

Legislative Council

Tuesday, the 4th October, 1960

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

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

ROCKINGHAM LANDOWNERS

Road Board Rates and State Taxes

1. The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND asked the Minister for Town Planning:

Following extensive road and beach improvement works recently effected by the Rockingham Road Board, land valuations in the area have been steeply increased. Besides causing landowners to pay higher road board rates, will the increased valuations also cause higher State land tax and metropolitan region improvement tax payments to be met by the landowners concerned?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN replied:

The revaluation of land values in the Rockingham Road Board area was undertaken by the Taxation Department under its normal policy of revaluing each four years or thereabouts.

Unimproved values based on the then current trends as at the 30th June, 1959, were assessed by the

Commissioner of Taxation and have been adopted for land tax and metropolitan region improvement tax. No alteration of the current assessed value will take place until the area is reviewed.

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLERS

Income Required for a "Reasonable Living"

2. The Hon. S. T. J. THOMPSON asked the Minister for Local Government:

- (1) In reply to my question on Tuesday, the 27th September, regarding war service land settlement, the Minister advised that clause 7 (2) had been amended. As my question referred to clause 5 (5) will the Minister for Agriculture review my question?
- (2) In *The Farmers' Weekly* dated the 22nd September, the Chairman of the Land Settlement Board, Mr. A. R. Barrett, is reported as having made certain statements. Are these substantially correct?

Final Valuations

- (3) (a) What is the basis for the economic test as applied to final valuations in war service land settlement valuations;
- (b) what are the conservative estimates of yields and prices for products at prices conservative to those ruling for these products at the time of valuation; and
- (c) on what dates were these valuations made?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN replied:

- (1) The question originally asked was what amendments had been made to the "conditions"; and, as answered, clause 7(2) was the only one which had been amended, therefore clause 5(5) has not been amended.
- (2) Apart from the one statement which was misreported, the statements are substantially correct. The one misreported was that the valuations were based on carrying capacity; whereas the statement was that the valuations were based on cost, and had been tested by the carrying capacity.
- (3) (a) The basis of the economic test is to ascertain what amount is available for rental after allowance has been made for the cost of operating a property and meeting his commitments on stock, plant and structures and obtaining a reasonable living for a lessee having no capital.

- (b) Estimation of yields is based on the productivity of the holding being valued, and the prices for the products are the average prices for wool, as submitted by brokers, less an allowance where average clips in a district would be below that level, and the prices for lambs are the average prices received for lambs sold during the export season.
- (c) The latest valuations issued are those for the Mt. Many Peaks project and these were issued on the 14th September, 1960.

MIDLAND JUNCTION WORKSHOPS

Five-Year Plan

3. The Hon. G. E. JEFFERY asked the Minister for Mines:

Will the Minister table the papers in connection with the five-year plan for the W.A.G.R. Workshops at Midland Junction?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

No. It is considered not in the best interests of railway administration to table these papers. Workshops programmes are the subject of continuous review.

The details of the 1961-62 programme are at present being worked on to anticipate material and other requirements.

Experience has shown that there are fewer misunderstandings if a clear-cut programme is declared for each year before the commencement of a financial year rather than a more general statement in respect of a number of years.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

On motion by the Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), Bill read a third time and passed.

ARCHITECTS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 29th September.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North) [4.42]: The parent Act was originally introduced to Parliament in 1922, and this Bill has been brought before us to amend two provisions in that Act whereby the Architects' Board seeks an alteration in its existing set-up, under which architects of the board have to be resident in Western Australia.

The purpose of this Bill is to extend the right of membership—interchange, shall we say—to architects in other States of Australia, with the exception of South Australia, so that they can practise in this State but be resident in another State. This should result in a freer interchange of business on an architectural level between States; and I can find no reason why the request of the board should not be acceded to. In my opinion such an exchange will be of benefit in the ultimate to Western Australia; and, in turn, the ideas of Western Australia on an architectural level can be promulgated in other States.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It will help the town hall design, too.

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: The Architects' Board, through the Government, has also requested the right to increase its registration fees and its annual subscriptions. The registration fee at the moment is £2 2s. per annum, while the subscription fee is £3 3s. The board, in asking for the right to increase these fees, has given not so much an undertaking, but a statement to the Government that it does not intend to increase these fees forthwith.

