be imposed on the product at the well-head. The Bill provides that the royalty cannot be fixed at higher than 12½ per cent.

Recently I heard some controversy over the fixing of the royalty at the rate I mentioned, and it was claimed in certain States that it was not sufficient. I do not go along with that idea, because the rate of 10 per cent. at the beginning and 12½ per cent. as the company gets into a better position is in keeping with the rest of the Western Australian legislation. We are applying that rate to the recovery of oil on land, so the rate provided in the Bill compares very favourably with the 10 per cent. mentioned in the original petroleum legislation.

It is interesting to note that when a production license is granted the permit area ceases to exist as such. By the time the license is granted, and the period applying to a second application for a further five years has elapsed, it is quite likely that a portion of the permit area will have reverted to the Government. The Bill covers that situation adequately.

I want to deal with the power of the designated authority to refuse the granting

of a permit area to an applicant. I am not quite happy with this provision, because in the case of applications for iron ore we find that some small people—by this I refer to perhaps a couple of persons applying, as partners, for an iron ore prospecting area—were fobbed off by the department for some time until a clearer pattern had been developed within the department. The original blocks applied for by the small people were fused into one large area. The bigger companies were granted considerable iron ore areas, but the smaller men, some of whom had prospected the iron ore deposits originally, were squeezed out. As instances like that could occur under the procedure adopted by the Mines Department over the years, particularly in respect of iron ore, it would probably be much more difficult for a person, unless he was very influential, to be granted a permit to search for offshore oil.

In reference to the royalty that has been determined for the first 21-year period of not less than 10 per cent. nor more than 12½ per cent., there is provision for changing the rate after the first 21-year period has elapsed. During the second 21-year period the royalty may be varied by Parliament. This is a good idea, but the position is not very clear, because we are given to understand that the provisions of this Bill cannot be amended or altered in any shape or form by any of the six States, or by the Commonwealth. We are told that no alteration or amendment to the regulations will be accepted by the Commonwealth. It seems that 10 per cent. to 12½ per cent. is to be the royalty initially, and Parliament is supposed to be authorised to vary the rate in the second 21-year period; but how do we reconcile this provision with the other parts of the legislation which state that not a single amendment will be accepted?

Mr. Bovell: I think an amendment will be accepted by agreement with the Commonwealth.

Mr. KELLY: The position is not clear, and there is no statement to that effect. If Parliament in its wisdom decides to leave the royalty at 10 per cent. then there is no need for an alteration and none will be made. An unusual provision in the Bill will exempt the transferee of a permit—whether it be a production license or a pipeline license—from the payment of stamp duty under the Stamp Act, 1921. I wonder how it is possible for a transferee to transfer a license, a permit, a pipeline license, or anything else, and skip paying stamp duty when every other industry has to pay it—and the amount could be very considerable.

Mr. Bovell: He is paying other fees.

Mr. KELLY: Why should the agriculturist and many other people have to pay stamp duty in regard to what is sold at any time? If one wants to sell a motorcar one has to pay stamp duty or a transfer fee. So it seems rather unusual for this provision to be found in this Bill. The amounts involved could run into large sums of money; there is no doubt about that. The transference of a pipeline from one company to another could be the subject of a considerable sum of money. Why the company should be exempt from stamp duty is something that I do not know.

Mr. Bovell: I think there is some reason for the reduction of the license fee. It may be the reason you mentioned earlier. You could not see why the $1,000 should be reduced to $900. I should imagine it would be to cover the various expenses of the operations. Therefore this may be included. That is my interpretation, but it may be wrong.

Mr. KELLY: I feel inclined to think the Minister is wrong. I wish to make one or two references to the agreement. I have already referred to the fact that the State is not competent to effect any amendment to the Bill or to the agreement, because that would not be acceptable to the Commonwealth or the other States. Why that is so, I do not know, because each of the States has a separate problem on its hands, and it may be necessary to alter the measure in some way or other. Even though there may be some urgency in the matter, it would be necessary for all of the six States to get together and agree that the amendment was necessary; and, finally, the Commonwealth would have to place its seal of acceptance on it, too. It seems a cumbersome way of getting around a matter of this kind. I wonder whether the Minister has a note in this connection so that he could give us some information.

