

the bench of the Arbitration Court? The decisions of the court should be given by a man of legal training.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Do you think a layman would not do it as well as a judge?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It would be quite impossible for a layman to do it.

Hon. J. R. Brown: It is impossible for a judge to do it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It might as well be argued that a layman could perform medical duties. Expert knowledge is essential in these cases. A judge should be on the Arbitration Court bench to decide legal questions. On questions affecting industry the representatives of the workers and of the employers are there to advise.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.51 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 3rd November, 1925.

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

QUESTION—DAIRY STOCK PURCHASES.

Mr. BROWN asked the Minister for Lands: 1, What number of dairy stock has been purchased in the Eastern States? 2, What are the respective numbers of the different breeds? 3, What is the average cost per head f.o.b.? 4, What is the average cost per head landed at Fremantle? 5, How

many dairy stock have been purchased in this State? 6, What is the average cost per head?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Lands) replied: 1, 1,264, excluding bulls. 2, Milking Shorthorn grades about 90 per cent., Jersey grades about 5 per cent., Guernsey grades about 3 per cent., Ayrshire grades about 2 per cent. 3, £6 10s. 3d. f.o.b. Sydney. 4, £11 17s. 7d. 5, 3,960, excluding bulls. 6, £12 7s. 2d.

QUESTION—BANKRUPTCY, A. J. WROTH.

Allegations against Government Official.

Mr. RICHARDSON asked the Premier: 1, Has his attention been called to the statements in the "Subiaco Weekly" of Saturday week dealing with the bankruptcy proceedings of one, A. J. Wroth, wherein serious charges are made against a Government official? 2, If so, will he consider the question of appointing a Royal Commission so that the charges against this official may be investigated?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, If sufficient justification is established, the matter will be considered.

QUESTION—SEAMEN'S DISPUTE.

Mr. RICHARDSON asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is it a fact that a number of British seamen, on strike, are employed on the Churchman's Brook reservoir construction work? 2, If so, will he give instructions that they be replaced by unemployed who are permanently resident in the State?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, No. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—PETROL SUPPLY, NORTH-WEST.

Hon. G. TAYLOR (for Mr. Teesdale) asked the Honorary Minister: 1, Is he aware that under a new regulation petrol for North-West ports must be carried in drums? 2, As the extra cost is considerable will he arrange for the lowest possible freight on empty drums from northern ports?

The Hon. S. W. MUNSIE replied: 1, The new regulations do not insist that petrol shall be transported in drums. Case or drum petrol may be carried on passenger ships in limited quantities under special conditions. 2, Provision is already made on the freight schedule for a specially low rate of freight on empty returns of all character.

QUESTION—GOLD-STEALING, PROSECUTIONS.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Justice: 1, How many offenders have been convicted in the Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie courts during the past seven years on charges of gold stealing? 2, How many offenders have been convicted in the Coolgardie and Kalgoorlie courts during the past seven years of being in unlawful possession of gold?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, None. 2, 46.

QUESTIONS (2)—POLICE.

Members paid by private bodies.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Justice: Are there any other members of the police force whose salaries and expenses are being paid from private sources and who are acting wholly in the interests of private bodies, as on the goldfields?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: No members of the force are paid from private sources, but the department is recouped the full expenditure incurred in connection with the Shop Stealing and Pillaging Staffs, and also the Guard at the Royal Mint.

Promotional Examinations.

Mr. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Justice: Who judge the answers given by candidates at police promotional examinations?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: H. S. W. Parker (Crown Prosecutor); Inspector M. O'Halloran; and Inspector C. Treadgold (Secretary, Police Department).

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair: the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 4:

Mr. ANGELO: I move an amendment—

That the following subclause be added:—“(4) By including ‘honorary advisory board,’ the interpretation of which shall mean for the purposes of this Act a board consisting of six honorary members, two to be representative of the agricultural industry, two of the pastoral industry, and two others, all of whom shall be appointed by the Minister, and one of whom shall act as chairman in the absence of the Minister.”

Members will realise the justice of my proposal. By this measure a special fund is to be raised for the eradication of dingoes and foxes, and the money is to be found by the pastoralists and the farmers. The Minister has told us that the Government will subsidise the fund to some extent, but we can expect that the pastoralists and farmers will be asked to provide practically the whole of the sinews of war, or at any rate the greater portion of the money required to carry the campaign into effect. The farmers and pastoralists who provide the money should have some say, in an advisory capacity, not only as to how it should be spent, but as to the policy of eradication to be adopted. The farmers and pastoralists are continually in the unhappy position of having to fight these pests and surely they, through their experience, would be qualified to give valuable advice to the Government as to how the eradication should take place, how the money they are providing should be spent, and generally to assist the Minister and his officers to carry out this important work. Under my amendment the pastoralists would have one-third of the representation, the farmers one-third, and the Government one third, in addition to which the Minister, by virtue of his office, would be chairman of the board.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member has apparently misunderstood the intention of Clause 4. If the amendment is inserted in the clause, it will mean that the honorary advisory board will assist in the administration of the whole of the Act and not merely of the fund. It is not desirable that the honorary advisory board should assist in the administration of the Act. I admit it is reasonable that the people who find the money for this special purpose should have representation on an advisory board, which should be appointed by the Minister; but this is not the clause in which that provision should be made. The proper place to provide for that is in Clause 10.

Mr. ANGELO: That being the case, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6—agreed to.

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

Mr. THOMSON: I hope the Minister will not press for the insertion of the new section. The Government having power to recover rates with the necessary costs, it is a gross injustice to impose an additional 5 per cent. Departments are only too eager to impose such levies. Only last week a man drew my attention to the avaricious nature, as he termed it, of the Taxation Department. Having unfortunately omitted to pay a tax of £4 odd for two or three days, he was faced with a demand for an additional nine or ten shillings. A man in a position to pay, and knowing that he has to pay, will always pay. Such a provision as this strikes at those least able to pay. It really amounts to a super-tax.

The Premier: That is a new idea.

Mr. THOMSON: A private firm may disallow discount, but would not actually penalise a debtor, for being two or three days behind. However, I have no sympathy for the man who can pay and does not. Many men in the country districts are not always in a position to find cash promptly.

The Premier: The Government departments usually err on the side of leniency. There is a quarter of a million interest owing to the Agricultural Bank and the I.A.B.

Mr. THOMSON: A stamp inspector visited a business in a country town recently and spent a whole morning in going through thousands of receipts for years back. He found four which had been short-stamped to the extent of a penny each. A fine of 1s. 6d. was imposed. In such a case no private firm would dream of making any demand. This Bill represents an extra tax of £50,000 annually on the landholders of Western Australia for the purpose of combating pests.

The Premier: It is not a tax; it is a payment for services rendered.

Mr. THOMSON: The money to be collected is to be distributed in bonuses for scalps of dingoes and foxes. Many farmers are personally attending to the destruction

of those pests. Section 107 of the Act which is not being deleted, reads—

The board may grant bonuses for the destruction of vermin, except rabbits, within its district at such rates and under such conditions as may be prescribed by regulation.

The Minister for Agriculture: If board will not do it for this vermin, they must be very foolish.

Mr. THOMSON: That, however, is the basis on which the boards have worked in the past. I hope the Minister will agree to the deletion of this clause.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member entirely misunderstands the position. The clause gives, not to the Government, but to the local vermin board power to impose the extra 5 per cent. after 12 months.

The Premier: That is the weakness. The local vermin board will not press for payment.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The only authority that can sue for the rates is the vermin board. This power is one the board ought to have if they think fit to use it. Some ratepayers will not pay their rates.

Mr. SAMPSON: On this occasion I cannot support the member for Katanning. We should encourage the prompt payment of rates, and the imposition of a 5 per cent interest charge after 12 months is not oppressive. After that period the interest would be mandatory, and the Government auditor would, I think, draw attention to any omission to charge it. I move an amendment—

That the following be added to proposed Section 63a:—"But discount not exceeding 5 per cent. for payment of current rates made within 30 days of receipt of assessment notice shall be allowed by the board."

