

# Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1925.

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3 p.m. and read prayers.

## BILL—DAY BAKING.

### Recommendation.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Macfarlane, Bill recommitted for the purpose of further considering Clause 3.

### In Committee.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Prohibition of night baking:

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: My object is to secure for the public and the master bakers a better deal than the Bill as it stands gives them. The amendment I propose to move will follow closely on the lines of one unsuccessfully proposed by Mr. Baxter. Since the matter was previously discussed, there has come into my hands a copy of the "Australasian Baker," in which a Mr. Reel, who was to have been an accredited representative at the Geneva Conference, gives a later account of the situation there as to the resolution of which so much was made during the introduction of this Bill. His report discounts the resolution. He mentions that he received a great deal of assistance from the work of Mr. McNeil, formerly a lay member of our Arbitration Court.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Is your amendment on the Notice Paper?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: It should be there, but is not. I move—

That paragraphs (a) and (b) be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—"Between 8 o'clock in the evening on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays to 5 o'clock

the following morning; and from 5 o'clock in the morning to 10 o'clock in the evening of Friday, and from 5 o'clock in the morning of Saturday to midnight on Sunday: Provided, however, that it shall be lawful to make and bake bread between 10 p.m. on the Monday next preceding the Wednesday to be observed as the bread carters' monthly holiday, and 5 o'clock in the morning of the Tuesday following."

The master bakers think that by agreeing to the compromise which the amendment represents, they may in future be less harassed by members of the union and their friends. It must be borne in mind that there are also double and treble nights of baking. My amendment does not provide for those. Eastern legislation does provide for them. This year the master bakers have to meet the condition that Christmas Day falls on Friday and Boxing Day on Saturday, making quite a long holiday period. The same position obtains at Easter. Apparently the bakers have lost sight of those facts. I previously quoted from a pamphlet containing statutory declarations made by members of the Federal Master Bakers' Association of Australia, and I now wish to read extracts from a statutory declaration made by Mr. Hill, a South Australian baker, on the 7th March, 1925—

On the 10th day of April, 1919, a further variation of the award was made on the application of the Master Bakers' Association. This alteration was found necessary, in order that the convenience of the holiday-making public should be met. The application was resisted by the employees, but His Honour, President Brown, varied the award in such a way as to permit work to be started at 12.1 a.m. on any public holiday which fell on a Monday for the purpose of the making and baking of bread or rolls for restaurants (not being hotels), cafes, racecourse and picnic stands and ham shops. He found that the general drift of the evidence went to show that the holiday-making public wanted fresh sandwiches, and wanted them early. By a submission filed on the 4th day of October, 1919, the employees asked for the old award to be rescinded, and repeated their claim for an 8 a.m. starting time. The matter was again thrashed out, but the president refused the application, and in the result, whilst rescinding the old award, made a new award which increased the number of hours during the night on which work could be done in the bakehouse at the usual rates of wage, and also lifted the bar on other hours of allowing work at any time at special rates of pay. The material portions of the award are as follows:—Making and baking of bread and rolls, Mondays to Fridays, starting time 5 a.m., finishing time 6 p.m. same day. Friday nights and double and treble nights

starting time 6 p.m., finishing time 11 a.m. following day.

There is now before the New South Wales Parliament a Bill on much the same lines as this measure. Mr. Lang, the Premier of New South Wales, however, has discovered that the conditions proposed could not satisfy the public. The "Australasian Baker" of the 31st October last contains the following:—

Hopes of an acceptable compromise, however, have been raised since by the fact that, on the 30th, representatives of the operatives and carters, together with the president (Mr. S. J. Service) and other members of the master bakers' executive, conferred with the Premier and discussed a proposal to amend the starting time in order to meet the week-end trade in a way that will meet the main objection to the Bill as drafted, the only way to make it workable, in fact. The idea is to start at midnight on Friday and finish not later than 10 o'clock on Saturday morning, thus enabling the carters to get out hours earlier; and the same before the carters' monthly holiday.

The same contentions that I am putting up now in the interests of the public were advanced and recognised in the Eastern States, where it was realised that it was useless to introduce day baking when the trade objected to it. The evidence, as reported in the "Daily News," before the Royal Commission now inquiring into the prices generally, bears out the claim that nearly all the bakers object to Sunday work and would like it abolished. It is well known that since Sunday baking has been indulged in, the demand for fresh bread has increased to such an extent that some bakers have sold from 300 to 350 loaves in less than half an hour. I was asked who, I thought, were those who bought the fresh bread on Sundays, and I was told that they were mostly wage-earners' wives who wanted the fresh bread for lunches on Monday mornings. Under the conditions sought to be established it will mean in effect, that baking will cease on Thursday nights and that bread delivered after that day's baking, will have to be used till the following Monday, because there will be no further deliveries till then. That is not right. By no stretch of imagination can it be considered a moderate proposal that people shall be asked to consume bread on Mondays in such circumstances, particularly if the temperature is such as we have experienced during the last few days.

The Honorary Minister: But the bread that is bought on Sundays is fresh.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I want to avoid that position.

The Honorary Minister: In whose interests?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: In the interests of the public and the bakers themselves. If in the interests of the bakers themselves we do not allow them to bake on Saturdays so that they can have Sundays free, we shall not view the position in the proper light. I will read a letter from the secretary of the Perth and Fremantle Operative Bakers' Industrial Union of Workers, dated the 3rd December, 1924, and addressed to the Master Bakers' Association following upon a conference between the executives of the association and the union, in order to show that the employees recognise that night work at some period of the week is necessary. The letter would have been converted into an industrial agreement had it not been for Mr. W. D. Johnson, who came from his home at Bruce Rock and told the operatives not to adopt the conditions outlined as he intended introducing a Bill that would make their position better. The letter was as follows:—

The following proposed amendments to wages and conditions as agreed to at the conference of executives on 27-11-24 was submitted to a special general meeting of my association called for that purpose on 2-12-24. I have been instructed to inform you that we have accepted same. Starting times: Sunday, midnight; Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 5.30 a.m.; Friday, 5.30 a.m. till 10.30 a.m., with a break of eight hours or not more than 10 hours. Carters' holiday week: Sunday, Monday, midnight; Wednesday, 8 a.m.; Thursday, 5.30 a.m.; Friday, 5.30 a.m. All work done between the hours of 10.30 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. on Fridays shall be paid at penalty rates of 10s. per hour, to be collected by the secretary of the union. Christmas Day and Good Friday: All time worked on these days shall be paid at the rate of double time, plus the week's wages. Wages: 8s. per week increase all round, and jobber 21s. 6d. for 8 hours. The meeting desired that these amendments should be submitted to your members on Saturday next, 6-12-24.

I hope that my amendment will be agreed to. I recognise it is not all it ought to be, but it is as near to it as I can get. At any rate more justice will be done under the terms of the amendment than is extended to those concerned under the provisions of the Bill. In Melbourne the starting time is 12 midnight, and the finishing time is not stated. Those conditions were adopted after a strike had taken place in connection with

the effort to establish day labour in the baking trade there. The strike lasted for a number of weeks, after which the public took a hand to such an extent that the proposal was defeated. In New South Wales also a strike occurred over the same question and the public again took a hand, with the result that the proposal was defeated. The day baking question has been resurrected by the present Labour Government there, but they deem it necessary to provide for night baking one night in a week so as to overcome the long gap during which stale bread would otherwise have to be used. The Committee have been told that the Bill represents a compromise arrived at between the operatives and the employers and that it will cut out the small man. I know that the master bakers have felt that they have been harassed to a great extent, particularly by Mr. W. D. Johnson, who, doubtless, has been desirous of improving the conditions of the operatives. Probably the idea of incorporating in the Bill provisions that will mean the outing of the small man was the inducement offered in order to bring about an agreement between the master bakers and the operatives. There is not the slightest doubt that the small man who does not employ anyone, constitutes a bit of a bother to the master bakers who do employ operatives. Perhaps it was considered that if the small men were done away with, the master bakers would have less harassing conditions imposed by Mr. W. D. Johnson. Much has been made of the fact that the Geneva Conference recommended the adoption of day baking, and, with Mr. Lovekin, I felt that there was a nigger in the wood pile somewhere, although I could not locate it. A report contained in "The Australasian Baker" which I have, shows where, I think, the nigger in the wood pile really is.

The Honorary Minister: It took you a long time to get this material together.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I received the information only two days ago. The paper I refer to contains a report regarding the Geneva Conference and day baking.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: What authority on the Geneva Conference is the writer of the article?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: The statements are those of Mr. Reed, who was a delegate at the conference with Mr. McNeil of this State.

[Mr. Macfarlane read from "The Australasian Baker" of October 31, the article headed "The Great Day Baking Hoax—how unions

have gulled Australia—Mr. Reed brings truth back from Geneva—four a.m. start still allowed—Anti-British nonentities carried ratification for own personal trade benefit—British Labour Government opposed day baking."]

That is my case and I hope members will recognise the importance of the information I have read. With the temperature we have had for the last few days it will be conceded that night baking has some advantages over day baking.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I regret I have not had opportunity to check Mr. Macfarlane's amendment and go through his supporting documents. I never bargained on the hon. member taking us round the world, as he has done, and indulging in a second reading speech in Committee. Seeing that the Bill has been before Parliament for months past, this information should have been brought forward much earlier. The hon. member has opened up a discussion that may extend over many hours. On the second reading other hon. members, having intimate acquaintance with the minutes and reports from the Geneva Conference, contented themselves with brief references to those documents and refrained from taking any biased view with which to bolster up their case. The extracts read by Mr. Macfarlane have been ferretted out for him by other men having a strong bias against the Bill. Those who know Mr. McNeill and Mr. Curtin, Australian representatives to the Geneva Conference, will readily accept their opinions as against the opinion of Mr. Reed. It is significant that Mr. Macfarlane made no attempt to quote local illustrations. He said the consumers would greatly benefit if they could get fresh bread on Monday instead of bread baked on the previous Thursday. Nothing of the kind occurs to-day. The hon. member said he was speaking in the interests of the baking operatives. Having an exceptional opportunity to gauge the opinions of the baking operatives, I say the hon. member could not get 2 per cent. of them to vote for his amendment.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: I could get 50 per cent.