Another section of this agreement appears to give the Commonwealth Government very far-reaching authority. Mention is made of its being incumbent upon the States to refer to the authority all matters having connection with permit licenses, pipeline licenses, access authority, or special prospecting authority under a common mining code, that relates to the adjacent area that a State granted, renewed, or varied. The States will apparently be deprived of freedom of action in regard to these matters; and if the States are going to be restricted to that extent they will have a very difficult task ahead of them when it comes to varying to any extent some of the conditions that do not apply to them or for which no provision has been made for action. In that case the Commonwealth and three or four other States, or one State, or the Commonwealth, could veto what the other States were attempting to accomplish.

It looks as though there is actually no room for negotiation unless that negotiation can be held in a perfectly amicable spirit and all the States and the Commonwealth agree to whatever is being sought.

With reference to the sharing of royalties between the Commonwealth and the

States, and assuming that 10 per cent. is the royalty that is decided upon and that prevails, out of the 10 per cent. the Commonwealth Government is to receive four-tenths. In other words, 40 per cent. of the entire amount collected is to be kept by the Commonwealth.

Mr. Bovell: Four-tenths will go to the Commonwealth and six-tenths to the States.

Mr. KELLY: That is correct. It seems to me the States will be carrying the brunt of the exercise of exploration, because they will have to provide lots of amenities; they will have the companies at their doorstep the whole of the time; and they will have to effect improvements to roads, and other things. The Commonwealth Government will not be called upon to the same extent. I would have thought the States would have bargained better in regard to the allocation of the royalty that has been agreed to.

The agreement appears to disclose that the Commonwealth has a very minor part to play in regard to actual expenditure to cover the contingencies of offshore oil search in the various States. As I see it, no amendments can be made to the Bill or the agreement unless there is total agreement between all of the signatories. Therefore, there is nothing we can do about it at this stage; and I trust that the experience of the various States will be sufficient and convincing enough for them to stick out for a better share than four-tenths when discussions on this measure again take place.

To some extent, I have mentioned the condition that applies in another clause; that is, any amendment to the agreement must be acceptable to all States and the Commonwealth. As I have stated, I am not quite happy about that because I think circumstances could arise that would necessitate a quick decision without which an oil search could be adversely affected. Because of that, I feel it is quite wrong that no action can be taken without reference to all of the other States and the Commonwealth.

I think that a State with a problem should be in a position to overcome it temporarily by, perhaps, granting a company some concession which the State concerned would find far easier to control than would the Commonwealth authority. As a matter of fact the variation of conditions between the States would make it almost impossible for another State to appreciate the difficulty confronting the State concerned. Perhaps the Minister would be able to give us some information on that point at the appropriate time.

I think that covers the points I wished to raise on this Bill. I realise that a terrific amount of work went into the compilation of the final product and that the various Governments were faced with a tremendous amount of new matter. Because of that a lot of discussion would have ensued. As a matter of fact I feel a great deal of credit is due to those responsible for making the final agreement possible, especially when we realise that so many Governments and people were interested in that final decision. I have no amendments in mind, and support the second reading.

MR. MOIR (Boulder-Eyre) [8.33 p.m.]: The member for Merredin-Yilgarn has very ably covered the salient points in this legislation and therefore there is no need for me to say very much about the matters he has raised, except that, in the main, I agree with him.

This measure is to legalise the permits and titles involved in offshore drilling for oil and gas, and has been drawn up as a result of an agreement between the Commonwealth and all the State Governments. Here let me say that I realise a lot of thought was necessary before the agreement was arrived at. I feel that in the process the Parliament of this State and, indeed, the Parliaments of the other States as well, must have been placed in a rather invidious position because they have had to present a Bill which must be passed, no matter what criticism of its provisions might be forthcoming. In my opinion there is room for legitimate criticism of some of the contents of the measure.

The Bill contains many provisions which require a lot of study, and it would have been helpful if the Minister had outlined some of the legislation which operates in other countries. We are entirely in the dark concerning similar legislation adopted elsewhere in the world.

This type of exploration for oil and gas is not new, as drilling commenced in a small way in 1923 in Venezuela; and, in 1927, the first producing well was drilled off the coast of Louisiana in the Gulf of Mexico. Since that time this sort of exploration has extended to many other countries, and a tremendous amount of offshore drilling is engaged in in various parts off the coast of America.

Here let me say that a lot of conflict has occurred between the States in America and the American Federal Government over the legal implications in oil search and recovery. I understand that some cases have been before the courts for years in America and two States at least have cases at present before the Federal court.