A similar discount is allowed under the Roads Districts Act, and I think it will be approved by vermin boards generally.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the hon. member will agree to substitute "may" for "shall," I will accept the amendment.

Mr. Sampson: I will agree to that.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I hope that the amendment will not entail litigation. The interpretations given by courts differ widely.

Amendment amended accordingly and put and passed.

Mr. THOMSON: I am pleased to have the Minister's assurance that the new Section

63a deals only with rates recoverable by the board, but in view of the reading of that new section, a proviso should be added making it clear that this provision shall not apply to rates levied in respect of dingoes and foxes. If that is not done, it seems to me that the imposition of the extra 5 per cent. can also be made to apply to rates levied by the Minister under the proposed new Section 100a embodied in Clause 10. I take it the Bill will be read in conjunction with the Vermin Act as a whole.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not so. The Bill represents a measure to amend the Vermin Act, but the funds referred to in the new Section 63a will go to the Vermin Boards, and are distinct from the funds referred to in the proposed new Section 100a.

MR. THOMSON: The new Section 63a commences with the words "When any rates shall remain unpaid for a period of 12 months." Clause 10 embodies the proposed new Section 100a, which sets out that every owner of a holding shall pay to the Minister annually on demand a rate to be fixed by the Minister. As the position should be made perfectly clear, I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—"Provided that this section shall not apply to rates collected under Section 100a of this Act."

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The new Section 63a follows on Sections 62 and 63 in the parent Act. The first mentioned section has further reference to Sections 62 and 63, which deal with the rates, powers and taxation in the hands of vermin boards. Under Clause 10 we propose a further amendment to the Act by providing for a special fund under the Vermin Act, but that fund has no relation to that dealt with under Sections 62, 63, and 63a. There is no provision whatever made for interest to be charged on the rates referred to in the proposed new Section 100a. I assure the member for Katanning that the amendment is unnecessary.

HON. G. TAYLOR: The amendment may complicate matters because it is really at variance with the clause before the Committee. The Bill provides power, under the original Act, to create a fund for certain purposes, and that fund will be controlled by the vermin boards. It will have nothing to do with the rates collected under the Act for other purposes.

The Minister for Agriculture: They are two distinct matters.

MR. THOMSON: I accept the assurance of the Minister and will ask leave to withdraw the amendment. At the same time I ask the Minister to look into the point I have raised.

The Minister for Agriculture: I will do so.

Amendment by leave withdrawn; the clause, as previously amended, agreed to.

Clauses 8 and 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Insertion of new section after Section 100:

MR. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That in line four of the proposed new section "penny" be struck out, and "farthing" inserted in lieu.

This will give about £16,000 or, with the Government subsidy, £32,000. We can always increase the rate if it be found to be insufficient.

MR. ANGELO: Before we discuss this amendment I should like a statement from the Minister as to whether we are to have an advisory board. I would not object to the rating proposed in the Bill if the fund is to be administered by such a board.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Pastoralists' Association have requested me to appoint a board and Mr. Church says he will be satisfied if power be taken for the Minister to appoint a board.

HON. G. TAYLOR: Leaving the personnel of the board to the Minister?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, the board to consist of one representative of the pastoralists, one representative of the agriculturists, and a third an officer of the Agricultural Department, who shall be chairman. Mr. Church agreed to that.

MR. ANGELO: Will the board be able to say what the levy shall be each year?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. The Minister, on the advice of the board, is not likely to impose an unnecessarily high rate.

MR. TEESDALE: You would keep on reducing the rate if you found the fund accumulating.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course so. If we are to actively take on the work of destroying dingoes, we shall have a big task before us. The amendment would limit the fund to £10,000 per annum, for I do not propose to ask the Government

to subsidise the fund pound for pound. Already the Government pay a subsidy, and spend £25,000 per annum in the administration of the Vermin Act, and the Rabbit Department, and in the payment of bonuses on the destruction of dingoes. The Leader of the Opposition, referring to the valuations at Bruce Rock, declared that the land was worth £6 per acre and that, in consequence, the levy would be tremendous. But I find that the Taxation Department, in their latest assessments, make the taxable value of the whole of the farming land only £13,000,000. Moreover, I propose later to exempt all holdings of less than 100 acres, and, if so desired, I will not object to exempting holdings up to 150 acres; for I do not want to bring under this legislation anybody who is not running stock affected by the dingo, the fox, or the eagle hawk. Even the agriculturists agree to much more than the mover of the amendment finds satisfactory. Recently the farmers and settlers came to me in a deputation and urged the creation of this fund. I told them I would make the rating one half-penny for agriculturists, and 1d. for pastoralists. They agreed to that.

Mr. Thomson: But they represented only a section of the agriculturists.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They represented the great mass of the agriculturists. The pastoralists have given their benediction to the Bill and agreed to pay the proposed rate. Back in 1922 the Pastoralists' Association urged the imposition on all pastoral leases of a uniform rate with a maximum of 3d. and a minimum of $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: That applied only to the North.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It was further agreed that on all other agricultural and grazing land the rate should be a maximum of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. and a minimum of $\frac{1}{4}$ d.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: We would not object if the tax were limited to the areas affected.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In 1923 the Primary Producers Association put forward a proposal for a uniform rate on all lands, not exceeding 1d. in the pound on the unimproved value.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: That included rabbits.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In October, 1923, the Primary Producers Association wrote to Mr. Maley asking for a

uniform rate to be struck throughout agricultural and pastoral areas on the unimproved land value basis, to bring into being a fund for the payment of bonuses for the destruction of dingoes, foxes, and eagles. In June, 1925, the Pastoralists Association wrote to me suggesting an amendment to the Act asking for the establishment of a central fund from which a uniform bonus could be paid and the striking of a rate not to exceed $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound on agricultural land and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound on pastoral land. They subsequently agreed to 1d. in the case of pastoral areas. The agriculturists have asked that they should be taxed a maximum of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What will the tax bring in from the pastoralists?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The pastoralists will pay about £10,000, but the rate of 1d. need not be struck.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They pay or twenty times the rental value.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Leader of the Opposition fixed the method of valuation.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It was introduced by Mr. Bath.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It was introduced by the hon. member's Government. The pastoralists will actually pay on 1d. tax £11,000, and the agriculturists about £28,000.

Mr. Thomson: Including those you propose to cut out?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I cannot arrive at that yet. The group settlers will be exempt, as well as numbers of other people. It is not right to ask persons to pay a tax if they will receive no benefits from the measure. The man who grows sheep will be the one who will benefit most. If the board find a lesser rate is suitable, it will be struck.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I never heard of such a monstrous proposal as this one. The Minister is certainly prepared to make some concessions now, for I suppose he has talked with the member for Leederville and the member for South Fremantle, in whose electorates there are some small holdings. The destruction of dingoes should be a charge against the general revenue. The Government have more than sufficient money in view to square the ledger. Why do they collect so much by way of taxes? The Minister wants to tax people for services which might be paid for by the general contribu-

tions of the people. Why not separate the pastoral lands of the North from the farming lands? I am willing that all contributions from the pastoralists should be spent on the pastoral areas, and that the same principle should apply in the case of the agriculturists.

Mr. Teesdale: We fed you for years until you got a few sheep down south.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister is going to tax land that is used for purposes other than sheep raising. The Minister says that from the farmers he proposes to take £28,000. I am able to show that the amount will be £39,500. This is on the estimate of the value of agricultural land given by the Government themselves. They gave the value of pastoral land at £2,500,000, and pastoral land is taxed at 20 times the rental value. It is considered to have an unimproved value of £20 per thousand acres. The pastoralist will thus pay 1s. 8d. for the destruction of dingoes. In the pastoral areas there are about half the total number of sheep in the State, and thus the pastoralist will pay £10,500. The farmer will pay £39,500, and far more, for the protection of the other half. The pastoralist is in a better position to pay than is the farmer, and moreover, he is not willing to escape.