It is a matter of interest that the fees have remained unchanged for 38 years; and one would be led to a reasonable conclusion if one thought that perhaps they were too high in the initial years. However, upon further thought, one concludes it is probable that the growth of the State brought with it increased numbers in membership and this has enabled the board to finance successfully over the years. I feel, too, that the proposals put forward in the first portion of the Bill to take on to the Western Australian register people from other States will give the board an increased income and probably enable it to carry on for some years at the present registration and annual subscription rates.

I think that rather than oppose the Bill, one will have to accept the board's assertion that it does not intend to raise these fees immediately, and that it has brought this matter before Parliament to give it the right to raise these fees in the future as circumstances dictate. The Board is probably desirous of getting all the amendments passed in one Bill.

The Hon. J. G. Hislop: Who receives the registration fees?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: They are paid directly to the board. There is no income so far as the Government is concerned. A point into which I did not have time to look was why the board had to approach the Government to obtain this increase in fees. That is a question I was going to ask of the Minister.

The Hon. J. G. Hislop: What is the subscription for?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: It is an annual subscription and is imposed by the board in the same way as would be a fee imposed by any other organisation, such as an accountancy organisation.

The Hon. J. G. Hislop: It could not be paid to the board, surely?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: I think so.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Does not the B.M.A. charge a fee?

The Hon. W. F. WILLESEE: There is no balance sheet submitted with this application from which one could judge the merits of the increase and what happens to the finance of the board; but it seems to me that the Bill is reasonable, and I have no inclination to oppose it. I support the measure.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines—in reply) [4.49]: I would like to thank Mr. Willesee for his approach to this matter. The request for increased fees was made by the board. However, the board has given the Government an undertaking that it will not unnecessarily increase the fees. It does not propose to increase the fees now, but it wants provision made so that such an increase can take place if the board thinks fit.

What the honourable member said is perfectly true. The Government derives no benefit from this. The Act deals purely with the registration of architects, in the same way as a similar Act deals with the registration of builders; and I can think of a number of others. I have had a quick look at the principal Act to see whether I could answer the honourable member's question with respect to why the board has to make application to Parliament. Section 18 of the Act says—

(1) Every registered architect shall pay an annual subscription to the funds of the Board of such amount, not exceeding three guineas—

The amount charged at the moment is £2 2s.—which does not exceed £3 3s.—and therefore there is a requirement to alter the Act as it now exists before any fee greater than £3 3s. can be charged.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

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

HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 29th September.

THE HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East) [4.52]: At the present time local governing authorities have power to assist low-income-group ratepayers in the installation of sewerage connections by way of easing payments over a period on the deferred payment plan. Very often when these connections have been made, a health inspector will order certain other work to be done. He may order the replacement of a bath; the addition of a sink, or a trough; or other work which could be quite costly. Frequently it has been found that the ratepayer concerned was not able to meet those additional costs if they had to be paid in a lump sum, or in large amounts. This Bill seeks to give power to local authorities to assist, on the deferred-payment plan, with these additional works; and as such, the Bill fulfils a necessary requirement.

Another provision in the measure seeks to control the mosquito menace which is often caused by septic systems. In the municipality in which I reside, the mosquito menace was not so noticeable until some years ago when the Licensing Court insisted that hotels install septic systems. Following this, the mosquitoes became almost unbearable. Inquiries were made and it was ascertained that a good deal of the problem was traceable to the vents which form part of a septic system. Vents were often left open, and the traps became rusted and worn. As a result, mosquito larvae were bred and the nuisance was aggravated.

The Bill seeks to give local governing authorities more power to control such nuisance; and if, through this control, the authorities seek regulations or power to control these vents, I think it will make life a little bit more bearable in municipalities such as the one in which I reside.

The Bill also seeks control over eating-houses. As the cafes and eating-houses have increased in number, it is necessary to widen the control and to include those eating-places at present exempt under the Licensing Act; and the Government is seeking more effective control over such premises by means of this Bill. In my opinion, this control is badly needed and will make for improved hygienic methods in the serving of meals. It is also necessary to define eating-houses to cover such places as outdoor or pavement restaurants which have increased in popularity in recent years.

Concerning the taking of samples of food, milk, and so on, the claim has often been made that the vendor is the person who is usually prosecuted, although he has

little or no knowledge of the matter. It has often been felt that the correct person to have been prosecuted was the manufacturer. On the other hand, the manufacturer claims that he should be served with a sealed sample of the offending food. This Bill provides for such action to be taken.

It appears, therefore, that the object of these small amendments is to exercise greater control over the sale and handling of foodstuffs. As such, it should receive general support. I intend to agree to the second reading of the Bill.