This type of drilling is taking place in some important areas in the world; notably, in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Japan, the South China Sea, and the North Sea. Immense discoveries of oil and gas have been made and have greatly benefited the countries bordering those areas. As recently as Sunday, when in the company of some visitors from the United Kingdom Parliament, I was informed that Britain is already making use of the gas supplies which have been found in the North Sea. I was rather surprised to learn that at one point on the east coast of

England, no fewer than 14 pipelines distribute gas to some of the adjacent large cities; and this gas is now being used.

These discoveries have been comparatively recent and their importance can be gauged by the fact that the product has been harnessed so quickly and is now being used.

Another very large offshore producing country is Saudi Arabia; and, more recently, some very important discoveries have been made off the coast of Victoria. Just how important these discoveries are, we do not know at present because exploration is still in progress. It appears that almost every well drilled in the Gippsland basin has produced oil and gas. I do not know whether these wells have been drilled in the same type of structure or in different types of structure. However, the discoveries are of immense importance to the State of Victoria, and probably to the adjacent States, as well as to the Commonwealth.

It was, no doubt, as a result of those comparatively recent discoveries that the need for this legislation was brought to the notice of the Commonwealth and all the State Governments. We, in this State, have not yet experienced any offshore discoveries. Discoveries have been made on land and at Barrow Island; but great interest has been shown in the areas off our coast.

I was surprised to read in a country newspaper, during the week-end, that just a few days ago two oil survey ships were in Esperance Harbour. They put in for a few days after exploring the southern part of our coast. One of the officials said they were carrying out a survey on behalf of a particular company, and that a sister ship was working on the north coast of Western Australia. So it appears that the survey is fairly widespread.

I do hope that when these permit areas are granted, activity in the search for oil and gas will be maintained and we will not have the spectacle of large areas being tied up for a number of years with a rather haphazard search going on. In a way, I feel there was justification for letting out areas years ago, to companies for the carrying out of the search for oil in Western Australia. However, on the other hand, I believe that some companies got larger areas than they were prepared to handle in a really active search.

Here, let me say, that over the years I have heard many comments about the rather lackadaisical search—at least it appears so to the public—which is being undertaken in some areas. In this respect I would mention the Gingin area where we know quite a reasonable supply of gas was found; but there does not seem to have been much activity since the discovery. It almost appears as though we are not very concerned about the location of available gas supplies, and the using of those supplies. While oil discoveries are very important indeed, large gas discoveries close to cities which can use that gas are also very important. Such discoveries must have a great effect on the economy of a State and must provide a cheap source of power.

We know that the search in offshore areas is far more costly than the search which takes place on land. Floating drilling rigs are very costly to build and very costly to hire and maintain. I was interested to read recently that we have been able to build one of these rigs at Whyalla, in South Australia, and it will be in use very shortly. It is heartening to think our industries have advanced sufficiently to be able to build this complicated type of floating drilling rig. I understand the rigs are very scarce throughout the world and are greatly sought after, and that there are about four drilling rigs already working in Australian waters.

It might well be found, in practice, that this legislation will require amending but, as pointed out by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, we will be faced with almost insuperable difficulties. The other States would have to be canvassed and their agreement obtained—together with that of the Commonwealth—before amendments could be made. I do not doubt that if serious handicaps are encountered a way will be found to solve the problems.

I do think the Commonwealth Government has come out of this arrangement —or agreement—very well indeed. I notice the States are entitled to six-tenths of the royalty and the Commonwealth to four-tenths. To put it another way, one could say that the States are entitled to a little over half of the royalty and the Commonwealth is entitled to a little under half. However, I suppose the Commonwealth is in a fairly strong bargaining position considering that the continental shelf comes under its jurisdiction.

It is interesting to know that the people interested in the search for oil favour offshore areas. They consider there is more stability in the sediment which has been laid down over many long years and which accumulates oil. That sediment is not subject to the same disturbance as is the case with land masses. With land deposits disturbances have usually taken place and the oil structures destroyed. In many cases the oil and gas have been dissipated as a result of those disturbances.

It appears that oil-bearing structures under the sea are not subject to this type of movement and, therefore, it is considered they are more stable. As a result, in the favoured localities there is more chance of finding oil structures still containing oil and gas.