Mr. Teesdale: You cannot prove that he is in a better position to pay. He has not been selling his wheat at 6s. per bushel.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If I had the report of the Commissioner of Taxation I would show the hon. member that the pastoralist is better able to pay.

Mr. Teesdale: Don't forget that for many years he was getting only 6½d. and 7d. a pound for his wool.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I wish the House to be fair and not say to one section, "You must pay four times more than another section." What I protest against also is that the tax being imposed in this way is a tax on top of another already being collected for the destruction of dingoes. Again, why should those who have no dingoes be compelled to pay?

The Minister for Agriculture: Where are they?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: About Northam and York, and the Great Southern.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: There are many dingoes in the Great Southern.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Bruce Rock will pay £4 3s. 4d. The Government

have done nothing but introduce measures to impose burdens on the people.

The Minister for Lands: You cannot find any such Bills on the file. We have been reducing instead of adding to taxation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I can point to the heavy burdens already imposed on the people on the land. We should make this an acreage tax rather than a tax on the unimproved value. In one case the areas are devoted entirely to sheep and in others to wheat growing and other things. The Minister knows that at Indarra wheat growing is the principal industry and that sheep raising is secondary to it. The Minister seems to have no compunction about taxing all and sundry. I do not know that anything more unfair than this has ever been submitted to Parliament. The Minister should separate the pastoral land from the farming land and allow the pastoralists to control their own fund. Then they could impose whatever taxation was necessary to meet their requirements. Whatever tax is to be imposed on agricultural land should be imposed by the vermin board and not by the Minister. I object to the dual control. I should prefer the Government to control the whole of the business. I doubt whether we were ever wise in taking this work away from the Government. The individual will have to do the work of destruction on his own holding, but the tax will be a bonus paid to him at the sweet will of the Minister. To reduce the rate to the pastoralists as proposed would mean the difference between £10,000 and £2,500, and the pastoralists themselves would admit that £2,500 would be useless. Pastoralists have told me that they want the right to compel all lessees to pay alike. They do not want the North to pay for the South, or the South for the North. The Minister could take power under this measure to collect and establish a fund for the North, which could be dealt with apart from the amount collected from the farmers. To collect from both farmers and pastoralists, as is proposed, would be unworkable and monstrously unfair. Since the Bill has been under consideration, the Minister has promised to relieve the small holdings. If he thinks over the matter a little longer, he will decide to have one fund for the North and another for the South.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have no intention of doing that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then the farmers will see that it is done. They will not pay on this basis.

The Minister for Agriculture: They have agreed to pay.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: A few farmers may have agreed, but the farmers generally do not know that it is proposed to tax them in this way.

The Minister for Agriculture: The farmers' association have agreed.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They would soon cease to be a farmers' association if they agreed to this proposal.

Mr. Thomson: I shall not insist upon this amendment.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Does the hon. member agree that for the protection of one-half of the sheep in the State the amount paid should be equal to that for protecting the other half? If so, the rates will not be 1d. and 1/8th of a penny; the latter amount will have to be much less. I object to all these special taxes that are being imposed, and particularly that the fund is to be controlled by the Minister, apart from the House, as under the Forests Act. The Minister would not have to submit estimates; he would be king. If, as seems certain, he will collect £60,000 by the time the revaluation is made, we should not agree to it. While the agricultural land will grow in value and contribute more by way of taxation, and while a great deal more agricultural land will be selected and will pay taxation, the pastoral tax cannot be increased during the first 15 years of a lease, and there is not likely to be much more pastoral land taken up to add its contribution to the fund. I hope the Minister will not insist upon the farmers' contribution going into a general fund. The agriculturists, when and where they need it, should have a separate fund in the area to be protected.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Leader of the Opposition has not a good word for any Bill introduced by the present Government. According to him, he and no one else represents the farmers. Last year deputations waited upon me—

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: They did not represent all the farmers.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: One deputation was from the South-West and one from the wheat belt, and both asked

for the measure and agreed to the taxation principle.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope they will read those words in the Press and say whether you got the hang of what the meant.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: This will mean reduction on what we are paying.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, it will be additional.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have read to members the agreement of the Primary Producers' Association and the Pastoralists' Association to a higher rate than that imposed by the Bill.

Mr. Thomson: But you had not increased the land tax when you asked for that.

The Minister for Lands: The farmer complains of the income tax, not the land tax.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A few months ago the agriculturists asked for the measure and agreed to pay 1d. in the pound, and the pastoralists have asked for the measure and agreed to pay their rate.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I should think they would.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Leader of the Opposition talks about the Government introducing taxation measures all the time, and says this is a national work. Did not his Minister for Agriculture introduce a similar Bill in 1923?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, it covered the North.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Because the agriculturists had not asked for it. The hon. member is a recent convert. His Government introduced a Bill to impose a rate of 1d. in the pound on the North and he was very hurt when another place threw out the measure. This Bill will not impose upon farmers a tax for which they have not specially asked.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, it will they have not asked for it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The farmers and pastoralists have asked for the measure. At a joint conference in 1922 it was agreed that the pastoral rate should be proportionately higher than the agricultural rate as in this Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Who agreed to that?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Primary Producers' Association and the

Pastoralists' Association. Am I to understand that the Primary Producers' Association do not represent the agriculturists but that the Leader of the Opposition does?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I certainly do represent them.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Does the hon. member represent the little protected area of Northam, where the people probably do not want to pay one penny, or does he represent the great body of agriculturists who are unable to carry sheep because of the depredations of the dingo and fox?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I represent every farmer in this State, and in fact every man. You represent the pastoralists.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am one who will have to pay the tax and I shall not growl about it. I know that the man out beyond me is protecting me, and that the more closely I am surrounded by other settlers, the greater the protection I shall have against pests.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Do you think the farmer should pay four times as much as the pastoralist?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member says the pastoralists own half the sheep and are not paying their proportion. The pastoralists are not so affected by the dingo to-day as are the agriculturists.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course they are.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The pastoralists fought the vermin in the back country on their own, and did not ask for assistance, and the fact that they are carrying only one-half of the sheep in the State shows that the value of their land is not so great. One-half of our agriculturists are carrying no sheep at all, but when they do stock their holdings, as they will do by the assistance of this measure, the agricultural areas will carry two-thirds of the sheep of this State.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The pastoralist grows only half the sheep in the State. The agriculturist, who now grows the other half, will grow as many more so soon as the new areas are in a position to carry stock. With water supply and protection from dingoes our farmers will carry two-thirds of the sheep of West-

ern Australia. The farmer now concentrates on wheat, not because he does not want to carry stock: his strongest desire is to carry stock. While he has not time to concentrate on the destruction of dingoes, the pastoralist has had time to do so, and as a result three-fourths of the pastoral areas are to-day not afflicted with dingoes, though they are afflicted with euros and kangaroos in respect of which pests this measure gives no assistance. The pastoralists, having done the work of destroying dingoes, do not object to contributing towards the destruction of dingoes in the agricultural areas. During last year a deputation of South-Western settlers informed me that they could not grow calves because the dingoes destroyed them. I do not think the agriculturists will object to the raising of the proposed fund, since not one of them who has seen me by deputation or has written to me has expressed objection to the proposed rate. The deputations have been absolutely unanimous. Could anything be stronger than the resolutions carried agreeing to the measure and expressing readiness to pay a higher rate than that proposed by the Bill? In many of the newer agricultural areas the farmer pays not only a vermin rate—I myself paid £7 this year—but contributes to a special dingo club.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You will pay the same still.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No; because the rabbits do not affect us. In 15 years the dogs have attacked me only once. The vermin boards are merely defensive: they do not go out to destroy dingoes but only sit down and pay bonuses to those who destroy them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They have inspectors out.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I pay the rate, and if dingoes destroy my stock I have to pay men specially to go and attack them. I have paid £15 for two dingo scalps, as well as wages to the man who caught them. The vermin rate is not sufficient to allow the boards to take active measures against the dingo and the fox. The individual settler does that himself. However, there will always be in a district some settlers who will do it and some who will not. On an area of 1,000 acres the rate will be only £4 3s. 4d. The man now growing wheat finds his country becoming grass country as the result of cultivation and to-day, as he fallows and cultivates, he

covers in many hundreds of pounds worth of grass. Will not 20 sheep, or even 10 sheep, pay the rate under the Bill? And that is apart from the other advantages accruing to the settlers. If we are to carry on an offensive war against the dingo, we must find the money. This measure will relieve the farmer of payments to a dingo club.

