

I am afraid the hon. member was not speaking by his book. The asset is there, and will gradually develop. The Minister referred to an area at Hester where a group was established by a former Minister for Lands, the present Agent-General (Hon. W. C. Angwin). Members will remember the indignation of Mr. Angwin on that occasion, when the Conservator of Forests sent an army in there to ring-bark that country for reforestation purposes, and Mr. Angwin could not get it for group settlement. I said it was one of the bright spots of group settlement in the South-West. The Minister for Lands has been down in that area and he endorses every word I said. Around the Hester group there are hundreds of areas between Donnybrook and Manjimup equal to anything on the Catterick group, but there is no co-ordination between the Lands Department and the Forests Department. Only tonight the Minister regretted that there was no available land. When speaking on the Address-in-reply, I said that from Pinjarra south at least 500 farms could be established along existing railways, with roads and schools and other facilities already provided. So while I am endorsing the Minister's remarks, I do say again that round about Bridgetown and every township along existing railways in the South-West, hundreds of farms could be established. And the Minister for Lands knows, and the officers of the Forests Department know, that there are in my electorate at least 100 applicants looking for land, men who would not require a pennypiece of assistance, men who cannot get land because so much is held for forestry purposes. Even if there were a few trees on a block suitable for farming, why should they not be allowed to remain under forest conditions, while the settler tills the soil? All that is required is the necessary co-operation between the Lands and the Forests Departments. And even if the settlers converted the timber into a marketable product, would it matter very much if the Forests Department did not get the royalty, if the farmer got it instead, so long as it was used in developing the State? I can assure the Minister for Lands that if only he will throw open those areas he will have no need to go farther afield, but will have enough work to do in settling the land along existing railways and roads without having

to provide any assistance whatever for the settlers. They are already in the district, farmers' sons who are only too anxious to go on the land. They have their own stock and implements, and will get every assistance from the old people in the development of their holdings. I am pleased to have from the Minister the assurance that the Nornalup farms are going to be established at £800 apiece. If that can be done, it will be very good work indeed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.41 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 15th October, 1930.

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

QUESTION—RAILWAY WOOL FREIGHT.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Minister for Country Water Supplies: Regarding the reduced railway rate on wool granted by the Government as from the 13th inst., will they favourably consider the extension of the concession to those who consigned new season's wool prior to that date?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES replied: No. It is not the custom to make retrospective variations of rates whether they be upward or downward.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Harris, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. C. B. Williams (South) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—EVIDENCE ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by Hon. J. Nicholson and read a first time.

BILL—BEES.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. V. Hamersley, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 3.

In Committee.

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

Clause 3—Interpretation:

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I move an amendment—

That in the definition of "beekeeper" the words "who allows bees to be kept upon any land owned or occupied by him, or" be struck out.

A beekeeper moves his hives from one locality to another in order to get the benefit of the blossoms at the change of the seasons. The bees would not be on the beekeeper's holding throughout the year. They would be located on the holdings of different persons. If one of those persons allowed bees to be kept on his land, he would be liable to the penalties under the measure, although he was not the owner of the bees.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Why should he not be liable?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Not being the owner, he would not be aware whether the bees were diseased.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: If the bees were registered, it would not matter where they were located. All that is desired is to facilitate the tracing of bees so that action could be taken against the registered owner. A person on whose land bees were temporarily located would not be troubled. It is necessary for the department to be able to trace bees moved from one place to another in order to control disease amongst them. Otherwise, if bees were located on another person's land, the owner of the bees might disclaim responsibility for them. The amendment would destroy the usefulness of the measure.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Ample control would be provided without the words sought to be struck out. The definition would then read—

"Beekeeper" means any person who keeps bees, or the person in charge of bees, or a person who has in his possession, or allows to be kept on any land owned or occupied by him any appliances that have been used in connection with apiculture.

Hon. E. H. Harris: What if he allowed someone else to put bees on his land?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: There is provision in the penalty clause.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Show us where it is.

Hon. H. STEWART: If the amendment were agreed to, the department would still be able to exercise control and obtain all the information desired. If a beekeeper took his bees to another man's holding, the appliances would have to be there, and the presence of appliances would be justification for an official making an inspection. If Mr. Hamersley is satisfied with the excision now proposed, the department will have all necessary powers.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The amendment should appeal to the Leader of the House. I would be inclined to go a little further than Mr. Hamersley, and strike out the reference to appliances. The words "owned or" should also be excised, especially in view of Clause 8, which provides that, in case of disease among bees, departmental orders which have not been carried out by the beekeeper may be carried out by the department. The case described by Mr. Hamersley might well arise. Beekeepers move their hives from one place to another. If the owner of the land on which the true beekeeper has placed his hives is classed as a beekeeper, the development of the industry will be impeded, as landowners will refuse permission to the beekeeper to make use of their land. The amendment is in the interests of the industry.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: What is wrong with the definition of "beekeeper"?

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is too wide.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The land owner will know the owner of the bees which he allows to be located on his land. The land owner merely becomes liable to inform the department who is the owner of the bees. A practically similar provision in New Zealand has worked well for years.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The New Zealand definition says "land occupied." This definition says "land owned or occupied." That is the difference.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I see no danger in the definition.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The wording of the New Zealand definition shows distinctly that Mr. Hamersley's contention is sound. The hon. member merely wishes to fix the liability on the true beekeeper, and not on the owner of the land. For the time being the beekeeper is the tenant or occupier of the land on which the bees are located. Subclause 2 of Clause 8, under which the Director of Agriculture may carry out at the beekeeper's expense departmental orders which have not been obeyed, renders the amendment necessary. The amendment cannot handicap the department in their work.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If Mr. Nicholson's view is right, all that is necessary is to strike out the words "owned or."

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: Quite right.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That amendment would meet the wishes of both Mr. Hamersley and the Minister.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Mr. Holmes has anticipated what I was about to say. I hope members will recollect that the Bill is for the prevention of contagious disease amongst bees. The policy of moving colonies of bees from one place to another is not always the best policy, because the man who is not particular about hives may for a small consideration obtain permission to put his bees on a property which has some blossom, and next door to which is a beekeeper whose hives are in perfect condition. Thus the owner of the land may unwittingly connive at the introduction of disease into that part of the country.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I see here nothing towards the prevention of disease in bees, but a good deal towards the harassing of owners and occupiers of land. The "West Australian" tells us that this is the two-thousandth natal day of the poet Virgil, who is a classic on bees. We might celebrate Virgil's birthday by inserting in this measure a few sections suggested by the poet in the "Georgics" with a view to preventing disease and obtaining the largest

return of honey. The Minister should be glad of the insertion of provisions to prevent disease not by destruction of bees, but otherwise.

Amendment put and negatived.

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

That in line three of the definition of "beekeeper" the words "owned or" be struck out.

Hon. H. STEWART: Mr. Nicholson and Mr. Mann used the term "occupier" as though the occupier might be a person who was using the land in question and residing there, but was not the beekeeper. On the other hand, "occupier" might apply to the man who had received permission from the owner. Thus both parties could come under the term "occupier."

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is right.

Hon. H. STEWART: The owner may be the occupier and also have another occupier. All we are relieving by the amendment is the absentee owner.

Amendment put and passed.

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

That in line 5 "owned or" be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: This is quite a different matter. There are several cases where boxes have been left full of disease. If we strike out those words whom shall we make responsible?

Hon. J. Nicholson: The beekeeper.

Hon. H. Stewart: You will have the resident occupier who may be the owner.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: In one case, although the block was owned by a particular person, there was no one on it.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: In my view the taking out of the two words will prove fatal to the Bill. It will permit of a beekeeper being the person who has bees on land that is occupied, but it will not refer to the man who has bees on land owned by him, and which may be vacant. There is a big difference. Taking out the similar words in the earlier part of the definition is no argument in favour of taking out the words in this instance.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: This affects the ownership of the hives, and I think it would

be wise to leave the words in. I shall withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The Leader of the House desires to get at the real owner of the bees or hives or the appliances. That can be simply accomplished by moving to insert after "who," in the fourth line, the words "is the owner of or." Later we can strike out the words "owned or." That part of the definition will then read "who is the owner of or has in his possession or allows to be kept on any land owned or occupied by him any appliances that have been used in connection with apiculture." That will accomplish the purpose the Leader has in view, and will save visiting a hardship on the owner of the land. Why should any owner who has allowed a beekeeper to go there, be made liable?

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: He should be responsible for his action.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If the Minister views the development of apiculture in that way, he must realise he is going to set any owner of land against a beekeeper putting his bees on the land. No owner of land, realising that he is under a liability, will allow any beekeeper to put in appliances or hives on his land.

Hon. E. Rose: What about orchardists?

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The same would apply to them. They would be liable. My amendment will accomplish what is fair and proper. I move an amendment—

That in line 4, after "who", the words "is the owner of, or", be inserted.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Is the hon. member in order in moving his amendment, seeing that we have dealt with a similar amendment?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is in order.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I have no objection to the words being included, but I want it understood that I shall object to striking out "owned or" in the next line.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That in line five the words "owned or" be struck out.

Hon. H. STEWART: The object desired will be secured if the words are struck out.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I should like Mr. Nicholson to tell me whether he proposes to take out similar words from Clause 5.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I do not think it necessary to do that.

The CHAIRMAN: Clause 5 can only be dealt with again on recommittal. I ask members to keep to Clause 3.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	..	13
Majority against					4

AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. A. Lovekin	(Teller).

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. G. A. Kempton	Hon. J. Fwing
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported with further amendments.

BILL—STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 9th October; Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Minister for Country Water Supplies in charge of the Bill.

Clause 7—Persons employed on scaffolding, or using gear, to have knowledge of the English language:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on an amendment moved by Mr. Kitson to strike out the words "extending beyond one storey in height."

Hon. E. H. Harris: What will be the effect of the amendment?

Hon. W. H. Kitson: I assume that the clause will then apply to any scaffolding that is more than eight feet in height.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I have on the Notice Paper an amendment which will, I think, meet the situation. If Mr. Kitson's amendment is agreed to, there will be no exemptions. The result may be that foreigners will not be allowed to build their own homes.