THE HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [4.59]: I also will support the Bill. I am not too sure of my facts yet, but I would like to ask the Minister—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am sorry, but I cannot hear the honourable member.

The Hon. F. R. H. LAVERY: I am not too sure of my facts yet, but I would like to ask the Minister whether clause 4 of the Bill gives authority for a number of these new-type eating-houses in Perth to serve hot meals such as grills; or whether this is prohibited. I have in mind that some tearooms opposite Parliament House grounds in Hay street—and I am not advertising some particular group of people—are beautifully set out; Perth could do with more of that type of eating-house. At the present time these tearooms are allowed to serve only such food, in the way of hot meals, as a plate of mince; they are not allowed to provide grills.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [5.01]: It is my intention to support the measure. Clause 5 will add a new subsection (4a) which reads—

Where the purchaser of the food or drug has pursuant to subsection (3) of this section notified the seller or his servant or agent selling the same of his intention to have the same analysed—

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am sorry to interrupt the honourable member, but we on this side of the House cannot hear what he is saying. Usually he has a loud voice but on this occasion I cannot hear him.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: For the Minister's edification I will speak a little louder. I was referring to the amendment to section 228 which deals with foods and drugs where an analysis is to be taken.

The Health Act now contains a provision which states that a sample which should be submitted to a manufacturer, or a person selling a food or drug, need not necessarily be submitted. It is rather anomalous; because in the Act there are provisions dealing with the taking of samples, and the splitting into parts of samples, but there is also a small subsection which states that even though those particular provisions are not carried

out, that fact is not a defence in court. I wanted to point out this anomaly because I think it is something that should be investigated.

An inspector can go out and take a sample; and, although these provisions are in the Act, the inspector need not comply with them; to all intents and purposes, they need not be included in the legislation. As the Bill stands, it is not possible to amend the Act along the lines I have commented on, but I would like the Government to look into that aspect. I support the measure.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

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

NOXIOUS WEEDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 29th September.

THE HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.51]: I rise to support the Bill because I feel we should do everything possible to make sure that noxious weeds are eradicated or, at least, kept under control. I know it is not possible completely to eradicate some weeds, but at least it is possible to keep them under control. Therefore, we should do everything possible in that direction.

I think individuals must be given every encouragement to keep noxious weeds under control; and every individual, in his turn, must use his best endeavours to bring this about. We owe it not only to ourselves but also to posterity to do everything possible to prevent noxious weeds which have become such a menace in other States from spreading in this State. At the moment Western Australia is relatively free of some of the worst noxious weeds which are growing in other States and other countries. While we as individuals must play our part, local authorities, and even the Government itself, should play their part by doing everything possible to eradicate weeds from roads and reserves. When one drives around the country one often sees where local authorities are not doing their job; and neither is the Government doing its job because, quite frequently, noxious weeds are found to be growing on the sides of roads and on reserves.

I shall not stick my neck out by stating it as a fact, but I think I am correct in saying that a number of noxious weeds are to be found in the Kalgoorlie area, and even in the Norseman district. Some of these weeds have apparently been transported from the Eastern States on trucks

which have come from those States. Unfortunately, the seeds of these noxious weeds which are carried on the trucks are scattered around the Kalgoorlie district, and it makes it hard for the local authorities concerned to keep the weeds under control, or to try to eradicate them. As Kalgoorlie is a port of entry, as it were, for stock and other produce from the Eastern States, everything possible must be done to keep the noxious weeds under control; and the Government should shoulder its responsibility to a greater extent and, if necessary, make money available to the Kalgoorlie local authorities to eradicate these weeds.

Probably in a direct way the growing of noxious weeds in Kalgoorlie would not have much effect on the people of that district. The ratepayers of the Kalgoorlie Municipality, and the Kalgoorlie Road Board would probably have nothing to lose if noxious weeds continued to grow in their districts; but, as we know, those local authorities are responsible bodies and, to the best of their ability, they try to eradicate these noxious weeds; and the Government should do all in its power to help them with this work by providing some of the necessary finance. I suggest to the Minister that the Government have a close look at this matter, because I have seen noxious weeds growing in that area.

No doubt the local authorities concerned have done something about eradicating these weeds, but if very little has been done I think it is up to the Government to give the necessary assistance. Railway yards are other places where noxious weeds grow. In railway yards throughout the State one often sees noxious weeds; and the Government should set an example by eradicating, or at least keeping under control, weeds in such places as railway yards and reserves.