I do not intend to labour this Bill, because it would not matter how much one criticised it or how much one disliked

certain aspects of it, it would have no effect because the Bill, as presented, has been agreed to by the various State Ministers. The Government, of course, has given an undertaking that the Bill will be passed.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [8.49 p.m.]: I am interested in this legislation only because of the complications with which we might be faced—which will be far greater than those of any other State in the Commonwealth—because of international territorial claims. By looking at the agreement it will be noted that certain lines apply to the area of jurisdiction. The Bill itself, as other members have indicated, is principally a means of determining what shall apply when oil search rights are granted within the various territorial limitations set out in the agreement between each of the several States and the Commonwealth.

However, several features of the boundaries rather intrigue me, and I would like some explanation from the Minister. First of all I refer to article six which is mentioned in one of the schedules. This article is concerned with the United Nations convention, the continental shelf, and the States that are parties to the convention, etc. In the second paragraph of article six, on page 144, it says—

> 2. Where the same continental shelf is adjacent to the territories of two adjacent States, the boundary of the continental shelf shall be determined by agreement between them. In the absence of agreement, and unless another boundary line is justified by special circumstances, the boundary shall be determined by application of the principle of equidistance from the nearest points of the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea of each State is measured.

When one looks at the agreement which was tabled by the Minister, and examines the situation, one will find that the territorial limitations associated with Western Australia go far closer to the Indonesian Republic than they do to Australia. I would like the Minister to explain whether Indonesia is a party to this agreement.

Mr. Bovell: Not to my knowledge.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Minister's interjection further complicates the situation, because an oil company could be in a rather peculiar position. Demands could be made by the Indonesian Republic for it to undertake certain responsibility; and, under this agreement, demands could be made by the legislation of this State for it to undertake certain responsibilities. Indeed, we could be involved in an international problem in connection with this legislation if we are not clear where we are going. No other State is affected in this way.

It is true that Papua is fairly close to Queensland, but of course in that case Commonwealth administration would have the final determination, for the present at least, and probably for some considerable time. Accordingly there would be no worries. Indeed it looks rather as if an equidistant proposal has been arrived at in respect of most of that territory, as is the case with the Northern Territory. However, in the case of Timor, it would appear as if Australia has made a line of demarcation, or a line of boundary, which is very close to the Indonesian Republic and which could cause some concern at a later date.

It is noticeable, too, that whilst the Commonwealth left a section in the very far north-west of this portion for the State to administer, it excluded a triangular portion bounded by an imaginary line drawn from latitude 12 degrees 24 minutes south and longitude 121 degrees 24 minutes east; to latitude 10 degrees 21 minutes 30 seconds south and longitude 126 degrees 10 minutes 30 seconds east; to latitude 13 degrees 19 minutes 30 seconds south and longitude 124 degrees 27 minutes 45 seconds east; and then back to the commencing point. I would like an explanation as to why this area, which is generally referred to as the Ashmore Islands, has been excluded and doubtlessly filched, acquired, or taken by the Commonwealth Government.

It is interesting to note that the Commonwealth seems to have grabbed this piece. Doubtless it has prospects. I think the Burma Oil Exploration Company is presently drilling in the Ashmore Islands and the Ashmore reef area. Not long ago there was a suggestion of an oil strike in this territory. It does seem to be excluded from our jurisdiction, and consequently the State of Western Australia will be excluded from receiving any royalties that may accrue from this section. If we have the right to approach the Indonesian Republic to a point in the far north which is very close to that country, I feel certain that this other section also should be under the jurisdiction of the State of Western Australia.

On the other side of the continent of Australia, it is noticeable that Tasmania has jurisdiction to Macquarrie Island which is, of course, far closer to New Zealand than it is to Tasmania. In fact, if Macquarrie Island is maintained at all, I think it is maintained by Commonwealth Government departments which have various weather stations on the island. For the purpose of administration, to the best of my knowledge, Tasmania has very little control over this area. Nevertheless, by using the scale, it would appear that Macquarrie Island is some 1,000 to 1,500 miles from the nearest other point which is under Tasmanian jurisdiction. This action would seem to be contrary to the procedure which has been adopted in the north-west section which, on the map, is diagonally opposite the area I have just mentioned.

