

From letters I have received I am satisfied a great number of people who left the Old Country to come here are only too anxious to get back. If we carry the motion it will be a blow to our prestige, but what is prestige when people are starving? Many of the settlers that were in my district a few months ago are to-day in Perth receiving sustenance; and that applies to every district in the South-West. Committees in my district met the migrants on their arrival and told them that all they had to do was to throw the seed on the ground, that they were now in a land of milk and honey. Many of the able-bodied men only too willing to work left good positions in England and could secure employment again if only they could get back there.

On motion by Mr. H. W. Mann, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.5 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 17th June, 1931.

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

QUESTION—CATTLE, PLEURO-PNEUMONIA.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, How many cattle were condemned by officers of the Health Department on account of pleuro-pneumonia at (a) Robb's Jetty, Fremantle, during the year 1930, and (b) at Wyndham during the 1930 killing season? 2, What percentages of cattle were condemned of the numbers killed at each place?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, (a) Carcases condemned, 13; organs, 55; (b) carcases condemned, 25. 2, Robb's Jetty, .011 per cent.; Wyndham, .085 per cent.

QUESTION—FARMERS' DISABILITIES ROYAL COMMISSION.

Position of Mr. W. R. Murray.

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: 1, Has the attention of the Premier been drawn to the statement appearing in yesterday's issue of the "West Australian," under the heading "Farmers' Problems," that Mr. W. R. Murray, the president of the Perth Branch of the Nationalist Party, on Saturday submitted in the name of the Nationalist Party a plan for assisting farmers? 2, Is the statement correct? 3, If the statement is correct, when, and by whom, was Mr. Murray authorised to promulgate this scheme as a proposal of the National Party?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, It is a plan devised by the Perth Branch of the National Party to help the farmers.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

As to Report.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [4.35]: I move—

That the report of Committee be adopted.

I would like hon. members to understand that, if at all possible, this Bill should be passed through all remaining stages to-day. The Standing Orders are suspended, but I have not the slightest intention of taking advantage of that fact unless it becomes imperative as in connection with this measure. Only a small amount of time remains to have the necessary regulations framed and gazetted, and the Administrator's assent obtained. The traffic authorities have the new licenses prepared for the first of next month, and all the local governing bodies are in readiness to act. I shall be glad if hon. members will assist me to have the Bill returned with amendments to another place to-day.

Recommittal.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [4.36]: I move an amendment—

That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clause 4.

Because of certain representations which have been made to me to-day, I intend to submit certain amendments. I assure the Minister that I personally have no desire to act in any way that will delay the object he has in view. At the same time I feel it is only right that I should bring some amendments before the Chamber.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.37]: I also intended moving for the recommittal of the Bill. I do not know what is in Mr. Nicholson's mind. My intention was to move the recommittal for one particular purpose. If other hon. members have other ends in view, I am not too keen on having the Bill recommitted. My desire is to move an amendment which I know the Government will accept.

The **DEPUTY PRESIDENT**: The Minister has not signified his intention of opposing the recommittal. It is very unusual for the House to refuse a recommittal.

Amendment put and passed.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Minister for Country Water Supplies in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 42:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: To-day I had an interview with some persons who pointed out to me that a great body of people would suffer considerable inconvenience by the bringing into force of regulations of the nature indicated by Clause 4. I take for example the route traversed by tramcars along the Mount's Bay-road and on the way to Nedlands and Claremont. I am informed—I have not verified the statement, but the Minister will be able to say whether I am right or wrong—that in many cases the residents have to wait something like 20 minutes before a tram is available. One can easily perceive what a great inconvenience such a wait would represent to people, especially in such weather as we experienced yesterday. Take the case of a woman with one or two children waiting for a tramcar in a place where there is absolutely no pro-

tection from the weather. The clause is so restrictive that unless regular tram services are provided along such routes, the inconvenience must be most serious. Between trains there are sometimes intervals of 40 minutes or an hour. Recognising our duty to protect the interests of the State, we must also have regard for the convenience of the public.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Would you suggest a 3-minute service?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I was wondering whether leave could be given to either taxis or motor buses which traverse those routes—

Hon. G. Fraser: Do any of them go along Mount's Bay-road?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes.