The HONORARY MINISTER: That's nonsense. Such a statement makes one sceptical of the information supplied by Mr. Macfarlane. I challenge him to name a single baker who is in favour of his amendment.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You cannot say that of the employers.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I am not speaking of the employers at the moment; I am speaking of the bakers, about whom the hon. member feels so concerned and in whose interests he said he was acting.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Would it alter your attitude to the amendment if I did give you the names?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Not a scrap. Black sheep are to be found in every flock. The hon. member might find some bakers prepared to bring coercion to bear, but even if the screw were put on, I do not think this proposal would be agreed to. I venture to say the hon. member could not get 2 per cent. of the men to support his amendment. He should be candid and say that he is moving his amendment in other interests.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Several of the master bakers have told me they are not game to oppose the union.

The HONORARY MINISTER: But still they are prepared to go behind the backs of other people and ask members of Parliament to fight their battles for them. There are very few organisations that are not prepared to meet the employers and come to an agreement with them. To secure conferences is becoming an easier matter every year. Quite a number of masters attended the meeting as a result of which the proposals were submitted to the Minister for Works prior to the Bill being introduced in another place, and apparently some of them have since changed their opinions. In the interests of industrial peace the operatives accepted the compromise then reached. When both sides agreed upon certain proposals, what honesty of purpose can there be in submitting this latest proposal? An agreement was reached with the Minister, and now the employers are working through their representatives in Parliament to defeat the object of the Minister. To do that they are even prepared to repudiate the obligation into which they entered. It makes me tired when proposals of this description are brought forward at the death knock. I detest anything that is unfair. Certain conclusions have been arrived at; no complaints have been made, but the masters, instead of standing by the agreement, have misled Mr. Macfarlane. The information he has given is contrary to fact and certainly his proposal would be contrary to the interests of those for whom he says he is acting. I could quote a lot

of information from the Geneva Conference in refutation of the arguments advanced by the hon. member. He, however, has quoted information from a biased journal. Regardless of the views expressed by Mr. Reed, the world is opposed to night baking. I trust the amendment will not be accepted. It will get us nowhere. In effect it is similar to the amendment that was moved by Mr. Baxter and almost unanimously rejected by the Committee. Mr. Macfarlane, by moving his amendment, is not acting in the interests of the consumers or of the bakers. The bread delivered on Monday will be as fresh as the bread that is now delivered on that day. The operatives do not like Sunday work, but they are prepared to work on Sundays. If they are satisfied and the consumer will not be penalised, in whose interests can the hon. member be acting? The amendment would inconvenience everyone and please no one, and it would practically wreck what remains of the Bill.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am surprised that Mr. Macfarlane should have brought up this question again. During the second reading debate I explained the method of bread manufacturing on the Continent. Some members regarded my remarks as a joke, but in view of the opinions expressed by Mr. Macfarlane this afternoon, they have proved to be very apt. An important difference between the provisions of this Bill and the decisions of the Geneva Convention is that we have taken up only one-half of the recommendation. The smallgoods men and those engaged in the confectionery side of the business are excluded from the measure. Such exemption would influence the opinion of Mr. Reed, but that gentleman, according to the official report, is a very unreliable authority. According to the "Report on Night Work in Bakeries," issued by the International Labour Office last year, Question 1 which was submitted to the various countries read—

Do you consider it desirable that the conference should adopt a draft convention on night work in bakeries?

The reply of the British Government was as follows:—

His Majesty's Government consider that this is a question which might properly be dealt with by a draft convention on the understanding that the procedure followed would be that proposed by the governing body as set out on page 6 of the questionnaire.

Later on the following question was asked:—

Do you consider that such a draft convention should lay down prohibition of night work in bakeries? If so, what is the length of the nightly rest period which should in your opinion be laid down by the convention?

The reply of Great Britain was as follows:—

(a) His Majesty's Government would view with sympathy proposals for eliminating night work for the bakery trade as far as possible; but they are satisfied that it would be necessary for certain exceptions and exemptions (both temporary and permanent) to be made in order to meet the public demand for bread and to prevent undue dislocation of trade—

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: That is exactly my case.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The reply continues—and to allow an adequate period of grace in which employers can make arrangements to enable them to comply with the new conditions before the prohibition becomes operative. (b) The length of the nightly rest should, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, be not less than six consecutive hours, which should fall between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m., or exceptionally 10 p.m. and 6 a.m.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That reply says exceptions would be necessary.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Exceptions are provided under this Bill. I protest against the statements in the report of Mr. Reed. He has misrepresented the operation of bread manufacturing in Europe. Germany and Holland make exceptionally good bread. For Vienna bread they have the advantage of a monopoly of a special brand of flour, which commands a higher price than does the flour from any other country. So far as I know they still have that advantage over any other country. It is wrong to say that Continental countries do not make bread in the way that it is made in Great Britain. In Belgium and Berlin are the biggest machine bakeries in the world. They are owned by the workers and managed co-operatively. Practically every country with the exception of Great Britain and Canada replied to the questions in the affirmative. Norway did not reply definitely because she was engaged in the experiment.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Most of the countries you quote have a bigger population than Australia.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes. I should like the opponents of day baking to read this report. The amendment would make the Bill unworkable. It would mean that a lot

of bread would have to be delivered on Saturday morning.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: Overtime could be paid.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That would make the bread dearer. According to the amendment bread baking would have to stop from Thursday until Friday night. That would throw the trade into chaos. The proposal would not be acceptable to the trade, and would make the Bill farcical. Mr. Macfarlane has spoken for an unknown authority, and does not understand the position himself.

Hon. T. MOORE: I hope no notice will be taken of Mr. Macfarlane's proposal if he is going to base his claim on the fact that Mr. McNeil went into the matter of day baking other than with the object of defeating the proposal. Mr. McNeil has always spoken from the company or employer's point of view. He cannot be quoted as a fair authority on this question. From his own point of view he was quite honourable, but he cannot be accepted as a man who would arrive at a decision from the point of view of both sides. He said he did not think the Convention should have dealt with this matter, and on that ground he was going to oppose it. Mr. Reed then quoted him as being a man who had done yeoman service for one outside the trade.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	14
				—
Majority against				5
				—

#### AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. Nicholson	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. J. W. Hickey
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. W. H. Kilson
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. H. Scddon
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. E. H. Gray
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Bill reported without further amendment, and the report adopted.

*Third Reading.*

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. J. W. Hickey—Central) [4.16]: I move—  
That the Bill be now read a third time.

**HON. H. J. YELLAND** (East) [4.17]: I move an amendment—

That at the next sitting of the House the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of considering a new clause.

I desire to move the insertion of a new clause which was moved previously, but with regard to which I was misled by an interjection.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (in reply): Every opportunity should certainly be given for the fullest discussion of a measure, but I hope the amendment will not be carried. Quite enough discussion has taken place on this Bill. It has been recommitted, and now another recommitment is suggested. It would be extraordinary to recommit the Bill after all the opportunity there has been for discussion and for the placing of amendments on the Notice Paper.

Amendment put and negatived.

Question put and passed.

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

**BILL—RESERVES.***Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.19] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to alter the purposes of certain reserves. Lithos. outlining the reserves referred to have been prepared for the information of members, and are now on the Table of the House. The first proposal is in the interests of the Educational Endowment Trustees who hold Class "A" reserve 11373 at Albany as shown coloured red on litho. No. 1. The Albany High School is built on portion of this reserve. The Education Department propose to carry out agricultural experimental work in connection with the high school, but there is no suitable land in the present reserve. Lots 312 and 315 shown in blue on the litho. contain good black loam, and have been partly cleared. The lessee of these lots has forfeited his lease in order that the trustees may obtain

the land. It is now proposed to grant the two lots to the trustees in exchange for the lots bordered green, but as this affects a class "A" reserve, Parliamentary sanction is necessary. The next project also originates from the Education Endowment Trustees. They hold the Crown grant of Avon location 20,293, shown in green on litho. No. 2 for educational endowment. The land is useless unless it is netted against rabbits, which would cost about £500. The trustees are not compelled to deal with the rabbits, but the vermin board complain that this neglected area will be a breeding ground. The trustees therefore ask to be relieved of it, as they have no funds for the purpose of carrying out the necessary improvements to afford the requisite protection. The third proposal refers to the present pound site at Bunbury, shown on litho. No. 3. It is situated in the midst of the residential part of the town, and is quite unsuitable for its purpose. The Bunbury council desire permission to sell the site, and to purchase a lot in a more suitable position. It is therefore proposed to grant the land to the Bunbury council with power to sell, provided the proceeds are applied to the purchase and improvement of a more suitable pound site. Fourthly, the residents in the vicinity of Napier wish to erect an agricultural hall on the site bordered red on litho. No. 4. This forms part of Class "A" reserve No. 647 the purposes of which are camping and public utility. It is desired to exclude the portion bordered red from the Class "A" reserve and make it a separate reserve for a hall site, and to vest it in trustees. There are no departmental objections. Fifthly the school site at Subiaco is on Class "A" reserve No. 5691, the boundaries of which have been fenced as shown in red on litho. No. 5. This, however, does not agree with the boundaries as gazetted, which are as shown in blue. As both the school grounds and the adjoining municipal park lands have been laid out to conform to the fenced boundaries, it is necessary to amend the boundaries of the school reserve to conform to the fencing. All the parties are agreeable. Sixthly, Class "A" reserves Nos. 18,324 and 18,325 as shown in red on litho. No. 6 have been vested in the Perth Road Board for recreation, with power to lease, subject to the Governor's approval, for any term up to 21 years.

