

Legislative Council

Friday, 7th December, 1956.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Milk, supplied to Kalgoorlie schools	3072
State Shipping Service, concessions to pensioners	3072
Water supplies, Northampton scheme	3072
Poliomyelitis, immunisation, North Kalgoorlie State School	3073
Assent to Bill	3089
Bills : Statistics Act Amendment, leave to introduce, 1r., 2r.	3073
Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment, 1r.	3074
Land Tax Amendment, 1r.	3074
Vermin Act Amendment (No. 2), 1r.	3074
Administration Act Amendment, report (No. 2), 3r.	3074
Bread Act Amendment, 2r.	3074
Vermin Act Amendment (No. 1), 2r.	3080
Land Act Amendment (No. 3), 2r.	3089
Land Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r., remaining stages	3089

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

MILK.

Supplies to Kalgoorlie Schools.

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is he aware that—

(a) Present supplies of school milk to Kalgoorlie schools are bottled in Perth, railed to Kalgoorlie, and delivered free of charge, and that this has been the case for the last 12 months?

(b) The heavy cost of freight for this supply, under the Commonwealth scheme, leaves no margin for distribution?

(c) This cost, however, has been borne by the present licensed treatment-plant operator, pending the arrival and installation of approved treatment machinery and the issuing of a licence?

(d) This plant is now completely installed and a treatment licence issued?

(2) Will he advise the House why a contract for supply of school milk has been refused to this operator, Mr. A. Fletcher, Firie Dairy, Kalgoorlie?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) The supply of school milk to Kalgoorlie is in the hands of Masters Dairy which supplies bottled pasteurised milk to

those schools. All arrangements for the distribution in Kalgoorlie are entirely the concern of that firm.

(2) Masters Dairy, when it approached the Education Department regarding the supply of bottled pasteurised milk to Kalgoorlie schools, was aware that 2s. per gallon was the limit set by the Commonwealth Government for freighting school milk.

(3) The arrangements entered into by Masters Dairy for the supply of school milk, other than that it shall be efficient and hygienic, are not the concern of the Education Department.

(4) The only treatment-plant licence issued by the Milk Board for the Kalgoorlie area is for refrigerating and bottling only.

(5) Under conditions laid down by the School Milk Advisory Committee only bottled pasteurised milk may be given to children direct. The milk treated by Firie Dairy would not come within that category.

STATE SHIPPING SERVICE.

Concessions to Pensioners.

Hon. W. F. WILLESEE asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of recent concessions granted to pensioners travelling on railways, tramways and bus services which are State-operated, would the Government give consideration to the extension of such concessions to pensioners of the North-West who are travelling on ships of the State Shipping Service?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (for the Minister for Railways) replied:

This matter will receive consideration.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Northampton Scheme.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

In view of the fact that £860,000 has been made available for country water supplies outside the comprehensive scheme, why was no provision made for the Northampton water supply scheme?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

An amount of £680,000 has been made available for country water supplies outside the comprehensive scheme. Of this allocation, an amount of £648,000 was required to complete or continue works in progress. The remainder was insufficient to provide new schemes for the many towns, including Northampton, requiring a water supply.

POLIOMYELITIS.**Immunisation, North Kalgoorlie State School.**

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Has there been some unexpected delay in connection with the Salk vaccine immunisation of pupils of the North Kalgoorlie State school?

(2) When is it intended that the immunisation of these children will commence?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) No. Children in the Kalgoorlie area are being immunised out of a regular vaccine allocation made to the Kalgoorlie Municipality every four weeks. This allocation is comparable to that of other local authority clinics such as Bunbury, Collie, Albany and Geraldton. Each school is being dealt with in turn, but the precise order is a matter which has been left to the discretion of the local authorities concerned.

(2) It is understood that immunisation of children at the North Kalgoorlie State school is likely to commence soon after schools reopen in February.

BILL—STATISTICS ACT AMENDMENT.*Leave to Introduce.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West): I move, without notice—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Statistics Act.

Question put and passed; leave given.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [2.37] in moving the second said: After discussions with the various States, the Commonwealth Parliament earlier this year passed the Statistics (Arrangements with States) Act. Western Australia and the other States agreed to a proposal by the Commonwealth that the statistical services throughout Australia should be integrated under Commonwealth control. It was agreed that this would provide for greater efficiency and economy. In order that this arrangement can have statutory authority, it is necessary to amend the principal Act in the manner dealt with in the Bill. The arrangement, or agreement, entered into with the Commonwealth, is contained in the schedule to the Bill.

Briefly, the object of the agreement is for an integrated statistical service in Western Australia operated and paid for by the Commonwealth under the immediate direction of a statistician who will hold office under both the State and the Commonwealth. The present Government Statistician (Mr. Little) will continue in

the position of State Government Statistician and he has been appointed as the Deputy Commonwealth Statistician for Western Australia. In this way the State will continue to be adequately served by the statistician and the integrated statistical service.

Western Australia will not be required to surrender its sovereign powers in the field of statistics. The State has merely agreed to exercise them in a special way through the integrated service. There will always be an officer functioning as State statistician; our Statistics Act will continue in force for use if and where necessary. We can appoint a group of statistical research officers to work for the State on any special project under the Government Statistician in his State capacity, and, in the unlikely event of any of the arrangements or services proving unsatisfactory, procedures are provided for rectifying the position, through a joint statistical committee.

The agreement with the Commonwealth in the schedule is similar in fact and substance to the agreements accepted by other States. In substance it provides:—

- (a) that there be an integrated statistical service for the purpose of the State and the Commonwealth;
- (b) that the present Government Statistician of Western Australia be also the first Deputy Commonwealth Statistician in Western Australia;
- (c) that subsequent appointments of any Deputy Commonwealth Statistician be made after consultation with the State, and that the State will appoint the same person to be Government Statistician of the State;
- (d) that statistical employees in the Western Australian service be appointed to the Integrated Statistical Service of the Commonwealth Public Service under conditions similar to those applied in previous cases of State staff transfers. The rights of officers agreeing to transfer will be protected;
- (e) that the Commonwealth will meet the full cost of the Integrated Statistical Service;
- (f) that there be a Joint Statistical Committee to examine and make recommendations should any major difficulty arise out of the agreement.

It is estimated that the amalgamation will result in the saving to the State of approximately £80,000 per annum and that the State will suffer no inconvenience at all. The State will, through the Police Department, continue the collection of statistics under present conditions and the

Commonwealth will pay costs of postage, freight, etc., incurred by the police in this connection.

The Commonwealth will continue to publish statistical publications relating to this State and will expand them to include a Western Australian year book and such other matters as the Commonwealth may consider necessary or desirable from time to time.

A lengthy discussion was held concerning the salary classifications and other conditions which would apply to those officers who were transferred to the Commonwealth service and it was agreed that the terms were advantageous. Any officer who did not wish to transfer was to be given other work in the State service without suffering any disability. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment.
- 2, Land Tax Act Amendment.
- 3, Vermin Act Amendment (No. 2).
Received from the Assembly.

BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Report, etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [2.45]: This is only a small Bill, but there is one provision in it that certainly does not appeal to me: the one which makes it mandatory for a baker in a zoned area to deliver bread irrespective of the demand in that area. That looks like getting back to some of our wartime regulations, and usually they do not pan out too well. In addition, the Wheat Products Prices Fixation Committee fixes the price of bread; and the price fixed was not sufficient to cover the bakers' delivery costs. If a baker is not permitted to increase the price of his product to cover the cost of delivery, it will mean a considerable loss to him.

It would not be possible to get a bread carter today under £15 a week; and, in addition, the baker would have to get a motor van or a horse and delivery cart to undertake deliveries. Horses have to be fed, and that costs money; and if the baker purchases a motor-vehicle for delivery purposes he has to maintain it and

run it, and that would cost a considerable amount per week. I am not opposed to the principle of bread deliveries where it is a payable proposition; but this Bill states that any person—and that could mean one person—can write in and request that the baker deliver bread in his zone if the bake-house is in that zone. In such a case, if this Bill were passed, the baker would have to deliver to only that one person; and that is not a fair proposition.

If the Bill provided that there should be delivery where the demand was for a certain number of loaves, which would make it a reasonably payable proposition for the baker to deliver bread, I would certainly agree with it. I understand that the amendments on the notice paper will cover that aspect; and if they are agreed to, the Bill will be made fair, reasonable and workable. I am prepared to support the second reading in the hope that those amendments will be agreed to during the Committee stage.

HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East) [2.48]: I was on the Goldfields when the master bakers suddenly decided that they would not deliver bread any longer. They had been delivering it for 50 years and had been doing a good job. When it was first rumoured that deliveries would cease, most people refused to believe it; and when it actually came about, it was quite a shock. A number of deputations went to the master bakers, and at no time during the early discussions was it stated that the price had any bearing on their decision to discontinue deliveries. Rather, they said that there was no suitable labour offering, and that was the main argument as to why they were discontinuing the delivery system.

Firstly, therefore, I must congratulate the Minister for bringing this Bill forward in an endeavour to meet the situation. It is about two years since bakers ceased delivering bread on the Goldfields; there were elections in the offing at the time, and a good deal was said about the subject. In fact, the public have not yet settled down from the disturbance which was created by the non-delivery of bread. The argument which is offered by the bodies in opposition to the measure—which they consider to be a strong argument—is that if deliveries are to be made at all, they should be on a zoning system. That would, of course, be better than no delivery at all.

While it has been said that nobody desires zoning, the master bakers have imposed a system of zoning at the moment. There are about seven master bakers, and they came to a detailed and mathematical arrangement by which they would say to one baker, "You have been selling 1,000 loaves a week, so we will endeavour to arrange to enable you to sell 1,000 loaves in the future." Another man may have

been delivering 5,000 loaves a week and they would endeavour to ensure that he would continue to deliver that quantity.

So the depots they selected were selected on that basis. One shop might be given 150 loaves, and the other might also be given 150; and if one happened to be living near those shops, that was the bread one would have to take. That also applied to the other depots. It was permissible for only one baker to make deliveries; two men were not permitted to deliver in the same area.

It has been said that if there is bread available in a shop, one has a choice. But what is there on the bread to indicate that it comes from a particular bakery? I understand, however, that there is one bakery that brands its bread; at least that is so in the metropolitan area. There is nothing to indicate that the bread comes from a particular bakery; and if a customer came in and asked for a particular type of bread from a certain bakery he could not be at all sure that he would get it. The depots take what is given to them, and sell what is given to them. They have no choice.

It has been said by Mr. Logan that nobody has the right to dictate that delivery should be made. The master bakers made their own arrangement; they banded together; indeed, they did more than band together. I could give the story in a good deal more detail if the House wished, because I took a particular interest in it at the time. From the information I have, I understand that some of the master bakers rather regretted there being no delivery. At least one was anxious to make deliveries because he felt he would be able to sell more bread by that method. He had no alternative, however, but to fall in line with the general arrangement which was made between the master bakers.

It was suggested that a certain party should commence baking and deliver bread. He went around and inquired at one or two baking-houses that were empty and found that they were not for sale; nor were they to let. I think he also found that the master bakers had control of those two bakeries, but they were not being used for baking or selling bread. Accordingly, it can be seen that the set-up was not open and free.

The question has been asked as to why bread should be delivered when nothing else is. We all know that milk is delivered, both in small and large quantities, and there certainly does not seem to be any difficulty about its delivery; it is done quite easily, and is also delivered on Sunday in some places. All that we ask is for bread to be delivered six days a week.

The provisions in this Bill are quite fair from the point of view of the master bakers, inasmuch as it will be an answer to one of their previous objections. I might interpolate here that the master bakers

complained that they did not get paid for a good deal of their bread and that accounts were allowed to run on. Under this measure, the master baker will be permitted to deliver but will have the choice to refuse delivery unless he is paid cash. So if a housewife wants bread delivered, and she is not prepared to pay cash for it, the master baker can say that he is not obliged to deliver unless she does.

I do not think the public can object to zoning if this Bill becomes law. The master bakers take it upon themselves to say how bread shall be delivered. They deliver bread to certain shops; but where there are no shops, they select a point at an intersection of a street and say that their van will be at that intersection at 10 a.m. More often than not—especially in the early stages—the van would not arrive before 10.30 a.m. or 11 a.m.

This would, of course, mean that busy housewives with little children would have had to wait at that intersection in the heat of the morning for the van to arrive. Some of them may have had to make arrangements for their children to be looked after while they set out to purchase the bread; and on account of the late arrival of the van, they could not wait to buy their bread and consequently it has meant their having to go to some other point for this purpose. This, of course, makes them worn-out, and tired.

I hope members will give consideration to this measure and do something which will prove to be of a humanitarian nature. No great hardship will be occasioned to the master bakers because the consumer will be reasonable enough to appreciate that the baker will expect a fair return for his labours. It is only reasonable to expect bread to be delivered as was the case previously. If the master bakers feel they cannot deliver to one point a quarter of a mile away, and another a mile away, I am sure they will not look with an unkind eye on a zoning scheme. So I trust the Goldfields will have restored to it what was the practice some time ago—namely, the delivery of bread.

Hon. L. A. Logan: It is only confined to Kalgoorlie.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: No; it applies to a prescribed area. A small town with not much population would not be covered; it would only apply to areas of large populations; and would take effect in prescribed areas.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [2.58]: I am very pleased that this Bill has been brought down. It provides for the delivery of bread to people in prescribed areas. During my recent visit to the Eastern States I made inquiries in Queensland and New South Wales, and I found that in the former State the system was working very satisfactorily. There

was a complaint while I was there that the bakers were seeking an increase of 3d. per loaf; that was not to cover the cost of delivery, however, but to enable them to provide a better quality of bread. Since the delivery of bread ceased in Kalgoorlie, we have not been getting the same quality of bread that we did previously. I can vouch for that, because of the bread that has been sold to me. It has not been of the highest standard.

A short while ago Mr. Teahan and I were on a committee appointed to look into the questions raised by master bakers. We found that the main factor instrumental in their deciding to cease the delivery of bread was the large number of outstanding debts. It was the amount of credit given to customers. Now they are on this "go and get the bread" system it is on a cash basis. If a charge were made for delivery, it would be to the benefit of the baker as well as the people, and he would have no need to worry about bread deliveries or the price of the bread. I do not think people who want their bread delivered desire to dodge payment for delivery. I am sure they would be prepared to pay for it so long as the charge was not excessive. I do not believe in service without payment.

During my recent visit to the Eastern States, I also visited Canberra. There they have one huge bakery, which is a monopoly; and in addition to this one baker, there are pastrycooks baking a special loaf of bread which they are permitted to make. That man does what the Kalgoorlie man wants to do: he arranges for the bread to be delivered by contract. There is only one baker there, and that man has many vans which take the bread out to the various localities.

In Kalgoorlie there were a couple of persons who wanted the bakers—during the trouble—to allow them to take delivery of their bread to the public at a charge which was within the reach of the people. These bakers took the bit in their mouth and said there would be no deliveries of bread; so the people had to go and get it. The decision they made was that a van would go along and ring a breakfast bell advising people that bread would be available on a certain corner, and they would have to go and get it. Some days in Kalgoorlie are very hot and some are very cold. The vans do not always arrive on time, and there is quite a long queue. It means that women in a certain condition have to cart their bread and it is not in their interests to run after these carts.

I am most perturbed about the bakers there, because I have been one of the pioneers of Kalgoorlie. I remember that many years ago, during the 8-hour-day processions, the bakers' carts and delivery vans were a credit to the district. In

those days they took pride in their deliveries; but they have allowed themselves, just the same as the butchers did, to get into a certain debt for which they blamed the delivery of bread.

Not only am I perturbed about the bakers in Kalgoorlie, but also about those in Norseman. There is quite a big population in the latter town, and I understand the baker has a monopoly. He bought out the other bake-houses and closed them down, and it is a "go and get" policy there. The same thing applies in Merredin. About two to five years ago there were two shops there, and two bakers engaged in baking bread. The present baker bought out the other one and now has a monopoly. Therefore the people of Merredin have to go and get their bread. I would say that the people of Merredin have a similar claim to those in Kalgoorlie. Bread should be delivered on all four sides of the bakehouse up to about 1½ miles in Norseman and Merredin, as I think that would embrace a thickly-populated area. A baker should not be expected to deliver to what we call a prospector's camp, say, two miles out. I do not think these people would expect him to do it. But we do want bread delivered in the thickly-populated areas.

There is an amendment on the notice paper today; and I think the distance mentioned was one mile on all sides, which I think would be quite satisfactory. The amendment would cover the position. While I was in Kalgoorlie, Norseman and Merredin recently, with Mr. Garrigan, making enrolments, the temperature was 107 degrees during that week. I am sure Mr. Garrigan would bear out my statement that it was disgraceful to see old women, young women and children going down to the shops and lumping everything in that heat. Those people were wearing their feet off. No doubt we will have a poorer race of people if they have to lump this stuff home. We are only asking for a fair thing, and I would say the people would be only too pleased to pay a margin for delivery.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Would it be 3d. or 2d. a loaf?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I cannot give Mr. Jones a figure, but it could be worked out. The people in Kalgoorlie who asked to be allowed to deliver bread at the time of the trouble worked out a figure, but I do not know what it was.