The CHAIRMAN: If the Committee decides not to strike out these words, the Minister cannot move an amendment at this sitting unless Mr. Kitson withdraws his amendment.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: I will withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: It is difficult to define a one-storey building. Many places may be 25ft. in height, and yet be only of one storey. To overcome the difficulty, I move an amendment—

That in line 5 the words "one storey" be struck out, and "15 feet" inserted in lieu.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: What is the reason for arriving at the height of 15 feet? It would be better that it should be 12 feet.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I have been informed by the department that 15 feet is in keeping with the Act.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It should not be necessary to call in an inspector merely because a man desires to erect a chimney. We might well go beyond 15 feet. The clause is drafted to protect workmen generally from the ignorance of foreigners. There is, however, another type of man against whom his mates may require protection. I refer to an exceedingly deaf man. Such an individual might not hear an exclamation that was made in his own language, whereas a foreigner would probably look up if he heard an exclamation in any language. Some of the men may be shortsighted. There are other defects equally bad. I suggest that 15 feet is not enough, and I would recommend the Minister to consider extending the height to 18 feet, so as to deal with houses having 12 feet walls, with chimneys as well.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I support the suggestion to increase the height to 18 feet. The Act, while it applies to the metropolitan area, also applies to the West Province and in that part of the State many people have to build barns and sheds. In those circumstances, the Minister would be well advised to increase the height to 18 feet.

Hon. G. FRASER: Perhaps Mr. Harris and Mr. Mann have overlooked the point that a scaffold erected to the height of 15 feet would enable work to be done at a height of 19 or 20 feet. Mr. Harris has referred to the man who may be deaf or shortsighted. That would be an exceptional circumstance, but apparently Mr. Harris is concerned with the individual and is prepared to neglect the larger number to whom the clause will afford some protection.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Perhaps it will satisfy Mr. Harris if I say that before the measure was dealt with by the Parliamentary Draftsman I had a consultation with the Chief Architect, who assured me that 15 feet was sufficient in regard to one-storey buildings.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Not with chimneys!

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I take it that the Chief Architect would not forget that there are chimneys in such buildings. He was definite in his advice that 15 feet was quite sufficient.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I can support the statement made by the Leader of the House. When the Bill was first introduced in the early days of the administration of the Collier Government, it was intended to apply to the whole State. It was severely criticised, but the House agreed to extend its operations outside the metropolitan area, provided it applied only to structures over one storey in height. That was submitted to the Chief Architect and he objected to the term "storey." In 1928 an amendment was introduced and Section 2 of the amending Act had the effect of striking out the reference to buildings of one storey and the insertion of a proviso as follows:—

Provided that this Act shall be enforced and have effect throughout the State whenever scaffolding exceeding 15 feet in height from the horizontal base is used.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: The more we endeavour to grasp the meaning of the clause, the more I am inclined to think

that it should be rejected altogether. After we have dealt with the amendments, I shall move in that direction.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I move an amendment—

That in line 5, after "height," the words "above the horizontal base" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: It appears to me that we are asked to penalise certain people that are admitted to Western Australia in a proper and legitimate manner. If we impose restrictions upon the entry of such people, and they comply with those restrictions and are admitted, then they should be treated in the same way as we deal with other persons. If we are not prepared to do that, we should not admit them at all.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you mean even before they are naturalised?

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: The point is that we admit them. I do not care about their being naturalised; that merely amounts to an advertisement in the newspapers.

Hon. G. Fraser: Under the law they cannot have certain privileges until they are naturalised.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Are the men the hon. member refers to unionists?

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: I do not care whether they are or are not.

Hon. G. Fraser: Most of them are good unionists.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: We should reject the clause altogether.

Clause put, and a division called for.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the division is taken, I wish to announce that I give my vote with the Ayes.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	13
Noes	13

A tie
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AYES.

Hon. F. W. Allsop	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. E. H. Harris
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. T. Franklin	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. G. A. Kempton
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	(Teller).

NOES.

Hon. J. Ewing	Hon. Sir C. Nathan
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. Sir W. Lathlain	Hon. Sir E. Wittenoom
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. E. Rose
Hon. G. W. Miles	(Teller).

The CHAIRMAN: The voting being equal, the question passes in the negative.

Clause, as amended, thus negatived.

Postponed Clause 2—Amendment of Section 2:

The CHAIRMAN: Consideration of Clause 2 was postponed after Mr. Nicholson, on the 9th October, had moved an amendment to delete the words "any ladder exceeding 25 feet in length" appearing in subparagraph (3) of paragraph (d).

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not propose to move the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: But the Minutes show that the hon. member moved his amendment on the 9th October and subsequently the consideration of the clause was postponed. The hon. member must either proceed with the amendment or withdraw it by leave of the Committee.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Then I ask leave of the Committee to withdraw the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: There being one dissentient voice, leave is refused.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I hope this amendment will not be agreed to, for if it is it will mean that every ladder above 8 feet in length will have to be examined. The Committee will be well advised to vote against the amendment.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The member who moved it wants to withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: The question of withdrawal has been placed before the Committee, but there was one dissentient voice. Therefore the amendment cannot be withdrawn, but must be voted upon.

Amendment put negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR WILLIAM LATHLAIN (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.47]: Probably no Bill of greater consequence than this has been before the House for a very long period. The question is one of tremendous importance, not only to the State and to the Commonwealth, but practically to every other country in the world at the present time. The advent of the motor has so completely turned upside down our previous methods of transport that it is quite necessary something definite should be done in order to cope with the ever-increasing motor traffic. While one regrets that it should be necessary to interfere with private enterprise, the fact remains that of our total loan moneys of 70 odd millions, 33 per cent. is invested in our railways, and a further proportion in our tramways. So something must be done to preserve those tremendous assets of the people against the invasion which is being made upon them. I remember when in Victoria, probably 40 years ago, an encroachment was made upon the railway traffic in that State, but in a different manner. The times were very bad and a lot of the farmers having waggons and horses began carting goods from Melbourne to Bendigo and Ballarat and vice versa, and so carried away from the railways a great deal of their legitimate trade. Those farmers were able to do it just then because horse feed was very cheap; but later, when horse feed increased in price, the increase drove those people off the road. The position to-day is very different, because in addition to providing the railways and tramways we have provided also roads in point of which I think, considering their enormous extent, the State compares very favourably with any other part of Australia and indeed with many other parts of the world. When we realise the enormous extent of the roads we have already constructed, and remember also our comparatively small population, we come to see how much has been done in the construction of roads. Just here let me congratulate the Leader of the House upon the fair and intelligent way in which he placed the whole of the details of the Bill before the House. There are in the measure many

details that have to be taken into consideration. First of all there has to be borne in mind the enormous cost entailed in the construction of the roads, as expounded to us by the Minister last night. It would be an impossibility for motor traffic successfully to compete against the railways were it not that these roads had been constructed at such enormous cost. Also it has to be borne in mind that the motor traffic is very severe on the roads which, in consequence of the heavy loads carried by motor lorries, require a great deal of costly maintenance. The private motor traffic, what I might call the tourist traffic, is not very hard on the roads, but when we have great lorry loads coming into various parts of the city, we realise what an onslaught that traffic is making, not only on our roads, but also on our bridges, which in consequence require so much greater maintenance. It was something of a coincidence last night that, after the Minister had moved the second reading, I went outside the precincts of the House and the first thing I saw was a large lorry load of wool coming in from some distant part of the country. And I saw the same thing again to-day; not only a large lorry, but with it a trailer, and both loaded with wool that had come from Wagin. When we think of the enormous traffic which is being carried on by these motor vehicles and for which the Government have generously provided all facilities in the way of good roads, we see that it is time the motor vehicles were compelled to pay something tangible towards the upkeep of those roads. Then we might get back to those means of transport in which the State has invested so much money. It is easy to argue that the producer has a right to send his goods to market in the cheapest and most convenient way. But the probability is that those people who are transporting their wool by motor to the city are also expecting the Government to carry their superphosphate out to them at a very low rate on the railways, a rate which does not pay. There must be a quid pro quo in all these things. Therefore I am glad the Government have brought down this Bill. It should be some satisfaction to members to know that it has been framed on lines similar to those of the Act in Queensland. The Minister gave us that information last night. After all, Queensland is a State closely akin

to our own with its vast distances and similar problems, and therefore probably the Act which suits Queensland will meet with the approval of both Houses of Parliament in Western Australia. The Minister last night made a very striking point when he mentioned the concessions granted on the railways to various people, as for instance school children, college boys, apprentices and juniors travelling to and from work.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And also State employees.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: Yes, State employees and many others enjoy these railway concessions, which are part and parcel of the one big scheme. Therefore it behoves us to do everything we can to co-ordinate, not only with the present Government, but with any Government in attacking this problem which has been before successive Governments for a considerable time past. There is no problem more difficult to face than the one before us. If the serious inroads being made into railway and tramway revenue are allowed to increase, it will mean a material depreciation in our railways and tramways, considered as joint assets. Sydney and Melbourne have been taking energetic steps to protect their tramways and railways, and it is time we did something of the sort in Western Australia.

Hon. G. W. Miles: We should have done it years ago.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: At the same time, I do not think any Government have tackled this problem at the right time or as seriously as it should have been tackled years ago. I have given consideration to the question for a very long time past, as far back as when Colonel Pope was Commissioner of Railways and even before that, when Mr. Short was the Commissioner. I discussed with those gentlemen this position, more particularly regarding the railway traffic from Fremantle to Midland Junction. I suggested that something should be done to maintain a smart and rapid form of transport on the railways between Midland Junction and Fremantle. This was long before we had lost the railway trade to the extent we have done. On the other hand, the existing service on the railways is not necessarily the best one. Those members who know the system in Melbourne and have travelled by the electric railways have experienced rapid, comfortable travel with every possible con-

venience. Some of those conveniences should have been supplied here years ago, before we lost the railway traffic. At the present time the motor taxis and buses land their passengers at the A.M.P. corner. Half the people do not want to be landed there, but prefer to be put down in the vicinity of the railway station. The same thing applies to people coming from Midland Junction. A little time ago I was out towards Bayswater attending a function, after which I walked down to the railway station. That was about ten minutes to four in the afternoon, and I asked how long I would have to wait for a train. The answer was that I would get one at ten minutes past five. Consequently I had to take a taxi back to the city. In the metropolitan area there should be at least a 5-minute railway service between Fremantle and Perth and, say, a 10-minute service between Perth and Midland Junction. Of course, on such a service we could not have the great long trains we have over longer distances.