Hon. G. Taylor: He will pay here instead of there.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The Leader of the Opposition quoted some figures regarding land values. I have here a statement given me by the Chief Land Valuer of the Taxation Department to-day, and he estimates the present value of our agricultural lands, not including pastoral lands, at £13,000,000. He estimates that the value of the agricultural lands in three years' time will be £19,000,000. The constituents of members have asked for this measure, and they will derive considerable advantage from it. The maximum rate for a pastoralist is a halfpenny and for an agriculturist one penny. If the resultant fund is found to be too great, the rate can be reduced. The Minister does not want a fund which cannot be used elsewhere and which cannot go into Consolidated Revenue. If for the special purpose in view a lower sum will suffice, a lower rate will be imposed.

Mr. TEESDALE: I support the rates proposed by the Bill. The pests are a great menace to the State. I have nagged at two Governments to try to get a measure of this kind passed. In 1922 we had a favourable Bill thrown out on some tinpot objection in another place. I am prepared to take the Minister's word that the fund will not be alienated for any other purpose, and that if the money accumulates too fast the rate will be reduced correspondingly.

Hon. G. Taylor: You are pretty optimistic.

Mr. TEESDALE: The rates proposed, being maximum rates, are not exorbitant. The Minister has been good enough to agree to the appointment of an advisory board upon which each industry affected will have equal representation. What could be fairer? The Opposition Leader laid considerable stress upon the pressure which the Bill will exercise on the average farmer. But on the average farm of 1,000 acres the annual rate will be only £1 3s. 4d. On the average station of about 500,000 acres the annual rate will be £40. Taking it at 40s., the pas-

toralist would be rated at about £80 for his average sized station. I defy the Leader of the Opposition to disprove that.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I will do so.

Mr. TEESDALE: I am going on the Minister's assurance that the money raised will not be alienated for any other purpose.

The Minister for Agriculture: It cannot be.

Mr. TEESDALE: It will not be paid into general revenue and it will not be allowed to accumulate until it becomes a curse to the department. Nothing will be more pleasing to the three gentlemen, who will be on the board, than to be in a position to advise a decrease in the rate. It is in no one's interests to penalise the pastoralists. The dingo is such a curse that, for God's sake, let us give the Minister an opportunity to carry out his promise.

Mr. ANGELO: I cannot agree with the point of view of the Leader of the Opposition. He regards the Bill as a taxation measure, but it is nothing of the kind. It is merely the legislative machinery, sought by the pastoralists and farmers, for the purpose of taxing themselves to deal with a real menace.

Mr. Teesdale: They have been asking for it for over eight years.

Mr. ANGELO: It is for the purpose of assisting them to help themselves.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: You should qualify your statement by saying that the Bill has been asked for by farmers in certain areas.

Mr. ANGELO: I will do nothing of the kind. Farmers have been just as keen as the pastoralists to secure a measure of this description.

Mr. Teesdale: And it has been urged through their association, too.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes, so that some, who are not prepared to do their share in the destruction of the pest, will be compelled to do so.

Mr. Teesdale: The same as with those who won't take their salaries.

Mr. ANGELO: The Bill is not before the Committee as the result of deputations to the present Minister. There have been deputations to past Governments.

Mr. Teesdale: We haunted them.

Mr. ANGELO: The Minister for Agriculture in the Mitchell Government, I presume with the consent of the then Premier,

the present Leader of the Opposition, brought forward a Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: He did not bring forward this measure.

Mr. Teesdale: And it was nearly as good as this one.

Mr. ANGELO: The Minister for Agriculture in the Mitchell Government was asked time after time to bring forward this legislation.

Mr. Teesdale: And he included in his Bill a flat rate throughout the State.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, he did not.

Mr. Teesdale: Yes, he proposed it.

Mr. ANGELO: The Leader of the Opposition said that it was a national affair and if that is so, I want to know why the devil he did not do it himself when he was in power.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: We did not have the revenue that the Government have now.

Mr. ANGELO: There is still a deficit! The pastoralists realise that the Treasury is not overflowing and they are prepared to do this for themselves. The Minister has pointed out that the pastoralists will have control and the Government will merely carry out the policy of the advisory board which will consist of farmers and pastoralists.

Mr. Teesdale: With equal voting on the board. What could be fairer?

Mr. ANGELO: As to the incidence of taxation, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party may be right in saying that the farmers will be taxed out of proportion compared with the pastoralists.

Mr. Lindsay: And they were quite right, too!

Mr. ANGELO: The advisory board will have the say as to whether the maximum tax provided in the Bill shall be levied.

Mr. Teesdale: You can take your oath that the farmers' representatives will have a say in that.

Mr. ANGELO: If the rate proves to be unduly high, the advisory board will ask for the striking of a lower rate for the farmers and perhaps the full amount for the pastoralists. It may be vice versa. I hope the Bill will not be lost because of the trifling little difficulties that can be adjusted when the advisory board is appointed.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If I were a pastoralist, I would accept the Bill with open arms. There is, however, reasonable ground for the representatives of agricultural areas raising a protest against Clause 10. It

sounds well and has a certain ring of democracy about it when we are told that the board to be appointed will be representative of those concerned. The statement of the Leader of the Opposition regarding the relative payments to be made by the farmers and pastoralists cannot be denied.

The Minister for Agriculture: The farmers are the people who will reap the benefit.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, they will not.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Minister is right in his contention to a certain degree. There are many farmers whose stock has not been attacked by dogs for years. It is the experience that if dogs are not kept down in the back country, they will work in to the settled districts. The ordinary stock fence will not keep dogs back. It is a question whether everyone should not contribute, because if the Bill proves successful, the public must benefit. Every sheep or calf killed by dogs, foxes or eagle hawks tends to make the meat market more bare, with the result that the public will have to pay. The task of dealing with the pests is no easy one, and should be made attractive. I hope the Minister will give the Committee some idea as to the subsidy he will be prepared to pay on the amounts contributed by the farmers and pastoralists.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not wish to be misunderstood. I have no objection to the tax proposed to be levied against the pastoralists, for I think the amount suggested is moderate. I contend, however, that the funds should be dealt with by the pastoralists in their own way and applied to the pastoral areas. The area of the pastoral land leased is 12 times the area of agricultural land sold. I have no objection to agricultural lands likely to be ravaged by the pests, being taxed and funds collected, but I think those funds should be dealt with by the farmers in their own way. I do not agree with the amounts proposed to be raised from pastoral and farming lands respectively on the basis indicated. It must be remembered that millions of acres in the South-Western portion of the State remains Crown lands to-day. The member for Roebourne stated that the pastoralists having 500,000 acres at £1 would pay ten times as much as a farmer having 1,000 acres in the agricultural areas. That is wrong. It cannot be termed fair. If I were the member for Gascoyne or the member for Roebourne

I would embrace the Bill with both arms. Still, as I say, we have to be fair.

The Minister for Agriculture: The pastoralist has kept all the back areas clear.

Mr. Teesdale: We have no rabbits in our district, yet we have been paying for their destruction ever since the Act came into force.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The pastoralist has not been paying for the destruction of rabbits in the agricultural areas. We should be fair to everybody. This money is needed, not so much because of the pure-bred dingo as because of that far more destructive animal, the half-bred. When Mr. Maley dealt with the matter the object was to provide a fund for the North-West. I am not going to agree that the farmer of Bruce Rock should pay as much on a thousand acres as the squatter will have to pay on 50,000 acres.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: While there are districts in the Great Southern interested in the Bill from the point of view of dingo destruction, not one-third of the farming community as a whole is interested in dingoes.