Hon. H. K. Watson: It costs 1d. a minute for wages today.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I believe it works out to 1½d. a minute. That was the amount mentioned to me, and it covered petrol, wages, van repairs and everything else. That was not given to me by the contractor, and I do not know whether it is correct.

If this Bill is passed, these two persons in Kalgoorlie would again be prepared to deliver bread by contract, and that should be suitable to the bakers. I buy my bread in Hannan-st. at a shop which is about a mile away from my place. However, I could get it closer. Two bakers deliver to that shop, and it is not possible to know whose bread one is buying. Some of the vans which delivered bread to the corner were of a very poor type, and at first the bread was not covered. However, after a week or two, it was wrapped and delivered in a reasonable manner.

I am not going to speak any further on this matter; but I do hope this Bill will be carried, and that people will be given a chance to have their bread delivered, if they live within a prescribed area which requires it.

HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West) [3.10]: We must all agree with many of the statements made by previous speakers in support of this measure. Mrs. Hutchison spoke about the increasing burden on housewives of this country, and it is a problem which is facing all of us. However, it is not being helped by much of the legislation which has been passed in recent years, providing for restrictions of shopping hours, deliveries and so on. I feel that the speech Mr. Hall made yesterday posed some good points, as did those of speakers today. However, despite this, I do hope this House will not agree to this measure, for the simple reason that I do not think it will be a solution to the problem.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It could be given a trial.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: The whole basis of such matters as delivery, goes back to economics, and all speakers today have put it on that basis. A careful examination would show that the one point on which we all agree is that the biggest trouble about the delivery of bread is the price, and the price control which operates on wheat products. If we look at the history of deliveries we find they have all gradually been cut out as a result—as originally mentioned by Mrs. Hutchison—of wartime restrictions, price control and a gradual increase in general controls, not only in relation to the handling of a product, but in matters such as wages, hours of labour and general conditions; they have all had their effect.

We can all remember deliveries by butchers, which have also been mentioned. I am referring to the old cutting cart, where the meat was cut up by the butchers and was open to the flies. It was convenient, but, from a hygienic point of view, it has been considered absolutely out of the question. However, we are not here to debate the merits of hygiene. I daresay the majority of meat is cooked long enough to kill most germs. The fact that we have changed our attitude in regard to

hygiene was one of the major contributing factors in the cutting out of meat deliveries. Wages, conditions and hygiene play a part in the cost structure. There are also various arguments in different districts about the way bread should be handled. Most of the arguments put forward have been on behalf of one section of people at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Norseman and Merredin.

Hon. G. C. MacKINNON: Mr. Bennetts did mention Norseman and Merredin as well. But the district familiar to me is the South-West; and I have been approached by bakers on quite a few occasions in regard to price fixing by the Wheat Products Prices Fixation Committee, and the difficulties the bakers are experiencing. Throughout that area we have a mixed planning. Some towns have one baker who delivers to a few shops; some towns have all deliveries; and some have no deliveries. Each town seems to work out a system which suits its requirements.

I do not doubt that in all towns some complaints will be found; but there are some things which must strike members with regard to Kalgoorlie. Mr. Heenan, when speaking on the profits Bill, assured us there were no businesses in Kalgoorlie to which that Bill could apply; but this does not ring true with what Mr. Bennetts had to say when he gave us to understand that some bakers had not been playing the game by the community of Kalgoorlie.

It would seem that the best method of dealing with the question is to raise the price of bread and allow freer trade and competition. The Bill appears to me to be the logical outcome of controls. Once a control is established, it results in the need for another and yet another control, and now we are asked to force the bakers to deliver bread within prescribed areas. We all know the influence that is brought to bear on Parliament by pressure groups, and I am wondering where this agitation for bread deliveries will end.

I am sympathetic towards the problem, and I think we are all aware of the difficulties under which housewives labour. I do not think that any section of the community has suffered more in recent years than have the housewives, because every improvement in the working man's conditions seems to have been gained to some degree at the expense of the housewife. But we are not here to argue that question.

I do not think the Bill would do anything to overcome the basic problem with which we are faced. If we agree to this control I have no doubt anomalies will occur, necessitating still further controls. We will be asked to extend the delivery distance by perhaps a mile or 1½ miles, and then there will be someone just outside that radius who wants bread delivered, and so it will go on. I repeat that

in my view the solution of the difficulty is to cut out all controls over bread except those governing quality and hygiene, and let the bakers compete freely. I realise that many bakeries are family concerns which may be in competition with big bakers that employ labour, but I am convinced that one control does not solve the problems caused by another. We should lift the controls which in this instance are the cause of the trouble. For those reasons I oppose the Bill.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [3.20]: This Bill seeks to give power to prescribe an area within which bread shall be delivered compulsorily; and the effects of the measure, if agreed to, will be State-wide. Previous speakers have said that if the Bill is passed, areas where the delivery of bread would be uneconomic will be included, and I take it that that will be a very live issue in the districts concerned. However, as the zoning of prescribed areas is to be done by regulation, each member concerned will be in a position, when Parliament meets each year, to endeavour to have removed any injustices which may have been inflicted in any district within his province, by moving for the disallowance of the regulations; and so I think we can rule out that objection.

I think Mr. MacKinnon made out a good case in regard to the economics of bread delivery. The baker has had inflicted on him from time to time penalties created by increases in wages and various costs, such as the maintenance of vehicles, and so on, which must overall be a nightmare to him at present. For that reason I feel that we must ensure that the baker is protected in this regard. The Wheat Products Prices Fixation Committee should consider these things when a determination is made as to what allowance there should be to meet the cost of deliveries. Most speakers so far have admitted that that is only fair and reasonable; and that is my view, also.

While zoning is not mentioned specifically in the Bill before us, I think it is the logical way in which to attack the problem. Whether the objections to it can be substantiated is quite another matter. In this State there is a vast number of residents in small country communities scattered over large areas where a single baker has served the community year after year, with satisfaction to all concerned. We never hear objection taken to that; and yet, if that is not zoning through economic circumstances, I do not know what is. That system operates satisfactorily—

Hon. G. Bennetts: Five different bakers used to call at five houses close to my own.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: That is a most uneconomic state of affairs; and if society demands the privilege of perpetuating the operation of such a bad system, surely it should pay the costs. In Kellerberrin,

where there is a baker who has a monopoly, bread is delivered, and there has never been any question of disturbing the position there. That baker is fair in his trading, and he owns his own bake-house and delivers bread. I cannot see why similar circumstances should not prevail throughout the length and breadth of the country.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: What does he charge for a 2 lb. loaf?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I do not know, but I suppose it is the prescribed price.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: If you phoned your wife, she could tell you.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I think that on the Goldfields they are doing one of the things we have tried to prevent. It is said that on the one hand the master bakers believe in competition; but that, on the other hand, they have come to an amicable arrangement between themselves. I think it is a rather substantial arrangement; and that even if one of them wished to break away and deliver bread, he would not be permitted to do so. If that is not creating a ring, I do not know what it could be called. The illustration of the satisfactory working of a monopoly at Kellerberrin proves that price control does not necessarily lead to abuses. It is the individual operating under the control that brings such things about. For those reasons I intend to support the Bill.

HON. J. J. GARRIGAN (South-East) [3.27]: I support the remarks of my colleagues in regard to the Bill. Over the years we have preached decentralisation but have done nothing practical in that regard. If it is good enough for the housewife in Perth or Kellerberrin to have bread delivered to her door, it is also good enough for the housewife in Boulder, Kalgoorlie or any other country town. It is my belief that in all the major towns of the State bread should be delivered, and that applies particularly to the Goldfields.

In that part of the State the people have not the amenities that are available in the metropolitan area, where there are the river and the hills and beaches. On the Goldfields there are only heat and dust in summer, and a chill wind in winter. Are women with small children expected to go out in the blazing heat and pick up their bread on a street corner? We do not wish to deprive the master baker of his living; but if he raised the price of bread by $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per loaf to cover the cost of delivery, I do not think the housewife would object at all. I support the Bill and hope members will give it the consideration it deserves.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [3.29]: I am not enamoured of this Bill, which I think seeks to accomplish something in a roundabout manner. One of

the points essential to be examined is that, prior to the introduction of controls, there was never any difficulty about bread deliveries because then it was only a matter of competition and demand, and those factors settled the problems. Now we have a Wheat Products Prices Fixation Committee, which interferes from time to time in the price of bread. Then we produce a Bill of this nature which not only involves Kalgoorlie but the whole State, which will be divided into zones in which bread will be delivered.

