

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I have not the dates available, but will say that over 700 gallons of milk per day come to the Goldfields from the metropolitan area. The cattle on the fields are hand-fed and the dairymen are having a bad spin. The milk is taken out on the rounds in carts which I suppose are not up to the required standard. Damp bags are placed around the cans. The wind blowing on the water in the bags brings the temperature of the milk down. In my opinion, only one class of milk should be sold on the Goldfields, and that is pasteurised milk. It is advertised in Kalgoorlie as pasteurised, and last week the inspectors tested the milk which came from Perth. The milk is sent in goods brake-vans. It is placed on the floor of the van and covered with mail, vegetables and luggage. It is milked in the metropolitan area in the morning and is supposed to be pasteurised. The pasteurising takes about half-an-hour. It is then loaded in the train and arrives in Kalgoorlie the following day at 10.10 a.m. It is then stored until the following morning, when it is delivered.

The other day when I was on the Kalgoorlie station as the milk arrived, I saw the milkman get a beater and beat the ice on the milk. He then took the milk from the can and put it with the pasteurised milk. The whole procedure is a farce. That is the class of milk that we on the Goldfields are getting. We have elected a board in Kalgoorlie consisting of a member of each of the councils, a member of the road board and the medical officer on the Goldfields, to go into this matter. We also have a businessman in Kalgoorlie who is prepared to erect the requisite plant to pasteurise the milk. In my opinion, the only thing to do is to support this Bill and hand the control of the milk over to the board, which will be able to ensure that the Goldfields people get wholesome milk. I would point out to members that the milk cans, when they are returned to Perth, are filled with the bags that are put round the cans when they are sent to Kalgoorlie. The board's inspectors will, of course, see that in future the cans are properly steamed.

As I said, the Goldfields climate is very dry and dusty. I have been on a dairy on the fields and the method of getting a cow into the dairy to be milked is as follows:—

A person comes along and gets the animal by the ear and brings it in. He pats it on the tail or gets hold of the tail and pushes the animal into the pen. He then starts milking without sterilising his hands. I have also seen him put his hand into the pail of milk to wet the teat before milking. I therefore cannot be convinced that our Goldfields people today are getting clean, wholesome milk. Certainly, the milking conditions should be improved. We cannot at present get the necessary plant. Again, the dairymen on the fields are labouring under difficulties because they cannot secure cement to repair their floors. To put their dairies into a reasonable condition, the dairymen will have to expend some hundreds of pounds. In my opinion, Whyalla in South Australia is the best place in the Commonwealth for milk. Before the cow is put in the milking pen, it passes through a tunnel in which there is a terrific draught which blows away the flies and loose hairs from the cow. The dairy is sterilised and everything possible is done to ensure the cleanliness of the milk right from the time it leaves the cow until it is placed in containers to be delivered to the people.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 3rd October, 1916.*

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

**QUESTIONS.****DAIRYING.***(a) As to Stock for Soldier Settlers.*

Mr. McLARTY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Is he aware that the Victorian Soldier Settlement Commission has guaranteed a minimum price of £5 per head for weaned average quality heifer calves at 5 to 7 months of age?

2, In order to ensure that future soldier settlers shall obtain sound dairy stock, would he favour giving a similar guarantee to breeders of dairy stock in Western Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

1, and 2, A brief reference in the Press to the purchase of heifers by the Soldier Settlement Commission in Victoria has been noted.

The Western Australian Government was the first to recognise the necessity of purchasing heifers for future needs of soldier settlement, and care has been taken to select suitable dairy stock and to pay a reasonable price to producers, while at the same time safeguarding the interests of soldier settlers to whom this stock ultimately will be sold.

*(b) As to Centres for Artificial Insemination.*

Mr. WILLMOTT asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, In selecting districts to establish centres for artificial insemination, has consideration been given to the establishment of such a centre or centres in dairying districts producing butterfat and not whole milk?

2, If consideration has been given to the matter, will he state when it is expected to establish a centre in these areas and in what particular areas?

The MINISTER replied:

1, and 2, The Artificial Insemination Centre at Wokalup Research Station is of an experimental nature to ascertain to what extent artificial insemination may be applicable to Western Australian conditions.

Full consideration will be given to the establishment of centres throughout all dairy districts.

**WUNDOWIE CHARCOAL-IRON.***As to Cost Compared with Imported Pig-Iron.*

Mr. THORN asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

1, What is the price per ton f.o.r., Perth, of pig-iron imported into Western Australia from Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd.?

2, What quantity of wood is required to produce one ton of charcoal-iron at Wundowie?

3, What will be the cost of each ton of wood landed at the works at Wundowie for use there?

4, What will be the cost of converting each ton of wood into charcoal?

5, What quantity of charcoal will be required to every ton of iron-ore for conversion into charcoal-iron?

6, What is the percentage of iron in the ore it is proposed to use at Wundowie?

7, From where will that iron-ore be obtained?

8, What will be the cost per ton of mining ore?

9, What will be the cost of handling and transport per ton of iron-ore to the works at Wundowie?

10, What quantity of iron-ore will be required to produce one ton of charcoal-iron?

11, What will be the cost of each ton of charcoal-iron produced at Wundowie, delivered f.o.r., Perth?

The MINISTER replied:

1, £7 1s. 4d. per ton.

2, Three tons with 20 per cent. moisture basis.

3, 10s. 6d. per ton green basis loaded into wood buggies.

4, Charcoal is the by-product of wood distillation and costs of converting wood into charcoal are absorbed by the refinery.

5, Nine cwts.

6, Approximately 50 per cent.

7, From Wundowie and Coates' Siding.

8, Five shillings per ton.

9, Three shillings and sixpence per ton.

10, Two tons.

11, £6 14s. 8d. after allowing for depreciation and interest on capital.

## LANDS DEPARTMENT.

*As to Surveyors and Trainees.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Lands:

1, How many surveyors are at present in the employ of the Lands Department?

2, Is this number considered sufficient for present requirements?

3, Is there a training class for apprentice surveyors, and if so, how many are taking the course?

4, Does he consider sufficient inducement is offered to surveyors in this State to attract sufficient trainees?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Five (5) salaried surveyors in the field, and four (4) contract surveyors who accept work from the department.

2, No.

3, Each trainee is required, under the Licensed Surveyors' Act, to register under articles as a pupil with a licensed surveyor or surveyors for a period of not less than four years, not less than three of which must have been in service in the field. Before entering into articles, a candidate for a certificate of competency must produce evidence that he has passed—(a) a University Matriculation Examination; or (b) an examination accepted by a University as being equivalent to such Matriculation Examination; or (c) the Leaving Certificate Examination conducted by a University or by the Department of Education of New South Wales; or (d) in five subjects of such Leaving Examination or corresponding examination, as the case may be; provided that the examination passed by the candidate shall include a pass in English, Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry. Six (6) departmental cadet surveyors are attending the full-time degree course in Surveying at the Western Australian University, five of whom were appointed in March, 1946. Two (2) departmental cadet surveyors, who were employed in May, 1940, are employed in the field with staff surveyors, in the completion of their articles, and these and one other are due to sit for the Licensed Surveyor's Examination in March, 1947. Five (5) pupils are serving under articles to licensed surveyors in private practice.

4, There was no lack of applications for cadet surveyors when applications were called to fill five positions last January.

**BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.**

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

**BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Third Reading.*

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [4.37]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**

(Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle) [4.38]: I regret I was unable to be present yesterday when the second reading of this Bill was under discussion. Had I been in attendance, I would have indicated that I supported it very strongly, because the measure is in consonance with Government policy to make available to children in country districts a living-away from home allowance to enable them to attend consolidated schools. One difficulty in connection with the plan is to find suitable accommodation in districts where consolidated schools are being established. Local groups do not always find it possible to raise sufficient funds for reasonable buildings, and I have been expecting that local authorities would interest themselves in this matter as they have in regard to the establishment of bus services. I am very glad that the Leader of the Opposition has made this attempt to alter the Act to permit local authorities to establish hostels, because I know quite a number of districts where such hostels could very well be established by local committees where, without that assistance, the desired provision would not be made. I am very glad the House has seen fit to agree to the second reading and I certainly support the third reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

**BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.***Message*

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 19th September.

**MR. STUBBS** (Wagin) [4.40]: I am sure members will agree with me that this is a very important measure. In my judgment, it affects a large section of the people, those with families. Let me give an illustration. A few days ago I saw in shop windows in Murray-street and Hay-street smoked mullet marked 1s. 8d. per lb. About 2 lbs. of smoked fish of any kind is required to feed a family of, say, five; and 2 lbs. at 1s. 8d. per lb. is far more than the average person can afford to pay. This may be a little outside the scope of the Bill; but what I desire is to bring under the notice of the House and the Minister the fact that this legislation is long overdue. That is my excuse for prefacing my remarks with a statement as to the enormous price the public are called upon to pay for fish. Some 50 years ago the Swan River abounded with all kinds of fish. Illegal netting was rife.

I question whether members of this Chamber know how frightened shoals of fish are even when hundreds of yards away from a net. Illegal netting is still being carried on in many of the rivers and estuaries of the State. I have on scores of occasions been bathing with friends just about daylight in the Swan River and, before we knew where we were, hundreds of fish were hopping over our heads as we were swimming. When we reached the shore we looked in the direction from whence the fish came and saw, in the twilight, four or five men—mostly foreigners—hauling in nets. The Bill proposes to confer greater powers on inspectors. In the past, if an inspector found a long net in an estuary or a river which was closed against netting, he could not seize the net and confiscate it. If the Bill passes, an inspector will have power to confiscate a net, whether the owner of the net is present or not. This is a wise provision and I am glad it is included in the measure.

The main provision in the Bill is for the creation of a committee consisting of four members, one of whom—the chairman—shall be the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, one shall be appointed to represent fishermen who are commercially engaged in the fishing of crayfish; one shall be appointed to represent fishermen who are commercially engaged in fishing in estuaries and on beaches; and one shall be appointed to represent fishermen who are commercially engaged in deep-sea fishing. I think the proposed committee will function in the right way. One of the main reasons for the depletion of fish in the Swan River, I think, is the increased traffic at Fremantle. This frightens away many fish that would otherwise enter the river to spawn; but whatever the reason is for the depletion, I do not think any member will contradict me when I say that the depletion is also due to a very large extent to the illegal methods employed to catch fish.

There is another aspect I would like to bring under the Minister's notice so far as concerns the depletion of fish in our rivers. I am an angler of 50 years' standing and for that long period have also been an honorary inspector of the Fisheries Department. Therefore, a few observations on my experiences may be of interest both to the Minister and his department. I have frequently noticed that during the heavy rains in the wintertime nearly all of the fish that usually remain in the river throughout the winter were washed out to sea. I also observed that much of the food upon which the fish subsisted was carried away by the heavy floods in the wintertime out to the ocean.

I hope the proposed committee will make inquiries into that aspect, with a view to providing food for fish in our rivers, so as to encourage them to come in from the ocean to spawn. In that way the supply of fish for future generations will be maintained. Formerly one could catch 30 or 40 black bream in the river. It is an edible fish and affords good sport for anglers because of its great fighting qualities; but the river has been practically depleted of that fish, largely due, in the first place, to illegal netting, and in the second place to the fact that the food upon which it subsisted—such as shell fish and food carried down the river on fallen trees—is not now available. It must be

replaced in some form or other. If the Bill becomes law, I hope the proposed committee will endeavour to provide, if it is humanly possible, the best kind of food to induce the fish to come back into the river.

There is one other provision that I am glad the Minister has placed in the Bill, and that is the one giving the inspectors much wider powers than they have under the parent Act. I hope the Minister will carry out the promise he made to me quite recently to bring down, before the session closes, a Bill to give effect to my earnest wish that the supply and distribution of fish be controlled so as to enable it to be placed on the breakfast table for about half the present cost. One of the big expenses attaching to the sale of fish is that most of the retail shops in the city pay from £10 to £15 rent a week. That is added on and has to be met by the unfortunate families that desire to buy fish. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

**MR. KELLY** (Yilgarn-Coolgardie) [4.52]: I have given a lot of consideration to the clauses in the Bill and I feel that they will do a great amount of good when included in the parent Act. There are, however, some other provisions that could be added to make the measure complete. I am anxious to get certain information from the Minister in reference to some of the clauses in the Bill. I welcome the idea of appointing a professional fishermen's advisory committee as an excellent one. It should have far-reaching results in the ultimate success of our fishing industry. I feel that the appointment of this committee will give the Fisheries Department a far better perspective of the industry than it has had in the past. Up to date the average fisherman has been too prone to treat the Fisheries Department as something irksome and, to some degree, established for the purpose of preventing him from earning his legitimate livelihood. There are many instances of professional fishermen—probably only a small minority—who have endeavoured to flout the law and have succeeded in obtaining a lot of fish of an illegal size, and have perpetrated other breaches of the law.