Hon. J. Duffell: Only reserve 18,325 is mentioned in the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Western Australian Lawn Tennis Association, the Western Australian Football League, and the Western Australian Golf Club desire to lease portion of reserve No. 18,325, but these bodies, in view of the large expenditure proposed, desire leases of not less than a 50-years term. The improvements which are proposed by these bodies will involve an immediate expenditure of about £3,500, and in addition large sums annually. The road board are not in a position to carry out these improvements. The Bill therefore proposes to set apart 17 acres of reserve No. 18,325, as shown bordered blue on litho., as a Class "A" reserve for a public park, and to empower the Governor to vest the balance of the reserve in the Perth Road Board with power to lease up to 50 years conditionally on the approval of the Governor being first obtained to any lease or proposed expenditure. The remaining provision deals with reserve No. 5,574 in Labouchere-road, South Perth, shown in red on litho. No. 7, which is set apart for botanical gardens. It has not been utilised for that purpose, and the desire is to set it apart as a recreation ground, exclusive of golf.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: What is wrong with golf?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is no objection to golfing itself. I understand, however, that the Golf Club have already a considerable area under lease.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But the lease will expire.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Not for many years, I understand. There was a long lease in the first instance, and some six years prior to its expiry the club were given another lease. I have not investigated the matter closely, but that is what I am informed.

Hon. J. Ewing: It is so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There are also two reserves adjoining not classed "A," which are set apart for Zoological Gardens caretakers' quarters and municipal purposes respectively. These are not required for such purposes, and it is proposed to set apart the whole block for recreation, exclusive, however, of the strip along the Labouchere-road frontage shown in blue, which it is proposed to declare a Class "A" reserve for parking ground for cars, etc. This

would meet requirements in connection with the Zoo, Golf Links and other recreation grounds. The area shown in brown is to be left as a road access to the recreation ground. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. A. Stephenson, debate adjourned.

## BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

### *Second Reading.*

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.29] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to extend the operation of the principal Act for another year. The number of clients on the board at March 31, 1925, was 2,674, of whom 1,154 were ex-soldiers. New clients taken on during the year numbered 85, all being ex-soldiers. No other clients are being taken on. Clearances from the board obtained during the period from the 1st December, 1924, to the 1st October, 1925, totalled 194. Since the inception, 1,478 clearances have been granted. The board must continue operations in order to maintain securities and to complete the work in hand. There has been no further extension of activities except in the case of ex-soldiers. The total advances to the 31st March, 1925, amounted to £9,459,001, and for the 12 months to that date to £1,201,918. The average annual advances totalled £945,900, and since the 31st March last, for a period of seven months, advances totalled £750,350. The heavy increase in the advances is due to: (1) the high price of corn sacks; (2) the increased quantities of super. supplied; (3) the increased insurance premiums due to (a) higher prices, (b) increased area and yields, (c) increase in premium rates for hail insurance; (4) the greater amount of soldier settlement interest payable to the Agricultural Bank on behalf of the latter's clients; (5) heavier miscellaneous expenditure. The crop proceeds for the 1924-25 season to the 31st October, 1925, were:—

Co-operative Wheat Pool—	2,684,045/48
bushels, at 6s., less freight,	£723,456
7s. 4d.	
No. 2 Wheat Pool—	109,464/24
bushels, at	5s. 6d., less freight,
	£27,574 17s. 4d.
Cash Sales—	2,243,938/7
bushels, at 5s. 8.86d.	average £643,832 6s. 5d.
Other produce—	£109,828 9s. 7d.
Totals	5,037,448/9 bushels: £1,504,692 0s. 6d.

To that has to be added the estimated equity in the pools; Co-operative Wheat Pool, 1<sup>st</sup> and No. 2 Wheat Pool, 3d.; stored wheat, 7,422 bushels at 5s., which gives a total of £15,410 11s. 8d., or an aggregate of £1,520,102 12s. 4d. The total produced since the inception of the board amounts to 344,258,758 bushels. The payments to creditors for the 12 months ended 31st March, 1925, amounted to £16,995; the total payments since the inception, to, approximately, £302,959, while the balance of the claims yet unpaid totals £270,033. The estimated debtors' balances to be carried forward against the next harvest total £1,427,138 and the balances brought forward from the 1923-24 season against the 1924-25 harvest represent £1,600,663. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. T. Moore, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the 26th November.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee.*

Hon. J. W. Kirwan in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Insertion of new section after Section 63; rates to carry interest:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It is unusual for interest to be charged on outstanding rates. Frequently the boards send out notices to people regarding the rates but it is becoming increasingly difficult for some settlers to find the cash necessary to make the payments. Arrangements can be entered into with the local authorities by which the ratepayers can undertake certain work as a set-off against their rates.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Various vermin boards have asked for this power which is already exercised by some local governing authorities. Interest cannot be charged until the rates are 12 months overdue. Some vermin boards have to obtain an overdraft at the bank in order to carry on and interest has to be paid on the over-

drafts. Those ratepayers who do not pay their rates for 12 months should be obliged to pay interest as a business proposition. On the other hand, a rebate is allowed on rates paid within a certain period, in the form of a discount.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The clause is fair and equitable. It is fair to those who pay that those who use their money for other purposes should have to bear a penalty of 5 per cent. after 12 months. The dog difficulty is a matter of urgency, and the work cannot be done until money is obtained. The clause will provide an inducement for people to pay up.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 8 and 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Insertion of new section after Section 100; special rate for destruction of vermin:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in line six of Subsection (1) of the proposed new Section 100a, the word "half penny" be struck out, and "fourth of a penny" inserted in lieu.

In 1923 several conferences were held regarding vermin matters at which representatives of the pastoralists and the agriculturists were present. It was agreed that the pastoralists should pay as much as the agriculturists. We should not confound the vermin as specified in the Bill with the rabbit question. The latter problem will be more costly to the agriculturists who are prepared to pay for the extermination of the rabbit pest. The rate referred to in the proposed new section is for a special purpose.

Hon. H. Stewart: And has to be borne by everyone.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, including the timber lessees, which, I think, is right. Under the proposal contained in the Bill the pastoralists will pay £11,000. The annuities total £132,000, and twenty times the amount gives a total of £2,640,000 from which a rate at 1d. in the pound will produce £11,000. On the other hand, the valuation of the farming areas totals £11,316,92 plus the re-assessments by the Taxation Department amounting to £2,661,238, giving a total of £13,978,161. A rate of ½d. in the pound on that basis will produce £29,12 which is two and a half times as much as will be paid by the pastoralists. That was never intended by either the pastoralists or



the agriculturists and it is not equitable. Under my amendment the farming lands will pay more than the pastoralists, but it will be a reduced amount. Under my proposal the pastoralists will pay £11,000, the agriculturists £14,500, and the timber lessees and others £1,041. Under the Bill the cost to the pastoralists will be  $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per sheep, whereas the cost to the agriculturists will be eight times that amount per head. That was never intended. It is estimated that £24,000 will be required. My amendment would produce £26,600 or £2,600 more than is required. Last year 9,000 dingoes were paid for, which means that probably 28,000 or 30,000 were destroyed. Most of them are poisoned and two-thirds of the number are never discovered. As a result of a few weeks' campaign in the South-West while I was in charge of the Department of Agriculture, 800 scalps were obtained, but it is safe to say that ten times that number were poisoned.

Hon. T. Moore: In the South-West now the dingoes are eating two-year old cattle.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. If we get 12,000 dingoes this year, all that will be required to pay for them will be £24,000, and we should not rate the pastoralists and agriculturists higher than is necessary.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. The executive of the Primary Producers' Association on the 15th October, 1923, made certain recommendations to the then Minister for Agriculture regarding a proposed Vermin Bill. One of the amendments they suggested was that a uniform rate be struck throughout the agricultural and pastoral areas on the unimproved value. The rate provided in the Bill is not uniform; the farmer will pay only one-half of what the pastoralist will pay. If we had complied with the request of the Primary Producers' Association, the amount would have been made one penny all round. That is the latest letter on the file from the secretary of the Primary Producers' Association. The farmers will pay in the aggregate £29,000 and the pastoralists £11,000. Agricultural land, though smaller in acreage than the pastoral land, is greater in stock-carrying capacity. The pastoralists have been fighting the dingoes for years almost single-handed. To a large extent they have stemmed the invasion at considerable expense to themselves, and if they had not done so, the agricultural areas would long

ago have been overrun by the dogs. I have a report covering every district in which dingoes were killed last year. The figures for the agricultural districts are 2,735 and for the pastoral areas 5,410 dogs killed. Five hundred have yet to come in, and I understand that number will be divided equally between the pastoral and agricultural areas. The pastoralists should no longer have to carry on this work of destruction unassisted. Some farmers have recognised their obligations and have assisted to destroy the pest, but others have done next to nothing.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That also applies to some of the pastoralists.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The pastoralists, with very few exceptions, are doing their duty to themselves and to the State.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There are a number of exceptions.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The pastoralists have my sympathy. They encounter droughts extending over years and their flocks are often reduced to a remnant. When good seasons come, they pay heavily in taxation and receive very little from the Government. The one uncomplaining section of the community are the pastoralists. They give less trouble to Ministers than do any other section.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They only want to be left alone.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is so.