The **CHAIRMAN**: Would it not be fairer if the hon. member first suggested to the Committee in what direction he proposes to move?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The matter will take only a minute to explain. Along routes of trains or trams where there is a competing taxi or motor bus service, if there is a train or tram arriving within a reasonable time of the intimation by the passenger of his desire to travel along the route, he should wait for the train or tram. But if not, he should be given the option of using the other means of conveyance which would be available to him.

Hon. G. W. Miles: There should not be any other means of conveyance there available to him.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That all words after "prohibit" in line 2 of the proposed new section be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"The driver of any omnibus from picking up any passenger who may desire to travel or proceed in the same direction as such omnibus may be travelling in all cases where a tramcar or train is due to arrive within five minutes from the time of such picking up at the place or in the case of a railway at the entrance to a railway station or within 150 yards from such railway station where such passenger is waiting to be picked up."

Hon. E. H. Harris: There would be no complication in that, would there?

The **MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES**: Mr. Nicholson said some people would be inconvenienced by the regulation. There may be a few inconvenienced, but those people before they built their houses in that district must have

known of the inconvenience. Moreover, the service has been greatly improved, and intending passengers now have a timetable. So they know when the trams and trains are due, and there is no necessity for them to wait 20 minutes. Again, what department could control the traffic under such an amendment as this? It would be absolutely impossible. The regulation has been in operation for the last five or six years, with the exception of a few months during which some of the bus people have been taking advantage of the court's decision that the regulation was *ultra vires*.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Is the 20 minutes wait exceptional, or is it the rule?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: It is quite the exception. The Committee should not agree to the amendment, unless they wish to place the department in such a position that it will not be able to control the traffic.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I oppose the amendment. No motor vehicles carrying passengers should be allowed to run along Mount's Bay-road. As for the local residents, if there is a tram service every 20 minutes it is much better than obtains in other suburbs. For instance, the people of South Perth have a ferry every half hour. But they have a timetable, just as those using the tram service have, and so they go to meet the ferry when it comes. It would be absurd to have such an amendment in the Bill. I hope the department will consider the advisability of preventing the taxis from running along Mount's Bay-road.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. G. FRASER: I move an amendment—

That after "or" in line 9 of the proposed subsection, the words "passes the entrance to a" be inserted.

Later on I will move a complementary amendment to insert the word "station" after "railway."

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: There is really no necessity for the amendment. Everybody knows that the word "railway" here means railway station. It could not refer to anything else, for the railways cannot pick up passengers at other than a station. The amendment will not interfere with the existing conditions.

Hon. G. FRASER: There is just this feature about it: In the past the buses have been permitted to pick up passengers within 150 yards of a railway. The clause, as printed, will give power to frame regulations preventing that. I want to lay it down definitely by making it 150 yards from a railway station.

Hon. Sir CHARLES NATHAN: The amendment is one which I myself had proposed to move yesterday. It was pointed out yesterday that the Minister, by interjection, had intimated that he saw no objection to the amendment. I will support the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	6
Noes	..	..	..	..	13

Majority against .. 7

AYES.

Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. J. Nicholson
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. F. W. Ailsop	Hon. Sir W. Lathlain
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. C. H. Wittenoom
Hon. G. A. Kempton	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. G. FRASER: I move an amendment—

That in line 10 of the proposed subsection after "railway" the word "station" be inserted.

With my proposed amendment the clause will then read, "Where a prescribed route intersects a tramway or railway station." I candidly confess that it will then read peculiarly. At the same time it is necessary that the word should go in because of the great inconvenience that will be suffered by a large section of the people. I am only asking the Committee to agree to something that has been permitted during the past three or four years.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Is there anything to prevent its being continued.

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, if the clause goes through as it stands; it will be possible to gazette regulations. The insertion of the word "station" will permit buses to pick up

passengers alongside a railway line but not within 150 yards of the railway station.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest to Mr. Fraser that having lost his first amendment, the amendment he now seeks to move will have no effect.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The hon. member should make the sentence read, "Intersects a tramway or a railway station." If there happened to be a road crossing the railway line, passengers could not be picked up within 150 yards of the intersection of the railway where the road crossed it. If the sentence read, "a railway station" then passengers could be picked up where the road crossed the railway line some distance between the stations.