I support the Bill and I hope that all concerned will use their best endeavours to see that noxious weeds are kept under control; and the Government should give the greatest encouragement to the local authorities to see that they carry out their part of the work.

THE HON. F. R. H. LAVERY (West) [5.11]: I support the Bill, but I want to draw attention to one or two ways in which noxious weeds have been allowed to spread throughout the countryside. The department is to be commended on the amendment to section 22; and I hope, when it is agreed to by this House, the department will not waste any time about implementing its provisions.

Not many years ago there was in Fremantle, an infestation of caltrop weed, which spreads very quickly; and at the time I had the use of a property, about 2½ acres in size in Fremantle. This weed appeared on it and, within two or three months, had spread over one acre of

ground. I did not know what it was, so I went to the department; and, with their assistance, I eradicated it. This weed was also found on the sides of the roads, and even along Sampson Street and other streets in Fremantle. As soon as the Fremantle City Council heard of it, its employees were set to work and the weed was very quickly eradicated. It is my hope that the department will make sure that this weed is not allowed to take root anywhere in the State. It is a vigorous grower and the burr is different from the double-gee, inasmuch as it has about five spikes and they do a tremendous amount of damage.

I want to support Mr. Jones's remarks about interstate trucks and the transporting of weeds into this State. About four or five weeks ago some people showed me a truck that had not been used for a number of years prior to its being used on some rabbiting trips in the area to the east of Kalgoorlie. On the shackles and the U-shaped bolts which hold the springs, I could actually see weeds growing. It was obvious that noxious weeds could easily be spread in this way.

I think it would be a good idea if the department's attention were drawn to this matter, particularly because of the vehicles which arrive in Kalgoorlie from the Eastern States. I think departmental officers could inspect this section of the trucks because it is amazing how many weeds are carried on these U-shaped bolts and shackles. If this inspection could be made, I feel sure it would be a means of preventing some noxious weeds from entering the State. I support the Bill.

THE HON. C. R. ABBEY (Central) [5.15]: A very important point has been raised by Mr. Jones and Mr. Lavery. It is a point which three members of the community—Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Levi Butcher, and I—have already raised with the Minister for Agriculture. The weed infestation in the Kalgoorlie district is reaching alarming proportions. I am talking about the infestation of Bathurst burr and Noogoora burr.

We have received reports that very large areas in the district surrounding Kalgoorlie are infested. This is the area in which a very large sheep station is established. As we know, sheep will carry and distribute Bathurst burr and Noogoora burr very freely. There is an arrangement, whereby all sheep coming from the Kalgoorlie district, or from other centres where Bathurst burr and Noogoora burr exist, have to be shorn. I believe there is only one inspector appointed by the department for the district. He has to inspect and control all movements of stock.

The people of this State do not realise how serious this infestation is. We are aware that in Esperance there is a large newly developed area for which great

numbers of stock are required—particularly breeding stock. I am referring to the newly opened and freshly cleared land. The settlers there will obtain their stock from the nearest source, if possible, and that is the Kalgoorlie district.

If we do not check the spread of noxious weeds, we will find that this State will be similar to the Eastern States as regards weed infestation. In districts such as Kalgoorlie where Bathurst burr is so prevalent, the growers and pastoralists do not regard it as of very great significance.

Let us consider the financial cost to the industry. A fleece that becomes infested with burr has to be carbonised, and that is a fairly expensive process. This means the buyer will pay a low price for the fleece at the auction. In my view, strong measures need to be taken to remedy the existing situation. We do not want to see Western Australia—a very large State—become infested with Bathurst burr and Noogoora burr.

I believe that the Government and the farmers should be prepared to contribute towards the necessary costs to implement what I refer to as a "Killer" scheme—a scheme similar to the type used in the extermination of rabbits. The first cost of eradication must definitely be the best. It is not impossible to eradicate Bathurst burr and Noogoora burr. Various sprays are available to the Department of Agriculture, and they will deal with these weeds effectively.

If it is necessary for the Agriculture Protection Board to deal with this menace properly, we should face up to the fact that a slight increase in the vermin rate will be needed. If we do not take effective steps to control these noxious weeds, we will find that eventually this State will become infested throughout the agricultural areas as well as the pastoral areas; because, unfortunately, these weeds have a bad habit of spreading, gradual as the spread might be. In 10, 15, or 20 years' time, if we do not take effective measures now, Western Australia will become badly infested with these weeds; and remedial action if not taken in the immediate years ahead will cost this State millions of pounds. I make this statement advisedly, because the menace of these weeds is increasing. The position is, in fact, explosive.