Hon. J. Ewing: Do they object to the penny in the pound rate?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No; according to the file they are prepared to pay 3d. in the pound, and they made no stipulation as to what any other section should pay. But we must do them justice. It is in the interests of the farmers that this problem should be tackled. Fallowing is considered to be essential to successful agriculture and sheep are a necessary adjunct to fallowing. Soon after the completion of fallowing, weeds spring up and sheep are required to feed them down. Not only would it be impossible to keep sheep, but it would be difficult to carry on fallowing operations in a few years unless the dingo is exterminated.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I hope the clause will receive further consideration because it is the crux of the measure. It will have the effect of creating a new department and imposing new taxation. Agriculturists are paying a vermin tax at the present time.

Will they be relieved of that tax when this measure comes into operation?

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Then this will be a second vermin rate they will have to pay. At present they contribute to the local body who pay out the money to inspectors to travel around the country and tell them what they are to do. When a farmer has paid a local rate of £30 or £40, it is pretty cool on the part of an inspector to tell him to put on hands for vermin destruction and spend another £100.

Hon. T. Moore: Surely you do not pay that much.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Don't we? It is nothing to be ordered to do 50 miles of poisoning. Under this measure we are to have another department and another set of inspectors. A feature of the Bill is that any holder of 160 acres will be exempt. There are any number of people with small holdings that are breeding grounds for vermin, and they will be exempt. Yet the other poor beggars will have to contribute for the destruction of the vermin that such people are breeding. Some of these men do not wish to get rid of the vermin. I remember a farmers' conference at which a strong demand was made that no bonus should be paid for dingo scalps on the ground that the dingoes destroyed the rabbits. Another section of the conference wanted the dingoes destroyed because they were killing the sheep. Many farmers do not keep sheep, and they regard the dingo as a friend because it kills the rabbits. People with small holdings do not want the rabbits destroyed because they provide sport and good food. In many country towns there are large areas infested with rabbits.

Hon. T. Moore: This Bill deals only with dingoes.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It is a taxation measure. South Perth is a road board.

Hon. H. Stewart: Are there any holdings of 160 acres at South Perth?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I do not want a repetition of what has taken place; I want to see the money judiciously expended in the destruction of vermin.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Bill has been asked for by the executive of the Primary Producers' Association, by the pastoralists and also by the Agricultural Department. Mr. Hamersley asked whether the present tax imposed by the vermin

board would continue. It will continue because it is levied for a totally different purpose—the destruction of rabbits. With regard to the exemption of 160 acres, the Government have come to the conclusion that on 160 acres of land it is not possible to carry many head of sheep, consequently the holders of such small blocks would derive no benefit from the Bill. Mr. Hamersley also referred to the probable administration of the measure. There will be an advisory board on which the pastoralists and the agriculturists will have equal representation with the Government.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What will they do?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Advise the Minister.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: On what?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: On every problem that crops up.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There will be nothing for them to do.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In carrying out the request of the agriculturists and the pastoralists, the Government deserve the gratitude of Mr. Hamersley.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I have already congratulated the Government on the equity that is written all over the Bill. I am in the agricultural section. The tax that is to be imposed will be imposed at the request of the agriculturists and pastoralists. The trouble in the past has been that in some parts of the State the pastoralists, seized with their responsibilities, have paid a high tax, and other localities have not paid anything at all. The result has been that the board that did make provision for the payment of a higher rate on scalps received the greater number of scalps, but those scalps did not come from the board's own district; they came from all parts of the State. Mr. Baxter asked what the advisory board would do. It will fix the one rate to be paid throughout the State, and it will be their duty to see that there is a systematic attempt to destroy dogs all over the State. That in itself will be a pretty big contract. Since the Bill has been introduced an amendment has been brought down to provide for the appointment of a board of three, one to represent the agriculturists, one to represent the pastoral industry, and the third to represent the Government. Nothing could be fairer than that. Mr. Hamersley complains that two taxes will have to be paid. The fact that a special rate will be paid under the Bill will relieve

owners of some of the rates they are now paying. There will be a specific rate for dogs and foxes, and a rate for rabbits. Where there are no rabbits there will be no rate. Whilst there are no rabbits in the North, there are kangaroos and euros, thousands of them, destroying everything before them. Hon. members may not be aware, but it is a fact, that the South is now carrying far more sheep than the great North.

Hon. V. Hamersley: It has always been so.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Nothing of the kind. How was that brought about? It was brought about by the pastoralists on the outskirts making it possible for the agriculturists to carry sheep in the inner circle. The Bill provides that if either an agriculturist or a pastoralist encloses his area with vermin-proof fence, then he becomes exempt.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Do you think a pastoralist would like to do that?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: No, because his area is too large. But the man in the agricultural section can put up a rabbit-proof fence and thus become exempt.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What will he pay in interest on £80 a mile?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: He will save that. If he does not prevent his sheep getting out, he will prevent his neighbour getting in. There is one section that should be exempt—the holders of pastoral leases on the islands in the North, where there are neither dogs nor rabbits. We should not impose taxation on those people.

Hon. H. STEWART: Unaware that Mr. Baxter was going to move this amendment, I had it in mind to move to add a proviso on these lines: "Provided that the revenue due from the amount fixed on other holdings shall not exceed the revenue due from pastoral leases." If the dingo be considerably reduced as the result of work done with the funds to be made available, it may be expected that the rate will be reduced to an amount sufficient to cover bare necessities. Although I am prepared to support the amendment, yet I point out that in case there were to be such an expansion of the pastoral industry that their contribution should become heavier than the contribution from the agricultural industry, my suggested proviso would serve to retain the balance between the two contributions. I believe the pastoral industry would have no objection whatever to such a proviso.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The representatives of the pastoralists are fully agreed upon paying a sum equal to whatever the agriculturists will have to pay. But under the Bill the agriculturist is called upon to pay two and a half times as much as the pastoralist.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Something like 50 times as much!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In the agricultural districts thousands and thousands of acres are quite immune from dingo, notwithstanding which they will have to pay rates. Representatives of the pastoralists agree that my amendment is entirely reasonable.

Hon. A. BURVILL: I want some information from the Chief Secretary. In my district there is but very little trouble from dingoes. Nevertheless the road board are paying for dingo scalps, and striking a rate for the purpose. Will that rate have to continue after the Bill becomes law? Another point: black cockatoos are becoming a very serious pest in my electorate. When eventually they are declared a pest—as they will have to be pretty soon—who will have to pay the rate for their destruction? Is it to come out of the ordinary revenue of the road board as a vermin board, or it is to come out of the new vermin tax to be paid to the Government? If it is to be paid by the road board, I will support Mr. Baxter's amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If and when black cockatoos are declared a pest in the hon. member's electorate the bonus provided for their destruction will come out of the fund to be created under the Bill.

Hon. A. BURVILL: And those districts where the black cockatoo is not a pest will have to pay their proportion of the cost?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Certainly. They may have other pests not declared pests in the hon. member's electorate.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: This rate is for a specific purpose. In the North some road boards, having vermin to deal with, strike vermin rates, whereas other boards, being immune from pests, strike no rate. For instance, up there no rate is struck for rabbits. Why should property owners be called upon to pay into a fund that will provide a rate for the destruction of black cockatoos in Albany?

Hon. E. H. Gray: They are in trouble, just as you are.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The principal Act provides for the striking of a special rate for the destruction of such pests, and this Bill will relieve these people of the necessity for striking a rate for the destruction of dogs or foxes. Mr. Baxter has the audacity to speak on behalf of pastoralists, and to say they are quite satisfied. I give that an emphatic denial. If the hon. member confined his attention to the agriculturists I am sure he would find himself busy enough. How did Mr. Baxter and Mr. Stewart arrive at their calculation regarding the "2½ times"? The only way to arrive at a calculation is on the production of the different areas. The production of wool and meat south of Geraldton exceeds the whole of the production of the North.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: At what cost?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: In one huge section of the North, Roebourne, there has been no rain for three years. Stations which shorn 25,000 sheep two years ago have shorn 8,000 this year, and if they do not get rain within a few weeks they will have no sheep to shear next year. The pastoralists are conserving this huge territory for the Crown, but in the South a man's property is his own. The unoccupied Crown lands are the breeding grounds for these pests. I understand the Government propose to supplement the amount put up by the property owners, and in that way contribute their quota towards the destruction of dogs. I was pleased to hear the Minister confirm what I have said before that the pastoralist wants only to be left alone, and that he would not be making this request but for the fact that the dogs have not left him alone. The pastoralists are meeting the main attack, and those who live inside that circle might be expected to assist them in their work. The day is not far distant when the South will carry four or five times as many sheep as are carried in the North. The pastoralists in the North require 20 acres to the sheep, and in the south, in many cases, can carry 20 sheep to the acre. The dogs in the Kimberley areas have now begun to take the calves. Not only have we euros and kangaroos destroying the feed, but we have tick as well as dogs destroying the cattle. The Government are paying cattlemen £3 a head for cattle at the works, and the cattlemen are giving the employees £4 per head for handling them.

Hon. H. STEWART: Mr. Holmes has exaggerated tremendously the benefits that pastoralists have conferred upon the south with regard to the destruction of dogs. Those in the South-West have been relieved far more by their fellow agriculturists in the eastern districts than they have by the pastoralists of the North.