Hon. G. FRASER: I want to get over the difficulty that now exists, particularly in connection with the Armadale service.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: Do you think the Minister will introduce more stringent regulations now than he did before?

The CHAIRMAN: With a view to helping the hon. member, I suggest that he should not move the amendment. If his previous amendment had been carried, the clause would then have read, "Intersects a tramway or passes the entrance to a railway station." The words of the previous amendment were necessary for the passing of the amendment he has now moved.

Hon. G. FRASER: I admit that the first amendment having failed, the clause will read peculiarly if the second amendment is carried. I ask leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Bill again reported and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East) [5.10]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [5.10]: I wish to make a suggestion that I omitted to propose on the second reading. Two or three years ago I brought under the notice of the House the necessity for insisting that tail lights or discs should be affixed to push bicycles. I consider that

at night time these bicycles are the most dangerous things on the road, and it is more necessary in their case than in any other that they should have tail lights or discs. Whenever a car overtakes a bicycle, and another car with dazzling lights is approaching from the opposite direction, in nine cases out of ten one runs the risk of striking the bicycle even though the bicycle has a disc. But these discs are not bigger than a 2s. piece and cannot be observed. There should be a regulation to compel push bicycles to carry reflectors the size of a cup. I was unfortunate enough to run down a lad on a bicycle a year or two ago, and ever since then, when a car has approached me from the opposite direction I have always slowed down. There have been one or two prosecutions, but the police should be instructed to prosecute in every instance. In one prosecution that I am aware of I believe the charge was dismissed or a warning was issued. This is a matter of which the Minister might take notice. I have already spoken to the inspector on duty in St. George's-terrace and he suggested that I should refer it to Inspector Hunter of the Traffic Department. Instructions, however, should come from the Minister in charge of the Act. There is another point to which I wish to refer. When buses and taxis are on the road, they take complete charge and other traffic has no look in at all. I have noticed on several occasions that buses and taxis pull up at an intersection. There should be a regulation to compel pulling up to pick up or set down passengers only within 50 yards of an intersection. I have noticed buses and taxis offend in this way in King's Park-road and at the corner of St. George's-terrace and King-street. I spoke to a traffic inspector about this matter also, but I consider there should be a regulation framed to prohibit hire vehicles pulling up at intersections. The next matter to which attention should be directed is the starting point of the Metro buses at Fremantle. They are competing with the railways and are permitted to start their journey within 100 yards of the Fremantle station gates. It looks as if the Traffic Department were assisting the motor people to compete against the railways instead of doing what they can to combat that competition. I hope the Minister will make a note of these few remarks.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [5.15]: Mr. Miles should be thanked for having drawn attention to the three points he has raised. My experience has been that not 20 per cent. of the bicycles carry any reflectors. That class of cyclist represents a source of extreme danger not only to himself but to others. My experience regarding the buses has been largely that of Mr. Miles. In addition to what he has said, I have found that the buses pull up dead in front of a following vehicle, without giving the slightest warning. I will place a copy of the hon. member's speech before the responsible Minister and will see whether something cannot be done, not only to protect the interests of motorists but to protect the lives of others concerned.

Hon. G. Fraser: Not half of the push bikes carry lights.

The **MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES**: That is so.

Question put and passed.