The establishment of this committee will, therefore, have a far-reaching effect on the present position, and, apart from the amount of knowledge that it will make available, it will also be the means of pro-

viding a lot of data for use in the Fisheries Department. Among the clauses about which I would like some information is one which gives power to the Minister to limit and define the days upon and the period during which any licensed boat may be used for catching fish for sale. I quite realise, as the Minister explained in his second reading speech, that the inclusion of that provision is to deal with the situation that has arisen at Hopetoun where something new to the fishing industry has taken place; and I believe it has no known equal in any other part of the world. It is quite all right for that to be added to the Bill, but it is too harsh and binding a provision to be allowed to have general application. I would not mind if it mentioned a specific place, but when it is left open, as it is, it appears to me to allow undue authority to be exercised. There should be some easing of that provision.

In reference to limiting the period, I am quite in accord with that provision, particularly if it applies to limiting the time when nets may be used during, for instance, the spawning season. There has been, and still is, quite an amount of fish-trapping going on during the one important period when fish should be left alone so that propagation of the fish families could take place. We repeatedly find that fish purchased in the open market are in full roe. If that state of affairs is allowed to continue it will have detrimental effects on the industry. I therefore feel that the inclusion of that provision will have beneficial results. Another paragraph of the same clause provides for the limiting and defining of the species and quantities of fish which any licensed boat may hold or carry during any period of the year specified by the licensing officer. I would ask the Minister this question: Does this clause mean that the licensing officer may direct a particular fisherman as to what days he will be allowed to fish in certain waters, and as to what species he will be permitted to net? There seems to be no other interpretation that could apply. That provision, together with the restrictions in paragraph (b) of this clause make it very hard for a fisherman to get a living. If the clause is allowed to apply to the instances I have mentioned, it would be ridiculous and should be amended in some way.

In another part of the Bill it is proposed to give the Minister control over the purchase and sale of fishing gear. During the past few years the fishing industry, generally, has been acutely affected by the short supply of most of the cotton lines that are used. At times there has been little if any cotton repair material available, and the nets themselves have been in short supply. Many fishermen are today using four or five different sizes of net in order to make up one whole net. In many cases the sizes of net used do not comply with the regulations. I think some priority should be given to licensed fishermen for the purchase of nets, as they are the men whose living depends on the use of fishing gear. This clause asks that the restrictions should remain in force until December, 1947, roughly 15 or 16 months from now. That may be necessary and I do not think any member will disagree, if such is the case. On making inquiries throughout the trade I found that though a shortage of cotton fishing materials exists in Western Australia it is not so acute in the other States, and in the majority of the States it does not exist at all.

At present certain fishermen are able to procure nets from the Eastern States without the necessity of obtaining any release or priority. If it is possible for complete relaxation of control to obtain in the Eastern States it should be possible to get at least our legitimate requirements from the stocks offering. If we can obtain the necessary supplies an endeavour should be made to see that they reach the normal trade channels in Western Australia, instead of money being sent from this State to purchase such materials from retailers in other parts of the Commonwealth. If the necessity for priority still exists in the Eastern States I think this clause should be eased to permit the Minister, without further reference to the House, to repeal the provision at any date, irrespective of whether it is the 31st December, 1947, or not. That power should be given to the Minister. I agree in principle with the majority of the provisions in the Bill, but I would like the Minister to make clear to the House what he has in mind regarding the various clauses I have mentioned. I think the Bill could have gone further and I am disappointed that the Minister has not seen fit to add several new clauses.

I suppose members will think, "This is a hardy annual," but it is one in which I am deeply interested. In the framing of this small Bill plenty of scope existed for the introduction of several new clauses that are necessary if the legislation is to be complete. I expected that there would be a clause dealing with the protection of crabs and the protection of prawns, particularly in the Swan River. I also thought there would be a clause dealing with control of the use of Seine or drag-nets. In the parent Act there is certain reference to the Seine-net and the various sizes of nets permitted to be used are laid down. Provision should be made to govern the size of the nets permitted to be used in the catching of mullet in the Swan River. At the present time there is a disparity between the types of net used by the various professional fishermen. In the last few months I have measured 15 or 20 nets and there are hardly two of them that are complete as far as the sizes specified in the Act are concerned. In a number of cases several parts of the net being used are far below the present specified size. Greater care and supervision should be exercised if the nets used are to conform to the regulations. The diversity of sizes is responsible for the fact that some fishermen receive a far greater share of the catch than is received by others. That is a point that should receive consideration in the Bill.

The fisheries inspectors in this State have a colossal job and the Chief Inspector is not able to do his work properly under existing conditions. He has only a few inspectors to police our huge coastline, as well as our many estuaries. I understand that there are only eight or ten inspectors employed by the Fisheries Department from Wyndham to Eucla, and, besides policing both open and closed waters, these men are required to police the supply and distribution of fish in the metropolitan area. It is a task beyond the capacity of eight or ten men. On a number of occasions I have referred to the position of crabbing in the Swan River, and I am afraid that the department is opposed, in every way and at all times, to any alteration or addition where the protection of crabs is concerned. There have been a number of replies to queries put forward by me in this House, and statements made in the Press, and they are all wide of the mark, showing the feel-

ing that exists in the department. I am at a loss to understand why that obstinacy should continue.

The whole outlook of the department seems to centre on the protection of a few men who are getting what is perhaps a precarious living, as in many cases they are only part-time fishermen and could not depend entirely on the income derived from fishing in the Swan or any other river in close proximity to Perth. If the crabs do not receive greater consideration than has been shown in the past, we will be faced with a further depletion of the Swan River stocks. I cannot understand this prejudice on the part of the department—I can think of no other word to express my feelings in this matter. There must be something more than we have been told at odd times as to the reason why crabs are not protected. There should be regulations governing the period during which crabs can be taken, and it would be a simple matter to control the amount of crabs taken from the river. Such a regulation should cover the size of crabs to be taken, as well as the period, and the carapace measurement allowed should be within reason. It should not be, as was suggested in the Press on one occasion, a carapace measurement of 30 inches. Any man accustomed to catching crabs could count on the fingers of one hand the number of crabs of that dimension caught in a season.

The only way to preserve the wonderful crabbing that existed in the Swan River in the past is a total prohibition of set or sunken nets, particularly during the winter months, because it is at that time that the few remaining crabs, the females left after the season's catch, are to be found in the river. It is from those that we get the following year's supply. I say that with all deference to the opinion of the C.S.I.R., which says that the majority of our crabs come from the waters outside Fremantle harbour. I do not agree with that view, because I have proved, time and time again, that it is not to be relied on, and I speak with 30 or 40 years' experience of the Swan River.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is getting away from the Bill.

Mr. KELLY: I would like a ruling on this matter. It is not so much the few things that have been put into the Bill, as the number that should have been put in that is chiefly interesting to those who are to dis-

cuss this measure. Unless I am transgressing against Standing Orders, I should like to say I consider that these matters should be provided for in the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is getting a long way from the Bill.

Mr. KELLY: The practice of indiscriminate netting in our rivers and estuaries makes it necessary to amend the Act. One of the proposals is to appoint a committee to advise the Minister from time to time. Doubtless the Minister will obtain from the committee much useful information that will enable him to infuse into the industry something that it lacks today. If we are going to permit the continued destruction of thousands of fish, including crabs and prawns, in our various estuaries, particularly the Swan, this should be the occasion to stress the benefit that could be derived from the appointment of such a committee. Doubtless the Minister would ensure that the members of the committee were well recommended and would be sure in his own mind that they would function adequately. If this were done, it would be in the interests of the State and the department. I am rather disappointed that I have not been permitted to suggest what I think should be included in the Bill.

Mr. Withers: You can do that on the Estimates.

Mr. KELLY: Quite so, but I thought this was the proper time to offer such suggestions. I desired to give the House a full account of existing conditions and of amendments that would be desirable. I am pleased that the measure has been introduced because it represents some small attempt to bring the department up to date. With the enactment of these provisions, the department will be placed in a far better position than it has occupied in the past.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [5.19]: The main purpose of the Bill is to enlarge the powers of the Fisheries Department to supervise and regulate the catching of fish by licensed fishermen. Some concern has been expressed at the condition of our fisheries resources. This is more or less an expert matter, and I do not pretend to be an expert. It has been suggested—the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie has touched on the point—that the fish supplies in some of our estuaries have become seriously de-

pleted. Some time ago I asked several questions about Perth herring and, if my recollection is right, the answers showed that the catches of Perth herring in the Swan River over a period of years have been considerably reduced and that the canning company has augmented its supplies by obtaining herring from other estuaries. It would be a serious matter—and the Minister will appreciate this as much as I do—if, by the catching of immature fish in the Swan or other estuaries, the reproduction of fish supplies were reduced and a valuable and what should be a permanent source of this type of food should be diminished.

I hope the Minister will, in the near future, have a comprehensive survey made of the industry. Perhaps he will have something to tell us when the Estimates of his department come before the Chamber. The time is ripe for an examination of the whole machinery of our fishing industry—what can and should be done to preserve it, to expand its value and to ensure that the people get from this source sufficient supplies of food at a reasonable rate. In its way, the Bill is a minor one, touching as it does only the fringe of the matter, and I hope the Minister will make a public announcement of a broad and long-range policy for the preservation and expansion of our fisheries resources.

The advisory committee which is to operate—we had a similar committee under the National Security Regulations—will consist of representatives of commercial fishermen. I appreciate that the commercial fishermen are vitally concerned in the industry, because this is the source of their livelihood, but they might view the industry from their own standpoint only. The Minister might find it desirable to include on the committee a man thoroughly conversant with but not commercially interested in the industry. Such a man would be able to bring to bear on the deliberations of the committee the viewpoint of one having a knowledge of the industry while being quite disinterested in the way of personal advantage to be obtained from any policy that may be laid down.

I have received a letter, such as other members have probably received, from a body named the Confederation of Licensed Fishermen of Western Australia. In the interests of these men, I refer to the letter

and invite the Minister to say whether or not he considers the matters referred to have been taken into consideration in drafting the Bill. I am not aware of the composition, membership, influence or authority of the Confederation of Licensed Fishermen, but it suggests that there is in train a proposal for a marketing board for the distribution of fish, and that this proposal has been the subject of conferences sponsored by the Government and may be the subject of legislation in the near future. Whether this is so or not, I cannot say; I do not know what is in the mind of the Minister. The confederation suggests that this Bill be deferred until the Government brings down legislation to deal with the marketing of fish, in which measure more comprehensive provisions for the industry could be suitably introduced.

The confederation is of the opinion that the proposed advisory committee would be duplicating the committee appointed under the National Security Regulations, but in this contention I think it is labouring under a misapprehension. I assume that the committee appointed under the National Security Regulations will cease to function at the end of this year, and that the idea of the Minister, which appears to be not unreasonable, is to ensure that there will be a committee of an advisory character to continue the work when the committee appointed under the National Security Regulations no longer has power to act. Consequently there appears to be no duplication involved by the Minister's proposal. The confederation suggests that the powers of control over fishermen are rather too extensive. The licensing officer is to have power to say what fish shall not be taken. A fisherman may be restricted to the taking of schnapper and not be permitted to take any other fish. To read the clause exactly, it provides that the licensing officer may specify the species of fish which any boat may hold or carry. From the wording, I take it that a man cannot be held responsible for the variety of fish caught or taken.

Mr. Fox: He would not know until the fish was hauled to the surface.

Mr. McDONALD: From the limited fishing I have done, I can say that I have caught varieties for which I have not fished.

Hon. N. Keenan: Blowfish?



Mr. McDONALD: Sometimes. Therefore I assume it would not be an offence to catch fish outside the specification, but it would be an offence to keep such fish, and the duty of the fisherman doubtless would be to throw the fish overboard at once if it were not of the kind specified as being what he was permitted to take. This provision, in the opinion of the confederation, is rather arbitrary, or could be used arbitrarily, because it is not always easy for a fisherman to confine his catch to a particular sort of fish. The suggestion is also made that the power to forfeit a fisherman's net—which power is to be tightened up by this Bill—is rather arbitrary.