Hon. E. H. Gray: We would not need them with the more frequent service.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: That is so. Also I understand the difficulty there is in breaking up the trains. It costs more to break up the trains and disconnect them into single coaches than it does to run them. One of the features of the electric system in Melbourne—I have observed this at Coburg—is that at the peak hours seven carriages are run, at less busy hours the trains consist of only three or four carriages, and when traffic is at a low ebb a train may consist of only one carriage. It is quite easy to do that under the electric system. But that system is not yet for Western Australia, because our population is altogether too small to carry the burden of the cost of installing such a system here. I hope the time will come when we shall be able to do it. I discussed this matter with the Commissioner of Railways recently and was glad to learn that a new kind of steam train called the Sentinel is to be placed on the line to provide a quick service between Perth and Fremantle. Those trains cost about £4,500 each and will accommodate 56 passengers. I am hopeful that the adoption of this type of train will lead to a re-organisation, not only of the suburban service, but also of the country service. The manufacturers claim that the trains can be run

at a cost of 1s. 6d. per mile. The Commissioner says he is allowing 2s. per mile. If they can do the work, there is great hope of the railways being able to recapture a great proportion of the passenger traffic between Perth and Fremantle and Perth and Midland Junction.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: What about petrol-driven vehicles?

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: When I was abroad last year I attended motor exhibitions in Paris and London, but what impressed me more than anything else was the show of vehicles for carrying purposes. The type that has made most rapid progress is the steam lorry. Nearly all the heavy work of carting over the roads from Liverpool to London is being done by steam lorries. The Commissioner informed me that the Sentinel train can raise 150 lbs. of steam, and whereas he expects the cost of running to be 2s. per mile, nothing better than 7s. 6d. per mile can be obtained with the present trains. This Bill is of tremendous importance to the whole State. We must do our best to preserve the assets which have been built up for the community. If we can provide the facilities that should be provided, we should be able to regain for the railways much of the traffic that has been lost. It is patent that a number of people who live close to taxi routes would continue to travel by motor, but the bulk of the people would undoubtedly travel under the more favourable conditions that the railways could offer. I support the second reading of the Bill, and shall watch the various phases of it closely during the Committee stage.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [6.4]: It was interesting to listen to Sir William Lathlain, who is a champion of private enterprise, after admitting that private enterprise had left State enterprise high and dry, advocating that we should rush to the rescue of State enterprise. According to his remarks, State enterprise has fallen down on the job; private enterprise has captured the trade, and now it becomes the duty of the country to take the trade from private enterprise and give it back to the State utility. A properly controlled railway service is the solution of the difficulty, and when I say a properly controlled service, I mean a service

under autocratic control. When 25 or 30 years ago I had to do with the Government Railways Act, we took the railways out of the hands of the politician and vested control in a Commissioner. The fatal mistake we made was that we left the appointment of the Commissioner to Governments that come and go. What we should have done was to make the Commissioner's appointment a life appointment, he to be removable only on the vote of a majority of both Houses of Parliament, as is the case with a Supreme Court judge. That was the mistake we made, and that is the mistake which has to be rectified. If we do not take this great earning and spending department out of the hands of the politician and give the Commissioner proper control, I make this prediction—and I have made a few that have come true—that within five years the railways in most of the States will have to be sold and will be controlled by private enterprise.

Hon. V. Hamersley: That time is coming fast.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: If we had had private enterprise controlling railways, there would have been no question of vehicles with rubber tyres competing with vehicles of iron tyres running on iron rails. It becomes a question of management. I make no reflection on the present management of the railways, but I say the Commissioner's position is an impossible one, due to the fact that the politician plays too great a part in the administration of the railways. Proof of that may be found in connection with coal supplies, the long service leave, and the 44-hour week, the last-named concession granted behind the back of the Arbitration Court. The Government of the country set up the Arbitration Court, and then went behind the court's back and granted the men the 44-hour week.

Hon. G. Fraser: The Court first gave them the 44-hour week.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Political interference has made a hopeless mess of the railways. Now it is proposed to penalise the road traffic that has served the public in a manner the railways could have served them but failed to do.

Hon. G. Fraser: Make the road traffic pay for services rendered.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I do not know what the hon. member said, but there is no intelligence attached to it.

Hon. E. H. Harris: That is pretty hard.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: This Bill is an attempt to tax the owners of road vehicles out of existence, in order to rectify the misdeeds of politicians who have controlled the railways when we thought the Commissioner was controlling them. The Commissioner's position is an unfortunate one. He has even to do what the Minister tells him or on the expiration of his term, he has to look for another job. Is it fair that a man controlling assets that have cost one-third of the State's total borrowings should be placed in the position of having to do as the politician tells him, or run the risk of missing reappointment at the end of his term? We have before us a Bill to place the magistracy of the State in a safe position. Of that measure I entirely approve. Will the Minister ask the Premier whether we have not reached the stage when we should put the Commissioner of Railways in a position secure from political attack? If he reached a stage when he became incompetent and would not resign, Parliament could step in and relieve him of the office. Such security must be granted the Commissioner before we can hope to get any good out of the railways. If this course were adopted, there would be no question of whether Newcastle, Collie, or any other coal should be used. It would be a question of using the coal from which the Commissioner could obtain the best results. Only when the Commissioner is placed in such a position will there be any hope of conducting the railways successfully. The irony of it is that we have spent tens of thousands of pounds in building roads parallel with the railways, thus permitting motor vehicles to take the traffic from the railways. Now we are asked to step in and say, "We shall not allow you to use the roads for your motors unless you pay exorbitant rates." We have done the most idiotic thing imaginable. No wonder we are up against trouble. Had we built the roads from the farms to the railway stations, so that the produce might be expeditiously carted to the railways, there would have been some sense in the policy, but to build roads parallel with the railways was absurd. Travelling on the Wongan Hills line the other day, I noticed a road

good enough for any traffic, but not many yards away another road half a chain wide was being cleared. At Morawa I asked the road board secretary why another road was being cleared, and he replied, "So far as I know they have cleared 35 miles. They were going to build another road, but now the work is not to be proceeded with owing to the difficulties of obtaining money." That is what I was told. If the crisis has done nothing else, it has stopped the building of 35 miles of unnecessary road. What have we done in recent years? We have built roads to bring traffic to the city and compete with the railways. Private enterprise has stepped in and made use of the roads, and now we are asked to drive the traffic back to the railways. In view of all the trade that has slipped away from the railways, I should like to ask what is being done to live up to our promise to rectify the financial position of the State. We must bear in mind that the Railway Department was responsible for over £400,000 of the deficit last year. What is being done at present? We promised to balance the Budget. What is being done towards bringing about the reform necessary to keep faith with the Premiers' Conference and the money lenders in England? We have been discussing an Anatomy Bill and a Bees Bill. Three months of the financial year have gone, and nothing has been done. It makes one think that a Mussolini in this country would be useful at the present juncture.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Before tea I was saying that the railways had the largest amount of borrowed money invested in them, and that I was wondering what was being done to square the Railway Department's ledger. I gather from the Treasurer's Budget that last year there was a loss of approximately £400,000 on the railways, and that this year he anticipates an additional £300,000 of railway revenue and a reduction of railway expenditure to the extent of £100,000. If these things eventuate, the ledger will be squared. But they are only estimates. I have been looking to see how, when and where we are to get the additional £300,000 from the railways. If we are going to wait for something to turn up, there will be more hungry women and children in this State than there are now; and

the position to-day is a disgrace to the people who have had control of Western Australia. Again, 25 per cent. of the year is gone, and there is still drift. I refer to this in order to correct a statement which appeared in this morning's paper. I can only find that the Government have reduced the freight on wool, which I say is not a fair thing to do at the present juncture. I contend that we ought to get expenses down before we reduce freights. In view of the fact that we are asking the men to make sacrifices, it is not fair to annoy them by taking the freight off wool—something that means nothing. A few shillings on a ton of wool are neither here nor there. According to this morning's paper, the Minister for Railways is responsible for the reduction. I understood that the Railways Act put these matters under the control of the Commissioner of Railways. It would not worry me in the least if the railways were passed over to private enterprise, because I am convinced that under private enterprise we would get better results and better service, and there would not be much worry about the competition of buses and motor cars. I fail to see how we shall get the additional £300,000 of railway revenue. If the Government must hurry up with their Bills to reduce salaries and wages, the expenditure may come down £100,000; but I do not see how we can get the £300,000 in view of the fact that the country's business is practically at a standstill. Some years ago Mr. Ewing and Mr. Rose told us what a wonderful railway the South-Western line was. That was when the group settlements were being established, and when train loads of material were being sent down to develop the South-West. The freight on that material was derived from loan money, and so the railways were then paying. But we have not now any big group settlements developing. We have a wheat harvest. We are told that some of the wheat is 50 miles from a railway. We are also told that some of the wheat will never be harvested. That is a serious state of affairs. Who is responsible for sending men 50 miles out to grow wheat? Surely someone has blundered. Is this House going to continue to let people blunder? Fifty miles from a railway station to grow wheat! Why will some of the wheat never be harvested? Because the people put on the land by the Government

have never had any financial interest in the concern. They will go on so long as the Government find money for them to go on with. However, the necessity for putting people 50 miles from a railway to grow wheat does not exist. I travelled along the Wongan Hills line recently and saw thousands—I may say tens of thousands—of acres of beautiful land on either side of the line, and only a road separating the land from the railway. Never a stick has been cut on that land, and never a post put up. By whom is the land held? It is held under conditional purchase; it could not have been obtained in any other way. Conditional purchase sets out certain conditions, which in this case have never been complied with. It is years since Sir Hal Colebatch, then Leader of this House, told us—I am quoting from memory—that 19 million acres had been alienated adjacent to the railway system, and that only 9 million acres had been partially improved. What has become of the other 10 million acres adjacent to the railway system? Why should not the people who took up those 10 million acres for speculative purposes—they have fallen in now—have been compelled to comply with the conditions under which the land was taken up? Why has it not been done? If this wheat had been grown alongside the railway, as it should have been, instead of 50 miles away, the people would have a chance to live, and the railways would have a chance to pay. I come back to the point that three months of the financial year have gone, and the Government have done nothing, except, as I have already stated, bring forward a Bees Bill, an Anatomy Bill, and a Bill to confiscate the motor bus service. This is a Bill to confiscate the motor services, and to drive passengers back on to the railway system, after the railways have driven the passengers to the buses. Why do not the Government confiscate the buses altogether, and refuse them the right of traffic over the roads? Because the owners of the buses have the public behind them, and the public have votes. This Bill is another means of hoodwinking the public. In it the Government say, "We are in favour of the buses, but we are going to make them pay up." The idea of travelling by rail instead of by the buses is absurd. If I go to Fremantle, I go by bus. The last time I was there I looked into the railway station and asked, "When is the next train to Perth?" I was told that one had just gone. I then asked,