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

BILL—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [5.16]: I wish to offer a few words of comment upon the Bill. I believe it can be more fully debated with advantage by the farmer members of the House. It is interesting to know that the original Act was introduced as an emergency measure on account of the serious position that so many farmers found themselves in because of the falling price of their commodities. Apparently the legislation has worked much better than was at first anticipated. I believe that much of that has been due to the administration, and the effective management of the Director has contributed to the smooth working of the Act. To what extent that has been so, only those who have had experience of the Act and its administration can properly say. One of the features of our Western Australian economies is the enormous amount of loan and other funds that have been sunk

in the agricultural industry. From that standpoint, it is necessary to take adequate steps to see that the industry is maintained as satisfactorily as possible during adverse times such as the present. One must recognise the necessity for effective control of farmers who find themselves in difficulties, and sympathetic administration regarding the assistance rendered them in the position into which they have been forced through adverse circumstances. At the same time, I contend that it is necessary for the Government to be firm with those who have been shown to be inefficient. The amendments embodied in the Bill have been prompted by the experience of the Director and his officials in dealing with cases brought under their notice. We may therefore assume that they are, from the Director's standpoint, necessary amendments. I would like to hear from farmer members of the House something of their experience of the Act and its operations. It is essential for us to obtain the point of view of all concerned before we decide finally upon the passing of the various clauses. There are several points dealt with in the Bill that impress me as being particularly good. For instance it is provided that a sum shall be set aside to enable a man to travel to where the meeting of his creditors is to be held, and also for the provision of sustenance for himself and his family pending the harvest reaching maturity. From what I have seen in the country districts, that is a necessary provision. Many farmers have suddenly found themselves confronted with hard times and unless provision is made to enable them to secure stores, undoubtedly they will be seriously embarrassed. The part played by the country storekeeper has not received the recognition it is entitled to. The storekeeper has played a most important part in assisting farmers to carry on, and now he finds himself between two stools. He has to satisfy his creditors on one hand, but is unable to collect the debts due to him by his farmer customers. In those circumstances, the country storekeeper is entitled to a prominent position in the allocation of the order in which creditors of a farmer shall be dealt with. There are two parts of the Bill concerning which I hope the Minister will give us some information. Regarding Clause 13(A), I find there the words "except as aforesaid any order, authority, or writing given at any time by a farmer" and so on. I would like to have

some explanation of the meaning to be attributed to the word "writing." It appears to me that it might be interpreted to refer to any security as a "writing." Will the Minister advise the House as to the exact interpretation that will be placed on that word? It might be taken to mean that a document could be regarded as a security, whereas it could not rightly be regarded as such. Then again, Clause 13 appears to me to be really an amendment of the Bills of Sale Act. If that is so, it furnishes good ground for drawing attention to the matter because we have had previous experience of Bills that have embodied amendments to other Acts. The opinion has been expressed on other occasions that such a practice leads to confusion and should be avoided. Perhaps the Minister will deal with that point when he replies. The third point I want to refer to relates to the right of appeal. If a stay order has been issued or some decision has been arrived at dealing with the affairs of a farmer, he should be able to exercise, if he deems it advisable, the right of appeal. We may not always have a sympathetic Director. Officers come and go, and administrative methods change. In the circumstances, some such safeguard reserving the right of appeal to the individual is essential. Its aid would not be invoked in the event of the Act being wisely and sympathetically administered. I support the second reading of the Bill but I hope to hear the opinions of members, who have had experience in the agricultural industry. It appears there may be good grounds for referring the Bill to a select committee if only for the purpose of securing the opinions of farmers regarding the measure. That, however, is for the House to decide.

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

BILL—HIRE-PURCHASE AGREEMENTS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. C. H. WITTENOOM (South-East) [5.23]: I regard the Bill as most important, but I may judge from the expressions of opinion of those I represent—they are mostly practical farmers—the Bill is long overdue. I have not forgotten the