In many parts of the State bread has not been delivered for a considerable period; and if this measure is passed, it may mean that bakers will have to purchase new equipment to provide for the delivery of bread. It seems to me that the most effective remedy would be to remove from the Wheat Products Prices Fixation Committee the control over the price of bread. Competition would then be encouraged and bread would be delivered at a competitive price. Everyone realises that controls of any description have not got us anywhere in this State, and the sooner we remove the control over this commodity the better it will be for the people of the State.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [3.31]: It seems extraordinary to me that a Bill should be introduced to deal with a situation in one particular place. But if this Bill is passed, its implementation will affect every other place in Western Australia, whether the people in other parts agree with it or not, and where the conditions may not be the same as those existing in Kalgoorlie. Therefore, why should we have this Bill?

I should imagine that Kalgoorlie, where apparently the conditions need to be rectified—at least in the minds of those who have introduced this Bill—is one of the most popular centres outside the metropolitan area. Surely the people there can come to some agreement with the local bakers to control their own affairs without our having to introduce a Bill that will affect every other district in the State! If we are to control the delivery of bread in this way, the same could apply to eggs, fish, butter or beer. It would be equally logical.

The Chief Secretary: But not as essential.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I agree. But I understand, from the little I know about the matter, that bread had been delivered in Kalgoorlie before up to a stage where it was stated that the costs of delivery exceeded the price at which the product could be baked.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That was bad management.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Competition rules that out. The Wheat Products Prices

Fixation Committee then rules that bakers are not permitted to charge that price. I understand that the bakers themselves approached the A.L.P., which has a great deal of influence over the affairs of Kalgoorlie. They explained their difficulties to the representatives of the A.L.P., and a suggestion was put forward that a co-operative bakery be established, together with depots at convenient points so that no one would have very far to go to obtain his local bread.

However, co-operation along these lines was not forthcoming. They even canvassed private houses to try to get householders to help them solve this difficulty by allowing some residences to become depots at which the bread could be collected, but this was not done. The whole matter boils down to the fact that the price allowed was not sufficient to cover the bakers' costs.

It is all very well to talk about high costs and that sort of thing; but in Kalgoorlie, workers on the mines, and those who are employed in work that is associated with the mines, get £2 a week above the standard wage applying to the South-West portion of the State. Therefore, this problem should not be beyond their powers to solve. Why such a measure should apply to other parts of the State I do not know.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Such a position would not arise unless there was some agitation for it.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: Why should not every part of the State be allowed to carry on in the same way as it has always done? This is something of a local character which could be solved by the people on the spot. Why this Bill should be introduced with the object of saying, in effect, to people in other parts of the State, "You must conform to these conditions," I cannot understand; and I will not support the Bill.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [3.36]: I do not wish to cast a silent vote on the Bill. I cannot see any reason for the measure; therefore, I must vote against it. It has been suggested by those supporting it that bakers should be compelled to deliver bread. That contention is altogether wrong. If we were to pass a Bill in this House to compel the delivery of one commodity, where would it end? Following requests from housewives to deliver this, that and the other, it would be necessary to introduce a Bill to provide for the delivery of all commodities.

It has also been submitted that the cost of delivery would not be very great. I have not inquired into that, but I should imagine that bread could not be delivered for less than 2d. a loaf.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: The cost is in excess of 3d. per loaf.

Hon. A. R. JONES: The Wheat Products Prices Fixation Committee states that 2d. per loaf cannot be charged for the delivery of bread. I know that, because of its scattered population, the Goldfields area is a difficult one in which to deliver bread. Further, because a great deal of the population is constantly on the move trades people have great difficulty in collecting their money, and sometimes do not collect it at all.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The Bill provides for that.

Hon. A. R. JONES: We know that if a householder is not at home and the baker is in the habit of leaving bread, and if there is no money left out the carter will leave bread according to the note which stipulates the number of loaves required. In conversation with one baker I was told that his bad debts amount to £30 a month because of the moving population. He said there was no doubt that if he attempted to run his business on a cash basis he would be boycotted altogether.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I won't have that!

Hon. A. R. JONES: That is what he told me.

Hon. G. Bennetts: He was making that up.

Hon. A. R. JONES: No person should be compelled to deliver bread; in fact, no one should be compelled to do anything against his will. Surely if it were a profitable proposition to deliver bread, then by good, keen competition the bakers would deliver it! This proposal emanated from Kalgoorlie, but surely there is another remedy other than to ask us to pass legislation to compel bakers to deliver bread! If the people in the area are so keen to have bread delivered it should be quite easy for them to set up a co-operative bakery; and as a result of the competition that would result, it would be found that bakers would deliver bread if it were worth while. If there is anything in the contention that the bakers in Kalgoorlie have formed a ring, it is in the hands of the people to combat that sort of thing. I do not think we should be asked to compel bakers to deliver; and, for those reasons, although I would like to see the housewives of Kalgoorlie being able to enjoy a convenience such as this, I cannot support this measure, because I cannot see that justice would be done to the trades people.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

(No. 1).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [3.41] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to amend certain sections of the parent Act with the

object of improving control of animal and bird pests in the State. It has three purposes, these being:—

- (1) The prohibition of the operations of professional trappers over certain areas, prior to and during poisoning campaign.
- (2) The overcoming of obstruction caused to vermin control officers.
- (3) The protection of these officers from prosecution on technical grounds, when carrying out scientific tests on animals.

Country members will be aware that a poison known as 1080, is being used by the Agriculture Protection Board in its drives against rabbits. Present legislation allows trapping to continue during such operations, and only precludes trapping in instances where experiments are being conducted.

It is unlikely that any rabbit would contain sufficient 1080 to poison a human being, as the amount required to kill a rabbit is relatively small and the poison spreads right throughout the carcass. However, there is some risk, particularly if a rabbit gorged itself; or if, for some other reason, the concentration of the poison was high. It is unlikely that results would be fatal to a human being, but there could be enough poison consumed to cause sickness.

The Deputy Commissioner of Health has referred to this matter, and is of the opinion that trapping should not be undertaken in areas where the poison is being used. Articles regarding the danger have appeared in the Press, whilst letters have been received from the Farmers' Union and different local organisations on the same lines, supporting the views of the Agriculture Protection Board. Apart from the public safety factor, trapping just before poisoning—or any other disturbance for that matter—very seriously interferes with the efficiency of the work. In practically all instances where the Agriculture Protection Board's rabbit control scheme has not been successful, the trouble lies in trapping by the land-owner or professionals.

No organised drive can be successful if trapping is carried out either before or during the operation, as such trapping tends to frighten the rabbits away. This difficulty is encountered in most areas in which the board operates. The main result of the trapping has been to make the remaining rabbits "trail shy," and, as a result, a much lower kill is obtained.

In some cases, the farmers themselves carry out trapping on the trail which they have made for free feeding prior to poisoning. In other cases, they have permitted professional trappers to operate on their properties whilst a drive is in operation. There have been some instances also of professional trappers working along these trails without authority.

The furrow method of trapping is becoming quite popular, and this involves free feeding with oats similar to the board's poisoning campaign. This, of course, has the same result of making the remaining rabbits "furrow shy." Thus the work of most of the farmers in a district can be spoilt by one or two who trap and permit trapping on their properties during the period involved.

Dealing with the next proposal, instances have arisen where Agricultural Protection Board men have been abused and threatened with assault. In one case, a paddock gate was locked to prevent an officer leaving after he had inspected a property. Where farmers have not complied with notices to destroy vermin and Agriculture Protection Board men have been sent to do the work, some farmers have refused to move their stock in order to prevent the work being undertaken.

In one instance, a farmer was prosecuted for his failure to destroy rabbits and also for obstruction. He was fined £5 for each offence, but he informed the officers that he would rather pay the fine than have the work carried out on his property. This man's neighbours either voluntarily carried out destruction work or had it done at their expense and their properties are being reinfested from the property where rabbits remain unmolested. Officers have also been deliberately misled by people giving wrong names or giving wrong information. It can be seen then that the proposed amendments are most necessary to cover deficiencies in this section.

Provision is already made in the Vermin Act for officers to carry out investigations and research into improving control measures. These investigations here and elsewhere have already resulted in such revolutionary discoveries as myxomatosis and the new poison 1080, which have meant so much to Australia's economy.

There is some doubt as to whether the protection afforded to officers in carrying out their duties in this connection will fully shield them from technical breaches of other Acts (such as the Pharmacy & Poisons Act and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act). It is considered that, as long as the officers are conducting fully controlled investigations of a scientific nature to obtain essential information and the work is in the course of their normal duties, they should be fully protected.