"When is the next one?" The reply was, "In 70 minutes' time." I got into a bus that landed me in Perth 35 minutes after I left the Fremantle railway station. Will people tolerate that kind of train service? The solution of the difficulty, in Sir William Lathlain's opinion, is some new sort of train that will cost £4,200, to run between Fremantle and Perth at a cost of 2s. per mile. Such a train will not save the situation. A general upheaval in the Railway Department will save the situation.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: How many of those trains would be required to run at five-minute intervals?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is said that this train is a time-saving appliance. But the Commissioner will have to put as many men on that train as on a passenger train.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is not fair.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is fair, and the hon. member knows it. Thirty years ago I had an experience in that connection, and I do not think the position is any better now. I find that the people holding these unused lands are going to be exempted for two years from the operation of the Vermin Act. Surely they have friends at court somewhere! Unless some just cause can be shown, there will be no exemption for them so far as I am concerned. However, suppose we put on that train to run between Perth and Fremantle, and so solve that problem. It will not solve other railway problems. For instance, if a guard at Meekatharra is to go on long service leave, and a porter at Bunbury is next in seniority, the Bunbury porter has to go to Meekatharra, with all expenses paid, and wages paid while travelling, in order to relieve the Meekatharra guard. How can we expect the railways to compete with private enterprise under such conditions? I have asked myself the question how this position has been created, and who created it? I will give my own explanation as to how it has been brought about. Candidly, in my opinion, north, south, east and west, it has been brought about by vote-buying politicians and stop-work unionists, and if we are not careful it will be aggravated by a lot of people whom the Government have put on the land and who, because they are up against it, threaten to walk off. I do not think my explanation is far out.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: There is no place to walk to now.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: There is always Blackboy Camp. One can drive out to work in a motor car, come back and get a hot lunch, and then drive out again. Our railway system will have to get traffic, get it and hold it. So far as I see, the solution of the difficulty is the development of land adjacent to the railways. Why should we build additional railways when there is a hundred miles of land on either side of existing lines and only a minor portion of it developed?

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: What about closer settlement?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: That is another matter. In the Wongan Hills country I saw men 20 and 25 miles from a railway station going for their lives with tractors and horses on inferior land, getting ready for next season. Why should they not come alongside the railway, where there is superior land that has been held for years and nothing done with it?

Hon. A. Lovekin: Can you not compel them under the Closer Settlement Act to use the land?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It does not apply here because this is conditional purchase land. How long has the railway been built? Fifteen years. The holders of the land get their blocks for the first five years free of rent and then they have 25 years in which to pay, so it must be conditional purchase land and that does not come within the scope of the Closer Settlement Act.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: But you can compel them under that Act.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We can compel them under the Land Act. The Closer Settlement Act deals with freehold.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Conditional purchase land, too.

Hon. A. Lovekin: But to some of those holdings you can apply the closer settlement principle.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: So much the better if you can.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: You can make a man put his land to the best use possible under the Closer Settlement Act.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Then why has it not been done?

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Echo answers why! Why don't you play your part and see to it?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I shall never get on the Treasury Bench, but if I did get there I would do something. We have to get the land adjacent to the railways settled.

We should put the railways under autocratic control or sell them to private enterprise. The bondholders are looking at the railways of Australia and can see millions of pounds piled up by way of deficits to keep stop-work unionists going. Unless something is done, we shall be compelled to sell the railways to private enterprise, and there again good may come out of evil. Personally, I am sure it would. We must get a fair day's work for a fair day's pay from the employees; we must get coal, which is an important item, at a reasonable price. I quoted figures the other night to show that it takes 155 tons of Collie coal to equal 100 tons of Newcastle coal. That has been disputed, and if we get the Royal Commission that has been promised us, we shall know all about it. If we do not get that Commission, and the House is in the same humour as myself, we can remember it when the Appropriation Bill is being dealt with.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: There is no necessity for threats.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is not a threat; it is only a suggestion.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: I think I am in order in saying that the trade has been driven from the railways to the buses, and now the proposal is to drive it back to the railways. Is it not a ridiculous idea to run passenger trains through the country? With regard to the privately-owned Midland railway, anyone can go to Midland Junction in the morning and he will find what the Americans would call a fast mixed. There will be found passengers as well as merchandise, and sometimes the trains are so laden that it is difficult to see the end of them. Not so with the Government service. There we find passenger trains fully armed with conductors.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Do the Midland Company make their service pay?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Yes, and if they did not handle the service better than our railways are handled, the officials would not be in their positions to-day. The Midland Company were charging cheaper freights than the Government and the people were giving the company's line preference over the Wongan line. The Government compelled the company to put up their freights, being able to do that because of the agreement with the Midland Company, which provides that they are to charge the same rates as those on the Government railways.

Hon. W. T. Glasheen: Are they saddled with similar industrial conditions?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is private enterprise against State enterprise.

Hon. H. Stewart: Did not the Midland Company want to sell their line to the Government?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: They did at one time, but the company sold a good deal of their land, and their country has become so developed that now they do not want to sell. The settlers along the Midland line are satisfied, and in fact are preparing for next year, whilst our people, who are spoon-fed by the Government, are proposing to walk off their holdings, if what we hear is correct. When we get to the privately-owned railways, we find they can stand up against other traffic. I venture to say that if our railways had been privately owned, they would have seen the traffic disappearing, and they would not have waited to see what the effect would be upon the system, or reduced the staff, or waited to get the Minister's consent to act, but they would have got in straight away, not with one cheap train but with a dozen, and so put the bus service in its place. I have no interest in road transport, except to say that we have made roads for the motor vehicles, and we have driven the passengers into the buses. Now we are going to try to confiscate the traffic that has gone to private enterprise and push it back to the railways. State enterprise has failed in connection with the railway service. A lot has been said by those people opposed to State enterprise, and a lot has been said about the State interfering with private enterprise. It is the other way round now; it is private enterprise interfering with the State and there is a terrible hullabulloo about it. State enterprise has been ruining private enterprise for years with bricks and timber, fish and chips and meat, and all sorts of things, and the public have had to foot the bill. Now we have to force back to the railways the traffic that has been taken by private enterprise. I was not prepared to speak on this matter to-day; I waited for someone else to address the House and I only scratched a few notes together in some spare moments. I think, however, I have made out a case to show that the administration of the railways has been responsible for the growth of the bus service, and I do not think it is

a fair thing at the present juncture to confiscate private interests so as to rectify the wrongs that have been done by the political element that has been brought to bear on the railways of the State. Things are bad enough now, and unless the position is faced all round, we shall find deserving women and hungry children about us by the thousands. Who is responsible for all this? The politicians of Australia, and no one else, and the longer we leave it the worse the position will become. It is up to some of us to realise that this has gone far enough, try to stop the ship from sinking and bring about a condition of affairs that will establish solvency and prevent people from starving.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [7.55]: Before the second reading of the Bill is passed I should like to offer one or two remarks upon it. I was struck by what was said by the Minister when introducing the Bill with regard to a question that has been dealt with very fully by Mr. Holmes. The Minister said it was natural to expect that the farmers would recognise their moral obligations to use the railways, and the Bill is mainly aimed, as Mr. Holmes has said, to force back to the railways a lot of the traffic that has been diverted to the road.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: Where do you read that in the Bill?

HON. V. HAMERSLEY: It may not be put into actual words, but from what was said by the Minister I infer that that is the object behind the Bill. It is natural to suppose so when we see the greatly increased rates it is proposed to charge motor trucks. Apparently we have welcomed the advent of motor traction; it has been invited by the railways themselves. I repeatedly see motor vehicles carting wool, as Sir William Lathlain has said, through the streets of Perth. Motor traction has been of the utmost help to many of the settlers in the back country. I can quote one instance that was given to me by a grower of wool who, having taken off his clip, loaded it on a wagon and sent it to the railway. To his surprise on the same evening the driver of the wagon landed back in the yard with the wool. On remonstrating with the driver, the owner was told that he did his best to persuade the stationmaster to allow him to load the wool on to the trucks and he was

told that on no account could wool be received on that day because it was the wrong day of the week for loading wool. The driver was asked to return on the following Thursday or Friday, and as he considered it unwise to leave the wool at the station, he carted it back to the farm. Then when the particular day for loading the wool arrived, the wagon was again sent to the railway station and in this instance the owner himself accompanied it. The wagon was delayed somewhat in starting and on arrival at the station, although there was still plenty of daylight they found they had not got to the station yard in time. The gates were closed against them. Efforts were made to persuade the stationmaster to unlock the gates so that the wool might be unloaded. The owner was unable to persuade the stationmaster to allow the wool to be loaded on the trucks. He therefore went into the town and arranged with the owner of a motor truck to transport the wool to Fremantle. The owner of this wool does not think much of the railways, and says that so long as he is growing any wool the motor truck owner will carry it to Fremantle.

HON. J. J. HOLMES: This Bill will stop him.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY: I do not think even this Bill will do that. If we drive the motors off the road, the railways will revert to the practice of neglecting to look for business. During the last few years the railways have begun to realise the competition against them, and have been rather eager to cater for a good deal of the trade they have driven from their doors. The incident I refer to is one of many thousands. The high freights that have been put upon wool have driven many owners to use the motor as a means of transporting that commodity to Fremantle. Unless they can secure cartage at a cheaper rate, they may be obliged to revert to the old horse teams or else go out of business. I have been paying freights on occasions when I have felt it would pay to put on the teams again in competition with the railways. It does not say much for the system when we find motor traffic successfully competing with it. We know something of the high cost of motor fuel, the high cost of tyres and of accessories, and the cost of the vehicles themselves, apart from the wear and tear that follow the use of those vehicles.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Why do you not send your super and wheat by motor truck?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: We shall probably be doing that soon.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: They should pay a reasonable rate when they are using the roads.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: With all these high charges that have to be paid by the owner of a motor truck, it is strange that he is able to compete with the railways.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: It is because these people are not paying for the use they make of the roads.