I am sure members of the House would be interested to have this point made clear by the Minister. Why do these conditions apply? Why has Tasmania's area been extended in the one instance to cover an area which is normally considered to be the Commonwealth's prerogative, that is, the Macquarrie Island area? On the other hand, why has Western Australia been excluded from an area, such as the Ashmore Island area, which has such distinct prospects? The Minister may be able to tell us something about this matter. It is clearly defined in the second schedule to the Bill that this portion is excluded. As I have mentioned, it is a triangular section. Doubtless now it is in that section over which the Commonwealth will have complete jurisdiction.

In the main, the Bill is one of authority, and indicates and designates what shall apply in respect of such oil search. Ultimately it indicates what will occur if oil or gas is found in the area. To that extent, the Commonwealth and the States are justified in bringing down this form of legislation.

I agree with other members who have spoken and who have said that such a large piece of legislation obviously will need to be amended before very long if anything comes of offshore exploration. However, in the meantime it is a good basis on which to work—at least, it is some basis. Doubtless as experience proves certain points to be wrong, various amendments will have to be agreed to. It may be necessary for individual States to agree to amendments to suit the peculiar circumstances, such as those I have just outlined in connection with Indonesia. For example amendments would have to be made in this State if Indonesia suddenly decided it wanted royalties from the same oil exploration from which we were receiving royalties. Alternatively, amendments will have to suit all the States that are parties to the agreement. If the points I have mentioned can be effectively explained by the Minister, it would appear that the other provisions to cover the agreement are not too bad.

It would seem to be rather sketchy if the Commonwealth has made a determination without the prior approval of the Indonesian Republic, which has been anything but friendly in the past. As you would know, Mr. Speaker, that country has been in the habit of interfering in some of the industrial undertakings in Western Australia. In recent times it has been in the habit of delaying some of the iron ore cargo ships which have run rather close to its territorial waters.

What that country would do if a major oil strike were made in the area, I do not know. The Minister may be able to indicate some reason why Western Australia seems to have been treated rather differently from any of the other States of the Commonwealth when these various areas were drawn up prior to the agreement being entered into.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse—Minister for Lands) [8.59 p.m.]: First of all, I would like to commend the member for Merredin-Yilgarn for the study he has made of the legislation. It is not easy to comprehend, because it is so voluminous. As a former Minister for Mines, of course the honourable member has had the benefit of an overseas visit. I think he was Minister for Mines when the first oil strike was made in Western Australia. The Government of the day arranged for him to visit the United States to observe certain operations in that country, and he also visited other parts of the world, so he is fortunate in having some first-hand knowledge of this matter. I do not have that knowledge and I am handicapped accordingly.

As the member for Merredin-Yilgarn has said, the negotiations that led to the drafting of this Bill have been proceeding for a number of years and were entered into by the Minister for Mines and the Attorney-General of each State, and the representatives of the Commonwealth Government. As I do not hold the portfolio of Mines, I was not present at any of the discussions that took place, but it has been necessary for me to represent the Minister for Mines in this Chamber, because the Bill required a Message and therefore could not be introduced in another place.

I freely admit, therefore, when compared with the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, I am working under a handicap in discussing the Bill before the House, because he has had previous experience as a Minister for Mines and of offshore oil drilling operations. As I have stated, I was not present at the negotiations leading to the drafting of the Bill, and the information relating to the Bill has only been conveyed to me. I am now conveying it to the House in turn. However, I want to express my thanks for the generous approach that has been made to this measure by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn.

The Bill is an undertaking of great magnitude. I circulated among members some copies of the official agreement, on which will be seen the following:—

For the Government of the Commonwealth of Australia

Harold Holt
Prime Minister

For the Government of the State of New South Wales

R. W. Askin
Premier

For the Government of the State of Victoria

Henry Bolte
Premier

For the Government of the State of Queensland

Frank Nicklin
Premier

For the Government of the State of South Australia

Don Dunstan
Premier

For the Government of the State of Western Australia

David Brand
Premier

For the Government of the State of Tasmania

R. Fagan
Acting Premier

From those signatories it will be seen it was not an easy agreement to negotiate. I might mention that among the States I have just listed there are Governments of different complexions. For all Governments of the Commonwealth, including the Commonwealth Government itself, to have at last reached agreement is something of which one can be proud.