Hon. A. R. Jones: Did you get a letter from the Farmers' Union?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [3.47]: The Chief Secretary said that the Bill contains three phases. Actually it deals with four phases. I consider that the first

two sections are quite all right, particularly the one dealing with the prohibition of trapping, snaring or shooting during the time when a poison campaign is under way. The reason for the prohibition was that the Health Department was concerned that the public might be unfortunate enough to purchase rabbits which had been poisoned by 1080 or some other agent, and so become the victims of circumstances. While I appreciate the caution exercised by that department, unfortunately it was such caution which in the first place delayed the use of 1080 in this State for 12 months.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Do you call that caution?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I used the word "caution" for want of a better one. Members will recall that I asked certain questions in this House regarding 1080, and at the same time I gave information of what had happened in South Australia. After my questions had been asked, both Mr. Roche and Mr. Nalder took up the cudgels. After that was done, the Farmers' Union came into the picture and put its weight behind the proposal, and eventually 1080 poison was made available—in the first instance only to the department, seeing that it was carrying out the destruction of rabbits.

Many attempts were made to enable farmers to use "1080," but, again because of the ultra-caution shown by the department, those attempts were not successful. One would almost think—and I am not too sure whether this thought was not behind the Health Department—that some member of the public might use this poison on his mother-in-law. I believe that was in the mind of the department, and that that was the reason for the ultra-caution shown, despite the fact that a human being would have to eat 4 lb. of poisoned oats before he would be killed.

Even today the department seems to have the idea that its officers are capable of using 1080 to better effect than anyone else. The department even went to the expense—and a very heavy expense to procure plant and jeeps to carry out the poisoning campaigns. Altogether the department bought 12 jeeps, and two men were engaged on each one. Under the department's campaign, the farmer had to make the trial himself; he had to lay the free oats at least two or three nights before-hand. After doing that he was not considered by the Agriculture Protection Board to be capable of laying the poison oats. What a ridiculous state of affairs that was! The department then came up with a jeep and laid the poison oats.

I must admit that the charge for this work was a reasonable one; but in my opinion it was more than what the farmers could have done it for, particularly if they were permitted to take their own oats to the local inspector to have it mixed with

the poison. If that system had been adopted, the cost to the farmer would have been reduced considerably. The ultra-caution shown by the Health Department delayed the poisoning of rabbits for 12 months.

We are all thankful that 1080 has had such a good effect on the eradication of rabbits. When it was introduced, myxomatosis had already taken hold in a large slice of this State, but myxomatosis has its limitations. It was through the use of 1080 in areas where myxomatosis was effective that Western Australia became freer of this vermin than at any time since rabbits first invaded the State.

It is only now that farmers are beginning to realise how much damage has been done by the rabbits. Last year there was a really good season, the first after myxomatosis and 1080 had taken effect. There was a flush of grass and fodder throughout the agricultural area. Different types of grasses which had not been seen for many years were found growing profusely in the wheat belt. This came about because of the destruction of the rabbit population. Farmers who two years previously had been overstocked, found that they were understocked. From that it can be seen what has been done for the farmers of this State by the use of myxomatosis and 1080.

Naturally in the laying of a trail, which is the most effective method of using 1080, if persons are permitted to trap, shoot or snare along that trail it loses its effect. It is a well-known fact that the rabbit soon shies away from an area where trapping is taking place. A professional trapper does not stay very long in one spot; he goes into an area, gets the first flush of rabbits and goes away. The rabbit is not so dumb an animal as most people think. It becomes trail or trap-shy, and it moves on. Consequently any attempt to trap or snare on a trail would reduce the effect of 1080 poisoning. I believe that the department has good cause to prevent shooting, trapping, etc. while a poisoning campaign is going on.

The second phase of the Bill deals with the protection of officers who, in the course of their duties and in the pursuit of science—which is for the betterment of the producer and all of us—have to undertake tasks which sometimes lead them into trouble. If members were to cast their minds back to an incident which occurred in Cunderdin not so long ago, where the R.S.P.C.A. prosecuted officers of the department for their inhumane treatment of dogs, they would appreciate what this measure endeavours to do.

There may be some argument as to whether those officers should be given the power to carry out those experiments or not. I for one would not like to see anyone being inhumane. I believe that those

officers could have used a little more commonsense, and could have carried out the experiments in a way other than they did, and they would have obtained greater results. But throughout the history of the world something or some person or animal has had to suffer for the furtherance of science. Dr. Hislop will agree with me that it is only by experimenting that science is able to advance. Provided the departmental officers do their job in a correct manner, I see no reason why they should not have the protection which this Bill seeks to give them.

When we come to the third part of the Bill, which deals with the powers of the inspectors, I must disagree with the measure from that stage onwards. Section 121 of the Act says—

Any person who obstructs, or resists or hinders any inspector or authorised person in the performance of his duties, in the prosecution of his work or the exercise of any powers vested in him under the provisions of this Act shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £50.

The Bill seeks to increase the penalty to £100. I admit that some farmers do not play the game. In some localities they are a menace to their neighbours; but we would be going past the stage of reasonableness by increasing the penalty to £100.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Such farmers are a new type of criminal.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There is, in addition to the penalty of £100, another penalty, irreducible in mitigation, of £2 a day for every day of obstruction, resistance or hindrance.

Sitting suspended from 4.0 to 4.25 p.m.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Section 100 of the Act determines what an inspector may do. It provides—

If the owner or occupier of any holding fails or neglects to comply with any notice, whether published in the Gazette or served upon him under Section 98, any inspector or authorised person, with or without assistants, may enter upon the holding, and use such means and take such measures, and do and perform such acts and things as to him may appear proper and necessary to be done to ensure the destruction of vermin or eggs upon such holding, and shall have free right of ingress, egress, and regress into, over, and across such holding for such period as may, in his opinion, be necessary for destroying such vermin or eggs.

Under this section the vermin inspector has carte blanche to do anything he likes. If the owner or occupier of the holding does not comply with the instructions given to him by the inspector or the Agriculture Protection Board; or if he hinders

any inspector in the prosecution of his duty, he is liable to a penalty not exceeding £50. The Bill seeks to increase the penalty to £100. I say that is too much.

The measure also wants to include an irreducible minimum of £2 for every day until such time as the holder of the property complies with the instructions. That could quite possibly be a fine of £100 plus another £50 if the period continues for the requisite number of days, so that the total penalty would be £150. I do not think it is necessary to increase these penalties; they are already fairly high.

If the inspectors were to use the court more often and prosecute these fellows, there would be no need to increase the amount. I also say that if, at times, the inspectors used a little more tact and diplomacy, they would get much further than they do. Whilst, as I said earlier, some farmers do not play the game, I contend that the Act at present provides sufficient power to deal with them.

Clause 6 of the Bill introduces a new section, and I have been looking for an adjective to describe it because it reads, in part—

A person shall not—

(a) assault; or

(b) use abusive language to an inspector or authorised person.

The penalty for that is £100.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The Government is getting short of money.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: If an inspector came on to my property; and without using any tact or diplomacy, told me what to do, and I said so-and-so to him, I would be liable to a fine of £100.

Hon. F. D. Willmott: Trying to create stand-over merchants!

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: That is extravagant language.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It is an extravagant law; and it is just ridiculous to expect us—me, anyway—to accept this. I am sorry, the penalty for abusive language or assault is £50. I must correct my previous statement. The Bill goes on to provide—

A person shall not

(a) incite;

(b) encourage;

(c) aid or abet; or

(d) procure.

That is where the penalty of £100 comes in. If I only encourage someone to break the law, I am liable to a fine of £100. If I obstruct a policeman in the course of his duties in the Terrace, and I am taken before the court, I am fined a maximum of £5. Yet we are expected to pass legislation here making it possible to fine a person £50 for the first two offences, and £100 for the other. I certainly hope that this House will not agree to that.

Another small part of this new clause will make it mandatory for an inspector to be allowed to go on to a property and instruct a farmer, owner or occupier of the property to prepare for poisoning. He can instruct him to shift his stock; and it is not compulsory, after all that is done, for the inspector to go on with the job. He can decide not to proceed with it, and nothing happens. That is too ridiculous; and in case members think I am putting it over them, I will read what the Bill says. It states—

In order that he may perform any of his duties, prosecute his work, or exercise any power vested in him, under the provisions of this Act, an inspector or authorised person may by written requisition served on the owner or occupier of any premises, whether premises on or in respect of which performance of the duty, prosecution of the work, or exercise of the power is proposed or not . . .

What powers to put in the hands of an inspector! Do not let us forget, either, that penalties are provided if the owner or occupier does not carry out those instructions! There are many properties where it would be impossible, at any particular period, for the owner or occupier to shift his stock, and poison certain paddocks as might be requested by the inspector. Surely the farmer knows the set-up of his farm much better than the inspector! The farmer generally plans his farm to carry his stock in the best manner possible. If he has subdivided his paddocks correctly, he will use them in rotation; and if he has to break that rotation at the whim of an inspector who does not realise the set-up, the whole year's planning can be broken down. That is why I said earlier that a little more tact and diplomacy on the part of some inspectors might produce better results.