remarks of Mr. Drew last night when commenting on the Bill. He said that the measure should have been brought down many years ago. I agree with him entirely. The only thing I regret is that when Mr. Drew, as he mentioned, dealt with a similar Bill himself some years ago, he did not push it more persistently and secure the passage of that legislation himself. Had he done so, it would have saved the position of many farmers; it would have obviated the necessity for much expense and trouble, particularly in dealing with machinery firms. I congratulate the Government on having recognised the position as it obtains to-day, and upon having placed the Bill before hon. members. When we consider the area of land that has been developed during many years past, when we realise that many hundreds of thousands of pounds have been spent in the purchase of agricultural machinery, it is a wonder that the people concerned did not insist on the introduction of legislation long ere this. I can assure hon. members there is great dissatisfaction amongst the people in my province. I do not know whether it has been the experience of other hon. members, but in country towns I have seen agricultural machinery surrounded by 20 or 30 farmers, patiently waiting for an agent to come along and repossess the machinery, apparently to prevent him doing so. I do not know that I have ever seen any force used to prevent repossession, but I am under the impression that in one or two instances that has been resorted to. There is no doubt that the vendors hold the thick end of the stick under the terms of existing agreements. Those terms are strongly in their favour but at the same time, so far as I am aware, they have, for the most part, acted considerably towards the purchasers. On the other hand, there have been instances in which machinery has been repossessed although almost all the money owing had already been paid. When the Bill was under review in another place, some extremely serious cases were cited, but I think it will be agreed that the vendors, as a rule, have been very fair, and that drastic acts have been few and far between. But it is possible for drastic action to occur, and we should take the necessary legislative action to prevent it. The Bill represents an honest attempt to put pur-

chasers on a better footing. While that is a desirable end, it must be realised that we must not kill the hire-purchase agreement system. The greater part of the business done by farmers, particularly with regard to the purchase of machinery, has been done on that basis. We should not prevent its being done in the future. Already there are rumours about certain steps being taken by vendors. I hope that the information conveyed to me was not true, but this afternoon I was told that even now there is a campaign on the part of vendors to repossess farming machinery on which payments are owing. Perhaps the information has been exaggerated. I was told that in one or two country towns action has been taken along the lines I have indicated. We know that it has been the practice of farmers to take off crops as quickly as possible when prices were high. With that object in view they purchased machinery and signed the agreements without reading them or even understanding them. Despite that fact, we should not allow their property to be taken from them without having some regard to the equity they possess. We want to be fair not only to the purchaser but to the vendor. Under the Bill it is proposed that the purchaser may, within 20 days, demand from the vendor an account, and within the next 14 days the vendor must hand it to the purchaser and show what he considers to be the value of the machine. That seems to be one of the most difficult points. If the two parties cannot reach an agreement, the matter will be referred to the magistrate of the local court. The task for him will be difficult. If he places too low a value on the machine, it will be against the interests of the purchaser. If he places too high a value on the machine, it will be difficult for the vendor to dispose of it. It has been suggested that a select committee should be appointed to consider the Bill. I feel inclined to adopt that course so that we can hold the balance fairly between the purchaser and the vendor regarding the machines that are repossessed. The Bill, I consider, is almost a good one, but for the people who are suffering now, and have been suffering for the last two or three years, I cannot see that it will afford much relief. I understand it is proposed to move a new clause in Committee to make the measure retro-

spective. I hate that sort of thing and so does every other member of this House, but I regard the circumstances as exceptional. This Bill is presented to us in order that we may help people who are suffering now.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It should be declared to be not retrospective in order to make the position clearer.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: It is not retrospective.

Hon. C. H. WITTENOOM: If a person signed a hire-purchase agreement today, where would he stand? He could get no relief now and he might not be able to get any for a considerable time. The object of the Bill is to give people immediate help. I shall support the second reading.

HON. G. A. KEMPTON (Central) [5.34]: I congratulate the Government on having introduced the measure. Travelling through the country, attending meetings and conversing with people, I have been confronted with demands for a measure to deal with the hire-purchase system. It is beyond doubt that many farmers have suffered hardship because of the hire-purchase agreements into which they entered with certain machinery merchants. There are many upright and honourable merchants operating in this State, but there are many who have not played the game towards the farmers. The farmers consider it only fair that the Government should introduce a measure to protect them from those merchants who have not dealt with them as they should have done. There will be a feeling of satisfaction among the farming community that the measure has been introduced. It is certainly long overdue. Quite a lot has been said about a portion of Clause 9 which was struck out in another place. It was thought by members there, and it was also stated in the "West Australian" that because of the amendment the Bill would be retrospective. At first sight it appeared as if the Bill would be retrospective, but we now find that that is not so. When the Bill reaches the Committee stage, I intend to move the insertion of a new clause reading—

Subject to this Act the conditions contained therein shall apply to all existing hire-purchase agreements.