Mr. Angelo: That is due to the work of the outside people.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: No, it is due to the local farmers' own exertions in the past. I know that representations have been made to the Minister by the Primary Producers' Association, possibly on the lines contained in the Bill. But the Primary Producers' Association are not unanimous on the subject. As I pointed out on the second reading, we are already paying a pretty heavy tax to the vermin boards dealing with rabbits. Some of the Bruce Rock settlers are still having dingo trouble, but owing to precautions taken the pest is not nearly so prevalent in that district as it once was. I am willing that we should contribute something towards fighting the pest, but we must have certain exemptions. I want the Minister to say definitely what will constitute a vermin-proof fence in a district where a vermin rate is being paid. Are we to be entitled to exemption on rabbit-proof fencing when our chief pest is the rabbit? I agree with the amendment, because we are already paying heavily to the vermin boards. The North-West people should bear their own burdens.

Mr. MARSHALL: The member for Beverley says the pastoralist should look after his own interests. That is in accord with the

argument of the Leader of the Opposition. But the pastoralist has been looking after his own interests for many years past, and has carried a greater burden than the farmer is asked to carry under the Bill.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: Why, half the pastoral areas in the North-West have not vermin boards!

Mr. MARSHALL: It is not necessary to have a vermin board to carry out an expensive policy of dingo destruction. It has been done by individual pastoralists for years past. They have spent time and money in the work. In order to protect themselves they have been protecting the farmers of the wheat belt and the Great Southern. Surely the farmers will not object to pay a small tax for their own protection! I do not object to the squatters raising a fund and applying it to the work of dingo destruction in the North-West, but why should the squatter pay while the farmer goes free? Yet that is what the Leader of the Opposition wants. I agree that the Minister might say exactly what the Government are prepared to do by way of subsidy. Also I believe the Crown should be responsible for ridding Crown lands of the pest.

Mr. Thomson: We should soon get rid of the pest if that were done.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Government should subsidise the fund as liberally as possible.

Mr. Teesdale: The Minister distinctly said that the Government would contribute something.

Mr. MARSHALL: They are now contributing a good deal in the shape of administrative expenses. The Federal Government might well assist the State Government in destroying dingoes.

Mr. Angelo: Nearly all of which have come over from the Eastern States.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, I believe that is true.

Mr. THOMSON: Having listened to the discussion, I will no longer press the amendment. The Minister alluded to the attitude of the Primary Producers' Association, as revealed in the letter by Mr. Sutcliffe. But that was written in 1923, since when the Government have imposed a land tax. Therefore the members of the association to-day might not view the position as favourably as they did when that letter was signed by Mr. Sutcliffe. The members for Gascoyne and for Roebourne say that the penny rate was agreed to by the Pastoralists' Associa-

tion. But neither the letter I quoted nor the circular submitted by the Pastoralists' Association to the Primary Producers' Association contained any such figures. They based their estimates on the farmer paying $\frac{1}{8}$ d. and the pastoralist $\frac{1}{4}$ d. and anticipated that this rate would raise about £16,000, which, with a Government subsidy of pound for pound, would produce about £32,000. This was submitted by the Pastoralists' Association to the Primary Producers' Association. We were not pledged to support these particular levies of a penny and a halfpenny respectively.

Mr. Teesdale: We had to agree to this, because we could not do any better.

Mr. THOMSON: I shall later endeavour to have the sum reduced to $\frac{1}{8}$ d., which would place both industries on the same footing. The Bill means an additional tax upon the farming community. Hundreds of farmers may already be taxed up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound for vermin rates. The Bill proposes to impose a further $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound, making a total of 2d. The farmers already pay an increased land tax, increased road board rates, and increased charges for water supply and other services.

The Minister for Agriculture: Does the hon. member intend to withdraw his amendment?

Mr. THOMSON: I will not press it.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Minister stated that the valuation of agricultural land will be £19,000,000, and of pastoral areas £2,500,000.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is only an estimate based on what may be the case three years hence.

Mr. LINDSAY: On these figures the agricultural areas will provide £39,500 and the pastoral areas £9,000. I was a member of the conference to which reference has been made. It was held in September, 1923, between representatives of the Pastoralists' Association and the Primary Producers' Association. The following motion was carried:—

The rate shall be determined by the central board subject to the approval of the Minister, it to be clearly understood that the farming areas shall contribute only for the above purpose a sum equal to the pastoral quota.

We debated the matter for some time. The pastoral representatives agreed that the

farming areas should pay only on an equal basis. Another resolution was—

The maximum rate in any one year shall not exceed 1d. in the pound on the unimproved value of the land.

Another clause was agreed to by the conference as follows:—

The central board, if funds are required and with the approval of the Minister, will have power to levy a uniform rate on all pastoral leases, such rate not to exceed 2½d. and not less than $\frac{3}{8}$ d. in the pound on the unimproved value, and a uniform rate on all other lands not exceeding 1d. and not less than $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound on the unimproved value, it to be clearly understood that the farming areas shall only contribute for the above purpose a sum equal to the pastoral quota.

The conference recognised that the farming areas should be rated lower than the pastoral areas. But the pastoral executive contended that, in view of the difference in the unimproved value, namely, farming areas approximately £14,000,000 and pastoral areas approximately £5,645,200, the value of the production in the farming areas being approximately double that of the pastoral areas, and the necessity for a great deal more money being expended in the farming areas for the eradication of the rabbit pest, it was not equitable that the pastoralists should be asked to find the same sum as the farmers. The general secretary of the Primary Producers' Association, in a letter, states—

On the basis of the figures previously used, it was considered that with the pastoralists rating of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound a revenue of £5,586 will be secured. To produce a similar amount from the farming areas it would only have been necessary to rate at $\frac{1}{8}$ d. in the pound to produce something like £5,000. If, therefore, a uniform minimum rate of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. in the pound were adopted, it would mean that the pastoralists' rate would produce £2,940, as against £12,000 odd from the farmers. On realising the position Mr. Church asked me to leave the matter in his hands until he could meet his executive, which he did on Thursday last, and the secretary of the Pastoralists' Association has requested me now to arrange for the special committees to meet again, and I understand that that committee has now been given power to finalise the matter. I understand that Mr. Church proposed that the contributions should be in the following ratio:—Farmers three-tenths, pastoralists two-tenths, Government five-tenths. This would mean as an illustration that if £24,000 were to be raised, the Government would find £12,000, the pastoralists £5,000, the farmers £7,000.

From this it would appear that the statement that has been made concerning what occurred at the conference is not quite cor-

rect. In 1915 I called a road board conference at Northam, and moved that a uniform bonus be paid for the destruction of dingoes. I do not agree that certain areas should not be rated. We have paid a rate for many years, and are now paying a vermin rate of 1d. in the pound. The road boards with which I have been associated have paid up to £2 a head for dog scalps. Sixteen years ago there were no dogs in the Dowerin area. To-day the place is overrun with them. The position was the same at Goomalling where dingo clubs have now been formed for the purpose of exterminating the pest. I have no doubt that even Beverley will get a visitation from the dogs. I agree that all should pay a tax, but I do not agree with the ratio proposed by the Minister.

Mr. THOMSON: With the permission of the Committee I will withdraw my amendment, so as to be able to submit another.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. THOMSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 "one-half" be struck out and "one-eighth" inserted in lieu.

It is very unfortunate that we are placed in the position of having to deal with a question like this without having the report of the Commissioner of Taxation before us. The figures I have already quoted were those supplied last year, and they have not been refuted. This is the basis on which we worked: Estimated unimproved value of metropolitan land, 50½ millions; unimproved value of agricultural lands, 19 millions; unimproved value of country and gold-fields towns, 3 millions; unimproved value of Crown lands, 2½ millions. In last year's taxation return the value of Crown leases is set down at £4,855,210.

The Minister for Agriculture: That total includes timber, gold and coal mining leases.