With many districts in the State crying out for additional stock, considerable numbers have to be imported from the Eastern States to meet the local demand. I am referring to breeding-sheep and cattle. The two weeds I referred to are also spread by cattle. The seeds become entangled in the manes or tails of cows and horses, and by this means they are spread.

Many farmers from the Eastern States have taken up land in Western Australia, particularly in the Esperance district. They

are bringing their own stock and machinery by road from their established properties in the East. We know there is no effective road block operated by the Department of Agriculture here. If one were to travel from Western Australia to South Australia, or to a point further east, one would find that in South Australia the Department of Agriculture makes a very thorough inspection of all vehicles entering that State. That is not the case with vehicles coming into Western Australia. There is no proper inspection carried out here, but it is important that there should be.

I know that to implement these proposals will cost money. We, the farming community and the Government, as partners in this State, should be prepared to face up to this real menace. We cannot expect the Kalgoorlie local authorities to become greatly interested in this problem. After all, they are mainly concerned with the town. It is necessary for the Agriculture Protection Board, rather than the local authorities, to take over the responsibility and do this job. Steps will have to be taken on a large scale if we are to be sure there will be no infestation left in the district.

We all realise the potential as well as the existing menace from the two weeds I have mentioned. I am sure every member here, as well as every agriculturist in this State, realises how serious is the menace. Let us do something about it now rather than wait and spend millions in the future. I support the second reading.

THE HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South-East) [5.22]: I do not want to speak at length on this measure. I fully support it. However, I feel obligated to say something because recently I completed some research into the problem of noxious weeds in this State. That research was undertaken as a result of an inquiry which started in Esperance some 18 months ago when some stock brought over from the Eastern States was found to be badly infested with noxious weed seed. A committee was appointed by the party, and it was suggested that I should make some inquiries as Esperance is in my province.

At that time I was completely ignorant of what most of the noxious weeds in this State looked like. I had to ask the department to show me a sample of Bathurst burr before I was able to recognise it. But at the end of 12 months I knew quite a lot about the appearance and the incidence of these weeds. Reference has already been made in this debate to the infestation in the Kalgoorlie district.

It is rather astonishing to read how varied are these weeds. In and around the Kalgoorlie district huge acreages are

infested with noxious weeds such as Pater-son's curse, thorn apple, Bathurst burr, caltrop, star thistle; and in one specific instance in Esperance on a newly developed property a most attractive plant, which appeared to be a garden or nursery variety of flower, appeared. I asked the owner of the property what it was, and he was very proud to tell me that it was a field of evening primroses. He said it was a very good pasture plant and was made use of greatly in South Australia for that purpose. I made inquiries and found that the plant was regarded in this State as a noxious weed.

As a result of further inquiries I also found that the inspection and check undertaken by the department in this State is so lax that all sorts of noxious weeds have been introduced. The person to whom I have referred brought a consignment of many bags of evening primrose seed with him to this State, with the idea of sowing the seed for pasture. The strange fact is that this plant is held in very high regard by the Agriculture Department in South Australia, particularly on new ground. I have read pamphlets on it. The nutritional value is considered to be very high. This plant grows easily on new land; the land needs only to be ploughed and the seed sown.

I want to stress one point: Recently the infestation of the Kalgoorlie district with Bathurst burr was brought into prominence; but that was not because the weed had just been discovered there. Bathurst burr has been known to be in the Kalgoorlie area, to a considerable extent, for some 30 years. The increased sheep population in and around Kalgoorlie at the present time and the extensive movement of sheep around Western Australia have caused Bathurst burr to become more widely distributed.

One property, which not many years ago was almost a useless, eaten-out waste, was taken over by an experienced station owner. He has put in 30 dams on the property; and the movement of sheep between these dams has spread this pest over the whole of the area, whereas in the past the seed only found the opportunity to propagate, year after year, in dry creek beds. To give an idea of the number of sheep which are run on that property, I might state that the wool produced from it in the last year was greater in value than all the wool produced in the Esperance district.

The Government, which has opened some 1,500,000 acres of new land in this State, has made an announcement to this effect; and it has reason to be proud of its achievement. We should realise that this land has to be stocked; and it is almost unavoidable that stock from the Kalgoorlie district will ultimately be taken to those new areas. The result of this movement of stock could become tragic.