This House does not believe in retrospective legislation, but as has been pointed out by several members, this is an exceptional matter. However, that can be discussed in Committee. It would be wise to make the Bill retrospective so that those farmers with agreements already in force will have the same advantages as those who will come under the Act later on.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [5.37]: I also would like to offer my congratulations to the Government for having, at this very late stage, introduced this necessary piece of legislation. One of the oldest members of the House, Mr. Drew, in speaking last night, related how many years ago he had moved in the direction proposed by the Bill, but he said that the House was then so conservative that he could not get a seconder to his motion.

Hon. G. Fraser: Members have not altered very much.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: One of our younger members is of opinion that the House has not altered very much, despite what is considered to be an enlightened age.

Hon. Sir Edward Wittenoom: He is no judge.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Time will tell. Mr. Drew could not get any support for his motion at that time and because, since then, the representatives of the people who are opening up our agricultural areas have not seen fit to take action in the direction desired, members here are asked to do something that no doubt will be distasteful to them. Mr. Kempton said members would be asked to make the measure retrospective. The hon. member has given this matter much consideration and has consulted other members before deciding to take that step. Mr. Seddon, when speaking on the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment Bill, said he was waiting to hear what members representing the agricultural provinces would have to say. If he takes notice of the opinion of members representing agricultural provinces on this measure, he will accept their word, if he is not already of that opinion, that the measure is long overdue, and that to enable it to serve the purpose for which it is introduced, it should be made retrospective. I was the member Mr. Drew referred to last night as having accompanied him to the farm on the Wongan Hills line a couple of years ago.

That man was a successful farmer in every sense of the word. He was accustomed to machinery, but the tale he told that afternoon was indeed discreditable. Unfortunately, his was not an isolated case. As has been remarked, some machinery merchants have played the game fairly, but far too many have not played it fairly. The sins of one section are often visited upon the innocent in various ways, and because there have been so many cases of hardship, we shall ask members to make the measure retrospective.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Do you think the farmers will be equitably dealt with under Clause 5? Those are the cases to which I was referring.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I think they will be.

Hon. J. Nicholson: You will find they will not be.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: The Bill has received much careful consideration. It is recognised how difficult is the task to deal equitably with all parties. We are continually being told that we must bend our energies and direct all our attention to keeping the farmers on the land, to enable them to reduce production costs and make it worth while for them to continue as agriculturists. This is one of the best ways in which that can be done.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

MOTION—STOCK REGULATIONS, KIMBERLEY CATTLE.

To inquire by Royal Commission.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by the Hon. G. W. Miles (North):—

That an honorary Royal Commission be appointed to investigate the administration and application of the regulations under the Stock Diseases Act, 1895, as gazetted on the 11th October, 1929, particularly as they relate to the restriction of the movement of cattle from the Kimberley district.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [5.44]: Mr. Miles, in submitting the motion, assured the House that there was no desire on the part of the Kimberley cattle growers to interfere with stock in clean areas, or with the dairying industry of the South-West. As one of the representatives

of the South-West, I think I can reciprocate by saying that the people interested in the dairying industry do not desire to be obstructive or to insist upon the continuance of any regulation that presses unduly upon the people of the North. At the same time the relaxation of any regulation that can be proved to prevent the introduction of pleuro pneumonia or any other disease into the clean areas of the State is of supreme importance to the people I represent. We would be neglecting our duty if we did not point out to the House the great risk that would be run by permitting any stock that was suspect to be in any way intermingled with our herds, or to be allowed to travel through our country. I have noticed that for some time past there has been a considerable difference of opinion between the Kimberley stockgrowers—I understand they are practical men—and the Stock Department concerning pleuro pneumonia. It was said either by Mr. Miles or Mr. Holmes that there was no pleuro pneumonia in the Kimberleys, that it was merely a lung disease which had been mistaken for pleuro by the stock authorities. I do not pretend to have any veterinary knowledge, and I cannot determine which would be the correct view. I feel, however, that most of us in a case of this kind would take first notice of the pronouncement of the Stock Department.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Did you tell them about the potato expert?