Mr. THOMSON: Members can only deal with the figures that are available. Agricultural lands will return 40.80 per cent., which is practically 41, and pastoral lands 10.98, which is practically 11.

The Minister for Lands: No, the latest figures are 35 per cent. and 14 per cent.

Mr. THOMSON: I can only go on the latest figures that have been presented to the House. If my amendment be carried pastoralists will contribute £10,000 and farmers £9,870. This would be a reasonable proposition and would place both parties on practically the same basis. The Minister

must not forget that our farming lands are increasing in value every year, very much more so than the pastoral areas. I hope the Minister will accept the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the amendment is agreed to we shall not be in the position to carry out an effective campaign of destruction. In South Australia, when the bonus was increased, the funds also increased rapidly. If there is a desire to fight the pest on behalf of those who wish to carry stock we must have a strong fund. If we limit the fund the dog will not be destroyed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You have to be fair to everybody.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The proposal in the Bill is fair. It is wrong to pretend that under the Bill agriculturalists are going to carry the burden. The member for Beverley said that one-third of the agriculturists were concerned. I say they are all concerned. If the men in his district are to-day protected against the dingo, they are protected by the landholders behind them, those further back. The fox is becoming a pest; it is with us now, but the pastoralists, however, are not affected by the fox.

Mr. Thomson: Where are the foxes mostly prevalent?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They are in the Geraldton area in great numbers. They are also on the Midland line.

Mr. Angelo: There were seven killed at Perenjori two months ago.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Strange to say they have not approached the agricultural areas. I suppose because they are too widely spread. As soon as the wheat areas are able to carry stock, the farmers will enter into the fat lamb trade and they will derive additional advantages from that. I hope members will realise that ½d. is the maximum, and that it may not be struck at all.

Mr. Thomson: But whatever is decided upon, the rates will be in proportion.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so.

Mr. Thomson: We want them on a par.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: According to the Commissioner of Taxation, 35 per cent. of the tax is derived from country lands and 14 per cent. from pastoral areas. That works out at about 1d. and ½d.

Mr. Thomson: No, it does not.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The member for Kataning said that vermin boards would still strike a rate. The Act already enables the Minister to direct exemption from the payment of rates whenever considered necessary.

Mr. Thomson: But Section 107 also provides that special bonuses may be paid as well.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That will not be done. The member for Toodyay said he quoted from the notes of the conference of the Primary Producers' Association and the Pastoralists' Association of September, 1923. I have before me a letter dated the 15th October, 1923, expressing the opinion of the Primary Producers' Association.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Primary Producers' Association represent not the whole of the farmers, but only a small section.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Quite so.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That was a conference of primary producers, not of the Primary Producers' Association.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The letter states that they advocate striking a rate not exceeding 1d. in the pound on the unimproved value.

Mr. Lindsay: Read Clause 2 which states that the pastoralists shall pay as much as the agriculturists.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That does not appear in this letter.

Mr. Thomson: I think you are dealing with two different conferences.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, this is a letter that was addressed to the then Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Maley, by Mr. Sutcliffe, Secretary of the Primary Producers' Association, a month later than the conference to which the member for Toodyay referred.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That does not bind us.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course not, but it gives a very distinct explanation of what was in the minds of the executive.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Not the executive, but the committee.

Mr. Thomson: At that time.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Anyhow, they agreed to a uniform rate not exceeding 1d. in the pound on the unim-

proved value. Yet this Bill proposes a maximum of only $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound.

Mr. Thomson: What reply did you get when you, as Minister, wrote to the secretary of our organisation asking for their views?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have no recollection of having written for their views, and I have from them no view contrary to what I have quoted. I do not propose to argue the point further; I intend to stick to the Bill.

Mr. ANGELO: I would be inclined to vote with the Leader of the Country Party to strike out the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. if he would indicate that he intends to replace it with one-third of a penny.

Mr. Thomson: I suggested one-eighth of a penny.

Mr. ANGELO: That is a totally different proposition. The member for Toodyay quoted the minutes of a conference of representatives of pastoralists and farmers and said the two parties agreed to the farmers paying 1d. and the pastoralists $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. That means the pastoralists would have paid $2\frac{1}{2}$ times what the farmers were asked to pay. Yet the amendment of the Leader of the Country Party means that the farmers would pay only one-eighth.

Mr. Thomson: But they would pay the same total amount as would the pastoralists.

The Minister for Lands: They would do nothing of the kind.

Mr. ANGELO: The Leader of the Country Party should be more moderate in his demands. He should substitute one-third of a penny with the understanding that if investigations proved that even on that reduced contribution the farmers would be unfairly taxed, we could get it rectified in another place. I cannot support him in his proposed drastic reduction.

Mr. LINDSAY: I was a member of the committee that discussed this question and I know what took place.

The Minister for Agriculture: I did not doubt your statement; I merely quoted their letter.

Mr. LINDSAY: Clause 4 states that a maximum rate in any one year shall not exceed 1d. on the unimproved value of the land.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Was that put up?

Mr. LINDSAY: Yes, but it was not carried.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Minister might have been quoting the final decision.

Mr. LINDSAY: The minutes set forth that it was clearly understood that the farming areas should contribute a sum equal to that of the pastoral areas. That clause was not amended. This Bill, however, does not deal with the rabbit pest. A suggestion was made that the farmers should contribute 3d. and the pastoralists 2d. The original clause was not carried.

The Minister for Lands: The Minister for Agriculture did not say it was carried. He said he was quoting from a letter sent to him by the secretary.

Mr. LINDSAY: He read it as if it was carried.

The Minister for Lands: He had to take their letter as he found it.

Mr. LINDSAY: I personally am not greatly worried as to whether the Minister likes this or not.

The Minister for Lands: You contradicted the Minister's statement.

Mr. LINDSAY: I did nothing of the kind.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The Minister for Lands: You are reading a lot of stuff that is—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister for Lands must keep order.

Mr. LINDSAY: I shall not support the amendment of the Leader of the Country Party, because I consider one-eighth of a penny altogether too low. A farthing would be near the ratio asked for by the Pastoralists' Association, or the pastoralists' quota could be increased and the farmers' left as proposed. The amount of money raised by the Bill will not exceed a bonus of £2, and in their own districts people will still have to pay for the dingoes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Minister will agree to the suggestion which has been made. Under the clause the Minister himself is to fix the tax. I understand that according to the latest report of the Commissioner of Taxation farm holdings represent 35 per cent. of the total valuation for land tax, while pastoral holdings represent 45 per cent. The farmer should not be required to pay more for the protection of farm lands than the pastoralist for the protection of pastoral lands. Under the clause pastoralists will pay £10,500, and farmers at least three times as much, according to the figures which have been given. The member for Katanning only asks that all should pay alike. I hope the amendment will be carried. In the older

districts the 5 per cent. for the dingo is fixed.

Mr. Marshall: Owing to development other people have the responsibility of the dingo now.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not concerned about what deputations have said. We have to consider what is right by the people of this country wherever we find them. The tax should bear equally upon each of the two great sections on the land. It would be fairer if we divided the fund and allowed the pastoralists to administer the part contributed by them, and similarly as regards the farmers. Since the Minister for Agriculture will not have that, the duty of the Committee is to see that the burden bears equally on each of the two industries.

Mr. ANGELO: The Leader of the Country Party has indicated that he is prepared to accept one-third of a penny instead of one-eighth, and on that understanding support the amendment, which I hope the Minister will accept.

Mr. TEESDALE: If the representative of the farming industry can induce the Minister to reduce the rate so far as that industry is concerned, I have no objection but the Bill is too important for us to risk its being jettisoned. In view of the Minister's statement that he paid £15 for two dingoes killed on a 4,000-acre farm, the rate proposed by the Bill cannot be considered heavy.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Not wishing to prolong the agony, I have not taken part in the discussion so far; but I am as much interested in this Bill as is any member. In the district in which I am interested the dingoes have been particularly destructive and they have cost me a fair amount of money outside the vermin rate I pay. We fence effectively, and yet we have to yare our sheep. The pastoralist, instead of yaring his sheep, leaves them out on his huge area. Therefore the dingo must be far more destructive with the agriculturist than with the pastoralist. In my district we have shot dingoes at 11 o'clock in the morning. The sun must be well up before we dare let our sheep out. If the destruction in the pastoral areas were proportionate to the destruction in the farming areas on the far eastern fringe, the pastoralist would soon be out of business. I agree with the member for Roebourne that there can be too much in the way of carping criticism of such a Bill as this, which has been introduced.

the request of the pastoralists and the farmers.