There is some check on the movement of stock from the west to the east of Australia; but despite an agreement between the South Australian authorities and the Government of this State that a check would be made on stock coming from the east to the west, it was proved that such check had not been undertaken. The Minister in this State has taken steps to remedy that situation.

There are three channels through which pests and seeds can be introduced into this State: by the railways, and the check is non-existent except at Kalgoorlie; by road, and it is also non-existent; and by air, and the check in this instance is fairly stringent—so stringent that sometimes inconvenience is caused. The department makes a close check on all plants and fruit coming into this State through the airlines. At times the measures it takes fall rather harshly on some people. In one instance, a very valuable and comparatively rare plant was purchased in the Eastern States and airmailed to this State. The officer of the Department of Agriculture examined it because the roots were wrapped in soil. He literally scoured the roots of the plant, and replaced it in the empty tin container after his examination. Five days later the plant reached the owner.

Surely it would have been possible for the department under those circumstances to place a couple of handfuls of plain sand in the tin to preserve the life of the plant after the inspection had been completed and it was found that the plant was in no way affected. I think that the treatment was harsh. After all, even for 100 plants under similar circumstances, not very much sand would be required. However, that is beside the point.

I do not want it to be thought that the Government has not done much, particularly on the goldfields, to prevent the spread of the various weeds, because it has. Considerable sums of money have been spent; but unfortunately in many cases, through no fault of the Government, it has been unwisely spent. I know of one road board which had the job of using a considerable quantity of spray on weeds. It adopted the practice of employing for the spraying, one or two aged pensioners in order to give them a few extra pounds.

The inspector in Kalgoorlie—and I state this without any reservation whatsoever—is one of the best, most conscientious, and hardworking departmental inspectors we have ever had in the district. He has tramped miles and miles on dry creek beds within a radius of 50 miles of Kalgoorlie inspecting, checking, and examining possible infestations. This inspector and I found a very comfortable cubby-hole near the railway line where obviously many hours of the day had been spent consistently. It was almost a semi-permanent camp. Around the area of

this cubby-hole the ground was very well sprayed; but I am afraid that nine-tenths of the money and material that were made available to be used in that particular district was wasted.

That sort of behaviour is not good enough. There should be a proper plant which is thoroughly supervised and handled by men who are interested in the job. In this way every hard-earned pound would be used to the fullest advantage. The spray that was being used is good; it has the intended effect when used properly on the plants.

As a result of our interview with the Minister, the Government has appointed another inspector at Esperance. His job will be to police incoming stock, plant, and so forth on arrival at Norseman. I consider that that in itself is an admission by the Minister of the necessity for something to be done.

The Minister has already stated that if it is necessary, the Government may adopt the drastic step of slaughtering the stock that is found to be infected on arrival at Kalgoorlie. This is a drastic step, because the one who will pay the penalty will be the recipient of the stock—the purchaser—as, although he has a certificate from the seller stating that the stock is clear, he cannot do anything about it if it is found to be false. The Government feels that it is not fair on the beasts to return them to the point of sale; so the only alternative is to destroy them. The Government feels this is justified; because rightly or wrongly, it believes there is probably some stock which is imported—other than pedigree animals—which is no superior to stock that can be purchased in the State itself.

But apparently, because of the limited finances available, the department feels, the best it can do is to try to contain the pest in the area rather than to completely eliminate it. However, I feel the department should be given a sufficient grant to instigate a campaign of the same intensity as that in connection with the eradication of rabbits. That campaign succeeded; and I believe that the eradication of noxious weeds and other pests in our State is important enough to receive the same consideration. I support the Bill.

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—Minister for Local Government—in reply) [5.35]: Whilst I have not all the answers to the problems raised by members, I can assure them that their representations will be conveyed to the Minister for Agriculture. The problems mentioned by Mr. Cunningham are, of course, already provided for in the Act; but apparently the Act is not being carried out.

All stock coming into the State is supposed to be quarantined. The right to slaughter the stock is also in the Act. The penalty for anyone bringing in seed in bulk for sowing is £50. Therefore some-

one has fallen down on his job if the man at Esperance has been allowed to bring in a plant, classed as a noxious weed, and grow it on his property. There is, as I say, a penalty of £50 for such an offence.

The Hon. C. R. Abbey: There is no means of inspection on the road, so it can easily be done.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: A person bringing stock into the State has to notify the department, which is then in possession of the information and so is able to arrange for an inspector to be on the job to arrange quarantine. As I have said, all these provisions are contained in the Act; and pretty stringent measures are open to the board to deal with the problem.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: That is our point; the provisions of the Act are not being complied with.