Criticism of the Bill has been made by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, the member for Boulder-Eyre, and the member for Beeloo, but in order to reach mutual understanding no doubt it was necessary for some States to give way in some directions and for the Commonwealth Government to give way in other directions. Reference was made to the sharing of royalties and this is covered by the agreement. As stated by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn, the Commonwealth receives a four-tenth's share of the royalties and each State six-tenths. Clause 19—sharing of royalties—reads as follows:—

> After the coming into force of the Common Mining Code in relation to the adjacent area of a State, royalties received in respect of petroleum produced from that adjacent area shall, subject to subclause (2) of this clause, be shared as follows—
>
> (a) as to so much as is royalty, not being over-ride royalty, payable at a rate that does not exceed ten per centum of the value at the well-head of the petroleum in respect of which royalty is payable—four-tenths shall be allocated to the Commonwealth and the remaining six-tenths shall be allocated to the State; and
>
> (b) any royalty consisting of over-ride royalty in addition to the royalty referred to in paragraph (a) of this subclause shall be allocated to the State.

After reading that clause I would say the States had to give way to a degree. Comments have been made, of course, that the States are the major operators in this exercise and therefore should receive the greater share of the royalties. In fact they do, but whether the remuneration paid to them is sufficient is a matter of opinion. Evidently, however, it was necessary to have a unanimous decision reached on the agreement and there is not much we can do other than to accept or reject it. If we reject any of these provisions, of course, it will mean that negotiations will have to be recommenced.

The member for Merredin-Yilgarn raised the question of diagonal drilling and pointed out that no mention of it was made in the Bill as far as he could find. To date this has not been brought to my notice and I will certainly draw the attention of the Minister for Mines to the comments of the honourable member. I can appreciate the problem that could arise, especially in regard to contiguous leases. One company could be drilling under water and poaching on the seabed on the lease of another company.

It was also stated by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn that the Governments appeared to be generous to the oil companies. I think the royalties are reasonable, and the fees payable by the companies for permit areas and to conduct exploration for oil are considerable. Here again, the honourable member referred to the fee of $1,000 and that if the company did not proceed with the project it had only $900 returned to it from its application fee of $1,000. I have no explanation to make in regard to that other than to say that the expenses incurred would have to be covered and it would be logical to expect that the applicants should not have these services made available to them unless sufficient charge were made to cover the overhead expenses and the costs in which each State would be involved.

Stamp duty was also referred to, and in answer to this I can only say that because of the combined Commonwealth and State operations, and perhaps because of stamp duty being a separate matter for each State, it was decided not to include a provision covering stamp duty. This is only my opinion, and perhaps the amount deducted from the original application fee may have been fixed to cover such contingencies.

The member for Merredin-Yilgarn pointed out that the actual territory throughout the world suitable for the exploration of oil is becoming less and less and therefore we should be mindful of our responsibility, because the State has a great opportunity to bargain when entering into negotiations with any company drilling for oil.

The honourable member mentioned that there was no obligation on the company to complete operations, and he went on to mention the authority given to the designated authority. The designated authority, of course, is the Minister for Mines in each State, and the equivalent

Minister in the Commonwealth. He is more or less all-powerful. I think clause 58 of the Bill empowers the designated authority to issue directions regarding the recovery of petroleum. The power vested in the designated authority enables him to ensure that the companies concerned carry out their obligations. In the absence of their doing so, the designated authority will take the appropriate action.

The honourable member also made reference to the variation in the agreement. Clause 25 of the agreement states—

> This Agreement shall not be capable of being varied or revoked or of being determined by any Government except by agreement between all of the Governments for the time being parties thereto.

This of course means that any variation must be agreed to by the seven Governments concerned. How this can be overcome, I do not know. In my opinion it would not be right for a State Government, or the Commonwealth Government, to vary an agreement by passing legislation only within its own Parliament. I do not know whether it would be true democracy for a majority of the States to force their will on any one State. Having come to a conclusion on the basis of agreement, I think the only feasible way for any alteration to be made is for the Governments concerned to come together with a view to obtaining a unanimous decision, so that they can return to their own Parliaments and adjust whatever matter they consider needs adjustment. I can think of no other satisfactory way to handle this. If we accepted the view of the majority of the States it would mean their forcing their will on those States which did not wish to comply.

Mr. Kelly: I think it would be in the case of an emergency arising. It seems a rather cumbersome method.

Mr. BOVELL: I cannot offer an alternative. I appreciate the fact that the honourable member has made some very helpful suggestions, and if he can make a helpful suggestion here I know it will be conveyed to the Ministers when they meet —and they will meet from time to time— in regard to the problems that will arise.