I sympathise with the inspector who is trying to do a good job and finds one or two bad farmers who refuse to do anything to help. But the inspectors already have a right to go on to a man's property and do all that is necessary, and the cost of the job is charged against the farmer or the land. I maintain that if these inspectors carry out their functions and duties, as outlined in the present Act, that is all that is required.

I have dealt with the four main phases of the Bill which are—the right to restrict trapping in a poisoning area; giving some measure of protection to the scientists or research officers; and—the last two phases—the provision of penalties. There is also the iniquitous part which will have the effect of making a farmer do something after which the inspector can decide not to go on with the job. I propose to support the second reading because I believe the first two parts of the Bill are worthy of support; but I certainly propose to vote against the last two portions.

Reverting to what I said earlier about the 1080 poison and the ultra-caution of the department, when 1080 was first produced in a prepared form, it was coloured purple, and that was done for the express purpose of making it safer to use. We know that it is odourless and tasteless and has all the desirable features of a poison which could be used by somebody who had an ulterior motive. That was the reason for its being coloured purple. That having been done, I think it was made perfectly safe. As I said earlier, it would take 3 to 4 lb. of oats poisoned with 1080 to kill a human being, and no person could eat 3 or 4 lb. of oats whether it was poisoned or not.

Hon. J. J. Garrigan: Who would want to eat it?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: So I believe the ultra-caution of the department is unnecessary. With those remarks, I support the second reading.

HON. G. C. MacKINNON (South-West) [4.37]: Mr. Logan has covered the Bill thoroughly, and there are only one or two small points that I want to mention. He quite clearly stated that the Bill up to and including about line 17 on page 4 is a very good measure; but it appears that from then on it becomes a very bad one. There is one part dealing with the prohibition of trapping, and this is a small point that I would like mentioned to the department by the Minister.

Wherever there is a prohibition of this type departmental officers always tend to keep that prohibition in force much longer than is reasonable. We see where some action is prohibited in a certain area for a specific period; and long after that period has finished that prohibition is still not removed. As a result, people in the district concerned, knowing that the prohibition is needless, tend to take no notice of it. I think that should be brought to the notice of the department so that as soon as poisoning has been completed on an area the prohibition on trapping can be removed; and people can shoot and trap without any worry.

It is customary now, when a property is being poisoned with "1080," to hang a small sign on the gate-post which reads "Danger, poison." It might be a good idea to repaint those signs to read "Danger. Poison laid. Trapping prohibited." It is only a small point but it would emphasise the fact that trapping was prohibited while the poisoning was in progress. I support the remarks of Mr. Logan regarding the penalties and so on; and while I support the second reading, I have some amendments, which I hope will be agreed to, to cover that aspect.

I hope we can remove the other clauses from the Bill; because to my way of thinking, the question of poisoning depends to

a large degree on the extent of co-operation forthcoming. From what investigations I have been able to make, I think the department has not had any trouble in getting co-operation. There are odd cases, but I think the existing Act covers the position fairly well without requiring any severe penalties such as are outlined in this legislation.

On motion by Hon. L. C. Diver, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th December.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [4.40]: I do not want to say much in regard to this Bill, but there are one or two comments I would like to make. The main purpose of the measure is to enable the Government to make a land deal, or to enable a person or company to purchase more land than has been possible in past years. The maximum amount of land which the Lands Department can deal with in one area has been, according to the district and the type of land involved, a maximum of 5,000 acres. This deal with the Chase syndicate has necessitated amending the Act because of the large amount of land involved.

As I have said before in this House, the Lands Department should have the right to deal in parcels of land greater than 5,000 acres. While it was a very good idea to deal as much as possible with the smaller landholders, and to deal in smaller quantities of land so that we could develop many more areas, it is also necessary in my opinion to allow people who can develop large areas, and who are prepared to comply with the conditional purchase conditions, to take large areas if they are away from the more favoured positions which are close to railway lines or highways. These areas further out are slower and harder to develop. I instance those people who have gone out west of the Midland line, 60 or 70 miles, to develop the country there.

I know of one man who took up 5,000 acres—the maximum allowed—and who bought plant to develop it. He found, after having bought his plant, that he was over-capitalised to glory and he needed more land to make an economic proposition of it. Under the Act he was not allowed to purchase any more land, and the only way anybody can get over the position is to call in a dummy. We know that land has been dummed on many occasions but that should not be necessary.

We should give every encouragement to the person who is prepared to spend his money in developing land which is 40 or 50 miles away from a railway line, because that is much harder to develop than areas closer in. This is particularly so in areas

where there has been no development before, and where we know that the farmer will ultimately make a good agricultural proposition of the holding. The point is that these people are giving a lead to others and an encouragement for others to select land around them. They act as experimental farms in the area. So we should not discourage the department from selling parcels of land on conditional purchase greater than 5,000 acres, which is the limit today.

I would not suggest, however, that we give the Minister or the Government carte blanche to sell as many acres as they like and make a deal with whom they like, because I should imagine that 20,000 acres would be sufficient to cover any of the cases that I have mentioned. But when it comes to a deal of the magnitude of 25,000 acres to 100,000 acres—and in this case to 1,500,000 acres—it should be the prerogative of Parliament to authorise that deal.

I am definitely against any Minister or Government having power, without first coming to Parliament, to transact a deal of the magnitude of the one we are now considering. I am not decrying the agreement that has been arrived at. I think it is a wonderful thing for Western Australia, and I am sure it will prove of endless benefit to this State and to the Commonwealth as a whole. I am confident that in not less than 10 years' time we will find that the area selected by the Chase syndicate will have developed out of all proportion, and that we will be hard put to find anything to beat it in any other part of the world.

The potential of production is enormous, and the claims made through the Press and by various people are, to my mind, on the conservative side, because when we take into consideration what has been done in a few years, and couple it with the possibilities, as we know them, of advanced methods of agriculture, stock husbandry and fodder conservation, it will not be difficult to realise that this land has a potential quite out of the ordinary and better than what has been claimed for it.

When reading the agreement made between the Government and the Chase syndicate, I thought it was rather loosely worded. I then put myself in the place of the Government and in the place of the Chase syndicate and wondered if I could have made the agreement a bit more comprehensive and tied it up more securely. Having little knowledge of the proposition, and little to guide them as to what had taken place in the district, the Chase syndicate had many aspects to consider. I feel it is more or less a gentleman's agreement, and I hope that it will be honoured to the full. From the information I have from people who know the gentlemen concerned, I have no doubt that it will be.

I would have liked to see something a bit more definite placed in the agreement with regard to the development of the super works and freezing works. Once again, however, I dare say that if the syndicate goes ahead with the development and finds that its work is being hindered, or is likely to be hindered, because these facilities are not available, it will, in its own interest, establish a super works and a freezing works without delay. I am sure that here again we need have no fear.

Nobody will question the fact that huge tracts of country are to be developed; but I do think we should make it mandatory for the Government to come to Parliament for any future deals, instead of making an agreement to sell large areas of land and, after having made the agreement, bringing it to Parliament for ratification. Anybody who might wish to develop vast areas of country in the future will not decide to do so in five minutes. The Government will have plenty of notice and should be in a position to bring the matter to Parliament before any agreement is reached.

It is necessary we should amend the Act to the extent I have suggested; and when the Bill is in Committee, I will see if I can do just that; because I think it is silly to restrict a person or a group of persons to a limited amount of land if they are prepared to go further away from the railway lines to carry out development of the country. They should be given larger acreages in order to make it an economic proposition.

If a man were given 20,000 acres, he could be asked to develop it at a slightly better rate than that set down under conditional purchase at present. On the other hand, he could develop one particular corner of the 20,000 acres to the satisfaction of the authorities and still hold the other 15,000 acres on spec until land values rose. The matter should be clearly provided for in order to enable these areas to be gradually developed so that each section of a holding as large as instanced would not lie idle and be merely held on spec.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Midland) [4.52]: I do not want to let the occasion pass without assuring the House of the whole-hearted concurrence of the members of my party in the action to be taken to validate the terms of the agreement into which the Government has entered with the Chase syndicate in relation to this project. It has been said that the agreement is more in the nature of a gentleman's agreement, than a binding contract. At the moment I am not very concerned with that. Any syndicate or concern that has money to spend in Australia to develop and exploit its natural wealth should be encouraged to come here and help in the development of this State.