Mr. Watts: Hear, hear!

Mr. McDONALD: It would mean depriving the fisherman of his tools of trade or means of livelihood. The ends of justice might be met and the industry safeguarded if a fine were imposed without depriving the fisherman of the means of plying his trade, which conceivably he might find it very difficult to replace. On the other hand, I freely admit that fishing may be different from other industries. As a fisherman is licensed or permitted to take something which is the property of all the people, perhaps it is not unreasonable that, as he is given this privilege, he should be subject to particular conditions to ensure that his license is not abused. Generally, it is thought by the body to which I have referred that the powers sought to be put into the hands of the licensing officer are very wide, and rather wider than should be necessary. I bring the matter before the notice of the Minister, but do not profess to have sufficient knowledge of it to be able to pass any worthwhile comment.

An objection is also taken to the power to control fishing gear. It is pointed out that such power which previously existed is no longer maintained in the Eastern States, and it is suggested that there is no reason why it should be re-established here. It is maintained that fishermen can well be allowed to procure their gear, which I understand they are able to obtain from the Eastern States. The confederation says that a section of Western Australian fishermen may possibly be in favour of the control of fishing gear until December, 1947, but the great majority are definitely not.

That is a matter on which the Minister may have some information.

I am not too sure—but no doubt the Minister will be advised by his Crown Law officers—that any control sought to be established by this Act over fishing gear could legally prevent fishermen from importing that gear from the Eastern States if they desired to do so. In other words, the ordinary rule that trade shall be free between the States might operate; and in spite of the control proposed under the Act it may still be legally possible for fishermen, if they desire to do so, to order and secure supplies from the Eastern States. But that is a matter to which I have not given any degree of consideration. I mention it as it may possibly be worthy of inquiry by the Minister.

I think we would all agree that the fishing industry is an important one. It may become extremely valuable to this State. It is one that affects the living standard of the people and one which the Minister is entitled to protect by all necessary regulations that can be reasonably operated with regard to all people who are concerned. I would object to no reasonable regulation and I put forward what has been said by the Confederation of Licensed Fishermen in the hope that the Minister may make some reference to it in the course of the passage of the measure, so that members of the organisation may have the satisfaction of knowing the reasons the Minister has had for various portions of the Bill—reasons which may satisfy them when they are explained.

**MR. FOX** (South Fremantle) [5.34]: I have attended many meetings of the Licensed Fishermen's Association and I understand their views on this subject fairly well. The member for Wagin referred to the depletion of fish in the Swan River in comparison with 50 years ago. That is very easy to understand. Over the last 50 years shipping has become very frequent in Fremantle harbour. Numbers of ships enter the harbour and oil is pumped into the water together with other stuff that perhaps does not agree with the fish. That is one of the main reasons why certain types of fish have been driven out of the river. Further up the river it may be altogether different.

Mr. Berry: How have they been driven out of Safety Bay?

Mr. FOX: We do not know that they have been driven out of there.

Mr. Berry: I do!

Mr. FOX: The balance of nature equalises matters. Millions of eggs are laid by fish; and if they all hatched out, I do not suppose there would be enough food in the sea to sustain them. The balance of nature evens things up. I am not prepared to admit that the fishing that takes place in the estuaries has depleted the fish. Even if it had, I consider that the welfare of the fishermen who make their living out of this industry and who supply food for the population is of more importance than that of a few anglers who fish for pleasure and perhaps do not use half the fish they catch.

Mr. Kelly: That is a one-sided argument.

Mr. FOX: I do not think it is. I have done some fishing, and any amount of fish can be caught around the coast of Western Australia at present. One does not have to go out very far to catch them, either.

Mr. Abbott: It all depends who is on the other end of the line!

Mr. FOX: Well, I am not a very good fisherman. The man I am with will catch seven or eight to my one; but what I have been able to catch has provided me with a good meal and some of my friends as well. The member for Wagin also referred to the price of fish. If any more restrictive legislation is going to be passed with regard to fishing, then fish will be dearer still. The Lord knows it is dear enough at present, but the fishermen do not get the money. I was hoping that this legislation would be postponed until after the proposed Bill to control the industry had been given a chance to operate. No doubt the Minister did not bring that forward in view of the referendum proposals of the Commonwealth Government; but if they are not carried, I hope the Minister will introduce that Bill in order to control the selling of fish so that those who do the hard work will receive a decent living. I do not know of any industry which is subject to more restrictive legislation than is the fishing industry. Last session, or the session before, very severe penalties were introduced for nearly every offence contained in the measure applying

of the nets was added to the other penalties. If a baker is charged with selling under-to this industry. In many cases confiscation weight bread, why do we not confiscate his plant? Why do we not take his horse and cart or his lorry away from him? Why apply the confiscation only to fishermen? If a publican sells adulterated liquor why not do something extra to him?

Mr. Abbott: They confiscate the liquor.

Mr. FOX: Not much is confiscated; but the principle of confiscation is applied to fishermen, who are the hardest worked people one could find anywhere. These men go out in all sorts of weather, when it is possible to go out. Incidentally I would mention that up to the 20th July fishermen were able to go out on only five days in that month. More restrictions will be placed on fishermen under this Bill and I do not know how they are going to get on at all. The Chief Inspector may direct the type of fish a man is to catch. I do not know whether that was put in solely in connection with Hopetoun; whether it is intended to keep anybody else from fishing in that district. Are we proposing to give the cannery or the fishermen that operate there a vested interest in the place where the salmon run? If that is done in one place, why not parcel out the whole coast up to Shark Bay and beyond and hand out the fishing grounds to different fishermen so that they will be on the same footing as the people at Hopetoun? There is nothing wrong with that. If it is good for one section; if we are going to give a vested interest to men running the cannery at Hopetoun or engaged in the fishing industry there, what is wrong with allocating the whole coast and naming the fishermen who may fish in a given locality?

Mr. Watts: Can you not see anything wrong with that?

Mr. FOX: Yes. I can see a lot wrong with it; but to be consistent, the Minister might just as well parcel out the coast among a number of fishermen operating around it as give one part to the cannery at Hopetoun or to the fishermen operating for it.

Mr. Abbott: I have convinced you at last that there should be no monopolies!

The Minister for Lands: Only in regard to fish.

Mr. FOX: I have never believed in monopolies at any time. The only difference between the hon. member's views and mine consists in our definition of monopoly.

Mr. ABBOTT: The Hopetoun project is my definition of one.

Mr. FOX: The hon. member's definition of a monopoly is that it is something owned by the whole community—the post office or something like that.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the hon. member had better get back to the Bill.

Mr. FOX: I admit that is not in the Bill. The Chief Inspector is going to have power to restrict fishermen to the catching of snapper, whiting or some other particular fish. How is he going to be able to do that? How is a man to discriminate between the fish that come into his net? Is he going to send out a warning to them to keep clear, or what? I do not know how this is going to be done. Things are being made harder for the fishermen.

Mr. Watts: He will have to sort them out after he has caught them.

Mr. FOX: Of course, the fisherman has a right of appeal to the inspector, I suppose; but it would not be much good appealing to the man who had inflicted the penalty. The member for West Perth has already referred to the control of nets. If there is no control in the Eastern States, I do not see why there should be any in Western Australia; and I think the Minister might well give consideration to removing restrictions on the supply of nets. If fishermen are able to get them from the Eastern States they should be permitted to do so, rather than have to get them from some tradesman here and have the price kicked up 200 or 300 per cent.

I hope the Minister will give some consideration to holding this Bill in abeyance until such time as the measure dealing with the creation of a board for the fishing industry in Western Australia is brought down. That is the only hope we have of ensuring a fairly cheap supply of fish. We have no possible chance under the present circumstances. The sale of fish is in the hands of four or five individuals and the fishermen have no chance at all. I again appeal to the Minister to give the Bill a pass until the House has had an opportunity to

deal with the other measure I believe he will introduce to create a board for the control of the industry.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [5.43]: I am pleased to be able on this occasion to support a member of the Opposition, the member for South Fremantle.

Mr. Fox: Not of the Opposition!

Mr. ABBOTT: I will correct that: I meant a member of the Government's Party. Sometimes I have been accused of holding conservative views.

The Minister for Lands: Oh no!

Mr. ABBOTT: Now I realise that my views are not half as conservative as I have been led to believe. Nobody could call the member for South Fremantle conservative in his views.

The Minister for the North-West: This is the first time I have known the member for South Fremantle to be wrong.

Mr. ABBOTT: I am afraid I must disagree with the Minister on this occasion. It is wrong that the Minister should be guided on practically everything appertaining to fishing by professional fishermen. The board proposed to be constituted is to be known as the Professional Fishermen's Advisory Committee. If the duties of that body were to advise the Minister about professional fishing then it would be quite all right, but it will advise the Minister about the fisheries of Western Australia and their control, and everything relevant to the fishing industry. Therefore I would like the board to be known as the fisheries board, and to see some representation on it other than that of purely professional fishermen.

Mr. Watts: The Chief Inspector is there; he will fix everything.

Mr. ABBOTT: There must be some men, other than professional fishermen, available in this State. At one time we had Dr. Serventy who would be an acquisition to such a board.

The Minister for the North-West: Did you not just hear the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie disagree with the C.S.I.R.?

Mr. ABBOTT: Perhaps he did, but after all Dr. Serventy would be a valuable acquisition to this board. Is not the general public entitled to representation on the board? There may be certain spots in Western Aus-

tralia that the general public would prefer to be kept apart for the purpose of creating a national park for the people's enjoyment. As an example of that—it may be an extreme case—we have the rivers of Pemberton. What knowledge have the professional fishermen of the trout running in the rivers at Pemberton, and elsewhere in the State? I would like to see some representation of those who are not purely professional fishermen. I have the greatest sympathy for the professional fishermen and again I agree with the member for South Fremantle that theirs is an arduous occupation and one not without risk.

Mr. Needham: Or hazards!

Mr. ABBOTT: Yes. While, however, I am deeply sympathetic with their point of view, I do not think they should be the only ones to be in a position to exert pressure on the Minister. In saying that I do not mean pressure of a wrong kind, but they would be inclined to view circumstances and conditions from their own angle, which is that of making a living for the time being. Every person is naturally influenced, when dealing with his own occupation, by the fact of having to make a living at the moment. I have found it difficult to look forward and make due reservations for the next generation. Most people are so pushed in this life that they have as much as they can do to look after themselves and their families without thinking of the generations to come. So I would like the Minister to consider the advisability of including some representation of the general public on the board. That representation could come from men like Dr. Serventy, or from any body that takes a deep interest in fishing, other than professional fishing.

Like the member for South Fremantle I do not like the provisions enabling the licensing officer to say who shall and who shall not purchase nets. If this provision has been left out of Eastern States legislation it would be advisable to leave it out of ours and, as was pointed out by the member for West Perth, it is doubtful whether it would prevent any person from acquiring nets, or other fishing gear, from other States.

MR. READ (Victoria Park) [5.50]: I propose to say a few words on this Bill, but not from the aspect of the present price of fish, or the hardships of the fishermen

who reap a fish harvest, but that of what has happened to the hordes of fish that were here some 20 or 30 years ago. In my view a continuous supply of fish for the people of Western Australia is a more important matter than that of the price and immediate supply of fish. The Bill proposes to establish a new board or committee to assist the Fisheries Department. I have always had the idea that those in the Fisheries Department were mostly theorists, and that the knowledge of the men in charge was academic. Their management has been such that today we see the fish of our estuaries disappearing. The conservation of the fishing resources of our estuaries should be the care of the Fisheries Department, apart from any question of deep-sea fishing. The fishing in Western Australia many years ago was a national asset, and an attraction for the amateur fishermen of the rest of Australia.

When I first came to this State—it was a long time ago—any person could, with a rod and line, take fish at almost any season from the Swan River and all the estuaries from Mandurah south. Down the years the administration of the Fisheries Department has allowed such intensive netting in those waters that I fear that if we do not close them altogether for a few years the few remaining breeding fish will disappear completely, with the result that an asset that we have inherited will be lost for all time. The estuaries of Augusta, Nornalup, Bunbury, Denmark, Mandurah and Wilson's Inlet, Safety Bay and the Swan River are at present almost depleted of fish. Nornalup has been closed for fishing for, I think, one year. I maintain that we should close all of these inlets which are the natural spawning and feeding grounds of the ocean fish so that we might induce the fish to return to them. On one occasion I was at Emu Point, and I can give an illustration of what happened there.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the Bill.