The member for Merredin-Yilgarn also mentioned the fact that the designated authority had no obligation to give reasons for any action that might be taken. That does appear to be somewhat arbitrary, but I daresay a Minister in a responsible Government must be given authority to carry out the reasonable processes in regard to any legislation which comes within his jurisdiction.

Both the member for Merredin-Yilgarn and the member for Beeloo—in another way—referred to the circumstances of our obligations with other countries in relation to the continental shelf. The only information I can convey to the House is that clause 124 of the Bill ensures Australia's obligations under the convention and refers, in particular, to article 5 which is at the end of the Bill.

As far as I am aware, all the international obligations under this legislation have been incorporated in the Bill. At this stage I cannot give any clear explanation of the areas that have been defined near Indonesia and around Tasmania, but I will refer to the Minister for Mines the comments made by the member for Beeloo and will ascertain, if possible, the reasons why these areas have been so defined.

I agree it is necessary to ensure that we do not infringe on the rights of other countries, but I understand that the various Governments have made a careful examination of all these matters, and I cannot see that any infringement will occur because of the very lengthy research to which this legislation has been subjected over the years.

The member for Boulder-Eyre referred to lawsuits and litigation in other countries. In my second reading speech I referred to the problems which confronted other coutries in connection with this legislation, and I did say that Australia had made a study of the problems in other countries where there are offshore oil operations; and this legislation was drafted with the benefit of the knowledge that Australia had gained of the problems that confronted other countries.

There is no doubt that the legislation will have to be reviewed from time to time, and although it will require the unanimous consent of the six State Governments, and of the Commonwealth Government, I have no doubt that because of the agreement that has been reached on this occasion we will find some solution to the problems which must arise from time to time.

The continental shelf was referred to quite often in my second reading speech, and the member for Beeloo also made reference to it. I cannot see that the Commonwealth and the States would mark out areas which they were not entitled to mark out under international law. However, the matter will be examined and the comments made by members during the debate will be made available to the Minister for Mines for consideration.

I have covered most of the major points which were raised by the three members who spoke on the second reading. I would again express my appreciation to the House and to the members who have studied the provisions of the Bill for the attention they have given to it. My second reading speech occupied almost two hours because it was necessary to convey the contents of the Bill in detail to avoid a lot of questioning or argument, and to give the details relating to any points that might be raised. It is now 10 days since

I introduced the Bill, and members have had a reasonable opportunity to study all of its provisions. I do appreciate the attention that has been given by members to this measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

The Deputy Chairman of Committees (Mr. Crommelin) in the Chair; Mr. Bovell (Minister for Lands) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 23 put and passed.

Mr. Jamieson called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Clauses 24 to 161 put and passed.

First schedule put and passed.

Second schedule—

Mr. JAMIESON: As this is the schedule which defines the area of jurisdiction, I would again like to raise the matter of international litigation. If we as a State grant the right of search and usage of certain areas within these defined limits, and subsequently it is found this is outside our jurisdiction, who would be responsible at law for damages—the State or the Commonwealth?

I think Western Australia is the only State which would be affected because the other States are far removed from any foreign area. The Commonwealth itself is the only other Government which could be affected, because of the Northern Territory. It is true that part III—"Mining for Petroleum"—states that the Commonwealth Government will consider any matter referred to it, and one of the points included is external affairs.

However, I would like the Minister to raise the matter with the Commonwealth Government and ascertain the situation. In my opinion this is a Commonwealth and not a State responsibility. The Commonwealth Government is, after all, the governor of our external affairs, and would cover this matter. I would feel much happier if the Minister made a note of the matter at this stage and brought it to the attention of the Commonwealth Government. If any future litigation occurs, we would then be in a position to know that the point had already been resolved and that any battle would have to be between the country concerned and our Commonwealth Government.

Mr. BOVELL: I thank the member for Beeloo for drawing the attention of the Committee to this problem. However, it is necessary for Bills to be sent to another place as soon as possible. No doubt the honourable member who obtains the adjournment in another place will request a reasonable time in which to study the legislation. Therefore, I would like to proceed with the third reading this evening. However, I will certainly raise the matter with the Minister for Mines who, when dealing with the measure in another place, may be able to give some clarification on this point. I have made a quick note here to the effect that we consider any international litigation would be a Commonwealth responsibility. Is that the essence of the honourable member's query?