Hon. E. ROSE: The farmers are heavily taxed. They will, however, derive benefit from this Bill, but I hope if the Government find that the full amount of the tax is not required, they will not call it all in. In the "Pastoralists' Review" appears a report of some evidence given by Mr. Alec. Watson, before the Prices Commission. He stated that the stock in the Fitzroy River country had been seriously affected by wild dogs and kangaroos. He also said that vermin boards had been formed in the Kimberleys, and in five years had paid 15s. a head for 6,046 wild dogs, and 3d. a head for 317,367 kangaroos. They are not complaining about having to find this money, but they would like the tax made compulsory. That is why the Government have been approached to bring down this legislation. I hope Mr. Baxter will not press his amendment. Undoubtedly the Government will use their judgment, and, as the dogs are destroyed, I hope the tax will be reduced.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will read from the notes supplied to me as to the point raised by Mr. Burvill—

The amendment permits of any bird or animal being declared for any particular district or districts. This is very desirable, as any one class of fauna may be deemed a considerable pest in one district, whilst in another part of the State it may be desired to protect them.

Hon. J. EWING: Mr. Holmes has raised an important question which has been in my mind for a considerable time. Taxation on the farmer is already very heavy. Both pastoralists and farmers are looking forward to the day when they will be rid of these pests. Mr. Holmes said he understood the Government were going to subsidise the fund to be raised under the Bill. Can the Chief Secretary assure the Committee as to what the Government will do? If a subsidy is to be given, I will vote for the clause as it stands.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: According to the information supplied to me, the Government intend to contribute henceforth on the same lines as in the past. It must be

remembered, however, that there is an immense contribution from the general taxpayer in the maintenance of the rabbit-proof fence.

Hon. J. Ewing: What has been the amount of the subsidy in the past?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Last year £3,500 was paid by the Government in connection with the destruction of dogs. Provision is being made accordingly for this year.

Hon. J. Ewing: It is not much.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Mr. Holmes said he could not understand the calculations as to the various amounts to be collected. The relative productiveness of lands has to be considered. In the purchase of his land the agriculturist has paid the State an enormous amount of money. The pastoralist pays about £1 per 1,000 acres. The unimproved value of 1,000 acres on that basis is £20. Under the rating proposed by the clause, the pastoralist would pay one-eighth of a penny. The agriculturist who has 1,000 acres is assessed by local authorities on the basis of about £2 per acre. Under this Bill he would be rated at a half-penny in the pound, or a total of £3 3s. 4d. Road boards are already rating farmers at £2 per acre. I myself am paying on the basis of 35s. The pastoralist who has one sheep to protect on 10 acres will be taxed one-fifth of a penny per sheep. On the other hand, the agriculturist will have to pay 4d. per sheep. So the agriculturist is going to be caught. Dingoes have been breeding freely on the stations. I do not like a tax which strikes directly at one section of the community. The agriculturists are to pay £39,500 annually under the Bill, and the pastoralists about one-fourth of that amount. Yet it is the pastoralists who have been neglecting their duty. Mr. Baxter's amendment should be carried, especially as the agriculturist is already paying another rate for the destruction of another kind of vermin.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I support the general principles of the Bill, though I see many anomalies in it. The measure provides that a group of settlers or farmers may completely enclose their holdings with vermin-proof fence and then become exempt. But they would be enclosing a number of roads. What would be the position when the vermin-proof fence crossed a road? Would it be permissible to put a vermin-proof fence across each and every road?

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is permissible.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: Is any penalty provided for leaving gates open? Another anomaly is that a settler is exempt if he encloses his holding with a rabbit-proof fence. That is all right as regards the dingo, the fox, and the rabbit; but what about the eagle hawk, or Mr. Burvill's black cockatoo? The latter pests cannot be fenced out even by a vermin-proof fence.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the amendment before the Chair, or to connect his remarks with that amendment.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I am agreeably surprised to know that the pastoral industry has anything whatever to complain about. Some little time ago there was statistical information that the pastoral industry was most remunerative, and we were told that the industry was desirous of coming under this Bill at a much lower rate than the agricultural industry. I heartily support Mr. Baxter's amendment.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Is the rate intended to be in addition to that levied under the Act?

Hon. H. Stewart: This is entirely new and has nothing to do with that rate.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is a super tax.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: As the clause stands, it may be successfully argued that the rate prescribed is in substitution of, and not in addition to, that levied under the Act. It may be necessary to include words to make it clear that the rate is an additional charge.

Hon. V. Hamersley: It is clear as it is.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	..	15

Majority against .. 6

AYES.	
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. Duffell
Hon. J. Nicholson	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. W. H. Kitson	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I move an amendment—

That in line two of the second proviso, in the proposed Subsection (1), after "inspector," the words "or is part of the mainland" be inserted.

The amendment refers to the islands off the North-West coast, where there are neither dingoes nor rabbits.

Hon. V. Hamersley: I have no dingoes on my place and they cannot get at my holding, but I have to pay.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The hon. member knows that dogs will travel for hundreds of miles.

Hon. V. Hamersley: They can swim.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Has any hon. member heard of a native dog swimming out to sea? I am referring to Dirk Hartog Island and others situated in the Indian Ocean off the Australian coast. Even if a dog could swim across the sea, there is only one occupant on each of the islands and the dog would be destroyed as soon as it landed. When people are prepared to pioneer these islands and put up with the isolation without the possibility of rabbits or dogs coming near them, the least we can do is to exempt them from the charge.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I oppose the amendment. Not only have the pastoralists a big reduction in the rates to be paid compared with the agriculturists, but now Mr. Holmes wants to exempt some.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: We are paying 1d. against the agriculturists' ½d.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes, but on a smaller valuation. When we consider the cost of controlling a pastoral station compared with that involved in a farm, it will be realised that the two cannot be considered on the same basis. There are thousands upon thousands of acres within the agricultural districts that have never been and never will be troubled with the dingo pest, yet they have to pay. Now Mr. Holmes has the temerity to ask for the exemption of pastoralists who are merely placed in the same position as the agriculturists I refer to.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: What nonsense!

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is not nonsense. Why should the agriculturists in that position have to pay more than the pastoralists up North.

Hon. H. STEWART: Pastoralists benefit more directly than any corresponding number of people in the South-West, despite

the fact that some of the latter have never been troubled during the last 20 years with dingoes and never will be troubled with them. The pastoralists are concerned with the travelling of stock, the values obtained in the stock market, and the status of the pastoral industry. It seems despicable to lieved of the payment of their quota. Such an exemption would be unfair and unjustifiable, and not in accordance with the spirit of the legislation.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I oppose the amendment. To exclude the islands amounts to the same as including the names of personal friends in order to grant them exemption too. To support such a proposition would be going a little too far. Any number of agriculturists may be in a similar position, in that the dingoes cannot get to their holdings at all. Everyone should contribute his quota under the Bill whether personally affected by the dingo pest or not.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The Bill exempts some people who cannot be troubled with the dingo pest.

Hon. H. Stewart: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is provided that if an area is fenced in, this rate shall not apply.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What is the cost of erecting such fencing?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: These islands are surrounded by a fence in the form of the ocean and dingoes cannot possibly get to them. I ask that this consideration be extended to those who are enduring the isolation of the islands.

Hon. J. EWING: I realise what Mr. Holmes wishes to do and I realise the natural fence that these islands have in the form of the sea. The question arises as to how far the nearest point of Dirk Hartog Island is from the main land. I have been informed that it is almost a matter of yards.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Of miles.

Hon. J. EWING: I have been told that it is almost possible for kangaroos to hop across.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Where did you get that from?

Hon. J. EWING: That was the information given to me.

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

Hon. J. EWING: If the amendment be carried, a still smaller amount will be available for the extermination of pests. It is

only reasonable that the measure should apply to the people on those islands.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11—Penalty for obtaining bonus by fraud:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: On the second reading I expressed the opinion that the penalty was absurd. We shall have a fund created by the pastoral lessees and the land owners for the destruction of dogs and foxes, and the one means by which the fund can be attacked will be by persons resident in South Australia, where a smaller bonus is paid, introducing scalps and depleting the fund created for the destruction of pests within this State. The penalty should be a fine of £250 or imprisonment for 12 months. I move an amendment—

That after "penalty," in line seven, the words "Two hundred and" be inserted, and that "three" be struck out and "twelve" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. LOVEKIN: I suggest that the words "or both" be added, so that the court will have power to order fine or imprisonment or both. We should not show any sympathy with scoundrels who would try to work swindles.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The penalty I suggested is as far as I thought it advisable to go. I have discussed this matter with the Minister for Agriculture, and I think what we have carried will be accepted by him.

Clause, as previously amended, agreed to.

Clauses 12, 13, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Roads Closure.

2, Eight Hours.

Received from the Assembly.

## BILL—METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading—Amendment six months.*

Debate resumed from the 18th November.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [7.43]: This Bill is a very simple-looking measure intended to double the present rat-

ing, and the question that presents itself to members whose constituents will be affected is whether it is justified. After reading the twenty-seventh annual report of the department one recognises the great development and vast expenditure on works over a period of years, though one cannot but feel there are surely some other means by which the deficiencies, which constitute the chief reason for the introduction of the Bill, might be overcome, and the need for bringing in a measure such as this and doubling the present power of rating might be avoided. It is a very serious thing for rates to be doubled. We recognise that public services cannot be provided unless some money is contributed towards the maintenance of the department and the carrying on of works, but it is essential that those works be carried out with the greatest possible economy. It is only a comparatively few years—1912, to be correct—since the Government took over the water supply of the city. And we must view with alarm the possibility of the Government again approaching the House and asking for power to still further increase the rates. Notwithstanding that great hopes are always held out when works of this description are taken over, that Government control will mean reduced expenditure, it is seldom that those hopes are realised. The report furnished by the select committee, in this regard, makes interesting reading. The works that the department have in hand indicate that there is heavy expenditure going on, and the Government now come to us and ask us to provide legislation to give them the power to impose further rating to assist them to meet expenditure and carry through the scheme they have in hand. I am inclined to question the wisdom of granting that power. The burdens are mostly falling on the holders of land.