Hon. H. Stewart: And they have no overhead expenses.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The people who are using the motor vehicles and paying the freight are being charged pretty high, too.

Hon. G. W. Miles: And are getting concessions on the carriage of superphosphate and wheat on the railways.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Mr. Miles does not appreciate the fact that those on the land are paying a particular rate in order to make up to the railways for a reduction in freight. I refer to the tax which was passed specially to relieve the railways of some of the cost. The railway system would not give concessions to people in outback centres, if they were giving any, but when they did they were well recouped by the extra tax which was put on for the purpose. The experience of livestock owners is much the same. They have to revert to droving rather than continue to use the railways. Requests have repeatedly been made to the railways to improve the running of stock trains to the market at Midland Junction. It is well known in the Great Southern districts that owing to the change over of the different gangs there is a loss to the railways of something like five hours in the running from a place as near at hand as Katanning to Midland Junction. There is such a waste of time that the owner of stock is driven to use the road. A motor truck will cause less loss of weight to the stock than if they travelled by train, and the transport by road is much quicker. Furthermore, the motor trucks enable the stock owners to get their animals straight to market and arrive there in much better condition. The same thing applies to animals going to the freezing works at Fremantle. They are not bumped about and bruised on motor trucks as they

are in railway trucks. When the fat lamb industry develops, greater use will no doubt be made of this method of taking animals to the freezing works in order to minimise the loss of weight. Instead of the cost being increased, the rates for motor transport should remain as they are, and the railways should be asked to reduce their costs. We cannot live in competition with the outside world unless we do reduce costs. It is a question whether we are going to run the country for the benefit of the railways, or whether we are going to give some benefit to the people on the land, who have for years lived in the hope of securing reduced freights on the railways and charges at the ports to enable them to live. At present people on the land are not able to get bread and butter out of their jobs.

Hon. G. Fraser: They are bound to secure reduced rates on the railways when they patronise so much road transport.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: The railways should reduce their costs in order to compete with road transport. When they increased their costs the owners of these motor trucks realised their opportunity. Meanwhile the railways go on in the same old way, and do not try to meet the convenience of the public or make an effort to improve the facilities offered. Our facilities were as good 20 years ago, if not better than they are to-day. In spite of the enormous increase in the cost of railway construction, with consequent heavier charges and heavier costs generally, we find that in many instances the benefits we receive are not as good as they were years ago although we pay a great deal more for them. In the old days when we approached the railways for improvements in different directions we were told that owing to the freight costs and the small amount of traffic available it was impossible for the railways to meet us with better facilities, but that if we increased our production and gave them more traffic they would in turn be able to meet us. Since then we have quadrupled the traffic and quadrupled the amount of produce that is available for railway transport, but without a corresponding result in our favour. Years ago the railways showed a handsome profit in their working, but to-day they are making huge losses in spite of the fact that they enjoy vastly increased returns and a vastly increased amount of freight. There

must be something wrong that we have not been able to secure a reduction in freights and fares. It is in that direction we should look for a better return from the railways, rather than by imposing heavier charges upon those who are offering a service in competition with the railways.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The price of coal is too high.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Many factors affect the situation. Charges all round have increased. We killed our timber industry and many others, and now we have to fall back upon the farming industry. We are told we must rely upon wool and wheat as a last resource. From all accounts, however, these industries are in a bad way.

Hon. H. Seddon: The value of gold remains the same.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: We have been spoon-feeding the gold mining industry for a long while. Only yesterday a letter came into my hands showing that the few remaining companies have lost so much money that they cannot stand the suggested increased charge upon water for the mines. They, too, must be in a parlous condition.

The PRESIDENT: I must ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the Bill.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: People on the goldfields are very concerned about this measure. Considerable use is made of motor transport up there in the delivery of goods to the outer districts. The trucks also take back loading from some of the stations. From the very earliest days of the gold mining industry those interested in it have generally succeeded in putting it over the unfortunate man on the land.

Hon. E. H. Harris: They did not put over very much if they were all like you.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: We have fed them cheaply and have grown all we could for their benefit.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has not yet connected his remarks with the Bill.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I presume motors plying their trade on the goldfields will be affected by this Bill. I do not think there is any exemption for them. As a rule one finds these exemptions really do not exist. The officer responsible for the administration of the law usually finds some means to dodge the exemptions or the exceptions.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: But these exemptions will be embodied in the Act.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I am afraid we are running the State for the sake of railways, rather than in the interests of industry. It is a question whether we are on the right track in imposing the drastic charges indicated in the Bill, rather than extending assistance where it is so badly needed. I wonder seriously whether we will not jeopardise many of those who should be helped by means of a reduction of railway freights rather than by imposing increased motor charges. The position of the farmers is difficult enough already.

Hon. J. Cornell: Has the hon. member read the proviso to Clause 4?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I cannot recall any particular clause.

Hon. J. Cornell: That shows it does not touch them at all.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Reference has been made to exemptions under the Bill, but I fear they will be like other exemptions that have been provided under other Acts. When we thought we could avail ourselves of them, we found that they were set aside. I am afraid everyone will be roped in under the measure. If we continue to hamper those who invest their money in enterprises that are run in competition with Government concerns, we will do no good to the State. We should encourage private enterprise in every direction, but it seems to me that as soon as private enterprise becomes successful in one avenue or another, there is a tendency for the State to ascertain by what means the activities of private enterprise can be defeated. We have seen radical changes within the last few years. Several increases have been made in charges levied upon people who have been providing wonderful service even in centres where there are no railways. If they are met in higher fees, the extra impost will be passed on to the people who are served by the facilities. Rather should we reduce charges in order to encourage private enterprise. I do not desire to oppose the Bill, but I feel that we are to some extent interfering with private enterprise. It is possible that we shall scare people who may contemplate embarking their capital in concerns that will serve the welfare of the community. I shall hold myself in readiness to support any toning down that can be suggested in Committee.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [8.20]: I shall not delay the House very long. Shorn of all verbiage and viewed in cold blood, the Bill aims at one or two things, or a combination of both. An effort is to be made by so raising the amount of the license fee as may have the effect of forcing back to the railways certain traffic that has been diverted to motor transportation. The second point is that those who control motor transportation are not paying enough for the upkeep of the road. It is to deal with those two points that the Bill aims—either separately or jointly. There is no course open except to throw the Bill out on the second reading if the House is of opinion that the forcing back to the railways of the traffic referred to is not desirable. There can be no equivocation or half measures if the House is of that opinion, and the Bill will have to be thrown out.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Is that your view?

Hon. J. CORNELL: If hon. members think the owners of buses and other forms of motor transport are paying enough to-day towards the upkeep of our roads, then they must reject the Bill. If those people are not paying enough, and if hon. members think the provisions of the Bill are fair and reasonable, we should agree to the measure. If hon. members think that some of the imposts are too heavy, they should be reduced during the Committee stage. On the question of railways versus motor traffic, Western Australia has arrived at a stage at which the railways are run at a great loss to the State. That applies right throughout the Commonwealth and, rightly or wrongly, the blame for that position is attributed to the competition of motor transport. Present-day efforts to alleviate the position savour of death-bed repentance on the part of the powers that be. They sat by and procrastinated, without making the slightest attempt to move with the times by so altering the railway service as to nullify the effects of motor competition. To-day the Commissioner of Railways is contemplating the installation of a sort of glorified tram on the existing rails to run in competition with the motor traffic between Perth and Fremantle. If ever there was a time when it was inopportune to tackle that form of competition, it is to-day. The proper time to do that was long ago before motor competition had assumed its present proportion. I have al-

ways maintained that the service provided on the railways between Perth and Fremantle was such as to drive people from the railways to the buses. If anyone is to blame for the present position it is the railway administration, and no one else. Motor transport has come to stay, and it is in the hands of the people, who formerly used the railways but to-day patronise the motor traffic, to say whether or not they will revert to the use of the railway service. I am of the opinion that so long as people have the necessary money to pay their bus fares they will not again patronise the railways, no matter what law is passed or what regulations may be framed. The people will be masters of their own affairs, and they will not be forced back to the railways. We should realise at once that the passenger traffic between Perth and Fremantle, irrespective of what license fees are charged or may be levied in the future, will be carried largely by buses and taxis. Reference has been made to private enterprise taking over the State railways. The day is still far off when private enterprise will be able to control that system, or when the people of the Commonwealth as a whole will consent to the disposal of their national asset.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They will not be able to help themselves if the position continues much longer.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The mere fact that the Australian Governments have entered into the ownership of railways indicates that private enterprise was not prepared to undertake railway construction in Australia, and the States have to perform that duty themselves. The one big mistake made in connection with our railways was the construction on a basis that did not provide for uniformity of gauges. In South Africa, the various Governments had sufficient common sense to adopt a uniform gauge for railways constructed there. Consequently throughout South Africa, Rhodesia and even what was formerly German West Africa, there is one standard gauge. In Australia in some States there are no fewer than three different railway gauges and we lack uniformity throughout the Commonwealth. I agree with Mr. Holmes that a radical alteration in connection with the administration of our railways is long overdue. The sooner the railway system is removed from Ministerial control, the better it will be for our railways and

for the State generally. Take the Canadian National Railway system, which fell in on the Canadian Government during the war. That Government had no desire whatever to take over the greatest railway system operated by any one concern in the world, a system with a length of over 24,000 miles. When they had to take it over they passed an Act of Parliament vesting the control of the system without Parliament—absolutely outside of Parliament. They vested it in the general manager, giving him some £10,000 or £12,000 per year to run the system. A glance at the Canadian National Railways gives one some idea of the progress the manager has made, and of the satisfactory nature of his administration. The position in Western Australia is that Ministers come and Ministers go, and for years past they have been altering the policy of our railway system. We cannot from week to week, or month to month, alter that policy without landing the railway system on the rocks. For argument's sake, if the policy of a firm like Boans Ltd. was frequently altered, that firm also would soon be on the rocks. There must be continuity of policy, and the man running our railway system should not be responsible to Ministers, and by them be told how to do his job. While I do not go quite so far as to say the Commissioner of Railways should be appointed for life, I do say he should be given a longer tenure than he has to-day. Until such time as we get right down to reason and vest our railways without political control and run them on business lines for the benefit of the railways, and the benefit of Western Australia generally, we cannot hope for complete success. No one can accuse me of being opposed to the interests of the railway workmen and their privileges and prerogatives. But I say those prerogatives and privileges can be carried too far. We can milk the cow too long and too often, and can milk her until she becomes dry long before she ought to. To a large extent that is what has happened in our railway system. Our railway men have asked for and been granted privileges which theoretically they were entitled to because others already had them. Take, for instance, long service leave for the wages men in our railways. The plea put forward for the granting of that leave to the wages men was