Mr. Jamieson: Yes.

Schedule put and passed.

Preamble put and passed.

Title put and passed.

Report

Bill reported, without amendment, and the report adopted.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Bovell (Minister for Lands), and transmitted to the Council.

PETROLEUM (SUBMERGED LANDS) REGISTRATION FEES BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 18th October.

MR. KELLY (Merredin-Yilgarn) [9.46 p.m.]: I do not intend to dwell for very long on this measure because most of its contents have already been dealt with in the preceding debate.

This short Bill mainly concerns registration fees and validates the collection of fees under certain circumstances. It also deals with the transfer of permits or licenses, and this point also has been debated and agreed to by the House. In this Bill, as in the former one, the designated authority has considerable power, but under the circumstances there is not much we can alter in that regard. I therefore support the second reading.

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.

Third Reading

Bill read a third time, on motion by Mr. Bovell (Minister for Lands), and transmitted to the Council.

STATE FORESTS

Revocation of Dedication: Motion

MR. BOVELL (Vasse—Minister for Forests) [9.50 p.m.]: I move—

> That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 22, 38, 64 and 65 laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Governor on 24th October, 1967, be carried out.

It is necessary to get parliamentary approval for any revocation of State Forests and on this occasion, Mr. Speaker, the papers have already been tabled. There are four areas involved, as follows:—

Area No. 1:

Adjacent to the north-western boundary of Karragullen Townsite. Approximately 12½ acres, remote from the greater part of State Forest No. 22 and carrying no marketable timber. The land was formerly the Karragullen Railway Siding Reserve and was included in State Forest some years ago and retained as a suitable site for a forest settlement. It is no longer intended to establish a settlement at this centre and the area is to be returned to the control of the Lands Department.

Area No. 2:

Six miles north-west of Denmark Townsite. Approximately 26 acres of Denmark Lot 652 forming part of State Forest No. 64 outside the Denmark River Catchment boundary and applied for by the adjoining holder of Lots 651, 659 and 660. The area has been heavily cut over and is unsuited for good Karri regeneration. To safeguard the catchment area and rationalise the boundaries it is proposed to include in the adjoining State Forest, the northern portion of Denmark Lot 547 which is vacant Crown Land within the catchment area. It is also proposed to release almost all of the southern section of Lot 547 as it has little potential for a forest crop.

Area No. 3:

1¼ miles east of Yanchep. Approximately 441 acres of State Forest No. 65 unsuitable for pine planting, adjoining "A" Reserve 9868. The area to be excised from the Reserve is to be set aside for "Forestry Headquarters" to supplement the existing headquarters site, extension of which is undesirable as it abuts on the highly developed area of public recreation. The area of State Forest No. 65 for excision is proposed for inclusion in the adjoining "A" Reserve 9868 as part of Yanchep National Park.

Area No. 4:

Adjacent to the eastern boundary of Manjimup Townsite. An area of 10 acres adjoining the Manjimup Townsite boundary required for the establishment of an additional cemetery site reserve as the existing reserve has a very limited future use due to the presence of heavy rock formations. Though the area contains marketable timber it has been found by test drilling to be the most suitable and practical area of all potential sites which were investigated.

These areas have been recommended by the Conservator of Forests after a close examination by the Forests Department. Last year, when dealing with this motion, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition asked that more detailed information be given. The department has endeavoured to meet the wishes of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in this regard and I commend the motion standing in my name.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr. Graham (Deputy Leader of the Opposition).

House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 1st November, 1967

The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION ON NOTICE

SMOKING

Discouragement Campaign: Result in Schools

The Hon. J. DOLAN asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Will the Minister obtain, if possible, a report on the success or otherwise of the anti-smoking campaign being conducted in Australian schools by the health service of the Seventh Day Adventist Church?

(2) If a report is procured and it indicates the success of the scheme will the Minister give consideration to the Public Health Department conducting, in our schools, a campaign on similar lines?

The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ACT

Introduction of Amending Legislation: Motion

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North-East Metropolitan—Leader of the Opposition) [4.36 p.m.]: I move—

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should, in this session, introduce legislation to amend the Workers' Compensation Act, with particular reference to the following:—

(a) Section 5—

(i) Basic wage;

(ii) Dependency; and

(iii) Definition of "Worker."