Hon. T. Moore: For services rendered.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am not denying that. We cannot expect services to be rendered for nothing, but what we do expect is that the service rendered by the Government shall be rendered at the cheapest and not the dearest rate and that the work shall be carried out on the most economical lines and not on the most extravagant lines. It is clear from the report of the select committee that extravagances are going on in connection with the works now in progress. It is interesting to refer back to the first steps that were taken in the metropolitan area in

connection with a water supply scheme. The matter was first brought before Parliament in 1889. It was at that time carried out as a private concern and it continued as a private concern for a considerable time. On the 1st April, 1889, a motion was submitted to the Legislative Council by Mr. Scott in favour of determining the best scheme for supplying the city with good potable water. In the course of his remarks Mr. Scott referred to the steps that the City Council had taken in the matter and in the event of water works being started a rate of not exceeding 1s. in the pound would be imposed. Everyone seemed to be anxious to obtain what was then regarded as a great boon. The subject had been prominent for some years and the question then was how best to provide the supply and what was the most advisable scheme to adopt. The city council felt that they must appeal to the Government to help them, and Mr. Scott asked His Excellency to instruct the Director of Public Works to take whatever steps were necessary to determine the best scheme of water supply for the city. The income that was then estimated from water rates was £3,000 a year. To that was to be added the meter charges. The total receipts, it was expected, would be £4,000. Mr. Scott went on to say—

In the course of another two years—if we may judge of the future increase by recent circumstances—I believe we may reckon upon a revenue of £5,000, that is to say, before we have the scheme in operation . . . It will be necessary to encroach upon the public funds to some extent, but I apprehend it will not be such a sum as this House is likely to cavil at looking at the great importance of the question.

That was the humble beginning of the present scheme. Then as we progressed an Act was passed—the Act of 1896—which is still in force. It was anticipated in 1894 that the highest daily consumption would be 200,000 gallons, in 1895 238,000 gallons, and in 1896 537,000 gallons. In the course of the debate that took place on that measure a revision was made of the arrangements regarding payment of members of the board. The remuneration was fixed for the chairman at £250 and the members £150 each. The whole expenditure of the office staff amounted to under £1,000 per annum. Funds were to be obtained by debentures to be issued to the extent of £350,000 carrying 4 per cent.

interest. The amount of £220,000 was to be paid for the works and the balance of the money was applied towards carrying out improvements.

Hon. J. R. Brown: What has all this to do with the Bill, all this prehistoric stuff?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It is interesting to make comparisons. When the existing Act was introduced it was determined by the Parliament of the day that a sufficient rate would be a rate of 1s. in the pound on the annual rateable value of the land rated, or 2d. in the pound on the capital unimproved value where land is valued on that basis. The sewerage and storm water rate also, as fixed by the 1909 Act is 1s. 6d. in the pound on the annual rateable value, or 3d. in the pound on the capital unimproved value. It has to be remembered that values, in recent years, have been raised considerably and taxation has been thereby increased. We see that with the increase of population there has been very great development of the scheme. It has been necessary that the Government should keep pace with the increased demands. It is interesting to see how the work of the department has grown but, having regard to the report that has been furnished by the select committee, there is no justification for this present request to double the rate.

The PRESIDENT: That is the point; whether or not there is justification.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes.

Hon. J. R. Brown: It has taken a long time to arrive at the point.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The capital expended to date is £3,313,031. The total provision for redemption of capital by means of depreciation and sinking fund is £562,212, leaving a net capital indebtedness of £2,750,818. Also, the capital expended during the year has been £534,825. When we compare the very small beginnings of this department with the present expenditure, we see that it is a department of very great importance. But if we have to go on developing the scheme under existing conditions, then a later Parliament may be called upon to give sanction to another Bill doubling the rates asked for in the present Bill, it will be found that the services rendered are rendered at too great a cost, having regard to the other burdens the land has to bear.



Hon. J. Ewing: Well, we have to get the water.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Yes, but we have to get a satisfactory return for the money expended in providing the water, and, judging from the report of the select committee, it appears that we are not getting that satisfactory return. I ask hon. members to give very serious consideration to this matter before voting for the second reading.

**HON. J. M. MACFARLANE** (Metropolitan) [S.5]: I have not much to add to what has been said. I have been a consistent supporter of action on the part of public bodies for increasing the water supply to meet our new conditions. During the last year or two there has been great scarcity of satisfactory water in Perth, particularly in North Perth, and we have been annoyed with restrictions on our domestic supplies. I recognise that we cannot get all these improvements without increased cost. But what the metropolitan people are taking exception to is, not so much the work itself, as the undue cost of the work, which seems to be out of all proportion. The report of the select committee shows that whereas the capitalisation to-day is three millions, in 1936, when the Canning scheme will have been completed, the capitalisation will be £6,297,000. The deficit will keep on increasing until in 1936 it will have reached £247,000. The rates also will keep on increasing from the 1s. of to-day to the 2s. 11.17d. in 1936. So, there is not much relief to be looked for. Then there is the assessment increase, amounting to three per cent. of the capital cost. That is on water supply only. I have always been opposed to interfering with the Mundaring supply, but the select committee has converted me into a supporter of the proposal to obtain water from Mundaring. The select committee clearly showed that by a system of steel shutters and by improving the catchment surface an ample supply could be obtained from Mundaring at a cost of less than a quarter of a million. If instead of adopting that scheme, we are to rely upon the completion of the Canning scheme some years hence, we are going to suffer from water shortage and also from a higher rate than the people can bear.

Hon. A. Burvill: Then who will bear it?

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: We have to try to stop it by adopting some more

economical scheme. The time has arrived to give a board a chance to show that they can do much better than the Government are doing. The select committee, dealing with the question of lost water, found that it was due to meter trouble. So great was that trouble and so difficult did it prove to find a satisfactory remedy, that the idea was actually conceived of allowing the people to have their water without any meters at all. When we find such a thing admitted, it is time to appoint to deal with the situation, persons other than those who now have it in hand. To try to cope with the increased demand for water, which on appearances will soon reach 20 million gallons per day, the Churchman's Brook scheme was inaugurated. From what I have seen of the Wongong Brook and the Churchman's Brook recently, I anticipate there will be no more water running into them this year, or so little that it will be of no advantage to the Perth supply. We shall have to carry the expense of all this. That is where I join issue with the management. The objective is to give us an ample water supply for the next 25 years, for which we would be asked to pay something extra, but if the business had been properly handled the cost should not be anything like what is now being sprung upon us. We know the rate will reach nearly 3s. before the scheme is completed. I regret I have to take up this stand at a time when an adequate water supply for Perth is so very necessary. I am quite in accord with the feeling that the business has been mismanaged, and that the present cost has been reached because of the inability of the officials concerned to handle it efficiently.

Hon. A. Lovekin: We must stop the waste.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: If the work had been carried out economically we should not have been asked to pay a rate of 2s. in the pound. I am sure the people would accept a fair increase, but there will be a revolt if they are asked to pay 2s. I cannot suggest what line should be followed to remedy the matter, but I hope before the debate is over some suggestion will be made to alleviate the position.

Hon. J. Ewing: Do you believe in stopping the present works and drawing on Mundaring?

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member is not a Minister of the Crown.

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I am glad to have the question answered for me.

HON. A. J. H. SAW (Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.18]: For many years Perth has undoubtedly been suffering under a very serious water difficulty. The water has been deficient in quantity and in quality, and the quality has been even worse than the diminished quantity we were getting. For a long time we have been clamouring that this state of affairs should be remedied. I take it that the failure to remedy it was one of the important factors resulting in the overthrow of the Mitchell Government so far as the metropolitan area was concerned. The public of Perth, and I have no doubt certain gentlemen who have voiced their opinions in this House, joined in the clamour. I, to a certain extent, did so myself. Some years ago, just before the Mitchell Government went out of office, they determined to embark on this new scheme of the Canning, Churchman's Brook and Wongong. I was at a meeting at North Perth, at which Sir James Mitchell to a very hostile audience announced his policy. The audience was hostile not on account of the policy, but because of the very serious grievances under which the people were undoubtedly labouring. When we clamoured for that water we know well that it would be a very expensive business to give us an adequate supply. Everyone knew that money was difficult to obtain, and that the rate of interest was high, and we knew that the cost of material and of labour were also very high. As a result of that policy we are faced with having to foot the bill, and the bill means that the water rate will have to be increased. There is on the part of metropolitan members a hostile spirit manifested towards that increase. In common with others, on behalf of my constituents, I do not like to see the water rate raised, but I would still less like to repudiate what I consider my just obligations. I, therefore, intend to support the measure. I was very much astonished at one of the utterances of Mr. Lovekin when the other day he recommended that the work at Churchman's Brook should be scrapped, and that we should revert to Mundaring as an additional source of supply.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I did not say that. I said if it were mine, as a business proposition I would scrap it.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: The hon. member—I am not allowed to refer to him as the hon. gentleman—at the conclusion of his speech said that if it were his he would scrap it, and I understood him to recommend that the Government should adopt that policy.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is not quite right.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I listened attentively to the hon. member, and that was the impression left on my mind. I conclude that he either had a very short memory, or credited us with having one. I followed a good deal of the evidence, which was taken by the select committee.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I wish to put myself right. I said nothing of the kind attributed to me by Dr. Saw. In the report of the committee it is set out that we cannot recommend the scrapping of Churchman's Brook because it has gone too far. I said during the debate that if this were my own concern, I would scrap it.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: What difference is there between what the hon. member now says, and what I set out to say? It is because I was going to draw the attention of the House to the discrepancy of his concluding remarks with the report of the select committee, of which he was chairman, that he has taken up the stand he has this evening.