The Minister for Lands: Every Bill of this kind introduced at the request of those people has been fought bitterly.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The few are paying to-day, but the large number will not contribute. The object of the Bill is to put everybody on the list as a destroyer of vermin, so that the mass of the community will be arrayed against the scourge and ultimately overcome it. On the figures supplied, the penny and the halfpenny are not exactly equitable. The Minister might reconsider the point. The $\frac{1}{2}$ d. would obviously be wrong, since it would represent the actual rate for the agriculturist, while a maximum rate was fixed for the pastoralist. The Minister might agree to strike out the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. rate on the understanding that a more equitable amount will be included in the Bill.

Mr. THOMSON: I hope the Minister for Agriculture will accept the amendment. I based my calculations on the figures available, which worked out so that by imposing a rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ d., approximately the same amount would have been received from the farmers as from the pastoralists. The figures provided by the Minister for Lands, however, showed that a tax of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. would secure the same end. We recognise the seriousness of the dingo menace and my criticism has been merely with the desire to get an equitable basis for the levy upon both agriculturists and pastoralists.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	17

Majority against .. 2

AYES.

Mr. Angelo
Mr. Brown
Mr. Davy
Mr. Griffiths
Mr. W. D. Johnson
Mr. Lindsay
Mr. Mann
Sir James Mitchell

Mr. Sampson
Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Taylor
Mr. Thomson
Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Richardson
(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angwin
Mr. Clydesdale
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Cunningham
Mr. Heron
Miss Holman
Mr. Kennedy
Mr. Marshall
Mr. Millington

Mr. Munsie
Mr. Pantou
Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Troy
Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Wilson
(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—
“Provided that the rate imposed by the Minister under this section shall be fixed with a view to returning a total amount as nearly as possible equal from (a) lands held on pastoral lease, and (b) other holdings, respectively.”

The amendment means that the Minister will impose a rate that will provide him with about £20,000.

The Minister for Lands: That is a ridiculous proposition.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister has the right to fix the tax and the proviso will merely mean that the same amount will be paid by the farmers as by the pastoralists.

The Minister for Lands: How can the Minister do that?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He can fix it in his own way. If the Minister gets £10,000 from the farmers and £10,000 from the pastoralists, that will be a fair thing. The farmer, however, should not be called upon to pay four times as much as the pastoralist.

The Minister for Lands: The proviso will kill the Bill. It will make it impossible.

Point of Order.

The Minister for Agriculture: I do not think the amendment is in order, in view of the vote just taken regarding the rate to be fixed in the Bill. The amendment is a pure negation of that vote. I raise the point of order, that the amendment is on all fours with that moved by the member for Katanning, which has already been defeated by the Committee.

The Chairman: That seems to me to be the position. We have already decided what rate shall be paid by the farmers and pastoralists respectively. The amendment is really a negation of that decision.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: With all respect, I contend that the amendment has nothing to do with that moved by the member for Katanning. He proposed merely to strike out the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

The Minister for Agriculture: With the same object in view.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Not at all. If the member for Katanning had succeeded,

he would have moved to insert other words, which might have returned a smaller sum.

The Chairman: At any rate, I have given my ruling.

Dissent from Chairman's Ruling.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I move—

That the Committee dissent from the Chairman's ruling.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

The Chairman: I desire to report that the Leader of the Opposition moved a new proviso setting out that the rate imposed by the Minister under this section shall be fixed with a view to returning a capital amount as nearly as possible equal as between (a) land held under pastoral lease and (b) other holdings. I ruled that the question had already been agreed upon by the Committee, whereupon the Leader of the Opposition moved that the Chairman's ruling was not supported by the Standing Orders.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The member for Katanning moved to strike out "half-penny" with a view to inserting another word.

The Minister for Lands: We had already agreed to a rate not exceeding a penny for pastoral lands.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The amendment by the member for Katanning was lost. Then the Chairman ruled that my amendment to add a proviso was out of order because the question had already been decided. I contend that the question has not been decided at all. My amendment is intended to compel the Minister to fix an amount that will yield an equal sum from pastoralists and from agriculturists. That question has never been decided, nor even considered, by the Committee, so it is new matter. In any event, if the amendment moved by the member for Katanning had been carried, and if he had thereupon inserted other words, and if those other words had not meant exactly what my proviso means, the proviso would still have been in order. Neither the words of the clause nor the words of the proposed amendment moved by the member for Katanning meant what my amendment clearly means, so I contend that the Chairman of Committees was wrong in ruling my amendment out of order.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Leader of the Opposition has scarcely stated the case correctly. The member for Katanning

moved the striking out of "half penny" for the purpose of determining that the agriculturists should pay a rate similar to that paid by the pastoralists, or in other words that the agriculturist should pay a rate that would return a revenue equal to that returned by the pastoralist.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, no.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have spent the whole evening debating that principle. It was put to a vote and the Committee definitely negatived it. The Committee has now affirmed maximum rates of one penny for pastoralists and a halfpenny for agriculturists. Despite that differentiation the Leader of the Opposition moved an amendment that the rates shall be fixed to depart from that principle and secure the object of the previous amendment. On the principle established by the vote of the Committee an equal sum cannot be returned from the pastoralists and the agriculturists. Therefore the Leader of the Opposition desires to bring about a result contrary to the decision of the Committee on a vote already taken. I submit the amendment is out of order.

Hon. G. Taylor: The debate hinged on the striking out of the word "half" before "penny." It was indicated that "one-eighth" or "one-third" should be substituted. But the Committee decided that "half" should remain. Then a further amendment was moved to make the collections equal as between the pastoralists and the agriculturists. The effect of that amendment would be the same as if we had struck out "half" and later rejected the proposed "one-eighth" or "one-third." Had that happened, the question before the Chair would have been out of order. But we decided that "half" should remain, and so there was nothing else before the Committee. Then the Leader of the Opposition desired to add a proviso equalising the taxes. It was ruled out of order on the score that we had already decided upon that principle. I submit that the Committee have decided nothing beyond leaving in "half."

The Minister for Lands: I am surprised at the hon. member's contention. The Committee had decided that on pastoral lands there shall be a rate not exceeding 1d. and that on other lands the rate shall not exceed ½d.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is all.

The Minister for Lands: The rate has thus been fixed accordingly. The Leader of

the Opposition has asked that a rate shall be struck so that the amounts shall be equal.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: As nearly as possible.

The Minister for Lands: The principle has been affirmed on a division that the rate must not exceed 1d. and $\frac{1}{2}$ d., and the rate must be struck in accordance with that decision.

Mr. Sampson: An amendment was submitted by the Leader of the Opposition, the object of which was to secure an amount that would be equal in the case of pastoral areas and agricultural areas. That amendment looks further ahead than the one moved by the member for Katanning. It is inevitable that the area farmed will vary just as the area that is leased for pastoral purposes will vary. The figures would, therefore, have to vary from year to year so as to produce in each case a similar amount. The statement has been made that the amendment is a negation of the principle that has already been affirmed. That is pure assumption.

The Minister for Agriculture: The amendment of the Leader of the Opposition will bring about a different result from that which has already been affirmed.

Mr. Sampson: The amendment is not in conflict with that which has already been defeated. It must, therefore, be in order.

Mr. Davy: The Bill fixes first of all a limit on the Minister as to his powers to tax. The tax must be a maximum of 1d. in the one case, and $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the other. The previous amendment was designed to alter that limitation. The proposal of the Leader of the Opposition is to limit the power of the Minister in a different way. The amount of tax will stand, but he proposes an amendment by which the Minister will be guided by an altogether different principle from that which is set forth in the Bill.