that the officers of the service already had long service leave. I have always claimed that it was wrong that those officers should have long service leave. Instead of granting it to the wages section, in my view it should have been taken from the officers. Years ago, in this House, I contended that Government employees should not get long service leave when the taxpayer, who helps pay their wages and salaries, does not get it. The railway system should be a model employer, and above all things should provide some means of competence for its employees when they reach an age at which they cannot be employed any longer. But I say that no Government employee has any right to privileges which the man who works in a mine or on a farm does not get. The present state of affairs in our Railway Department has been brought about by the political atmosphere with which the railways have been surrounded. For that I do not lay the blame at the door of any of the political parties, because in that respect all those parties have been weighed in the balance, and found wanting. It has frequently been said that the wages men in the Railway Department are fully entitled to what other sections of the service have got. But I say the proper way to even matters up is to remove that privilege from the one section enjoying it. Another phase of the Bill which I desire to touch upon, is that which leaves it to the discretion of the Commissioner of Police to say at what age a young person shall be granted a license for driving a motor car. I would be prepared to leave in the hands of the Commissioner all the powers he possesses to-day, other than the issuing of licenses to minors. Another feature of the Bill is that it deals with car stealing, and proposes to make it a penal offence, with a term of imprisonment for the offender. That is a reform long overdue. The existing law of the land provides that if one steals a decrepit horse, that might die while it is being saddled up, the offender is liable to a term of seven years' imprisonment. Yet if he stole a costly motor car, probably he would be complimented by the judge on having done so. I will support the second reading, but since when in Committee I shall not be privileged to give effect to some of the suggestions I have made, I trust that one or two of them may

be taken up by other members. I am very much afraid the effect sought by the Bill in the forcing back of traffic to the railway system is not going to be realised.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [8.40]: I do not intend to detain the House more than a few moments. I merely want to say I am going to support the second reading for the sole reason that if the Act were suddenly withdrawn at the present time it would create some hardship and disorganise the work of people who are at present receiving assistance under it. The House is entitled to express gratification at Mr. Seddon's masterly survey of the Bill, and I think members will be repaid for reading the report that has been placed on the Table of the House. Both Mr. Seddon's speech and the report on the Table indicate to us that an enormous amount of money has been advanced by the Industries Assistance Board. Much of it, I agree, has been wisely expended, and a great deal has been recouped, and I believe the agricultural industry has much for which to thank the Act and the board. But the time has arrived when the necessity for this board has just about expired, and before another year rolls round the services of the board should be terminated. I feel sure the clients of the board will recognise that we have reached a stage in our history when we require to be very careful in the expenditure of public money. I have always been inclined to classify the men on State-aided agricultural ventures into several classes. One can do the same in this regard. In the first place there is the man who has had some training, who is physically fit, and who is determined to succeed. From that man we have very little to fear; he is usually a success. Then there is the man who has had no training, but who is physically fit and apt at picking up the points of the business, and who by his determination usually makes good. Again there is the man who has none of the qualifications

I have spoken of, but who goes on the land as a father to try to find something for his children. Following him there is the man who has deceived himself into believing that he would make a farmer, who has been fired by imagination of the wonderful life he will lead, and who thinks all he has to do is to become the registered owner of a piece of land and sit down while wealth flows into his pocket. Then there is the man who goes out on to a block of land, and tells us he is going to stick it just so long as the assistance lasts. Unfortunately we have those types, not only amongst the clients of the Industries Assistance Board, but in other spheres. The time has arrived when we should have a thorough investigation into the personal equation of those men, for the State should not be asked to carry any longer, men of the last three classes I have described. One hesitates to make any attempt at prophecy, but let me mention this: I was abroad recently and was in Canada for some time. I was present in the wheat pit when the compulsory pool put a huge quantity of wheat into the market silently and by devious means. I recollect the wild excitement of that day. We were given inside information of what was about to transpire, and were advised to attend and see what happened. After a scene, as compared with which a wool sale is quite a comfortable tea party, we spoke with a number of men interested in the production of wheat, and ever since that occasion, I have had at the back of my mind the thought that there are some bigger factors than are usually realised behind the world's wheat position. I make this prophecy—I hope I shall be wrong—that before the wheat position improves, we shall talk of bushels of wheat in terms of pence instead of shillings.

Hon. H. Seddon: I am afraid you are right.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I hope I shall be wrong, but I believe the force of the bear process is not yet expended but will go further. I have not been able to shake off that feeling, and I think we ought to be very careful how we deal with matters of this kind. I urge the Government to practise the closest scrutiny possible, not only in regard to this measure, but all other measures where our resources

can be conserved. I noticed in the report tabled in the House that the members of the board indicate their belief that the time has arrived when their services are no longer required. That may not be the phraseology, but it is the import of their statement. The Government should not fail to take notice of their opinion, and I hope this will be the last occasion on which such a measure will be placed before us.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [8.48]: The continuance of the Act is essential to protect advances already made. In the interests of the State the Bill should pass or the securities will go. There are still a number of accounts which have not yet been funded because, for various reasons, it has been impossible to complete the mortgages. It may be necessary to make limited advances to those settlers who are still under the Board, but mostly they will be financed by refunding part of the crop proceeds. Dealing with the remarks by Mr. Holmes I desire to inform him that the recommendation of the board on the 30th June, 1929, was to the effect that no advances would be made after the 31st March, 1930. It did not imply that the board would no longer exist. Their continuance is necessary to the control of accounts for advances already made, and legislative approval is sought to that end. There is very little weight in Mr. Holmes's comparison of the administrative costs for 1916 and 1930, because considerably more service is now given than in 1916. Since 1916 the field system has been enlarged to permit of closer supervision of settlers' operations and safeguard the board's security. Moreover, more than 1,400 soldier settlers were added to the board's list. Those additional settlers more than offset the effect of the previously closed accounts of other settlers. Also, the congestion in the administrative division compelled attention to the advantages of decentralisation, and eight district offices with full accounting staffs were opened in 1922-23. That action unavoidably added to the costs of administration. It might also be mentioned that salary rates have increased during the past ten years, consistent with other business experience. Considering the factors mentioned, it can be seen that the position in 1916 is not comparable with that of to-day. Mr. Holmes's esti-

mated cost of supervision of £200 per farmer takes no account of the expense involved in the supervision of the securities of 1,270 other settlers whose debts have been funded or are in the process of being funded.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Was not the number 208?

The **MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES**: For the benefit of the hon. member, I will repeat what I said in moving the second reading—

There are now only 208 fully and partly assisted settlers on the board's books and 149 are discharged soldiers. Therefore approximately 71 per cent. of the board's active operations are now concerned with soldier settlement. The total number of settlers indebted to the board is now 1,478, and 1,270 of them are not now receiving assistance.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Receiving supervision but not assistance?

The **MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES**: I made that clear in my speech. If the hon. member had not overlooked that fact he would have found the cost worked out at under £28 per unit. The total departmental costs of administration are divided equally by the bank and the board. There are 10,923 accounts under the bank and 1,478 with the board. Therefore Mr. Holmes's estimate of £400 per settler per year is clearly fallacious. Considering the amount of service rendered, the cost of administration is not excessive. The expense rate of the bank for the past two years works out at 9s. 7d. per £100 of average advances outstanding. It is the intention of the management to effect economies and curtail its staff as the funding of board accounts approaches finality. At the moment that is not practicable, owing to the work and supervision involved in the transition stages of funding. There are 59 ordinary assisted settlers with an aggregate indebtedness of £68,138 and an individual indebtedness of £1,155. The total indebtedness of the 149 assisted soldier settlers amounts to £188,403, or £1,264 per assisted soldier settler. The funded accounts total 855 with a total indebtedness of £1,047,539, or an average of £1,225 per settler. There are 415 accounts in the process of funding. The total indebtedness in respect to them is £427,651, with an average indebtedness of £1,030. The combined total of 1,478 accounts carrying an indebtedness of £1,731,731 works out at

£1,172 per settler. The board have undoubtedly been the means of enabling a large number of settlers to remain on their holdings who otherwise would have been forced to abandon them, with the accompanying loss of years of labour. Thus greatly increased production has been secured, and, despite substantial losses, the State has benefited. The continuance of the Act does not necessarily mean increasing its operations. That is entirely a matter of policy, and members can depend upon it that the Government will exercise every caution in that regard. Circumstances may compel the Government to afford some assistance to distressed farmers, in which case the protection of the Act would be necessary. The Government sincerely hope that it will not be necessary to re-open the board. Undoubtedly the scheme has had a demoralising effect on some farmers, and it is not denied that the dishonest actions of some clients made it impossible to continue operations. In common with others, the board have suffered heavy losses owing to the low market prices. Still, the Act has been a valuable one, and by it the State stood behind many a hard-pressed farmer to his ultimate success and the State's advantage. Losses were expected from the inception of the Act, and members must not forget that farmers in general have experienced great losses. The Industries Assistance Act has been just as important as the Agricultural Bank Act. Even under that Act, there have been many regrets, but they are outnumbered by the successes. Likewise the Industries Assistance Act has carried many farmers over seasonal difficulties, and the benevolent interest of the State has been repaid by the possession of many extra farms.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Continuance of Act:

Hon. H. SEDDON: Before we pass the clause, it would be well to go further into the particulars given in the report tabled to-day and the interesting figures given by

the Minister in his reply to the second reading debate. Clause 2 reads—

Section fifteen of the Industries Assistance Act Amendment Act, 1917, as amended by Section 2 of the Industries Assistance Act Continuance Act, 1929, is hereby further amended by omitting the figures "1931" and inserting the figures "1932" in place thereof.

Section 15 of the Act of 1917 reads—

Section thirteen of the Industries Assistance Act Amendment Act, 1915, is hereby repealed and the following provision shall have effect in lieu thereof:—"No commodities shall be supplied or money advanced under the principal Act, or its amendments, after the 31st day of March, 1918, except under the provisions of Section 14 of this Act."