Hon. A. Lovekin: You are setting up an Aunt Sally.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I refer the hon. member to the pages of "Hansard."

Hon. A. Lovekin: I know what I said.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I know what he said because I listened to him attentively. The select committee started off with a great prejudice in favour of Mundaring.

Hon. J. Duffell: Question.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is not correct.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: No one could read the questions that were asked without seeing running through members' minds, especially the chairman's mind, the idea that we should make use of Mundaring. Before the inquiry was over the committee adopted a rather different attitude. I am going to refresh the memories of members by reading the final recommendations of that body—

That steps be taken to secure the services of a fully qualified and highly efficient engineer to control all construction work, and that such salary be offered as will induce the acceptance of the office by an engineer possessed of the highest qualifications.

I am glad that step has been taken, and that we have apparently a highly efficient Engineer-in-Chief. I hope the Government will avail themselves of his knowledge, and of any recommendations he may bring forward. The report continues—

That the engineer referred to in the previous paragraph be instructed to further investigate Mundaring as an additional source of supply for the metropolitan area—(a) by increasing the height of the weir; (b) by adding to the storage capacity by excavation or other means; and (c) with a view to minimising future losses on that scheme and relieving the taxpayers of the metropolitan area of unnecessary further capital expenditure. That the Churchman's Brook scheme be completed as early as possible, in order to cessate the further supply of Osborne Park bore water.

The hon. member says that if it were his, even at this late hour, a year after, he would scrap Churchman's Brook.

Hon. A. Lovekin: There is nothing wrong with that.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: There is nothing wrong with the hon. member. He can explain much greater discrepancies than that to his own satisfaction. The report continues—

Your committee would have recommended the abandonment of this project, and urged Mundaring as a source of supply for two million gallons of water per day

It is only a limited supply we are to get from Mundaring, far less than we need.

With safety to the goldfields and the agricultural areas, except for the fact that the work at Churchman's Brook is too far advanced, and the expenditure already incurred is so large that stoppage at the present time would neither be practical nor economical.

A year after, in spite of the fact that the work has been going on all the time, and the cost must have been enormously increased, the hon. member says, "If it were mine, I would scrap it."

Hon. A. Lovekin: So I would.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I will let the hon. member swim in his own dam.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That does not affect the position.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: It is a question entirely for the engineers. Had the select committee which made this investigation been composed of engineers, I would have been prepared to accept their views.

Hon. J. Duffell: What about the evidence of the expert engineers?

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I do not know that any evidence that was called advised them to scrap the present scheme.

Hon. A. Lovekin: The report did not say so.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I am replying to Mr. Duffell.

Hon. J. Duffell: There is not much in the reply.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: It has been explained over and over again that the reasons why meters, in spite of the fact that it was not economical to put them in, were being used was because of the great shortage of water, and because their installation undoubtedly diminished the waste. It was because the people of Perth were starving for water that the use of meters was persisted in.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is not evidence.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: It is a statement I have heard repeatedly. If it is not evidence it is common sense that if people have not got a meter, and do not have to pay for excess, they will use the water ad libitum and will keep the hoses on all night. If people have meters and have to pay excess, they are naturally more economical in the use of the water. Perth has been suffering from a severe shortage for many years. I should like to bring under the notice of the Minister a request I have received from the Midland Junction, Bas-sendean and Guildford local authorities. It is as follows:—

I have been directed by the council to bring under your notice the proposal to increase the water rate from 1s. to 2s., which is being provided for in the Bill now before Parliament, and I am directed to request that when the Bill comes up for discussion before the Legislative Council you will take strong exception to any proposed increase in the water rate as far as the Guildford district is concerned. It appears that the Minister has the discretion under the principal Act to strike different rates for four districts mentioned under the Act, these including Guildford. This council maintains that the increased expenditure on the city and other suburbs in no way benefits this district, and under those circumstances they fail to see the justice of increasing the rate on a section of the community who are to reap no benefit from the increased water service for Perth and districts.

Hon. A. Lovekin: They are getting the Mundaring water, and the pipe line passes by.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: Their point is that this increased expenditure, which is neces-

sary on account of the new scheme, is not going to benefit the Guildford district. It is very much like the argument put up by Mr. Holmes a little while ago, and this House is continually hearing the same argument: that where a section of the people consider they are not gaining any benefit from increased expenditure, they object to paying increased rates. It is a very nice point which could be argued at great length, and there is a good deal to be said on both sides. As representative of the district I desire to bring these facts to the notice of the Minister.

**HON. H. SEDDON** (North-East) [8.31]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill, not because I do not recognise the need for finance, and not because I consider that the metropolitan area will be excessively rated, but because I consider that in view of the result of the investigations of the select committee we should see evidence of an attempt on the part of the department to put their house in order before we grant them any increased funds. The select committee put in a considerable amount of time in investigating the subject last year, and in December the result of their investigations was known, the report being there for the department to make use of. The only reference made to that report in the department's annual report is a brief reference to the select committee's recommendation regarding the completion of the Churchman's Brook reservoir. All the other recommendations of the select committee, recommendations of an important nature, have been entirely ignored by the department. Consequently this House should assert itself, and by taking a firm attitude should show that the department must answer the very serious charges made against departmental officers and particularly against the engineers. The select committee's report referred to the serious losses occurring in connection with the water supply to the metropolitan area. It was pointed out that not less than 1,000,000,000 gallons were unaccounted for annually, representing a yearly loss of £50,000, a considerable portion of which amount could be collected. Such losses, moreover, apply not only to the metropolitan area, but also in the sister scheme supplying the country and goldfields. The figures I furnished when discussing the select committee's report here show that in both cases the loss exceeds 30 per cent., and that in

one year, 1920, there was a loss of no less than 40 per cent. of the supply from the Mundaring reservoir. It is quite evident that while the engineers have been estimating on the quantity of water drawn from Mundaring, they have taken no steps to control the waste. Consequently there are two sources of waste, loss of water and loss of revenue. The revenue is urgently needed by the State, and yet the engineers are taking no steps to secure it. My motion will reference to the report of the select committee has been on the Notice Paper week after week, and I have been waiting to hear some official announcement regarding the charges made in that report; but absolute silence has been the order of the day. One can see around the city of Perth some very beautiful gardens, but I am informed that those are gardens on premises where no meters are installed. In the course of the select committee's investigations the system in use in Sydney was brought under the committee's notice by the engineer who was then responsible, Mr. Lawson. Although I pointed out that the system of rating garden areas was found effective in Sydney, no attempt has been made to introduce the system here, even though twelve months have elapsed since the select committee's report was made available to the engineers. The whole of the evidence regarding the safety of the Mundaring Weir was entirely inconclusive. The paragraph in the report in which Dr. Saw alluded indicates the fact that the select committee were not satisfied with the evidence placed before them. The question has been debated so frequently that one would have thought the evidence would be entirely conclusive. Before granting increased revenue we should insist on the department doing something to remedy the existing state of affairs. On the goldfield where there are unmetered ratepayers, the inspector has gone round and wherever he has seen a beautiful garden he has taken prompt steps to put in a meter. The same state of affairs exists in the metropolitan area. Some of the water unaccounted for must be due to persons without meters using water excessively. A friend of mine told me the other day he had been waiting five hours to get a drop of water for household requirements while the man next door, who had no meter, was keeping two hoses going all day long. That kind of thing should not exist, and we look to the officers of the department to remedy the position. One has

tates to take extreme action, but in view of the circumstances it is necessary. The select committee asked the Chief Engineer for Water Supply whether he was in favour of a suggestion made by Mr. Ritchie, who said there was a means of bringing water from Mundaring without endangering the reserve of water necessary for safeguarding the goldfields. He pointed out that if the water was taken from the top 10ft. of the reservoir, there would be no question of endangering the goldfields reserve. The water above the 10ft. could be made available for the metropolitan area during the time of the year when it was most urgently required. The select committee questioned the Chief Engineer, who told them that the cost of a 36-inch main to carry the water to Perth would amount to about £400,000. In the interim report which the select committee presented, they suggested drawing off water from Mundaring Weir under suitable safeguards, but the objection taken was that the water would not be available in time, whereas by pressing on with the Churchman's Brook scheme water would be available at the end of February—last February, that is. Next week we are to have the official opening at Churchman's Brook, and then the first water will be drawn from Churchman's Brook for Perth.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And no dam is there yet.

Hon. H. SEDDON: No. The department are simply taking the water from the stream. They are not giving us any impounded water from that source. In view of such facts members can appreciate the feeling of uncertainty as to the unreliability of the evidence given by the engineers. Had that work been started at that time, Perth could have obtained not less than 5,000,000 gallons per day during the peak period from the Mundaring reservoir. That water could have been drawn from the top 10 feet. I should point out that the top 15 feet of the reservoir contains no less than half its capacity, or 2,000 million gallons. That would provide the necessary 5,000,000 gallons per day for the three months of the peak period. Had the engineers viewed the thing in proper perspective, Perth might now be enjoying 5,000,000 gallons per day from Mundaring to carry metropolitan residents over the tight pinch that is being experienced. In the newspapers during the last few days there have been appeals from the department for care in the handling of water.