The attitude we adopted towards gold-mining in the early days is an indication, I think, of the attitude of this State towards encouraging investors to come here while we endeavour to make the terms of any agreement as easy as possible for them to help them in the development of the projects in which they are interested. Projects such as these are the best means of decentralisation. We talk a lot about decentralisation but very often we do not put that into practice. A project such as this could do a tremendous amount towards encouraging settlement in the remoter parts of Western Australia, and could help in bringing those areas into production. We have belts of good rainfall land with quite suitable soils along our sea coast which would lend themselves to developmental projects such as this.

I am not fussy whether it is British money, American money or Russian money, as long as the capital is brought here and projects such as these are inaugurated. As I have remarked previously, there is perhaps a danger where investors have not sufficient capital, and where they might break up the soil to a certain extent, and thus create a danger of soil erosion. But I do not think there is any such danger with a concern such as the Chase syndicate. I have also been told by those who have done a good deal of cultivation of light land that this project requires a good deal of money. That money must either be possessed by the investor himself, or there must be some support given by the Government at some stage of development in order to help those people to carry on.

It was said by Mr. Eric Smart, who is well known throughout this State as a successful farmer, that in his opinion the development of some of these light lands was a rich man's hobby rather than a poor man's project. His estimate to bring that land under cultivation and into full production—when he started—was I, believe, five years. He thinks now that the term must be a bit longer.

In any case, the experience he has gained from the work he has done could provide a useful object lesson to others who may be interested enough to wish to develop similar projects. I have no doubt that this syndicate will have the finance and technical equipment necessary to carry out this project successfully, and that in a reasonably short time we can expect a great amount of development in that area.

I spent a week down there in the early part of 1953; and I could see then, from what had been done, what was possible if men with capital could be encouraged to go into that area. I have examined the properties of those close to Esperance itself, and have seen what has been done with a small amount of capital in a few years. I saw work which had been done on the research station in that area. The late Mr. Garnett Wood, a former Minister

for Agriculture, had been down there on several occasions. He was very much impressed and was instrumental in establishing a research station at that point.

In the earlier years there had been an attempt to grow wheat further inland at Salmon Gums; and although wheat is still grown there the country on the whole was too salty to enable farmers to get results which they first thought they might. This climate and soil would not lend itself to the growing of wheat; it is essentially grazing country, or is perhaps suitable for the raising of fat lambs or dairying. The climate is such that the growing period is very long, perhaps nine or 10 months of the year, and with the facilities at hand it could undoubtedly be a great asset to the State.

I saw a property which was then in the early stages of development, and which had been taken up by Mr. Noel White on the Young River on the road to Ravens-thorpe. What he has done is an object lesson and a pointer to the possibilities of that region. I believe he has developed it considerably since I last saw it. But that is an indication of the possibilities of this great country running from the east of Albany to the east of Esperance. If the capital is forthcoming, and if it can be applied to bring that country into production, it would be of great benefit to the State. I think the same would apply to the land west of the Midland line; and it would be a good thing if we could get people interested in developing land in that area. I am very pleased to support this Bill, because I think it is a step in the right direction and can lead to much greater things.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [5.0]: When discussing this Bill, my mind naturally goes back to the only occasion on which I ever visited Esperance; and I think that was some three years ago. I was then the guest of the Minister for Health, Hon. E. Nulsen, who represents that area. There is no need for me to labour the point, because Hansard already has recorded my impressions of the agricultural possibilities of the area. I think it has a remarkable future.

We are now dealing with a Bill which proposes to enable the Lands Department to allow a company to use a huge tract of country in that area; and with the furnishing of this Bill to the House, we have had an opportunity of studying a document which purports to be an agreement between the Government of Western Australia on the one part, and Esperance Plains (Australia) Pty. Ltd. on the other.

Without wishing to make any unfair insinuations in regard to this document, I would say it is more in the nature of a memorandum of the responsibilities of the Government of Western Australia to Esperance Plains Pty. Ltd., because there is no provision made anywhere in the

document for dealing with any breach on behalf of the company. I want to be perfectly fair and say that the verbal information I have is to the effect that the gentleman who was really the driving force behind this document—an American gentleman—is Mr. Chase; and both he and his associates appear to be of a very high standard. Consequently it would appear that the Government has met them on such a footing.

I do trust that with the passage of time we will have no reason to regret these undertakings with this company. The agreement does not say what amount of wealth or money is to be brought into Australia for the purposes of developing this land and carrying out the different projects associated with this so-called agreement. I have a feeling that very likely there will be a nominal amount of money come into this country, and it will be treated in the nature of a revolving fund.

As each area is developed, it will be offered for sale, and the money that accrues from the sale of these parcels of land will go into the common fund. Therefore, instead of our having a great amount of new money coming into the State, the amount could be of a very limited nature. I sincerely trust that I am wrong. However, I was brought up in a careful school. When it comes to documents of this nature, if we are making concessions, it is only fair that the other party should give substantial grounds also to prove its bona fides.

I notice that portion of Clause 5 of the agreement reads as follows:—

Where further experience of the area shows that adequate water supplies are difficult to establish or maintain in a particular area or where poison is found in a particular area in such quantities that it is difficult to eradicate or control the State may—

I cannot understand why one paragraph should deal with two things; In the first place, water which is hard to find; and, in the second, poison of which there is a surplus. These things should have been in two distinct paragraphs. The clause goes on to say—

- (a) agree to exclude such areas wholly from the operations of this agreement in which case the area shall be surrendered to the Crown and a refund made of the purchase price
- (b) agree to exclude such areas from the provisions of this clause
- (c) agree that the provisions of this clause shall be amended so as to extend the period of subdivision and development for a term not exceeding five years
- (d) reduce the purchase price per acre to compensate the company for the additional cost to the company

of the eradication or control of the poison or the provision of adequate water supplies.

Having been in Esperance for a few days, I would say the purchase price the company is supposed to pay the Crown under this agreement could substantially vanish under that portion of this alleged agreement. There will be substantial areas—this applies not only to Esperance, but to other parts of Western Australia—where it will be extremely difficult to locate water; and, consequently, if they are good businessmen, they will claim under this clause. I know I would.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You would not do anything dishonest.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: It is not dishonest. It is in the agreement, and they would not be good businessmen if they did not claim. I hope the House does not get me wrong, but I think they would be well within their rights. To that extent, I think the clause is very loosely worded.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: You do not think it is unconscionable do you?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: No; it is not unconscionable, for the very reason that the State is fully aware of the difficulties associated with the location of water supplies throughout the country. One only has to go to the department to see graphs which show how difficult it is to locate water in some places throughout the length and breadth of the State. On the eastern part of Esperance there will not be much difficulty; but, if my experience means anything, I can foresee a bit of difficulty on the western section. I shall go on to Clause 8 (b), which reads:—

- (b) To construct or cause to be constructed and to authorise the Commissioner of Main Roads to maintain in a satisfactory condition a road from Albany to Esperance for the purpose of carrying the traffic to and from the district as development proceeds

In the scheme of things, that is all right as far as it goes; but there again, we have the looseness of language which I mentioned previously. I would have liked to see something more explicit in that regard.

I join with other members in regard to the necessity for a killing works to be erected at some time in the future; also in regard to the fertiliser works. The agreement says, "some time in the future"; it does not say that when the phosphatic requirements amount to so many thousand tons per annum these works will be provided. It does not say these things will be done in a given time. There is nothing like that.

The company is to be congratulated on having had Clause 18 inserted in the agreement, because it states the the provisions of the State Transport Co-ordination Act or amendments thereof will be

administered so as to not unduly interfere with or hamper the transporting of goods to and from the land held by the company. My only regret is that when our people selected land in that area the Government did not grant them the same concession. This wealthy foreign company, starting out to develop a large tract of land in the Esperance district, realised that it was essential not to be hamstrung by the Transport Board and was fortunate in securing a concession denied to Australian investors who wish to develop land in this State.

While I may have been a little critical, I feel that I have discharged my duty to those whom I represent in this Chamber; because if in the future things do not go with the swing which this project has developed over the last few months, I will at least be able to say that I did point out the weaknesses contained in the original agreement. I wish the company the greatest possible success, and I hope that any fears I have expressed this afternoon will prove to have been without foundation, for the sake of Esperance in particular and Western Australia as a whole. I support the second reading.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [5.17]: Most of what required to be said in connection with this measure has already been said, but I think that in dealing with the matter in this way the Government has taken away the power of Parliament which it should have in relation to all such matters. I am not one of those who has praised the Esperance area to high heaven, or who has said that it will be capable of carrying five sheep to the acre, as I believe all land in this State has its limitations.

Once we increase the stock carrying capacity of a particular area to the maximum by intense culture we run the risk of meeting trouble and the risk of heavy costs in smoothing out that trouble. I do not think that the land that is to be developed will prove to be as remunerative as many people think it will, although I am convinced it will be an excellent area when properly developed.