Section 14 deals with the provision for repayment by instalments. Section 13 of the Act of 1915, referred to in the amendment made in 1917, reads—

Every person upon whose application any commodity is supplied or moneys advanced under this Act shall, upon the supply or advance thereof, sign an acknowledgment and contract in the form contained in the First Schedule to this Act, or to the effect thereof, or in such form as is prescribed in that behalf.

Thus the amendment Act of 1917 provides for the extension to the 31st March in each year that extension is given. The Act of 1929 really carried the operation of the board forward to the 31st March, 1931. So that if this section of the Act is deleted, the board will still be able to operate under the provisions of the 1929 Act until the end of March. If we extend the operation of the board to the 31st March, 1932, we shall simply continue to make losses as in the past. During the last 11 years the amount of money advanced in a year has been equalled by the crop proceeds in only three years. In the circumstances hon. members should seriously consider the question of extending the operation of the measure. The original Act provides for the securities to be taken in order to protect the board. Anything needed to protect the board henceforth can be obtained by passing a small Bill to amend the Agricultural Bank Act during the current session. As regards farmers who are having a bad time this year, I understand there is legislation in contemplation by the Government. I fear that bad as the losses have been, they will be infinitely worse if we allow the board to continue to operate, and allow the farmers to be

brought under the control of the board. I suggest that hon. members vote against the clause. I should like to quote a paragraph from a report of the Industries Assistance Board laid on the Table only to-day—

The board considers that the purpose for which it was created has been served, and that its activities should not be renewed if such can possibly be avoided.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The position is that the report has been laid on the Table to-day. I have been very busy ever since, and have not had an opportunity of looking at it. I therefore suggest to the Minister that he report progress in order that members may peruse the board's report.

The CHAIRMAN: I may point out that a general discussion of the Bill can take place on the third reading. The House having agreed to the second reading of the Bill, which comprises only two clauses, it automatically follows that the measure will be agreed to in Committee unless hon. members vote it out.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Mr. Seddon has been at some pains to explain why hon. members should seriously consider the continuance of the Act. I thought I had made it plain that the Industries Assistance Board reported that they must have this measure to protect their securities.

Hon. H. Stewart: Why?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: There may be caveats, or other difficulties.

Hon. H. Seddon: Those things are provided for in the principal Act.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The hon. member had the temerity to suggest that something had been foreshadowed by the Government to take the place of this Bill. The hon. member knows much more about Government business than I do if he knows that.

Hon. H. Seddon: It has been mentioned in the Press.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Not as taking the place of a measure of this nature.

Hon. H. Seddon: A measure to protect the farmers.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: While the Government hope not to have occasion to use this measure, they are faced with critical times

and do not know what they may have to do in the future. The Chamber might speedily regret the rejection of the Bill.

Hon. H. SEDDON: If I conveyed to the Committee the impression that I understood legislation was foreshadowed to take the place of the Industries Assistance Board, I conveyed an entirely wrong impression. What I wished to convey was that from Press reports I understood that special legislation was being considered by the Government for dealing with the difficult position in which farmers find themselves to-day. I suggest that possibly that legislation may cover the position as regards clients of the Industries Assistance Board. I regard Mr. Holmes's suggestion to report progress as well worth the Minister's consideration.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I think Mr. Holmes and Mr. Seddon have made a reasonable request to the Minister. Here is a request which none of us has had an opportunity of looking at. I think it would be in the interests of the business of the country if the Minister acceded to the request. Otherwise there might be a debate raised on the third reading which would take much longer than a discussion in Committee.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: In view of the desire of some hon. members to analyse the report, but not because I am in any way fearful of what may take place on the third reading of the Bill, I agree to the suggestion which has been made.

Progress reported.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 9th October.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [9.13]: I welcome this amending Bill, and I consider the Vermin Act one of the best and most equitable measures ever passed in this Chamber. I regret that I am prevented from saying anything in favour of those people concerned, as they have an unfortunate habit of using such utterances against one at election time. I had something to do with piloting the Act through this Chamber. The pastoralist pays so much, and the agriculturist pays so much, into the fund;

the pastoralist has a representative, and the agriculturist has a representative, on the board; and the Government have a representative to see that the money is properly distributed. Last year bonuses were paid in respect of 15,000 dogs and 11,000 foxes. One can realise what a wonderful advantage that has been to the people on the land. A dog can destroy, or partially destroy, 40 or 50 sheep in one night. Thus it is easy to realise what the destruction of 15,000 dogs, besides 11,000 foxes, in one year means to the sheep and wool industry of Western Australia. The present Bill applies to dogs, foxes and eagles. It provides exemption from taxation for those who net their holdings so as to exclude vermin. I could never understand how an eagle is to be excluded by the erection of a fence, unless the whole of the million acres is covered over with wire netting. Emus have become a menace in parts of this country. When a flock of 40 or 50 of them get into a ripening wheat field at a rate faster than horses can travel, one can imagine what damage can be done. I have been asked why I would destroy emus when they have not been seen in the agricultural areas for a long time. I can understand that dogs have not been seen for a long time, the reason being that the men outback have been destroying them for the last year or so, but emus have been coming in closer to settlement because they are more inquisitive than any vermin known. An emu will almost come into a backyard for a drink of water, but the reason why he does not go into the backyard of the agriculturist now is that he can get plenty of water and food outback. There is every necessity for the inclusion of emus in the Bill. I find that provision is made that by proclamation it will be possible to include almost any kind of vermin, but I have as little faith in a proclamation as I have in regulations. If we are to do anything, let us do it properly by putting it into the Bill and then we shall know where we are.

Hon. H. Stewart: In other parts of the State great damage is done by kangaroos.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We can include kangaroos, but it should not be done by proclamation or regulation. Previously we were not able to agree as to the definition of fence, but ultimately we allowed the board to decide and the board made an im-

possible fence. What I am concerned about is that the Bill now proposes to define what a fence is to be. As far as I can see it will almost be as impossible as the vermin board's fence. The board provided for a fence, perpendicular so many feet and then with an overhang of barbed wire 3ft. over the road. One can imagine a man riding along the road and what might happen if his horse shied. They defeated the intention of the Bill which was to exempt from this tax those people who had put up vermin-proof fencing. The history of Australia shows that if you can get vermin, especially rabbits, inside a fence, north, south, east or west, you can deal with them as you can with dogs, but when there is a great influx of vermin on unoccupied Crown lands that may be adjoining, it is impossible to deal with them. The fence suggested in the Bill is designed on the Public Works Department principle, but nobody would ever take advantage of it. The Bill proposes to define what a fence is to be. The Bill will be all right, as far as fences to be erected are concerned, but what about the people who have been fighting vermin for the past ten, 15 or 20 years and who have put up fences which in some cases are much better than those proposed by the Bill, but which perhaps may not comply with the letter of the Bill. It is set out in the schedule that posts are not to be set less than 18 inches out of the ground, that the rabbit netting is not to be greater than 1½-inch mesh and the minimum width of the netting is to be 42 inches, but no provision is made for it to be 6 inches perpendicularly in the ground and 36 inches out of the ground. A number of the rabbit fences to-day are more than 36 inches out of the ground and the higher the rabbit netting, the better the fence. The Bill, however, provides that it shall be 36 inches out of the ground, and it says further that when you get the netting on the top, the dog netting is to be 36 inches wide. So you get a fence 8 feet 6 inches high. It is to be fastened with plain wires and attached to the post at 19½ inches and 36 inches from the ground level. Wires are not attached to posts; they are fixed by boring a hole through the post. To attach a wire is to put a staple on to green timber, and as soon as it dries the staple comes out. One wire is to be 19½ inches and the other is to be 36 from the ground level. But a number of the existing fences have six

wires, and there is netting attached. None of those fences will come under the provisions of the Bill because they will have to be fastened to posts, with wires 19½ inches and 36 inches above the ground level. From what I know of the department, if the wire is 20 inches from the ground the fence will be condemned. If we pass the Bill with these measurements, unless the wire that carries the net is 19½ inches from the ground and the next is 36 inches you will not comply with the conditions of the Act, and you will not get exemption. It says that the netting must be put 6 inches perpendicularly in the ground. The proper way is to put the netting at an angle and you have that angle towards the approaching vermin so that when the vermin strikes it, it cannot go further. The dog and fox netting which is to go above the rabbit netting is to be not less than 36 inches wide and fixed to a height not less than 72 inches, so that if the rabbit netting is 5 feet, and you have to put 3 feet 6 inches of dog netting on top, you get up to 8 feet 6 inches with your netting and the posts are only 7 feet 6 inches in height. This Bill will be all right with new fences, but something will have to be done about existing fences which are better, although they do not comply with the schedule of the Bill. I congratulate the Minister on bringing in the Bill, but I must say that it will require to be amended in Committee. I think it is a fair thing to ask the board to define a proper fence. It is not wise to take the matter out of the hands of the board unless we are prepared to provide in the schedule for a fence that will meet existing conditions. Between us we should be able to amend the clause in such a way that will meet the position.

Hon. H. Stewart: That fence or one of equivalent value.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: It is a good and an equitable Bill. The intention is right but the attempt to carry out what is intended and alter the definition of a fence will not do any credit to Parliament unless Parliament considerably amends the provision.