Hon. W. J. MANN: Not yet. So far as I have been able to read, I think there is some difference of opinion not only here but in the other States regarding the seriousness of pleuro pneumonia. I read the other day in an Eastern States newspaper about a grower who stated there was no necessity to have any great fear regarding this disease provided proper methods were taken to combat it. He was referring to the fact that some sales in one part of the State referred to had been made at a disadvantage because of a report having been spread that there was pleuro pneumonia in the district. He said that so long as proper methods were adopted there was no great cause for fear. I do not know that I can subscribe to that view. I understand that in this State some of the methods that were adopted to deal with the disease were said to be supremely crude, in that they resulted in the tails falling off the animals treated.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And they were treated by experts.

Hon. H. Seddon: And they became Manx cattle.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I did not see the animals, but I had it on the best authority that one gentleman said it was a good thing the heads had not been inoculated or they would have fallen off. I do not know that we need take much notice of the veterinary surgeons who were responsible for that kind of treatment, for I am sure that the Stock Department in this State have a much better grip of the subject than that. In our South-West there are about 78,000 dairy stock, all of which are absolutely clean. We want to keep them clean. If the Royal Commission is appointed, I should like to be sure that evidence will be secured from the South-West and from all possible expert sources, so that every precaution will be taken to keep this part of the State clean. I do not know what influenced Mr. Miles to move for an honorary Royal Commission. My recollection of his speech was that it should consist of practical men from the North.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Not necessarily from the North.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Of practical men engaged in the industry. I do not know that an honorary Royal Commission would suffice. If a commission were appointed, it should consist of the best experts we can get. The only men I can call to mind whom I would like to see on the commission are Dr. Gilruth, or Dr. Robertson, of the Commonwealth veterinary service. I believe the very small expense of obtaining the services of the latter would be fully warranted, and we would be likely to get further than we would if the inquiry were held by laymen. We should have men experienced in the industry to assist in the investigation, and men who know exactly what the local conditions are. We have been fairly fortunate in the past with respect to stock diseases. I trust the efforts of the Stock Department will not be lightly regarded, because I believe the officials are doing splendid work. I suggest to Mr. Miles that he should delete from the motion the word "honorary," thus leaving it open to the Government to say whether they will utilise the services of gentlemen such as I have mentioned so that we may get the best

possible results from any Royal Commission that is appointed. I support the motion.

HON. E. ROSE (South-West) [5.53]: I am an old pioneer of the Kimberleys where pleuro pneumonia now exists. My sympathies go out to the old settlers there. Only those who have been through the pioneering stages and roughed it on the stations know what the people of the North have to contend with. Since these restrictions have been in force it is very difficult for many of them to pay their way. A number of the smaller men have lost money and have even had to bear the expense of sending cattle down to the coast. Unless they get some relief, they will have to give up their runs entirely in three or four years. We all desire to avoid that. At the same time, I have no wish to see pleuro pneumonia introduced into our dairy herds in the south. We should be most careful to see that the regulations are put into force, and that no diseased cattle are allowed to travel through any part of the country that embraces the dairy industry. At present the regulations allow cattle to be slaughtered at Midland Junction, Robb's Jetty and Kalgoorlie. I should imagine there was a lot of risk attached to allowing these cattle to go to the markets. The animals are shunted into the yards and there may be other cattle grazing there, which are just as likely to pick up the germs as if they were running in a paddock. I should like to see it made possible for graziers further North to purchase Kimberley cattle and fatten them on their own holdings. The cattle have been driven for weeks in the far North and must lose a lot of condition. They are shipped to Fremantle and a number of them are hardly suitable for the trade. If a Royal Commission is appointed I hope it will go carefully into this matter, and see whether some means cannot be devised whereby these cattle can be fattened in the areas I speak of. I have spoken to many pastoralists up there, and they see no harm in having Kimberley stock fattening on their holdings. I should like to see the motion go further. Mr. Miles would be wise if he added words to the effect that an inquiry be held into the feasibility of starting either canning, chilling or boiling-down works in the West Kimberleys.