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN: It may be that there are not sufficient funds available. I know that the board itself is always growling because it has not sufficient funds to do the jobs in hand; but there is no money anywhere else at the moment to give it. Admittedly, it is one of the greatest problems we have to solve in the agricultural areas.

Probably we sometimes worry about one or two of the supposedly noxious weeds. As mentioned by Mr. Cunningham, one such noxious weed—the evening primrose—is regarded in South Australia as quite good feed; and the same applies to Paterson's curse. I remember that about three years ago Paterson's curse seemed to come up overnight, almost, in areas where it had never been seen before.

At that time—I think it was more than three years ago—rabbits were being eradicated by the use of myxomatosis, and rabbits had been responsible for keeping Paterson's curse down. In addition to this the conditions of the season at that time were an encouragement to the growth of this weed. However, immediately sufficient stock were introduced, the weed was a problem no more because it was kept in check by the stock.

It is a different matter with regard to caltrop and Bathurst burr because stock just will not eat those plants, and therefore they are a nuisance—and a terrific nuisance at that. I remember the time when the Northampton Road Board every year in September, without fail, sent a gang of six or seven men to the dividing road between the property near my place. They grubbed this Paterson's curse year after year, and year after year it grew. But it never spread into my paddocks because the stock kept it down and therefore it never became a problem.

I believe the spread of Paterson's curse was due to the effective eradication of the rabbits, and the particular climatic conditions; because since then it has almost died down. I have seen one or two patches

growing again this year as a result of the wet conditions; but, as I have said, I believe that too much attention is given to the smaller problems and not enough to the real problems. If we got rid of the real problems first—the caltrop, the cape tulip, and the Bathurst burr—I think we would be better off because we could clean up the others afterwards. However, I will make sure that the representations made by members are passed on to the Minister concerned.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 29th September.

THE HON. J. D. TEAHAN (North-East) [5.43]: Bills similar to this one have been introduced into Parliament on at least six occasions, the first one being in 1948. One of the Bills was nearly accepted and placed on the statute book, but it was rejected because of a disagreement on only one issue.

As far back as 20 years ago I attended, as a delegate, a municipal conference at which the desire was expressed that the two existing Acts—the Road Districts Act and the Municipal Corporations Act—should be consolidated. Quite a lot of effort and time was put into the preparation of the groundwork, and a lot of money was spent—some by private individuals connected with local government—in seeking advice and guidance from the Eastern States.

It appears from discussions I have had with members of local governments throughout the State—and some have written to me—that their desire now is that something at least be placed on the statute book, and amended when necessary. The local governing authorities have almost got sick and tired of waiting for the day when the two Acts will be consolidated.

The Bill as introduced on this occasion is somewhat in line with the one that left this Chamber in 1957. At that time there was a disagreement of the conference managers, and the Bill was set aside. Members can imagine that the local governing authorities are keenly watching and hoping that something will result from this measure; and that by trial and error it will be improved after a year or two of operation.

The Bill has been altered in several ways from the measure introduced by Labor Governments—mainly in regard to the franchise. This measure will continue to

give voting power to property owners in accordance with the value of their property. This system perpetuates an old custom which has existed for many years. The principle of one person one vote has been set aside.

However, some attempt has been made to serve the desires of those who differed so much, when we debated the last measure, on the question of a property owner and his wife having the right to vote. Under the Bill, if the man of the house is the owner, then the wife will get a vote; and *vice versa*. This provision tempers the provision somewhat; it seeks to appease those who differ so widely on the question of franchise.

In regard to the method of electing the mayor or president, I strongly favour the system by which such official is elected by the vote of the people, or the ratepayers. However, that system is not applied by road boards, because a road board elects its president by the members of the board sitting around the table and voting for him. A municipality elects its mayor by the vote of the people. I strongly favour the latter method because in a small group of people there might be some who dislike a certain person as a result of some action he took—although it may have been taken quite sincerely—and because of that act of courage he may have shown, he might not be elected.

In regard to rating and valuations, the road boards will still be able to use the unimproved value and the councils the annual value; but the ratepayers will have the right to alter the set-up in their own districts.

Unfortunately, as I have already mentioned, the old system of plural voting is to be perpetuated. By this means a person can have as many as four votes. But the measure will remove the obnoxious provision in the Municipal Corporations Act which permits one person to have almost an unlimited number of votes. At present a man can vote as a property owner—he may have four votes for his property; he can vote as the representative of a limited company; and he can vote as the representative of some club or other. That principle of voting is certainly an undemocratic one. Under the Bill a person will have only the votes he would get for one property.