Mr. READ: Yes, I hope so. The depletion of the estuaries, together with the formation of this committee, will possibly bring before the department the necessity to preserve the assets we have. At Emu Point estuary I, with four others, in four hours caught about 100 large whiting on a bank four feet

deep. We proposed to go out again next day to that bank, where there had been thousands of King George whiting, but when we arrived there we found that three fisherman had joined their nets together and had taken every fish from the bank. They were professional fishermen and were within their rights in doing what they did, because they were allowed to go into that estuary and catch those spawning whiting. Two days later we found another bank and exactly the same thing happened. There were 40 or 50 tourist boats on the estuary and for the rest of the fortnight that I was there not another fish was caught.

The estuary at Mandurah has been treated similarly and those of us who have fished there know that it has been netted out by men who have legally and illegally netted those waters. The Mandurah Estuary covers 56 square miles. That sounds a great deal of water to cover, but in these days of fast motor-boats the fishermen are able to go great distances and probe the whole of the waters where fish are likely to be found. They wait until periods when the fish are on the banks and then surround them with nets and send them to Perth. The whole of that great area of water is connected with the sea by a narrow channel or inlet and, when the fish are running there, fishermen take them before they have a chance to spawn and increase their species. Thus they are lost for all time. With practical men on the board, they will see the necessity for closing such estuaries for a period of perhaps two or three years, then possibly opening them for net fishing for three or four months only in the year.

The depletion of fish resources is not peculiar to Western Australia. It applies to the other States of the Commonwealth also. When I was a young man I fished in the Murray River, and that stream was a great attraction for tourists, the hotels and boarding-houses on its banks reaping a rich harvest at certain periods of the year. In the latest edition of the Fisheries Newsletter, published by the Department of Commerce and Agriculture, there is an article on the passing of the codfish from the Murray River and its tributaries. It says—

Not more than 40 years ago, the wild turkey was fast dwindling in New South Wales and had become extinct in Victoria. Our lovely Brolga with his fantastic set dance and displays was thinning out—the Platypus was

threatened as was the Koala, and the Mallee Hen was scarcely holding his own.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that what he is reading has nothing to do with the Bill.

Mr. READ: I am just coming to the part concerned with fish—

Today the Gippsland Perch has gone. The Blackfish—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is nothing in the Bill about black fish or white fish. I must ask the hon. member to get back to the Bill.

Mr. READ: The Newsletter continues—

In ten years' time our wild duck will be almost a memory.

Unless we take steps to preserve the fish in our estuaries, the same thing will happen here. At Mandurah in 1941 there were no black bream taken, but in 1945 the catch was 1,677 lbs. That was on account of the heavy rains washing them down the river to where the fishermen could surround them with nets. We can cast our minds back to the time when bream were plentiful in the Swan and other rivers, but now they are nearly extinct. The remedy is to prohibit the sale of black bream in Western Australia for a period of years. We have another great heritage at South Fremantle. Off the coast there is a reef where most of the genuine fishing is done. On that reef the fish are caught by the hundredweight, and not by the pound, as is the case in our estuaries. That fishing ground actually extends from Busselton to the Abrolhos Islands, and that is where Western Australia could get its fish supplies for the time being.

It is suggested that one member of the board or advisory committee should be the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, one a person to represent those engaged in crayfishing and one to represent deep-sea fishing, with another to represent estuary fishing interests. I think the board or committee should not represent only those people who have for their object the making of profits from fishing and I propose later to move an amendment to alter the composition of the board. We cannot entirely blame the Fisheries Department for the deplorable conditions that exist, because I do not think that department has sufficient money expended on it. There are about half-a-dozen inspectors to police the coastline, and that is not sufficient.

Some revenue should be raised from the fishing industry in order to supplement the moneys available to the Department. In connection with other activities revenue is provided. Recently we have dealt with the Milk Board, and prior to that with the Egg Board. In respect of both those organisations the industries concerned contributed a certain amount towards their revenue. The same principle should be applied to the fishing industry so that we may be the better able to finance the work and police the Act.

**MR. BERRY** (Irwin-Moore) [6.6]: All members of this Chamber know that it is nearly eight years ago since I first commenced to suggest that money should be granted for the protection not only of one of the State's national assets, but of the working conditions and incomes of the fishermen themselves. We heard tonight from the member for South Fremantle, when talking about the aim of this legislation, that the object of the Bill was really to prevent the fishermen from making a living. In point of fact, we are endeavouring, I hope, to save the fishermen in spite of themselves. The fish that are to be found along the coast, almost without exception—unless it be the blowfish that the member for West Perth likes to catch—are migratory. They proceed along the coast to spawn in various places, including the estuaries. Safety Bay, which is a spawning ground, can hardly be described as an estuary, but unbridled trapping is going on there by means of nets, set nets and hand lines, the last mentioned of course being a minor evil. By this means we are destroying the fish that come up the coast to breed. We catch schnapper—I have done so—by the hundreds, or rather we did, before they have time to deposit the spawn they are carrying.

If we want to destroy the poultry in this State, we simply murder the hens in the laying season. In the particular instance under discussion, we have almost destroyed the wonderful asset we possess in our coastal waters, not necessarily in the estuaries but, as the member for Victoria Park remarked, along the fringes of the reefs. I know that you, Mr. Speaker, were acquainted with a very able, experienced and courteous gentleman who occupied the position of Fisheries Inspector and who unfortunately died a few years ago. I refer to the late Mr. James Brown who, time after time, told me that if

we were content to leave the schnapper alone they would breed in Safety Bay in great numbers, but that if we did not do so they would go elsewhere. He also said that if they were left alone for a while we could always get schnapper at any time of the year on the slopes of the Continental Shelf. I have not been out to the shelf, but I know that so experienced a man would not have made such an emphatic statement if it were not correct.

We should be able to prove exactly where the fish come from and where they go. We know what has happened, and I hope I read correctly into this Bill a genuine and honest attempt to control the fishing industry in such a way that we will no longer slaughter the spawning fish but will so regulate matters that we shall provide a living for the fishermen for years to come. We should have sufficient nous to protect the fish in our waters as is done by the authorities in England. Why should we not do so? To assert that we are standing up and preaching a gospel, the effect of which will be to deprive the fishermen of their livelihood, is merely so much first-class tommyrot. We are doing nothing of the sort. We are endeavouring to protect and develop the fishing industry for all time as a national asset, whereas today it is nothing but a dwindling asset. Even as I speak tonight the schnapper are entering Safety Bay for the spawning season, and people are waiting there to destroy their own livelihood, which they will accomplish under present-day conditions within five or six years from now.

If the idea underlying the Bill is to say to the fishermen, "You must go where the fish go when they leave here," then the effect will be that we shall provide for the fishermen a good living during every month of the year. I happen to be a friend of a great number of fishermen. I know them intimately and help them whenever I can. The greatest assistance I can render to them and those who will come after them is to preserve their occupation for the future. At the moment we are damning their future. In front of my house I have seen five nets pulled where 12 years ago I could have gone to the same spot and with a handline caught all the fish that anyone could desire. To assert that amateur fishermen go down to the fishing spots and catch shoals of fish by line and thus are destroying the fishing, is not true. It really does not occur. What

does affect the position more than anything else is the destruction of the spawning schnapper, and in this legislation I trust I see a ray of hope that we shall ensure the fish being left alone for specified periods. If the Minister assures me that is so, then the Bill is very satisfactory.

I do not altogether agree with the idea of a committee largely consisting of fishermen who are making a living out of catching spawning schnapper, for they would never agree with what I am saying tonight. They would claim that the future was no concern of theirs. They would say that if they had caught this year £1,000 worth of schnapper, they had had a successful season. If I were a fisherman, I would consider I had done very well and that the next year could take care of itself. I am rather in agreement with the statement that the fish along the coast are almost depleted, but that is not quite so. On the other hand, I do not think that the fish will return to the estuaries unless we protect them.

I can tell members that this year I do not think 500 herring were caught in Safety Bay. They just did not go there. The cause may have been seasonal and the fresh water may have forced them to a greater distance off shore. I do not think that that has been the position. I have seen it coming and know what I am talking about. I tell members that the fish will visit our coast less and less often unless the Minister introduces effective legislation, which is what I seek, to afford protection to spawning fish in Western Australian waters. It is obvious that if we slaughter all the heifer calves we must give up dairy farming. If we chop down all the jarrah saplings we will have no timber. Equally so, if we destroy all the fish in the breeding season we will have no more fish in our waters and no more fishermen to make a livelihood along the coast.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. BERRY: I think the various points have been made clear and that this Bill will serve a useful purpose. As I have explained, there are one or two features of the measure that seem to be peculiar. The first is the constitution of the proposed advisory committee. The idea is that this committee shall, with one exception, consist of people who are actually financially interested in the industry. I realise for the first time that

grower-control seems to have crept in, for there will be grower-control, as it were, on this committee. Though we on this side of the House have asked for grower-control often enough, now that I see such provision made it does not seem to be the sugar-coated thing I thought it was.

A helpful suggestion to the Minister should be to include in the clause relating to the advisory committee the words "with power to add." Then the Minister would be in a position to overcome any difficulty that arose by adding to the advisory committee other people, perhaps amateur fishermen, who would be just as interested in and would take an unbiassed view of the whole matter. The committee will not have very much power because it will be dominated in any advice that it might offer, but possibly the committee will serve a purpose. All boards necessarily must be advisory bodies up to a point. I would hesitate to criticise the constitution of the board because I might be asked to suggest something more suitable, and I realise the difficulty of doing that. Therefore I content myself with suggesting to the Minister that he take power to add to the board as he in his wisdom thinks best.

The point has been stressed that the industry is inadequately inspected. I know of that from experience at Safety Bay. But we are inadequately financed; it is all a question of money. Possibly some means of obtaining more money will have to be found in order that more inspectors may be employed. I cannot see any use in telling people that they must do this or that and then being unable to police the order, thereby leaving the persons concerned in the position of being able to break the law because no-one is on hand to enforce it. The matter is one of £ s. d., but no doubt this aspect will receive the Minister's consideration and a proper policing of the law will be arranged.

Another part of the Bill that interests me is the provision limiting and defining the species of fish that may be taken. What does that mean? Does it mean that a fisherman must not catch schnapper, but may catch herring, skipjack or some other variety? To say that any fisherman, by holding the bar to the left would catch herring and by holding the bar to the right would catch schnapper would be absurd.

The Bill also provides for the department to control the distribution and disposal of nets. It is essential for us to get the nets into the State. How we get them does not matter much so long as we get them. I regret that the requisite nets are not made in the State because, for a long time, there has been and there still is a very serious shortage of this type of fishing gear. When the Minister seeks to control the nets, I suggest to him that line fishing will never damage the resources of an estuary, provided of course that every fisherman in the world does not go there. Line fishing does not cause any trouble. The amateur who goes to a tourist resort should not be discouraged from indulging in fishing so long as he uses a line.

I regret to say, however, that many amateur fishermen get the fine idea of owning a net—I once did—and of asking their friends down for the weekend and of doing a bit of showing off with it. If enough people did that, they would become a serious menace to any fishing ground. If the fishermen—the men making a living from the industry—alone fished with nets, it would not be so bad, but when holiday-makers go to these resorts and use private nets, they seriously endanger the future of such localities. A man with a private net can catch more fish in some of these estuaries than he requires for his personal needs or for the needs of his friends. I assume that, from now on, control will be exercised over the private individual who, for fun or perhaps out of conceit, buys a net to show his friends what a clever chap he is. In the course of this debate, members have received a very good spin from you, Mr. Speaker. Native companions, tomtits and what not have been brought into the discussion. Behind the Bill is the honest purpose of protecting a national asset which may be developed into a national industry for the good of the people, and for that reason I favour the measure.

**MR. LESLIE** (Mt. Marshall) [7.40]: The Minister, in introducing this measure, said that it was not controversial. While we might be prepared to agree with him on that point, he must evidently realise by now that it is a Bill of considerable importance, not so much from the point of view of its contents, but from the point of view of the

subject which it opens up for discussion. I had hoped that the Bill would contain an indication that the Government desired to shoulder a greater degree of responsibility in encouraging the expansion of an industry which, like Topsy, has just "grew". In this respect the Bill is disappointing to me. It seems ridiculous that the only matter we seem to be concerning ourselves about in this State is that we must have inspectors to control the industry. The member for Irwin-Moore pointed out that we are suffering from a lack of inspectors. I agree with him, but even if we had a sufficient number adequately to police the Act—and this legislation seems to deal with policing only—we are not in any way sponsoring the development and expansion of this important industry.