HON. W. T. GLASHEEN (South-East) [9.5]: It is my intention to support the Bill. It is amazing to know that there are so many foxes. I have never seen foxes but I happen to have a seat on the vermin board and I have had much information

from that board that has been helpful. In a measure I am responsible for some of the amendments contained in the Bill. This is one of the forms of taxation that we had imposed upon us for a definite purpose, and our experience has been that when we impose taxation it is much easier to impose it on ourselves than it is to get it removed. It has been a pleasing experience to us all to find that after four years of the operation of this Act the revenue was in such a state that it allowed us to rebate half of the original taxes imposed. In considering this matter it was found, on the figures that were placed before us, that unless we were prepared subsequently to revert to the original tax we would have to curtail the amount of bonuses we were paying in regard to foxes. The increase in the number of foxes is most alarming, but the discussions we had rather went to prove that the fox after all was not such a great danger to the sheep industry as was the dingo. There are times, of course, when foxes will attack lambs, take out their hearts and tongues, and nothing else. This occurs only at particular times. There are foxes in many districts that have never been known to kill a lamb or a sheep. There are features about the fox which exempt it from some of the faults of the dingo. One is that the greatest titbit the fox can enjoy as his meal is a young rabbit. He destroys thousands of young rabbits, just born or still very young. The fox is very partial, also, to emu eggs, and emus are very destructive. This matter was fully discussed by the Vermin Board and they recommended to the Government that, unless we were to revert to the original cost under the Act, there should be a reduction in the bonus paid on foxes. We recommended that the bonus be reduced by one half, namely, from £2 to £1. It is pleasing to find that in the Bill. In my first speech in this House I referred to another matter, the appointment of trappers. That is also provided for in the Bill. I had an unfortunate experience which cost me in the vicinity of £300, because of one isolated dog. Sheep were then worth 30s. a head, but today are worth nothing. The incident would not have cost me so much had it happened now. I said on that occasion that the principal purpose of the Act was to exterminate dingoes, but that the payment of bonuses upon seals would not be the means of

achieving that end. The very moment it became unprofitable for a trapper to make a living by getting these scalps, he would give up the enterprise until such time as the dingoes became numerous enough for him once more to make a living out of them. That sort of thing could go on in perpetuity, and we would never reach the extermination stage that was looked for. My recommendation to the board was that the only way to overcome the difficulty was to have paid trappers who would catch the few remaining dogs after the professional trappers had left the job. I am glad that, too, is contained in the Bill. I hope it will be agreed to by the House. Isolated dogs affect many of the farming districts. No one would bother, if the scalp of an isolated dingo was worth £25, to make the effort to catch it. They know what knowledge is required to catch such an animal, and they have their own occupations to follow. I could not catch a dingo for £100, and I doubt if I could catch one at all. We recently had an experience in our district of an isolated dog, and many of us lost a lot of sheep. We had to pick up someone to catch it, and the only person available was a nigger. We offered him approximately £20 if he would guarantee to trace the dog and catch it. He said he could not guarantee to do this, but would use his best endeavours to that end. He got on to the track of the animal on the first day, and found it suckling four puppies. He tied up the pups, set a trap, and caught the dingo that night. We suffered for six or seven weeks because of that dog. Had a trapper been appointed by the State, or had an officer been available in the department, we could have sent down an intimation that we were troubled with this isolated dog and that officer could have tracked it up. At the time we were paying the tax for nothing, but the officer would very possibly have done what the nigger did without further expense to us. I am pleased that in the Bill it is proposed that a number of trappers should be employed, sufficient to cope with the situation. There are isolated dogs somewhere all the time. When the professional trapper has finished with the job, the paid trapper will possibly be the means of exterminating these animals. Reference has been made to kangaroos, and I have noted what was said in another place on that matter. It is not necessarily protection that causes the kan-

garoo to become so plentiful and so destructive. What causes it to be plentiful is that the children of the niggers, and the niggers themselves, and the children of the farmers, when they take kangaroo skins to the local storekeeper for sale, find that the Government collects half the value of the proceeds. The result of this is that no one is bothering to kill kangaroos for the skins. If the royalty were removed, the child of every farmer would keep a dog and a gun, and every nigger also would go out after this vermin. I am convinced that the State is losing hundreds of thousands because of the destruction caused by this pest. Not only is the herbage suffering, but the revenue of the State is suffering because of this trouble.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Kangaroos are eating more feed than the sheep are.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: That is so. The State is collecting only a paltry £5,000 a year in royalties. I hope that common sense will prevail, and that the sentimental madness that caused someone to bring about the protection of kangaroos in 1912 will be allowed to go by the board. In those days the settlers were gathering mallee bark and sandalwood, and to a certain extent were supplementing their living by means of kangaroo skins and the meat they got from the animal. It was imagined in those days that the kangaroo would be exterminated, hence this piece of legislation. We know now that this vermin is increasing by leaps and bounds.

Hon. G. Fraser: A very appropriate remark.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: In some parts there are more kangaroos than sheep, and they are doing hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of damage to our wheat every year. I hope that kangaroos will be brought within the scope of the Vermin Act, and that the Government will have the sense to remove the royalty charged upon the skins.

Hon. G. W. Miles: A resolution recommending that has been carried in another place.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: But the Government may not adopt it.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The Government take no notice of private motions.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: If the royalty is removed, efforts will start immediately to destroy this vermin. The royalty was only imposed for sentimental reasons. It

is all very well to talk about perpetuating the kangaroo. It may be a beautiful sentiment, but I contend that the person who says that some day we shall ever see the last of the kangaroo, with all the thousands of square miles available in which it can roam, is qualified for a place at the Hospital for the Insane.

Hon. Sir William Lathlain: By leaps and bounds.

Hon. W. T. GLASHEEN: I am glad these amendments have been foreshadowed. I hope it will be possible to reduce the charge on foxes by £1. At present, on the basis of £1 for foxes and on the basis of the number of dingoes and eaglehawks that we destroy, we anticipate coming out about level with our revenue. If there is any alarming increase in the number of foxes, even at £1 per head, I fear we may have to increase the tax. I hope that will not occur. I congratulate the Government upon bringing down this Bill, and trust that some day we shall see the end of the dingo, the fox, and the eaglehawk, to say nothing of the end of hundreds of thousands of kangaroos.

THE MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES (Hon. C. F. Baxter—East—in reply) [9.40]: In his speech Mr. Stewart discussed paragraph (b) of Clause 7, which provides *inter alia* for the deduction from the rates of the expenses incurred by boards or government officers in connection with the transport to the Department of Agriculture of scalps or claws of vermin in respect of which a uniform bonus may be paid. In reply I desire to inform the hon. member that the advisory board recommended in the interests of the fund, that all scalps should be sent to Perth for destruction, and ever since that action has been taken, all expenses in connection therewith have been charged to the fund, also the travelling expenses of members. The latter amounts to about £30 per annum, and freight charges, etc., to about £100 per annum. Prior to the bonus being paid from the central fund, scalps were not sent to Perth for destruction, as the boards at that time were paying most of the bonus from their own funds. Regarding the hon. member's remarks on paragraph (d) of the same clause, and his reference to the inclusion of the words "other vermin as may be

prescribed," I wish to inform him that there is no alteration in so far as those words are concerned, and that those words already appear in the existing Act. As the hon. member is aware, the Vermin Advisory Board is comprised of a representative of the farming community and the pastoral community together with the Chief Inspector of Rabbits. The Board is not likely to recommend that any bird or animal shall be included in the section unless it is known to be a pest throughout the whole of the State. As a matter of fact, applications have been received that certain birds or animals which are undoubtedly pests in some districts, should be included, but in every instance the requests have been refused. In his criticism of Clause 7, which refers to the substitution of a new description of vermin fence instead of that contained in the present Act, Mr. Stewart drew my attention to the absence of provision for strainers. On my taking up the matter with the Director of Agriculture he told me that where wooden posts or iron standards are used, it will still be necessary to use strainers. Also, dealing with Mr. Stewart's remarks as to the advisability of the fence being topped with a barbed wire not secured to the netting or otherwise, the Chief Inspector of Rabbits has advised me that the object in leaving the top barbed wire free and not fixed to the netting is because it is believed it will thus offer less facility to a dog or fox attempting to scale the fence.

Mr. Yelland said he believed that payments had been made for eagles, other than the wedge-tailed species. I have ascertained that some of the local vermin boards may have paid for small eagles and hawks, but no such payment has been made for them from the central vermin fund. The very fact that scalps have to be sent to Perth for examination and destruction offers ample scope for supervision as to what is paid for, and it was very early disclosed that other than wedge-tailed eagles were being sent in in order to claim a bonus. Local vermin boards have been repeatedly advised and given a very detailed description of the wedge-tailed eagle, and are now all fairly well-educated, but although a board might pay on a small hawk they are refused the refund of bonus from the central fund. Therefore, the central fund is not exploited. Payment will only be made for wedge-tailed

eagles which are easily discernible, but the term "Eagle-hawk," as at present in the Act, embraces a variety of predaceous birds, and it is perhaps rather misleading to new road board secretaries; hence the present Bill provides for the alteration of the term to that of wedge-tailed eagle. Mr. Yelland questioned the wisdom of perpendicular netting. In the opinion of the department the proposed fence is essential. All the enactments of the Eastern States provide for the same thing, and it is a most erroneous idea that the netting when placed horizontally offers better protection, because there will always be rabbits on both sides. If the netting is perpendicular, neither will get through; but if it is horizontal, or sloping in one direction, it offers absolutely no protection from the rabbit attempting to burrow from the opposite side to the slope. Once the burrow is under the netting, access can be gained from either side and the netting is rendered useless. The Government have over 2,000 miles of rabbit netting erected, all of which is sunk 6 inches perpendicularly in the ground; and neither the Chief Inspector of Rabbits nor any boundary rider has ever seen a rabbit burrow beneath it, although it has been erected over 25 years.

The same cannot be said of many of the private fences where the netting has been sloped or placed horizontally underground. Almost without exception in such cases, burrows going under the netting can be found, whereas on the opposite side of the road where the netting is erected perpendicularly, no burrows are through, although ample evidence exists of attempts having been made, but frustrated. A rabbit always gets close up to its object before attempting to burrow, and if it finds it has to go down perpendicularly it will continue so for about 4 inches and then give up and attempt to burrow elsewhere. Evidence of attempts to get through can be seen along any properly constructed fence where the netting has been put in the ground 6 inches perpendicularly.

The fence as outlined in the Bill is not merely to guard against dogs, as is indicated in Mr. Yelland's speech. It is also to be fox-proof, and that is why the verandah type of fence, which the hon. member says it is now a common thing to see in the country, was recommended. There is a certain legal objection, however, to the leaning type

of fence; hence the need for an upright one as specified.

The height of 5ft. 6ins. has been found insufficient to keep out wild dogs. The height of 6ft. 6ins. as recommended will not be as good as the leaning-out fence, but with the top wire fastened to the top of the posts only, as suggested, and especially if the wire is left slack so as to make it difficult for any animal to obtain a secure foothold to scramble over, the recommended fence will then approach in effectiveness the lean-out type of fence which experience has proved to be the best. The Road Boards' Conference unanimously recommended that the verandah type of fence be made law: but there was a legal objection, and it could not be done.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 9.51 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

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

QUESTION—CHILD WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

Tinned milk purchases.

Mr. H. W. MANN asked the Minister for Health: What is the approximate value of tinned milk purchased monthly by the Child Welfare Department and supplied to persons receiving sustenance?