I hope I will be excused if I sound parochial; but as one who has had a fair bit to do with the settlers who went on to the land west of the Midland line, I hope I may be excused. It seems strange that as soon as a big firm with foreign capital comes along with a scheme such as this the Government is immediately willing to co-operate in every way, even to the extent of building roads for the company. I know all that sort of thing has to be done if the scheme is to be got under way quickly, but I cannot understand why the same consideration is not shown to the individual who goes out into some similar area and needs a road.

Between 1950 and 1953, about 100 or more farmers went on to the land to the west of the Midland line. They came from

the east of that line and from even as far away as the eastern wheat belt. In some cases those men were forced to take up the worst of the land in the area because it happened to be within 20 miles of the railway, and the Lands Department simply placed a blanket over the rest and said, in effect, "Only after this area is occupied will we think about the rest."

The land from about seven miles to 20 miles from the line is the worst in the area; and my contention to the Lands Department was that these men should be allowed to develop the land which they wanted further out, and that the remainder would in time be absorbed. But no; the department would not agree, and in that respect these men got a very raw deal.

For three or four years those settlers struggled along over sand roads which made it almost impossible to get through at times, and they received no assistance from anyone. For that reason I object to the treatment given now to a big organisation with plenty of outside capital. Today some of the farmers to whom I have referred have had to leave their properties after three or four years of hard work, simply because of lack of finance with which to build fences and secure water supplies.

It is not enough to go into an area such as that, thinking one can succeed by putting in a crop; because, in fact, a great deal of capital is necessary. All these men wanted was sufficient money to put up boundary fences and equip bores; and had that finance been supplied to them, the stock companies would have been prepared to advance them stock with which to carry on.

We did not ask for the money to be given them. All we wanted was that it should be made available, repayable over a long term. Had the Government instituted a policy under which that assistance could have been given, the majority of these men would have been on their properties today. I repeat that I would have preferred that those men be given the opportunity to go further out; but the Lands Department would not agree.

Like Mr. Diver, I think certain features of this agreement are risky; but I do not blame the Chase syndicate for securing the best conditions it could, and I only hope that the scheme will prove to be an outstanding success. The greater the success the scheme is the greater will be the advantage to Western Australia. Had the area in question been advertised sufficiently and made known to people in various parts of Australia, I am convinced that sufficient capital would have been forthcoming to develop the land.

We read recently of where 30 blocks were made available for selection, and the Lands Department advertised them in the Eastern States, making known what the

blocks were likely to cost, with the result that there was a spate of applications from the Eastern States; and there are still applications outstanding from people disappointed in the last allocation.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We tried to get the A.M.P. to develop this land.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I know. It will be recalled that Mr. Jones, Mr. Ackland, Mr. Owen and I went to South Australia to the A.M.P. company's project at Keith on the 90-mile desert. We examined its ramifications; and because we appreciated what it was doing, we suggested that it should do the same in Western Australia. However, the A.M.P. is only one company; and although I may be wrong, I believe sufficient capital could have been obtained within Australia to carry out the developmental work of this area.

It is no use crying over spilt milk. The Chase syndicate was sufficiently wide awake to realise the possibilities of this area and to put a scheme before the Government. The Government saw the merits of that scheme and the agreement was signed; and I only hope and trust that for the benefit not only of the syndicate, but also of Western Australia as a whole, the scheme will be an outstanding success.

On motion by Hon. W. R. Hall, debate adjourned.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Belmont Branch Railway Discontinuance and Land Revestment.
- 2, Nurses Registration Act Amendment.
- 3, State Housing Act Amendment.
- 4, Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment (No. 2).

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. F. D. WILLMOTT (South-West) [5.30]: This Bill seeks to bring about a small but very necessary amendment to the Land Act in order to correct an anomaly which was created as a result of a ruling given by the Crown Solicitor in 1954. The situation was created in this way: Prior to 1933, conditional purchase leases were issued without containing any clause relating to the reservation of timber to the Crown. However, when the holders of those leases sought to secure their Crown grant, they discovered, according to the ruling given by the Crown Solicitor, that the timber reverted to the Crown.

This, of course, created a foolish situation; because as long as a man holds the land under conditional purchase lease, it is

his to do with it as he wishes. He can sell it, bulldoze it, or do with it what he likes. But as soon as the Crown Grant is issued to him, the timber reverts to the Crown. Meanwhile, he may have sold the timber or it may have only been partially cut out; but the remaining portion of the timber reverts to the Crown and he is left without a permit for the cutting of timber.

This amendment was designed to remedy that anomaly. Under the provisions of the Bill those leases that were issued prior to 1933 will not be subject to the law as it exists at present. That is, the timber on those leases will not revert to the Crown on the issue of the Crown grant.

The only other provision in the Bill is that relating to limited reservation. That is included in the measure to protect a few persons who hold land under conditional purchase lease subject to certain conditions. Prior to 1922, there were certain tracts of land which were reserved under the Forests Act—land which contained a great deal of agricultural country with, perhaps, small areas of timber. In 1922, it was decided that those areas should be made available for selection under conditional purchase lease, but with a reservation that a sawmiller or timbercutter could enter on to those portions of the land which held that timber.

To instance what I mean, a man takes up land under conditional purchase lease which is issued for the whole 600 acres, but the limited reservation for the timber rights relates only to that portion of land—perhaps 50 acres—which contains the timber, and it is reserved for only a limited period. By the ruling of the Crown Solicitor, if there were any timber remaining on that land, it would revert to the Crown. It is to cover a man such as that that this provision was inserted in the Bill. I do not think I need to say any more. It is a very simple and necessary amendment; and the Chief Secretary, in introducing it, explained the position very fully. I commend the measure to the House.

HON. J. McI. THOMSON (South) [5.34]: I wish to commend the Minister for Lands in another place for bringing down this small but important piece of legislation, which no doubt will bring a great deal of satisfaction to many settlers in the South-West who have been affected by the ruling made by the Crown Law Department in 1954. I think I referred to this matter two years ago on the Address-in-reply debate; and following an answer to a question which I put to the Leader of the House, I pointed out the difficulties that had been created and the dissatisfaction that had spread among the settlers in the Denmark area, following this Crown Law ruling.

Those settlers had cleared the blocks which they held and had improved the pasture only to find that a milling company was permitted to enter on to their land and to lop the trees and take the timber, following which it left the pastures and the fences in such a state that it cost the settlers a great deal of money to put them back into the condition they were in prior to the sawmiller coming on to their properties. In addition, the sawmiller also left behind him for the settler to dispose of all the rubbish that had been created by his activities.

This Bill will restore the timber rights to those settlers who, when they took over these blocks, were of the opinion that they held the timber right. Ultimately, however, they discovered that this was not so. Because of the great satisfaction it will bring to these people, I commend the Bill to this House.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (Central) [5.38]: I think the unfortunate circumstances to which several members have referred, were brought about following an amendment to the Forests Act. As a matter of fact, particularly in the South-West, there was no control over forests, whether the timber was on land taken up under conditional purchase, or on any other land. However, it was found that considerable areas of land were taken up; and after a while, the timber on them was sold, but nothing more was done on the holdings. In fact, I think one man, who was a member of Parliament, made about £7,000 out of the timber, which was a considerable sum in those days. He made no improvements on the land but fencing, which he was bound to do because it was a Crown grant.

It was thought that such measures were exploiting the land; and for that reason a Bill was placed on the statute book somewhere about 1930 to retain control over all forests so that they would not be exploited in the future. Unfortunately, that legislation went further than was anticipated, because today every bit of forest country is owned by the Forests Department. No man can sell any timber off his holding unless he obtains a permit from the department.

That, of course, is rather stupid. However, it was done for two purposes: firstly, because of the milling of timber; and, secondly, to control the production of sandalwood which, at that time, was a great asset to Western Australia because a great amount of money came from its sale to China. However, there is not much left now, and it cannot play an important part any longer in that direction.

I will be pleased to see the provisions in this Bill put into effect to give relief to those people in the South-West where the sale of timber is being held up. A

most remarkable feature was that all the timber could be destroyed. It could be chopped down and burned off; and that was done for quite a long time, following which the Forests Department realised that there was a good deal of suitable milling timber being destroyed and its officers then went around marking the trees which people could not touch.

Now, if one travels through some parts of the South-West one finds, amongst good pasture land, a belt of tall, straight jarrah trees; but if one cares to travel through the same area a few weeks later, it will be found that only the stumps and the debris remain on the ground. When the Government of which I was a member was in office, there was great agitation for something to be done in this direction; and I am pleased that this Bill is to be passed through Parliament. I therefore support the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and passed.

House adjourned at 5.45 p.m.