If members will examine the production of this industry and consider the State's coastline and the resources undoubtedly available to us, they cannot but be impressed by the fact that we are neglecting an industry of great importance to our State and our people. The industry should be able to supply a much-needed and much-sought-for consumable commodity for the people, besides making a substantial contribution to our exports. It is a rarity in country districts to secure wholesome fish, and I find on inquiry that similar circumstances prevail in the metropolitan area. There is need for the Government to interest itself far more than it has done in the past in the marketing of fish. The Fisheries Act provides that returns shall be furnished of all fish marketed by licensed fishermen. The question arises to what extent those provisions of the Act are being carried out. My inquiries show that reports are rampant that a very small proportion of the fish that should be registered and marketed in the orthodox way is recorded; in other words, there is a tremendous "black market" in fish at present.

**MR. SPEAKER:** We are not discussing that point at present. There is nothing in the Bill about it, nor are we discussing the parent Act.

**MR. LESLIE:** Very well, Sir. The Bill, however, provides for the licensing of fishermen and I might speak on that subject. The present licensing system is restricted and appears to operate to the detriment of a considerable section of the community, but to



the benefit of some people in particular. Not long ago I attended a meeting of the Rehabilitation Committee of the R.S.L., when a person in Fremantle by the name of Paino or Paino—

A Member: Paino!

Mr. LESLIE: —was mentioned as the king of the fishing industry in Western Australia. If any person wants to succeed in the industry he must get sweet with this person and he must have a name ending in "o" or "ski". Returned soldiers have endeavoured to establish themselves in the industry, but with little success up till now. It will no doubt interest members to learn that the Reconstruction Department of the Commonwealth Government has established a fisheries school in the Eastern States at which ex-Servicemen who are eligible and suitable can learn the fishing industry right from the ocean bed, shall I say, up.

Mr. Doney: Where are they learning? At the Technical College?

Mr. LESLIE: No, on the coast.

Mr. Doney: That is better, of course.

Mr. LESLIE: They will also learn by undertaking fishing operations, and will study the scientific side of the industry. When they have mastered the details, probably they will be distributed among the various States, and I am hopeful that then the trouble we hear about today in connection with our fishing resources will be over. Today we hear complaints that fish are being caught at an age before they can breed. I deplore the fact that we are worrying about some odd man who might be fined for using a net in the wrong place or for catching a few fish which he ought not to have caught. We are worrying about such matters when we should be thinking about ensuring an adequate supply of fish for our people.

I suggest to the Minister that it is time, from what I have heard—although I have had neither the time nor the opportunity to inquire into the details, nor have the facilities to do so been at my disposal—that some inquiries were made into the operations of Paino and the control which he appears to exercise over the fishing industry. I would like to see some attempt made, should an offence be committed against the Fisheries Act, to deprive the fisherman of his license, although I do not usually favour a punishment which deprives a man of his livelihood

for offending against the law. But any person who offends repeatedly in that way should be punished. I understand there are men flourishing in the industry today who have repeatedly been found guilty of offences against the Fisheries Act.

Mr. Fox: There are no men flourishing in the fishing industry.

Mr. Owen: What about this Paino?

Mr. Fox: I mean the middleman.

Mr. LESLIE: It seems to me that it is the middleman who is either getting the licenses or controlling the licensees. There is need for an inquiry into the whole of this matter. The present Bill is disappointing in that regard. It should provide for greater encouragement to the fishing industry; there should be something done more than an attempt merely to police the industry in the way it is being policed today. Mere talk about the insufficient number of inspectors and their work will not get us far. We should encourage scientific investigation and not merely worry about fish that are no longer in our rivers or our bays.

The Bill contains a striking clause which I would like the Minister to explain. It provides that every licensing officer shall obey and observe the directions of the Minister, regarding the granting or removal or transfer of licenses, and that any action contrary to the direction of the Minister shall be null and void. Are we to take it that it has been the habit in the past for licensing officers to run contrary to the instructions of the Minister and that therefore it is necessary for him to have an Act of Parliament to protect himself in these matters? If that is the case, the only thing to do is to deprive the licensing authority of power to issue licenses rather than to place the Minister and the department in the position that instructions to a subordinate officer are not being carried out and that therefore the Minister has to render them null and void and seek an Act of Parliament to enable him to do it. I would like the Minister to make an explanation on that point.

In connection with the fishing industry, the Minister referred to Hopetoun. It would appear to me that one of the principal reasons for extending restrictions is to permit a greater measure of control over the fishing industry at Hopetoun. It may or may not be advisable to control fishing in that

area. From inquiries I have made, I believe that because of the peculiar circumstances existing there it will be necessary for some greater measure of control to be exercised; but it does not seem to me to be quite right that in order to have control over a peculiar set of circumstances very much wider powers should be sought by means of this Bill to operate over the whole State. It would appear to be easier to lay down conditions that will apply in that area alone and to provide in the Bill for that purpose only; but to provide, as this Bill does, that the licensing authority shall have power to say to individuals when and how they are to fish, on what days they are to fish and what fish they are to catch, and what they must do with the fish when they have caught them, and what fish they are allowed to carry in their boats, and to make that apply to the whole coastline and to our estuaries and harbours; to do all this in order to obtain greater control than exists at present over one small portion, seems to me to be wrong.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Do you think the power would be used capriciously?

Mr. LESLIE: I am not suggesting that. I suggest that it is far-fetched to seek all this power in order to operate in one small area.

The Minister for the North-West: We want the power to operate throughout Western Australian waters, and not only at Hopetoun. I only quoted Hopetoun as one instance.

Mr. LESLIE: Then in that case the powers still seem rather drastic, far more drastic than I think is necessary in view of the fact that at present nothing is being done to develop and encourage the industry. All we are doing is to continue the old idea of saying that this industry must be allowed to grow and are applying restrictive measures in order that nobody shall stop it from growing or interfere with its chance of progress. Something more than that seems to be necessary in order that the industry may develop. Something more is needed than a process of restriction. It is regrettable that this important industry has not received a greater measure of attention.

I am greatly disappointed in the Bill. I do not deny that certain provisions may be necessary to apply to places like Hopetoun. Amendments to the Act may be required

to rectify anomalies that have been found to exist as a result of the operations of the parent measure, which was brought up to date only a few years ago. At the same time, it is necessary for us to realise that the fishing industry is a valuable one. There are some people who are living on it; to them it is not even a sideline. The industry is providing a darned good profit for a few people, and the rest of the State is being exploited. For the benefit of those people, we are spending time talking about preventing others from getting into the industry. I hope the discussion that has taken place on this measure will assist in concentrating some attention on the importance of the industry, and that a greater attempt will be made to encourage its development by scientific investigation instead of our applying a restrictive attitude to the industry generally, and allowing it to continue as it has done in the past.

**THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST** (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley—in reply) [7.55]: I am very grateful to the members of this Chamber for the interest they have taken in this important Bill. I did say in introducing it that it was not a very controversial one. The majority of the members who have spoken have intelligently interpreted its provisions and have given careful consideration to the various points and supplied a lot of information. They have indicated that the Bill will provide adequate protection to the industry in course of time, contrary to the contention of the member for Mt. Marshall, who has suggested that the Bill, in which he is so disappointed, will do nothing to protect the industry in the future. I must disagree with his view. I would point out that the purpose of certain clauses is to give power to the department to control the various estuaries and the rivers and breeding-grounds of fish and to induce professional fishermen to undertake deep-sea fishing. Contrary to the beliefs of the previous speaker, much has been done recently to encourage deep-sea fishing, particularly by returned soldiers. Quite recently in the Press, reference has been made to the large numbers of salmon and other kinds of fish that have been brought in by deep-sea fishermen, including returned soldiers.

Mr. Leslie: Not enough!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I agree, but I do not like the statement being repeated without some foundation that the Fisheries Department is doing nothing and that the industry appears to be in the hands of one particular fisherman. That is not correct. I think the majority of members who have asked for certain information on this Bill are asking for it along the lines of a pamphlet issued to every member of Parliament and in opposition to this Bill. I would like to explain that there are two organisations interested in these amendments. One consists of the fishermen of what might be termed the metropolitan area. Those men use Fremantle as their headquarters. Their organisation is controlled by a secretary who has issued this pamphlet and the pamphlet was issued with a view to protecting the members of that organisation. There is a second body, of which the secretary is a man named Renfrey. He is the secretary of the organisation consisting of fishermen throughout Western Australia, with the exception of those who operate in the Fremantle area.

Mr. Fox: What is their numerical strength?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I am not concerned about numerical strength but with justice being done to all sections of the community.

Mr. Fox: That has some bearing on the matter.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It has no bearing so far as I am concerned. I represent a country district and I believe that the people of Albany, Bunbury, Mandurah, Busselton and other coastal districts, who are fishing for a living, need consideration and protection. I am positive that if this Bill is not passed in practically the form in which I have presented it, the result will be much to the detriment of fishermen in those country districts.

The organisation that is hostile to the passing of this measure has, in its pamphlet, indicated to members that the Bill should not be dealt with until another one, that is proposed, is introduced and passed. The two measures are entirely separate and distinct. This one is merely to amend the present Fisheries Act, whereas the other, referred to in the pamphlet, is to organise

the production, marketing and distribution of fish. A committee was appointed by the Government to draw up a Bill on these lines, and it was formulated, but the Crown Law Department advised that it would be ultra vires in the event of the referendum on orderly marketing being carried. Because of that advice the Bill has not been further considered by the Government, and it will not be dealt with until those results are known. But whether the referendum is carried or not, the proposed Bill would not affect this measure in any way. This one is to amend certain sections of the present Act. It would not be sensible to make the alterations that some members desire.

Reference was made by the member for Wagin to the price of fish. We cannot control that by an amendment of the parent Act. That is the first point on which the pamphlet misleads members. The committee that I referred to was appointed by the Commonwealth Government, and it is an advisory committee to that Government, and has nothing to do with the State Act or the State Government. The committee that the Bill proposes to establish is one to advise the department and the Government on the fishing laws of this State, and on any other matter on which the Minister might think fit to seek advice, apart from that available from his departmental officers. Members will, therefore, see that the two Bills are entirely different. I do not want them to be misled by the information contained in the pamphlet that this Bill can be postponed until some other one is introduced.

Mr. Fox: We know that the other Bill has nothing to do with this, but it would give the fishermen a chance of knowing where they are.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It would not.

Mr. Fox: If the fishing industry were stabilised the fishermen would know that they would be able to earn a decent income.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There is no possibility of there being any interference by the proposed Bill.

Mr. Fox: I know that the two Bills—

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Why should we postpone this until some other proposed Bill is introduced?

Mr. Fox: The proposed Bill—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: We are introducing these restrictions to protect the fishing industry of the State. We are concerned in this Bill with the fish and not the fishermen. We will deal with the fishermen in some other Bill.

Mr. Leslie: It all sounds a bit fishy.

The Minister for Lands: Very weak!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is the explanation why it is proposed to proceed with the Bill to appoint the committee already mentioned. The Bill also seeks to restrict or control the sale of nets and netting. It has been said that there is no such control in other States, and that the fishermen would be able to buy direct from the Eastern States and so obtain all the nets and cotton that they desire. That may be true, but the usual procedure is for the merchants here to indent the fishing nets and cotton goods to Fremantle, with the result that the fishermen in the metropolitan area have an advantage over the country fishermen by knowing much earlier when the fishing nets are due. They are able to select, if necessary, all the nets available. That is not reasonable, fair or just to the fishing industry as a whole. If there is any truth in the allegation of the member for Mt. Marshall that one particular fisherman controls the fishing industry of Western Australia, it is a sound argument why he should support the Bill because it seeks to give control to the Fisheries Department and allow it to see that the gear is allocated proportionately.

Mr. Leslie: It has not controlled this Paino very much.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I do not know that the hon. member has given us any facts to substantiate his argument that this man does control the industry. To my knowledge he does not. However, as I have said, if there is any truth in the statement, then the hon. member should support the amendment giving the department control of the distribution of the nets and other gear so that all the fishermen will get a fair share of what is available. Exception was taken to the fact that we desire to license the fishermen and the areas in which they may fish. As pointed out by the member for Irwin-Moore, it

is necessary for the department, if it is ever going to do anything to conserve the fishing grounds, to have more power than at present. The only way to achieve that conservation is to provide the authority that we are seeking here.