Yet this source of supply has been available the whole time, and one cannot but conclude that the whole difficulty has arisen simply from the obstinacy of the men in control of the scheme. These are strong words, but I think the circumstances justify them. Here is a scheme which has been making heavy losses year by year, and which had a large quantity of water that could have been safely supplied to the metropolitan area. On the other hand, the people of the metropolitan area have been crying out for water year after year. That source of supply, however, is denied to them, and there has never been any explanation from the department as to the capabilities or otherwise of this source of supply. The select committee were quite convinced that a quantity of water was available in the Mundaring reservoir for the metropolitan area. The questions which they referred to the engineers were purely engineering questions. The select committee also referred to the engineers the question of enlarging the reservoir and so impounding a greater supply of water there. Personally, I am convinced that the expansion of the city will make it necessary to use every available source of supply. If we can meet our present requirements by the means which the committee suggest, we can defer the making of additional provision, and the imposing of higher rates, until the increase of population enables the additional cost to be borne without difficulty. We have to remember that the strain comes during the summer months. Until the present losses are overcome, we are justified in refusing any further finances to the department. In order to give hon. members an opportunity of deciding the question. I move an amendment—

That the word 'now' be struck out, and the words 'this day six months' added to the motion.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

## BILL—BROOKTON RECREATION RESERVE.

*Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [8.44] in moving the second reading said: The people of Brookton have a small recreation reserve within the townsite and a racecourse situated some

distance from the town. It is desired to alter that position, and instead of having one large racecourse at some distance from the town and a small recreation reserve right in the town, to amalgamate the two and have one good recreation reserve and racecourse convenient to the town. In order to do this it is necessary to authorise the Brookton Road Board to sell the present racecourse and apply the proceeds to the purchase of additional land adjacent to the small reserve within the townsite. The lithos, which have been laid on the Table, show the lands referred to. The land within the reserve coloured red on the litho (1) and the land within the roads, which are closed by this Bill, coloured blue on the same litho, will be vested in the Brookton Road Board. The board is also empowered to purchase or acquire the land coloured green on litho (1). Provision is also made for the board to sell the present racecourse reserve (Lot 337) coloured yellow on litho (2). The whole of the areas on litho (1) coloured red, blue, and green, total 65 acres and will in future constitute the Brookton recreation reserve. The measure will permit the board to set apart portions for various sports, etc., lease them, make by-laws and generally control the area as a sports and recreation ground. The provisions of the Bill are similar to those contained in the Narrogin Recreation Reserve Act passed in 1920. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. H. STEWART** (South-East) [8.46]: The Bill is necessary because of the new movement to concentrate the whole of the recreation and educational activities upon one site. This scheme has proved a great success at Narrogin where the whole of these sports are concentrated upon one area. This means that instead of a recreation ground being used a few times each year, with all the different sports and other gatherings that are held from time to time, the buildings will be used more frequently and the grounds engaged much more often. An inducement is held out to people to attend gatherings there and thus a better return is obtained for the expenditure involved. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

## **BILL—LAND DRAINAGE.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from 18th November.

**HON. H. STEWART** (South-East) [8.50]: The Bill is not one that lends itself to much discussion; it is essentially a Committee measure. I agree with other members that it is necessary to provide for drainage schemes and the proper administration of them. I do not think that such a technical subject as drainage can be dealt with satisfactorily by the means suggested in the Bill. Just as the tendency in modern times has been to vest the construction and maintenance of main roads under the control of a special board comprised of trained men and skilled administrators, so I believe it will be found essential that drainage works shall be placed under the control of a special board or commission. Drainage as it has been dealt with here in the past, does not disclose a creditable record for those technically responsible for many of the schemes. Those responsible do not seem to have grasped much of what was laid down to us as students in engineering, as fundamental principles in connection with carrying out engineering work. One of those principles was that an engineering work to be carried out must be economically warranted and economically sound. We have an illustration of that principle in the Torbay-Grassmere drainage scheme referred to by Mr. Burvill, who was one of those whose land suffered more than it benefited by the scheme. Another illustration is afforded by the work at Herdsman's Lake, to which Mr. Burvill also referred, and which was investigated by a select committee. A drainage scheme was completed in the southern part of the State at Torbay where the Lands Department, prior to 1913, spent £14 a year in order to cut through the bar, thus providing an outfall to the sea. The carrying out of a permanent work that would save that annual expenditure would be warranted only if other benefits were to be conferred upon the residents, and if the annual charge for interest and sinking fund on the capital cost was not more

than the annual expenditure previously incurred. On the other hand, £15,000 was spent in carrying out the drainage scheme. Prior to that date there were some 475 acres of land under cultivation, and about 75 settlers. Subsequent to the work being carried out there remained about 70 acres only under cultivation, and about seven settlers who were working their land. At the same time, the annual cost on the work of keeping the bar open increased to about £100, exclusive of any charge for the capital expenditure. During the last eight years, owing to the unsuitable nature of the works carried out, the cost of opening up the bar and keeping it open has involved a large sum whereas previously only £14 a year was expended. Two principles are alluded to in connection with that work. One arises from the system referred to in the Bill of selecting boards from among the people concerned. I do not consider that system is in the best interests of the people; it will be found cumbersome and inefficient. It brings us back to the point that it is essential to have experienced men in control of such operations, just as we have them to control our water supplies, roads and other works. Then again we find that, in connection with Herdsman's Lake drainage, for instance, the cause of the failure was largely due to the lack of preliminary investigatory work. That occurred also at the Peel Estate. When money was requested for preliminary surveys and for the purpose of drawing up estimates, the then Premier refused to make the money available. So long as that goes on, so long will we have inefficient work. The other lesson to be learnt from the Torbay scheme is that while operations involve the application of technical knowledge and yet are controlled by boards under the direction of a Minister, we will have, as one of the contributing causes of unsatisfactory results, the political influences brought to bear for various reasons, such as the winning of an election, the fulfilment of election promises or to gain kudos for some purpose or another. If we have boards such as control the main roads and other works in the Eastern States, we will save the waste of public moneys arising out of operations carried out because of representations made for political purposes. The Bill does not call for much comment on the second reading. I direct attention to Clause 58 which provides that a requisition of 20 or more ratepayers is necessary

to convene a general meeting. Instead of stipulating a specific number, it would be better to provide for a percentage of the total number of ratepayers. Twenty may constitute far too big a percentage in a small scheme or too small a percentage in a large scheme. The boards, too, are liable to be cumbersome.

Hon. A. Burvill: The provision for 20 or more ratepayers is copied from the Road Districts Act.

Hon. H. STEWART: That is not sufficient reason for adopting it in this measure in preference to a percentage. In many instances the number of ratepayers in a road board would be far greater than the number of ratepayers in a drainage scheme. It should not be necessary to embody in the Bill Mr. Burvill's suggested provision requiring the whole of the watershed area to be considered, but the mistakes of the department have been such that its inclusion would be wise to safeguard technical officers from acting under political pressure in a way that a man with a free hand would not do. Mr. Burvill's proposed amendment to Clause 60 may lead to the desire of the majority being flouted by a minority. When speaking on the Vermin Act Amendment Bill, I urged the necessity for adopting an equitable and systematic method of land valuation, independently of the Taxation Department who are the tax collectors. We are continually dealing with measures hingeing on taxation of metropolitan, rural and pastoral lands, and it is essential that we should have a sound system of valuation giving freedom of appeal and ensuring an equitable decision at a low cost, whether for local government, drainage, vermin, State, Federal or any other form of land taxation. The longer this work is put off, the more unsatisfactory the position becomes. Though a Federal Commission reported that the States should adopt a method of land valuation, we to-day have the Federal Taxation Department making a re-valuation. Appeals are made, and the person who decides the appeal is the chief assessor of the Taxation Department. If a similar system were adopted anywhere except in governmental activities, it would be considered most improper. I support the Bill, realising the necessity for some improvement, but it would have been more satisfactory had safeguards been introduced

against political interference, with the control vested in commissioners versed in the carrying out of drainage works.

On motion by Hon. J. Ewing, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.8 p.m.*

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

### QUESTION—KENDENUP, RAIL CONSIGNMENTS.

Mr. COVERLEY (for Mr. A. Wansbrough) asked the Minister for Railways: 1. What was the actual tonnage in truck lots credited to Kendenup siding, inwards and outwards, for the 12 months ended on 30th November? 2. What was the actual tonnage in small consignments, inwards and outwards, for the same period? 3. What did the small outwards consignments chiefly consist of?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied: 1, For 12 months ended 31st October, approximately 300 tons. November figures will not be available for three weeks. 2, 166 tons. 3, Fruit and garden produce.

### QUESTION—STOCK INSPECTION, PIGS AND CATTLE.

Mr. GRIFFITHS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Are inspectors engaged in inspecting pigs and piggeries in this State? 2, Is herd testing being carried out? 3, Is there a systematic inspection of cattle for tuberculosis? 4, Is tuberculosis being stamped out, or is it increasing?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1, This work is portion of the duties of the officers of the veterinary branch, and receives attention as opportunity offers. 2, Yes; practically all the pure bred herds of the State are being tested; also, all the cows belonging to group settlers on the Peel Estate. 3, An inspector of the veterinary branch attends the weekly cattle sales, when clinical cases are ordered to be sold, subject to slaughter, and any doubtful cases tested. 4, During the period January to November, 1925, 90 cattle were subjected to the tuberculin test, of which 31 reacted. I am unable to say whether T.B. is increasing or decreasing, as figures are not available.

### QUESTION—BATHING, SAFETY REGULATIONS.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary: 1, Are the Government aware—(a) that precautions have been taken by the Cottesloe Life Saving Club to render a limited area of water reasonably safe for bathing during certain specified periods? (b) that certain individuals persist in swimming beyond the safety zone during such specified periods, and generally by their conduct attempt to flout the measures which have been taken? 2, If so, will the Government initiate legislation to clothe the various life saving incorporated societies with the necessary authority to enforce locally the regulations which from time to time may be instituted?

Hon. S. W. MUNSIE (Honorary Minister) replied: 1 (a) and (b), I am given to understand that such is the case. If individuals take needless risks, they do so upon their own responsibility.