I do not say where such works should be erected, but we must find some means to enable the growers to dispose of their cattle up there. It will not be many years before there will be more than enough cattle south of the Kimberleys to supply the whole of the market in the South-West. Some method will, therefore, have to be devised to dispose of the Kimberley cattle or many of the settlers will have to give up their runs. This will mean a loss to the Government because of the number of leases that will be thrown up. There are between 90,000 and 100,000 dairy cattle in the south which will have to be protected. I am very much concerned about this matter. Many scores of settlers there are dependent on the dairy industry for a living. The regulations at present in force should be continued in their application to the South-West. Whether the northerners would agree to have them relaxed in their case or not, so that the cattle in question might be fattened on their runs, is, of course, another matter. I hope the Royal Commission will be appointed. It should not cost very much, and will be able to make all necessary inquiries before coming to a decision. Therefore I support the motion.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East) [6.1]: I intend to support the motion. Although, of course, it is necessary to take every precaution against the spread of pleuropneumonia, it is also necessary to see that the cattlemen of the Kimberleys are kept on their holdings. Sufficient information has already been placed before the House to justify inquiry by a Royal Commission. Reports of cattle travelling to the Eastern States to be eventually shipped at Port Augusta have been current for quite a long time, and such a state of affairs requires remedying. From that aspect the Government are undoubtedly doing wisely in opening up the Canning stock route, because it will at any rate obviate the necessity for excessive travelling of the cattle if we bring them down over the route of 1,000 miles from Hall's Creek to Wiluna. It appears to me that the department could be a little more elastic in their regulations, while at the same time preserving the safeguard of quarantine. If the matter was placed in the hands of a reliable officer, one who had established his reputation as a firm administrator, there could be a considerable degree

of relaxation with safety. However, that is a matter for the proposed Royal Commission to find out.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 17th June, 1931.

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

QUESTION—HOSPITAL TAX, ASSESSMENTS.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Lands: 1, Was it the intention of Parliament to limit the payment of taxation imposed by the Hospitals Fund Act to income from 1st January, 1931? 2, Is he aware that individuals, as well as limited companies, are being assessed for hospitals tax on the basis of income covering a period anterior to 1st January, 1931? 3, As the Act provides for payment on all income received subsequent to 1st January, 1931, will he advise whether the imposition of the tax as indicated is mandatory, and if so, whether it is his intention to amend the Act and so give effect to the intention of Parliament? 4, As income from all sources is, generally speaking, now much reduced, will he advise what action is proposed in connection

with over-plus of taxation, estimated on the balance sheet of a previous year and already paid?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No. See Sections 5 and 8 of the Act. 2, Yes, in accordance with the sections just referred to. So far as individuals are concerned, the first contributions for which they are assessed is subject to adjustment on the next assessment in accordance with the second proviso to Section 5. In regard to companies, contribution is only payable on actual profits, and the payments of such contribution will adjust themselves over a period of years. 3, One principle of the Hospitals Fund Act is to endeavour to place persons receiving income from business, land, property, dividends and such like, on the same basis, as far as is possible, as the person receiving salary and wages. It is not proposed to submit any amendments of the Act. 4, Answered by Nos. 2 and 3.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS, EAST GUILDFORD.

Filling in of Clay Pit.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Do the filling in operations at the clay pit at East Guildford beyond East Street, which have been carried on for some years now by the Railway Department, represent an improvement of private property, which the Government have leased for that purpose? 2, Who are the owners being benefited and what is the date of the lease, if any? 3, What is the cost to date? 4, Was not the land indicated intended for immediate resumption, according to the report of the Town Planning Commission? 5, If not resumed, will the several owners, who have thus been benefited, have a claim for a higher price for their land, due to this great expenditure on the part of the Railway Department? 6, Will he look carefully into this matter in order to safeguard the funds of the Treasury?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, Yes. They also gave a necessary strengthening to the railway embankment. 2, (a) Mrs. Button; (b) 18th January, 1929. 3, The cost is covered by the benefit to the railways, both as referred to in No. 1 and as a means of disposing economically of surplus ashes. 4, Not to my knowledge. 5, No doubt. 6, This has already been done.