One member wanted to know how we would control the different classes of fish that could be caught. Under the Game Act we control the various types of bird life of Western Australia, and we can do the same thing with fish. It is well known to both the fishermen and the Fisheries Department that different fish usually go to certain waters during the spawning season. If the proposed powers are given to the Inspector of Fisheries, then licenses could be issued in conformity with the Act so that, for instance, no salmon could be caught in certain waters at a certain time of the year, and so on for other classes of fish. That would prevent the taking of large numbers of fish during the spawning season, and we would then be able to protect the fish to a certain extent during this period. There are also other reasons why the department wants this special power. I instanced the matter of Hopetoun but, in addition, there may be undesirable fishermen in the industry and this would be a means by which they could be refused a license.

Mr. Leslie: It appears that you could start straight away on that.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: We will get the Bill passed first, and consider that aspect later. This power is desired for these various reasons. We do not want part-time fishermen operating in large numbers in competition with professional fishermen. The member for Irwin-Moore mentioned that in some areas week-end fishermen cast their nets—it is well known that fish get net-shy—and in some cases they catch many times more fish than they want for their own use. In such cases it may be that they are doing something detrimental to the fishing grounds. That is only one of many reasons why this power is desirable. The member for Irwin-Moore also mentioned that he intended to move an amendment, in the Committee stage.

Another member mentioned the fact that the committee was to consist of representatives of professional fishermen only. I am not wedded to the idea of the committee

being composed only of representatives of the professional fishermen. It is usually argued that the people interested in an industry should have some say on the controlling body, but perhaps I went a step too far, and we can put that down to my youth. If the hon. member moves the amendment suggested, with power to add, we may be able to put some other representative on the committee. I do not think anybody has yet made any serious suggestion in that direction. However, if the clause is altered as suggested, with power to add, we can give consideration to what other person should be on the committee, if it is necessary to have other interests represented there.

I can assure members that the Chief Inspector of Fisheries is very concerned about the fishing industry of this State and will at all times continue to protect the areas where the breeding of fish takes place. One of the arguments of the professional fishermen has been that we close too much water. It is our intention to try to get the fishermen out into the deep water. We cannot expect this Bill to revolutionise the fishing industry overnight. During the war many of our professional fisherman were taken from the industry and placed in other avenues of employment. It was practically impossible to get new fishing boats or nets, and consequently the majority of the fishing gear in use in Western Australia at present would be unsuitable for deep-sea fishing. Therefore the process must be gradual. This Bill is the first step towards putting into operation what the member for Mt. Marshall suggested. I think I have replied to all the points that have been raised but, if not, I can give further information in the Committee stage.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for the North-West in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—New Sections 5A to 5F:

Mr. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 5A the word "professional" be struck out.

I am moving this amendment because I propose, later on, to move a further amendment which would have the effect of adding other representation to the committee, although it would still be composed largely of professionals.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The member for North Perth has intimated his desire to see on the committee a representative of the general public. I was thinking along somewhat the same lines. If the hon. member succeeds in securing the deletion of the word "professional" he intends to move for someone to be included on the committee who will, as he says, represent the general public. I have in mind a representative of the consumers. Almost invariably on boards or committees of this kind the consumers are represented and on a committee of this nature I think it is important that the consumers of fish be represented.

The Minister for Lands: Would he know, particularly, where the fish were spawning?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I do not know whether it is within the province of a private member to move for an increase in the membership of the committee, but at all events I think the consumers should be represented. I know of no essential food controlled by a committee or board where there is greater necessity for representation of the consumers than exists in this case. Fish is one of the most essential foods, particularly for children, but it is a food that is seldom, if ever, seen on the tables of the workers, because the price is prohibitive. We should take steps to ensure that the fish is fresh and that the price is within the reach of consumers.

Mr. BERRY: The amendment is unnecessary. This is merely a name, and if the amendment I suggested on the second reading that the Minister should take power to add to the number were adopted, all requirements would be met.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I agree with the member for Irwin-Moore; the name makes no difference. "Fishermen's Advisory Committee" would be acceptable to me.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of proposed new Subsection (2) the word "four" be struck out with a view to inserting the word "five" in lieu.

Later on I propose to ask for the appointment of an additional member. This need not increase the charge on the revenue, because the amount proposed to be provided could be divided amongst the larger number of members.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the amendment. The word "four" may be deleted, but no larger number may be inserted as it would increase the burden on the revenue and no private member may move in that direction.

Amendment ruled out.

Mr. BERRY: I move an amendment —

That in line 2 of proposed new Subsection (2) after the word "Minister" the words "with power to add to this number" be added.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the amendment because it amounts to the same thing as the amendment I have just ruled out. Such an amendment could be moved by the Minister though not by a private member.

Amendment ruled out.

Mr. BERRY: Then I ask the Minister to move it.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Members evidently desire some representation apart from the fishermen. I am prepared to accept the suggestion of the member for Irwin-Moore and therefore move an amendment—

That in line 1 of proposed new Subsection (2) after the word "members" the words "with power to add and" be inserted.

Mr. McLARTY: The Minister should give an assurance that the professional fishermen will not be outvoted.

The Minister for Lands: We have just struck out "professional."

Mr. McLARTY: I did not favour the deletion of the word. It has been suggested that the consumers should have a representative, but I do not know who else should be appointed to the committee. I understood that the Bill was designed, not only to protect the industry, but also to protect those engaged in it, and I wish to ensure that this is done. I suggest that progress be reported so that we may have time to consider the amendment and make any necessary investigations.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I suggest to the Minister that the amendment is rather dangerous and that its wording is poor. If passed, many consequential amendments would be required to the succeeding clauses. I agree with the member for Murray-Wellington that the Minister should report progress and consider the matter thoroughly.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I do not see the danger that the member for Murray-Wellington does. We are appointing an advisory committee, which will consist of three professional fishermen and the Chief Inspector of Fisheries. If we appointed an additional person, the industry would still have a majority on the committee. I do not think a representative of the consumers ought to be on the committee at all, as this measure has nothing to do with the sale or consumption of fish.

Mr. SEWARD: The Minister would be well advised to report progress, although, with him, I cannot see that the consumers have a right to be represented on this committee at all. There is, however, a definite clash of interests between the commercial and the amateur fishermen and I think provision should be made for the appointment of an amateur fisherman to the committee.

Mr. BERRY: If the Minister so desires, he can appoint 200 amateur fishermen to the committee, as it would not alter the Bill at all. The Minister's explanation has made the point quite clear.

Mr. ABBOTT: The Minister is at a disadvantage because the amendment has not been placed on the notice paper. It was my intention to move later on that a representative of the people not commercially engaged in the fishing industry should be added to the committee.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: In view of the controversy over the wording of the amendment, I ask leave to withdraw it. If leave is given, I shall move a further amendment which will overcome the difficulty.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of proposed new Subsection (2) after the word "members" the words "at least and not more than five" be inserted.

The subsection will then read, "The committee shall consist of four members at least and not more than five appointed by the Minister".

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I hope the Minister will give serious consideration to the suggestion made that a person not a professional fisherman should be appointed to the committee. We have established in the South-West a trout-fishing industry which we hope will attract large numbers of tourists. It might be that the members of this proposed committee would make recommendations which might entirely defeat the object of acclimatising those fish. I have done some fishing for pleasure; but I know that irrespective of the future of the industry there are many individuals engaged in it as professional fishermen who, if they could make £1,000 in the next two years, would get out of the industry after that and would not care much about how it progressed; whereas others might desire to carry on in the industry for all time and serve the interests of other people.

Mr. Fox: Have you ever struck a fisherman like that?

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Yes; I have met plenty of people who have taken on an occupation for the time being. The hon. member knows that that happens. How many miners have entered the industry with the idea of putting in two or three years and, after making a few pounds, getting out? I have heard hundreds express that intention. I want to see consideration given to other than professional fishermen. It is all right to cater for the interests of a few fishermen, but perhaps the interests of the tourists who come to the State to catch fish might be of more value to the State than a hundred professional fishermen scattered round its shores. People other than fishermen should have a say on this board and be able to give advice to the Minister as to what best may be done to encourage the multiplication of fish in Western Australian waters.

Mr. FOX: I move—

That progress be reported and leave asked to sit again.

Motion put and negatived.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Again I suggest that the amendment is not a very wise one, being careless about drafting here and another place always putting us right.

To say "four at least and not more than five" is practically to say "five". Therefore why not say "five"?

The Minister for Justice: We cannot go back.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I know the difficulty about that; but I do not like our

Mr. Watts: That is the most humorous thing you have said this month!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is a reflection on all of us. Why should we rely on another place to put our drafting right? Members are not taking the job seriously.

Mr. Mann: Talk to your own benches!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Members should try to do the job properly. We need to be careful in our drafting. This is bad draftsmanship, and I know it will be put right in another place. I do not want that to be done. I say most emphatically, that the Minister can make the membership five and then add another clause to set out what interests they shall represent. Then we shall get exactly what members want. Under the amendment we cannot do so unless we immediately proceed to put in the other one. If we do not, the previous amendment cannot possibly be accepted. I do not want this sort of thing to be done slipshod.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I do not agree with the hon. member.

Mr. Watts: Very few others do, either!

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I thought the hon. member was influencing other members.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Leader of the Opposition is the most slipshod of the lot.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: If the amendment is carried the proposed subsection will read—

The committee shall consist of four members at least and not more than five appointed by the Minister.

The next subsection begins—"Of the said four members....", and proceeds to indicate whom those members shall represent. Whom the fifth shall represent is not stipulated. He can represent anything the Minister who appoints him desires. To me the proposed new subsection is quite clear

in spite of what has been said about the drafting of it.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of proposed new Subsection (3) the word "four" be struck out.

If we strike out this word the subsection will still contain reference to the four members mentioned in the Bill, and if the Minister likes to add an additional member, well and good.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I hope the hon. member will not press this amendment, because if he does it will lead us into further bother. By adding the word "five" we would have to insert another clause—

Mr. Abbott: I am not moving to add the word "five".

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Is not the hon. member proposing to strike out the words "Of the said four members"?

Mr. Abbott: No, just the word "four".

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I cannot see any objection to that; but I want to ensure that three representatives of the professional fishermen will be stipulated in the Bill. I cannot see any danger in striking out the word "four" but I will be persistent in opposing the addition of the other words suggested by the hon. member.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That a new paragraph be added to proposed new Subsection (3) as follows:—“(c) one shall be appointed to represent persons who are not commercially engaged in fishing or the fishing industry.”

That leaves the matter wide open for what the Minister desires. I am not suggesting that this person shall be a representative of the consumers or of the amateur fishermen but an independent individual. The Bill could later be recommitted to deal with the clause on the lines suggested, and to have my original amendment inserted.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I cannot see any harm in this amendment. It does not specify whom the extra member shall represent.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: We are getting to the position where the drafting of the Bill will look silly. First of all we say there shall be four at least and not more than five members, which makes it optional, and in the same clause we proceed to stipulate that there shall be five members who will represent different interests.

The Minister for the North-West: Is there anything wrong with that? It reads sensibly.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: No. The first part of the clause states that there may be five but this amendment provides that there must be five.

Mr. Doney: There is an amendment to overcome that difficulty.

Mr. SEWARD: I would like to move an amendment on the amendment as follows:—“and the fifth member, if appointed, shall represent fishermen who are not commercially interested in fishing.”

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept that. The amendment would have to be withdrawn before I could do so.

Mr. WATTS: I hope that the member for North Perth will withdraw his amendment because, after the amendment of the Minister to make it optional to have five members, it was obvious that we could not make a definite declaration in this clause as to the appointment of the fifth member. The only way to do that is to insert words in the proposed paragraph to provide that the fifth member shall, if and when appointed, represent some one or other. By doing that we would still retain the discretion of the Minister without destroying the draftsmanship of the Bill.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I move—

That progress be reported and leave asked to sit again.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot accept the motion because it is not a quarter of an hour since a motion to report progress was moved.

Mr. McDONALD: The point raised by the member for Geraldton is well taken. Most members would prefer the Minister to undertake to recommit the Bill to make clear that the membership shall consist of five. That would be more satisfactory because, if it is desirable to have a non-commercial member on the committee, his



appointment should be definite and not a matter of option.