The Minister for Agriculture: It would be utterly impossible to carry it out.

Mr. Davy: The amendment is in no way in conflict with that which was moved before.

Mr. Lutey: All the evening we have been discussing the amendment moved by the member for Katanning to strike out one-half and insert one-third. The debate has ranged about the question of the incidence of the tax. The amendment of the Leader of the Opposition is an attempt to alter that incidence.

Mr. Sampson: Why not alter it?

Mr. Lutey: We passed it; that is enough.

Mr. Thomson: I indicated that if my amendment were carried I intended to move to insert one-eighth of a penny, and subsequently alter that to one-third. All that was decided upon by the Committee was whether "half" should be struck out or should stand part of the clause. The principle of the 1d. and the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. tax has been affirmed, and the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition in no way affects that. It merely provides that the money raised by each section affected shall amount to the same.

Mr. Speaker: I am not particularly concerned with what occurred prior to the Chairman's ruling being challenged. From what has been said I gather that the Committee affirmed that the Minister shall impose taxation in a certain manner, and in certain proportions as affecting the pastoral and agricultural areas. These proportions and that method, I have been informed, were challenged by means of an amendment that was defeated. The result of the loss of that amendment was to affirm the principle of the two kinds of tax. No amendment or addition to a proposal of that kind can be held to be in order. It is the invariable rule of procedure, indeed the law of Parliament, that what the House has affirmed cannot afterwards, in considering the same Bill in Committee, be challenged as we go along step by step. You cannot go back. You cannot undo. Although the argument is that this proviso is only a modification and does not undo what has been done, in effect it does undo it. I am not going to enter into an argument upon the point, but just one fact must be clear, namely, that two holders of land in this State are embraced in the clause, the pastoralist and the agriculturist. They do not grow or develop necessarily in equal proportions, and the proposal of the Leader of the Opposition may make it impossible to adjust things as he proposes.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is annually.

Mr. Speaker: It matters not. Even if the difficulties of interpretation were not obvious, this one fact is clear, that you cannot in any way amend, alter, rescind, or render invalid, uncertain or inconsistent a question that has been decided by an affirmative vote of the House or of the Committee. I must, therefore, uphold the Chairman's ruling.

Committee resumed.

Mr. ANGELO: I move an amendment—

That in line one of the second proviso, after "holding," the words "or group of holdings" be inserted, and after "holding," in line four, the words "or of any holding within such group" be inserted.

The proviso as it appears exempts a holding that is fenced with a rabbit-proof fence to the satisfaction of the chief inspector, from taxation under this measure. No provision, however, is made to allow of one or two or more holdings that are adjoining to have a common or a ring fence around all those holdings. I hope the Minister will agree to the proposal. If the holdings are sufficiently small to allow of one ring fence to effectively protect all against vermin, the Minister will not be giving much away by agreeing to the amendment.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—"Provided also that in districts other than dingo infested areas, a 'sufficient' fence shall mean a rabbit-proof fence in accordance with the existing Act."

In the Bill there is no definition of what constitutes a "sufficient" fence. Under the existing Act a "sufficient" fence is explained. We who already have rabbit proof fences in areas that are not dingo infested should be entitled to such a saving provision to exempt us from contributing to the tax if we have a "sufficient" fence.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot agree to the amendment because the rabbit proof fence is no obstacle to the dingo or the fox. Under the 1918 Vermin Act a person who encloses his holding with rabbit proof fence is exempt from rates imposed to eradicate the rabbits. He has that protection already. But his fence is no good to keep out dingoes or foxes.

Mr. LINDSAY: There is a schedule in the existing Act which sets out the meaning of vermin proof. If one complies with the terms of that schedule will he be exempt under the Bill? It is not right that such a matter should be left to the chief inspector; we should define in the Bill what is a rabbit proof fence. We have done so in the past. It is rather loose legislation to allow

a chief inspector to say what he likes on subject of this kind. Parliament should define a sufficient fence.

Mr. C. P. WANSBROUGH: I am sorry the Minister cannot see eye to eye with the proposal contained in my amendment. He proposes to exempt the people in the North yet I who pay proportionately more tax will not be exempt because I require only a rabbit proof fence. I would like to know from the Minister what does really constitute a vermin proof fence.

Mr. BROWN: I cannot agree with either the member for Beverley or the member for Toodyay.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I thought you were a united party.

Mr. BROWN: A rabbit-proof fence is not necessarily a dingo-proof fence. It would be far better to leave the definition of vermin fence with the chief inspector. In the Toodyay district they have fences with several barbed wires on top. In my district the fences are rabbit-proof below and dingo-proof on top, and are something like 7ft. high. We have miles and miles of such fencing. If the Committee were to define a vermin-proof fence, the owners of those 7ft. fences might have to pull them down. Much better would it be to leave the definition with the chief inspector, a practical man who will be able to say what constitutes a vermin-proof fence. In the older settled districts dingo-proof fences will never again be required, for the dingoes have been eradicated.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We cannot exempt persons who have rabbit proof fences that are not dog-proof also. Any person having a vermin-proof fence to the satisfaction of the inspector will be exempt. I do not know what a vermin proof fence is, and I am sure it will be better to leave the definition with the chief inspector. We know what a rabbit-proof fence is, but we cannot say what a vermin proof fence is until we have had experience of it.

Mr. LINDSAY: Those who drafted the Act of 1918 were able to describe a vermin proof fence. We ought not to leave the definition to one man. My fence has kept out dingoes for three years past. Two months before I erected it I killed 12 dogs on my farm in three weeks. The Minister says he does not know what a vermin-proof

lence is, notwithstanding that the framers of the existing Act had that knowledge.

Amendment put and negatived.

[Mr. Panton took the Chair.]

Mr. ANGELO: I suggest that after "section" in line 1 of Subclause (3) the Minister inserts "together with a contribution from Consolidated Revenue of 15s. in the pound to the amount of such rates."

Mr. Teesdale: It would be too much of a strain to put on the Minister.

Mr. ANGELO: I am only afraid the Bill may be lost in another place unless it contains some indication of what the Government intend to do.

The Minister for Lands: Then let them throw it out and keep the dingoes.

Mr. ANGELO: But cannot the Minister give us some idea of what the Government intend to do?

The Minister for Agriculture: I cannot speak to a question not before the House.

Mr. Griffiths: Then bring it before the House.

Mr. ANGELO: I move an amendment—

That after "Minister," in line four of Subclause (3), the words "and an advisory board" be inserted.

The Minister for Agriculture: The board cannot have the administration of the Act.

Mr. ANGELO: Well, suppose I make the words "on the advice of the board"?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, those to whom I have promised the board do not want that amendment. They are quite satisfied with my proposed amendment.

Mr. Angelo: Surely the board should have some say in the distribution of the money.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: At a later stage I propose to move a subclause providing that the Minister shall appoint an advisory board to assist in the administration of this section, and that the board shall consist of one representative of the pastoral industry, one representative of the agricultural industry, and a third, who shall be chairman, shall be an officer of the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. ANGELO: Unless the amendment be agreed to the advisory board would have no say whatever. The Minister could

ignore the board and spend the money as he thought fit

Amendment put and negatived.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
I move an amendment—

That after "payment of" in line five of Subclause (3), the words "such uniform" be inserted.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 4th November, 1925.

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

PAPERS—RAILWAY AND TRAMWAY DEPARTMENT UNIFORMS.

On motion by Hon. J. Cornell, ordered: That all papers, and tenders received, relating to tenders for Railway and Tramway Department uniforms, which closed at the Government Tender Board on the 1st October last, be laid upon the Table of the House.

PAPERS—FEDERAL ROAD GRANT.

On motion by Hon. H. Stewart, ordered: That all files dealing with the allocation of the Federal Road Grant of £48,000, for Main Roads, be laid on the Table of the House.