Mr. SEWARD: If the member for North Perth is not inclined to withdraw his amendment would I be in order in moving to alter the word "shall" to "may?"

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. SEWARD: I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out the word "shall" and inserting the word "may" in lieu.

By doing this we will give the Minister the chance to appoint a representative of the amateur fishermen as well as one of the professional fishermen. I have had complaints from amateur fishermen that they have gone to holiday resorts in the summer only to find them denuded of fish. It is most desirable that the Minister should have their viewpoint placed before him.

Progress reported.

#### **BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

#### **BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [9.0] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is being introduced in order to bring some sections of the Factories and Shops Act more up to date and more into accord with the industrial conditions at present operating in Western Australia under Arbitration Court awards and agreements. The bulk of the sections which it is desired to amend were introduced and passed in 1920. The member for Geraldton will have a particularly clear recollection of that legislation, as he was a member of the Select Committee that travelled all over Western Australia and heard a great deal of evidence with a view to bringing down that legislation. Those provisions have stood since that time and it is our desire now to bring them up to date. Section 163 of the parent Act reads—

Nothing in this Act contained shall in any way affect the jurisdiction conferred on the Arbitration Court established under the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912-1935, and any pro-

visions of this Act as to any matters wherein the jurisdiction of the said court may be varied, altered, modified or excluded by any award now made or hereafter to be made by the said court or by any industrial agreement now made or hereafter to be made under the said Act, provided that any such industrial agreement shall not have effect as to any such matters, unless and until the same has been declared a common rule by the said court.

In effect this means that any Arbitration Court award or any agreement which has been registered in the court, and made a common rule, over-rides any industrial matter in the Factories and Shops Act. I have a vivid recollection of that provision being inserted. It will be apparent to members that the proposals now being submitted are not intended in any way to usurp the functions of the Arbitration Court. Anything we now do can only affect those persons who are not covered by any such award or agreement. They are the people whom we are now trying to assist. It might be asked who can be outside any Arbitration Court award or agreement nowadays.

Mr. Leslie: The trade unions fell down on their job.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: They did not fall down on the job. Outside the metropolitan area and outside the larger towns such as Northam, Geraldton, Bunbury and so on, where there are sufficient members to organise, the unions have organised and those people are catered for by awards or agreements, but throughout the State in small places where there are perhaps only one or two shops, employees are working and are not members of any union, and it is practically impossible to organise them. Even if the unions had fallen down on the job, Parliament has the right to protect such people. Nobody knows better than does the member for Mt. Marshall, who is a leading light in the Returned Soldiers' League, that where they fall down on the job the Government comes in and protects them. Before I conclude I hope to prove to the hon. member that he is quite wrong. Having explained the meaning of Section 163, I will endeavour to point out what is now desired. I feel that this measure is long overdue, and there are only two amendments contained in it that do not come within the categories I have mentioned. One of them is inserted with a view to altering the definition of the word "factory" and the other is to give the

Chief Inspector more power in the matter of inspections.

Provision is made to enlarge the definition of "factory" so that the Factories and Shops Department may have better facilities for inspecting what are known as backyard factories. Attempts have been made to do this on many occasions. The Act provides that a factory is a place where four or more persons are engaged. We desire to alter that provision so that it will read—

"And includes any building, premises or place in which one or more persons are so engaged as paid employees for the purpose of the employer's trade or business."

The section which states "where there are four or more persons engaged" is used to a large extent to cover up bogus partnerships, and so on, but we are not worried so much about persons who are engaged and who claim to be partners. We say that where there are one or more persons engaged as employees for the purpose of the trade or business of the employer they have as much right to be looked after as have any four such persons. Of late years—particularly during the war period—and up to the present time, all sorts of manufactures and businesses have been carried on in a small way in backyards, as for instance in the mixing of paint and so on, which are injurious to the health of the workers. We feel that we should have the right to have those places registered, so that they can be inspected, in order to protect the health of the employees working there.

It is also proposed to repeal Section 28 of the parent Act, which provides for a 48-hour week for any adult male worker. It will be agreed that we have long passed the stage where the 48-hour week obtained. The Arbitration Court altered that years ago. It is proposed to repeal Section 28 with a view to inserting in Section 29, which provides for the hours to be worked by women and boys, the words "a man" so that the provision will then read, "A man, woman or boy." That will bring a man within the 44-hour week which has been in vogue for many years in practically every industry. The Government anticipates that here again there cannot be much argument against the proposal.

We also desire to repeal Section 30, which provides that the Minister, under certain

conditions, may exempt certain factories from specified provisions of the Act, or may allow them to work overtime. Sections 33 to 36 of the Act contain ample power without the necessity for any alteration to do what is required and provide for penalty rates if men are requested to work certain hours. It is proposed to take the matter out of the hands of the Minister because there is no necessity for any such provision, seeing that the sections I have mentioned provide all that is requisite. It is further proposed to add a new section to the Act that will enable employees to enjoy two weeks' holiday per year. We all know that the granting of two weeks' holiday has been applied throughout almost all the trades and callings in this State. A few weeks ago the Arbitration Court granted two weeks' holiday per annum to practically all workers engaged by private employers. The Government has also agreed to adopt that principle with regard to its employers. Of course, there are some, such as nurses and others, who have three weeks or a month each year as a holiday period, the length of the respite depending upon the industry in which the employees are working. The Government, therefore, has fallen into line and has agreed to grant at least a fortnight's holiday to its employees. The parent Act contains no provision at all for annual holidays.

Another amendment embodied in the Bill also deals with a privilege enjoyed by practically all workers throughout the State. I refer to the granting of six days' sick leave annually. Members will realise that the Factories and Shops Act is divided into two sections, the first of which deals with factories and the second with shops. In the factories section, provision is made for eight holidays, and it is proposed to add two more, making the total number of holidays per year up to ten, which is in accordance with Arbitration Court awards. The days are specifically named in the Act and the two additional ones are mentioned in the Bill. By amending the Act to cover holidays, sick leave and the holidays I have referred to, the factories part of the Act will be brought into line with awards issued by the Arbitration Court. It is also intended to confer upon the Chief Inspector more power with regard to matters concerning ventilation and conditions injurious to health. This will be embodied in an amendment to Section 61, paragraph (c) of Subsection (1) of which

sets out that a factory or any portion thereof—

“shall be ventilated so as to render harmless, as far as practicable, all the gases, vapours, dust and impurities generated therein, and in the opinion of the Chief Inspector, injurious to health.”

In this respect differences of opinion have arisen. The Chief Inspector goes to a factory and expresses the opinion that certain gases or dust or lack of ventilation are or is injurious to health. He is a layman, although highly qualified in his work. Should the employer not wish to carry out the improvements the Chief Inspector desires, a medical officer is brought in and he may say that he does not regard whatever it may be as so injurious as the Chief Inspector has suggested. To overcome the continual arguments that arise under that heading, the Bill contains a provision to amend the paragraph I have quoted by deleting the words “and in the opinion of the Chief Inspector injurious to health” and inserting in lieu the words “to the satisfaction of the Chief Inspector.” The effect of that will be that the lack of ventilation, for instance, which the Chief Inspector may consider is causing injury to health, will have to be remedied to the satisfaction of that officer.

Dealing now with the shops section of the parent Act, it has been found that exactly the same conditions operate under that portion of the legislation, and we propose to provide similarly for a fortnight's holiday and for six days' sick leave to apply to shops as well. The question may be asked as to why no such provision has been included in the shops section of the Act, particularly with reference to the stated number of holidays per year. The reason for that is that the Minister may at any time declare a public holiday in certain districts or for the whole State. That is being done quite frequently. Members from country districts know that if a show is being held, the road board or someone, through the member for the district, applies to the department for a holiday to be declared on that day. Thus the Minister is able to proclaim a holiday whenever he is asked to do so. It is proposed to leave that provision as it stands, thus permitting the Minister to proclaim a holiday to suit the convenience of local people. It will be appreciated that what operates in factories does not always operate in connection with shops.

A most important section in the parent Act is one that may cause wonder as to why it has remained in the measure for so long. Section 138 provides for wages to be paid to those employees who are not covered by any award or industrial agreement and sets out that the employee shall be entitled to be paid 10s. per week for the first year of employment in the trade, and to be granted an increase of 5s. per week each year until his wage amounts to 35s. weekly. That provision has operated since 1920, with the result that a person could employ a minor irrespective of sex or age, provided the individual was willing to work, for 10s. a week, with annual increases of 5s. weekly until the wage reaches 35s. a week. What happens after that I cannot say; that is all the Act provides.

We think the time has arrived when that position should be altered, and the Bill provides for the deletion of that portion of the Act and the substitution of an amendment to the effect that the rate set out in the Shop Assistants' Union's award in the metropolitan area shall be the wage paid to junior workers, in any particular district, plus any district allowance or basic wage adjustment. We consider that we are not asking for anything out of the way. We are asking to be applied to various parts of the State only what the court has prescribed. The clause was a difficult one to draft because we were faced with three or four alternatives. We have the electoral districts, the magisterial districts and the road board and municipal areas, and we had difficulty in deciding just what to do. Members might ask why we specify the metropolitan district. This matter was considered very carefully and we found that, omitting basic wage adjustments and district allowances, there was very little difference between the actual wage paid to juniors as a base in those areas as compared with the metropolitan area. The wage in the metropolitan area is fairly static.

So we propose in this way to overcome something which in my opinion has been allowed to stand too long, namely, the payment of 10s. a week for juniors regardless of age or sex in the country districts. This will apply to country districts only, because the metropolitan area is covered by industrial awards, etc. This is purely an attempt by the Government to bring into line those employees who are not catered for at pre-

sent, apart altogether from whether the unions have fallen down on their job, as the member for Mt. Marshall suggested. I do not care whose fault it is. A good many employees, particularly juniors, are not catered for except under the Factories and Shops Act. That is why this legislation was originally introduced. Section 163 was adopted so that there would be no usurping of powers of the Arbitration Court. I was a member of the Legislative Council when that provision was inserted. Sir Hal Colebatch was then leader of the Council and I remember his having had the clause drafted for the purpose. I have made this explanation so that there will be no misunderstanding. We are merely providing for people who are not already catered for. I trust that the Bill will be given a sympathetic reception and that the employees now suffering disabilities will be afforded a better outlook for the future. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Abbott, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

#### **THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE**

(Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle) [9.24] in moving the second reading said: This Bill contains certain proposed amendments to the Act. Last year a report was submitted to Parliament by a Royal Commission, which had been appointed to inquire into the prevalence of vermin in this State and to make recommendations for dealing with it. The Royal Commission was first appointed as a Select Committee in September, 1944. Extensive inquiries were pursued, and it became necessary to convert the Select Committee into a Royal Commission. The Commission did very good work. It devoted a considerable amount of time to the inquiry, took a large amount of evidence and gave a good deal of thought and study to the evidence. Finally it submitted a number of recommendations, and, instead of stating specifically what the recommendations were, I think I can say implied in many cases certain things that ought to be done. It is well to give consideration to the circumstances that led to the appointment of the Select Committee. Because of a succession of particularly favourable seasons, vermin had been

increasing in this State. The real menace was the rabbit. True, other vermin had increased, but the real trouble was the existence of very large numbers of rabbits.

Mr. Watts: That is not an apology for a Bill in A Minor, is it?

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Many years previously a similar set of circumstances had prevailed. We had a succession of good seasons favourable to the existence and continued growth of vermin and, as a result of the menace, Parliament was requested to devise some method of coping with it. I suppose it is only to be expected that we shall, from time to time, experience conditions that will focus attention upon the need for taking some action. Then, when the trouble abates considerably, people do not worry much about what they previously regarded as a menace until the next cycle occurs and attention is once again focussed on necessity for taking action. Strangely enough, there are very few rabbits about today. It is not an uncommon experience to travel many miles through the agricultural districts without seeing a rabbit.

Mr. Seward: But they are coming on again.

#### **THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:**

Of course they are. They will breed up again as they have done previously, but now is the time to make a very determined effort to reduce the vermin to a point where its numbers will be so small as to be negligible. However, we find that, owing to the very high price of skins, some people take the view that it might not be wise on their part to kill off the rabbits, because, if they did so, they would not be able to farm the rabbits. It is undeniable that some people do take that view. That is why trapping has never been effective. Landholders who have relied upon trappers to get rid of vermin have never succeeded, because the trapper continues in one spot only so long as it pays him and so long as he is getting sufficient rabbits to make his staying there worthwhile. Then, just when he ought to continue his activities in that spot, because he has reached a stage when a little further activity would result in the almost complete eradication of the vermin, he decides to move to pastures new where the number of rabbits is far greater and his return, consequently, more lucrative. That is one of the reasons why many farmers have

never been able successfully to cope with the rabbit menace—they have relied almost wholly on the activities of trappers.

The previous occasion to which I referred, when conditions were somewhat similar to those prevailing before the appointment of the Royal Commission with whose report I am dealing, was in 1918. Members will find the conditions very comparable. The Select Committee then appointed made some very sound recommendations. We can find little ground in these days for differing from them, their principle being very sound indeed. Those recommendations included decentralisation of administration, the formation of vermin boards to control districts where rabbits existed, the compulsory destruction of rabbits by settlers under the supervision of vermin board officers, vermin rates to be levied on the owner or occupier of alienated or occupied lands, the Rabbit Department to supervise the activities of all vermin boards, with power to carry out the work if the boards neglected to do so. The underlying principle of those recommendations was that a definite responsibility was placed upon the owner of the land to get busy himself and do something about keeping his property clean from vermin.

The report of the Royal Commission to Parliament last year departs from that very sound principle and recommends that the responsibility for the destruction of vermin should be lifted from the owner of the property and placed upon the vermin board. I regard that as a very serious weakness in the Commission's recommendations. Surely, in every case, in the first analysis, it must be the responsibility of the man who owns a property to take what steps lie in his power to keep the property clean. That is the basis of a number of Acts which this Parliament has passed. Take, for example, the Bush Fires Act. That places a definite responsibility upon the owners of properties to keep them free from grass, so that fires cannot commence.

Mr. Seward: Hardly that—not to keep the property free from grass.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am referring to suburban blocks. A responsibility is placed upon the owners of such blocks to burn off the grass so as to obviate the occurrence of fires. That responsibility is the owner's and he can be prosecuted if he does not take the necessary

action. We do not place upon somebody else the responsibility of seeing that the grass is burnt off. It is the owner's job.

Mr. Leslie: But you do not tax him, do you?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am dealing with one aspect at present, and that is, whose responsibility it is in the first place to take action along certain lines. Why should not the owner of a property bestir himself? It is his property. It is in his interest that he should get rid of the vermin. Many figures have been put forward to prove that any owner of a farming property who fails to take action to get rid of vermin is suffering a severe economic loss. As a matter of fact, we can put it this way: Some people say they cannot afford to get rid of vermin. I would say they cannot afford not to get rid of vermin, because of the cost it is to feed vermin on the property. Sufficient evidence was placed before the Royal Commission to prove very conclusively that producers were suffering great losses on account of the existence on their properties of considerable numbers of vermin. With regard to the proposal that the responsibility should be shifted from the individual, I want to say that a deputation from the Road Board Association waited on me and stated that, whilst the association accepted the recommendations of the Royal Commission generally, it would not accept that recommendation.

Mr. Seward: Did they see you after they had seen the report?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, they definitely did, and they said they would not accept that recommendation, as they considered it very wrong in principle and that its adoption would mean failure in any attempt to cope adequately with the destruction of vermin. The Royal Commission's report says that the majority of the boards have done a particularly good job of getting rid of vermin. An investigation does not substantiate that statement, nor do I think the evidence justifies that conclusion either. I will read what the report says—

We feel at this stage, however, that we should say that in our opinion the majority of local authorities have done their best in the existing difficult circumstances.

What are "the existing difficult circumstances"?

Mr. McLarty: The war years, of course.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** If it refers to difficulties due to the war, I would say that due allowance would have to be made for that, but one would still expect that boards making a genuine attempt to get rid of vermin would at least levy a rate that would give them some money to spend for the purpose. I have here a list compiled for the purpose of showing the rates the boards have levied. I am providing in this Bill, in accordance with the recommendation of the Royal Commission, that the rate shall be a minimum rate of  $\frac{3}{4}$ d. in the pound on agricultural land. But let us see what some of the rates were that have been levied over the years. I do not intend, unless members want me to do so, to mention any boards specifically. They can refer to the list afterwards, if they want to. But I find there that one board for a number of years levied a rate of one-sixteenth of a penny; another board levied a rate of one-fifth of a penny.

**Mr. Leslie:** But what was the income from those rates?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Very little. I leave the hon. member to imagine what the income would be from one-sixteenth of a penny in the pound.

**Mr. Leslie:** It depends upon the wealth of the district.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** We find that a very common rate was  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. Quite a number of boards levied a rate of  $\frac{1}{4}$ d.; several, one-tenth of a penny. Very few—and those few are to be commended—levied a rate sufficiently high to give them enough revenue to cope with the trouble. Those boards which did make a very real attempt to deal with the situation did it effectively. They set what should have been an excellent example to be followed by other boards. They proved that any board setting itself out to get rid of vermin could do so, and they also proved it was possible to eradicate the vermin from unfenced properties equally as well as from fenced properties; and plenty of evidence was brought to the Royal Commission to prove that very conclusively. If we are going to shift the responsibility from individuals on to boards which have not demonstrated so far any great desire to be particularly active, then what chance have we got of effectively coping with what is not today a menace but what, as the member for Pingelly says, will

undoubtedly once again develop into a menace? So I am very surprised indeed that the Royal Commission recommended that the responsibility for taking action should be shifted from the shoulders of the owners of property.

I have also a list which is available for the perusal of members, covering the various road board districts, with the number of properties set out where no success has been achieved at all in coping with vermin and a list of properties in the same district where the owners have been very successful indeed, showing that, where an individual farmer is prepared to take the right measures and maintain a sustained effort, he can succeed in satisfactorily dealing with the menace of rabbits and other vermin.

**Mr. Perkins:** How were those lists compiled? Were they compiled by the Vermin Department down here, or by the local authority?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** They were compiled from information available to the department. I have the names of the owners of the properties, particulars of the various properties, and the districts in which they are situated; and then a report on the condition of the properties, showing those where very positive action was taken and those places of negative action.

The Royal Commission has further recommended that there should be set up an agricultural protection board and that the whole of the responsibility for the destruction of vermin and the control of noxious weeds should be given to that board, which would have power to appoint technical officers and which would thereby, in many respects, simply duplicate the work of the Department of Agriculture. There is no reason to believe—in fact there is less reason to believe—that such a board, which it is recommended should consist of 12 members, would be any more successful than the board which is functioning today. I believe the additional powers that the amending Bill proposes to give to the existing board, slightly enlarged, would be a far better method of dealing with vermin eradication and control.

**Mr. Doney:** Apart from numbers, are you satisfied with the present board?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** No, but I am not blaming the board. I am blaming other conditions which are operative at present and which I hope to be able to

overcome. I think the agricultural protection board recommended by the Royal Commission would be too large and too unwieldy. In my opinion 12 members would be far too many to give satisfactory control. I propose to enlarge the present advisory board from three members to five, giving an additional member for the agricultural areas and putting on a representative of the road boards, the chairman to be a representative of the Department of Agriculture, as at present.

Except for the two recommendations with which I have dealt, I accept the proposals of the Royal Commission. Those two recommendations with which I do not agree I will repeat. They are, firstly, the shifting of responsibility from the individual; and, secondly, the removal of the administration from the Minister to the proposed agricultural protection board. The Bill further provides for the inclusion of areas which previously were excluded from the operations of the Act. A lease under the Mining Act 1904 was previously not included in the definition of "holding." It is intended that where such a lease is used for agricultural or pastoral purposes, it shall come under the provisions of the Act, and that is provided for in the Bill.

Provision is also made for the striking of a vermin rate independently of the amount of road rates in any particular district. It is to be stipulated that a minimum rate of  $\frac{3}{8}$ d. in the pound on agricultural land shall be levied. The case for this provision for a minimum rate was very well argued before the Royal Commission, and I agree that it is necessary to prevent a number of boards from imposing a rate so low that it is of very little value, or from asking for permission not to rate at all. We have had the experience that some boards have sought permission not to rate and subsequently have asked for assistance to purchase ammunition to destroy vermin. One of the principles upon which we must act is that the vermin advisory board will help those who help themselves; and it is expected that the different boards will do something on their own account to show that they are in earnest in attempting to get rid of vermin.

The present Act exempts from the payment of tax those properties that are rabbit-netted. The boards have frequently pointed out how their revenues suffer from this ex-

emption and have sought to have an amendment so that such lands shall be rated. The annual conference of road boards in 1932 carried a motion recommending no exemption at all for netted properties. This motion was re-affirmed in 1934, 1936 and again in 1940, and I understand that it is still the opinion of the majority of the boards that rabbit-netted properties should not be exempt from payment of the tax because, it is pointed out, there are other vermin besides rabbits which have to be contended with. I am not prepared to go as far as the boards have advocated, but I do agree with the recommendation of the Royal Commission, which is that they should be rated to some extent. I propose that such properties shall pay 50 per cent. of the tax. A further provision is that the exemption applying to properties of under 160 acres is to be removed. When the Act was first passed there was not a great deal of development in the South-West and neither the rabbit nor the fox had become a menace there. But today there are both rabbits and foxes in the South-West, and they are very close to the metropolitan area. So there appears to be no sound reason for excluding these properties today. The eradication of foxes and rabbits will confer a definite benefit on the owners of these small holdings and, as a result, it is considered that they should pay something for it. So this exemption will disappear if the Bill is passed.

As a result of the experience over the years, amendments have been included to allow the Central Vermin Fund to be used for purposes other than the payment of bonuses. In 1930, amendments were passed making it possible for payments from the Central Vermin Fund to be used for the employment of trappers, and the use of those people resulted in the wild-dog menace being pushed further and still further out. We want to continue that principle, so I propose, in this Bill, to make it possible for the Central Vermin Fund to be used for the purpose of employing trappers and others in order to deal with the vermin in the various districts so that we can make a concerted attempt, throughout the State, to assist the vermin boards and to direct attention where the menace is worst and, in that way, bring about a big improvement in general conditions. So the scope of the control fund will be considerably widened by this proposal.

Further, it is intended that the bonuses to be paid can be varied as between districts, but not within districts. The necessity for the granting of a uniform bonus means that an extra inducement cannot be held out in some districts without there being placed upon the fund a burden far heavier than it can bear. So that it will be possible to use the funds to give a special inducement in some districts, the board is being given authority to vary the bonus in the way I have mentioned. Also it is proposed that we may prescribe certain features as vermin in different places. It will be possible to prescribe a certain animal as vermin in one district and not in another, where it is not necessary to do so. As a result, we will differentiate between districts in the prescribing of vermin, and also in payment of bonuses for the destruction of that vermin. Whilst this is not a straight-out recommendation of the Royal Commission, I consider it certainly is within the spirit of its recommendations.

The number of amendments in the Bill is not large, but they are such as will enable the State to deal more effectively with the menace than has been possible so far. With the two exceptions I have mentioned, the amendments are in accordance with the recommendations of the Royal Commission. I regard the work that it did as being of great value to the State. The members of the Commission spent a lot of time and did not skimp their work in any way. They gave a good deal of study to the evidence, but it is apparent that they were in difficulty in dealing with a number of contentious matters upon which there was a deal of difference of opinion. It was not always possible for them to make a recommendation that would deal with a particular point. So, as I have said, their recommendations are, in some cases, more to be inferred than clearly understood. Many of the recommendations are well stated and, with the two exceptions I have already mentioned, I agree with them. I have dealt fairly completely with the Bill. It is one which, in Committee, will no doubt bring out differences of opinion as to the measures to be taken. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.58 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 5th October, 1946.*

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### GOLDFIELDS HOUSING.

*As to Permits to Build and Homes Erected.*

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary:

1, What number of houses have been built in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder district under the Workers' Homes Scheme since June, 1935?

2, How many houses have been built elsewhere on the Goldfields under the Workers' Homes Scheme during the same period?

3, How many houses have been built under the Workers' Homes Scheme—

(a) In the Kalgoorlie-Boulder district since June, 1945.

(b) Elsewhere on the Goldfields since June, 1945?

4, How many permits have been issued for house building—

(a) In the Kalgoorlie-Boulder district to June, 1946.

(b) Elsewhere on the Goldfields to June, 1946?

5, How many permits have been issued for house building—

(a) In the Kalgoorlie-Boulder district since June, 1946.

(b) Elsewhere on the Goldfields since June, 1946?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, 76.

2, 4.