At present the old Senate preferential system of voting is being followed; and it can present some strange anomalies. I know of at least one case where there were eight or nine candidates, one of whom outdistanced the others by gaining the greatest number of votes. However, because of the present system of preferential voting, that candidate ran last.

Under the present system, the votes of the first person elected are set aside and then distributed amongst the remaining candidates. By this means, if there are a few strong candidates who form a block,

they can keep someone out; and that happened on the occasion to which I have referred. The system is to be altered because under the Bill the person who is on the bottom of the list at the end of the first count will drop out, and his votes will be distributed amongst the remaining candidates.

On the question of valuers, at the present time—at least so far as the municipalities are concerned—almost anyone can be appointed a valuer; and very often one of the council's employees' is so appointed. The valuer need have no particular qualifications, and certainly no academic qualifications. This system has the disadvantage that the valuer probably is not fully qualified, and also that he has too much of the "local touch"—he knows the people in the district; and no matter how fair he may be, it will be said that he favours his friends or his relatives. The Bill seeks to ensure that properly qualified valuers will be appointed.

In regard to auditors, the road boards have Government auditors; and from my knowledge and experience of them they do an excellent job. Apart from any taint of socialistic methods, I should say that someone such as a Government auditor would be the best for this job because these people are dealing with local government procedure year in and year out. They know the Act, and they act not only as audit inspectors, but in the matter of giving sound advice on local government procedure. I know of many cases where the Government auditors have been able to set road boards on the right track, and to pull them up if they have been spending money incorrectly through ignorance.

In my opinion local governing authorities would not do things wrongly if Government auditors, who would follow the Act right through, were appointed; such people would be fully acquainted with the intricacies of local government, and would be more competent to do the job than would private auditors. Furthermore a private auditor would have the taint of local residence, and it would be far better if the auditor did not have that taint.

The question of hawkers has never been fully resolved. There has never been a definition that has been satisfactory to all. After much debate in this Chamber some years ago, we arrived at a certain conclusion. That, however, was not considered satisfactory by a number of the local authorities. I take it that the clause dealing with this question will be the subject of debate when the committee stage is reached.

In regard to elections—at least so far as municipalities are concerned—a council may elect any of its number to be the returning officer. It has almost become the custom to elect the senior councillor to be the returning officer, but perhaps he is a man with very little knowledge of

the procedure and with no desire for the position. The best results, therefore, are not obtained. The Bill seeks to provide that the clerk of the council shall be the returning officer. He would probably be the most competent person to hold the position because he would have studied the Act and would know the procedure to be adopted. Furthermore, if he did something that was off the beaten track, and committed a misdemeanor—although I have never heard of one being committed—he could be readily brought to book.

There has been some suggestion of local governing authorities being able to prescribe their own type of books of account. The Bill however, I am pleased to see, provides that the Minister shall prescribe the type of account books. I take it that whilst the Minister is named, some accounting officer in the department will prescribe the type of books to be used; and I am certain that the books prescribed will be the ones most suited to achieve the best results in local government.

In dealing with elections, there appears to be an endeavour to bring the provisions of the Bill somewhat into line with those of the State Electoral Act inasmuch as at the present time under the local government legislation, canvassing is prohibited within 50 yards of a polling booth, but under the State Electoral Act the distance is 20 feet. The Bill seeks to include the same provision as that which appears in the Electoral Act.

The Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON: Does it say anything about equal voting?

The Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I have just dealt with that aspect. It is a very outdated system that gives one person more than one vote.

The Bill appears to be an honest attempt to place on the statute book something that has been desired for twenty years; and the eyes of local government are directed to this Parliament hoping that something concrete will result from the measure. No doubt during the Committee stage a number of the clauses will be challenged by me. However, I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by the Hon. R. F. HUTCHISON, debate adjourned.

METROPOLITAN REGION IMPROVEMENT TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

The debate resumed from the 28th September.

THE HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [6.0]: For the reasons I advanced when speaking to the Metropolitan Region Town Planning Scheme Act Amendment Bill—the measure complementary to this one—I find great difficulty in supporting

the second reading. Like Mr. Wise, I can see no reason why the Bill should have been brought down this year. The existing Act provides that the tax shall be levied until the 30th June, 1962; and in those circumstances I feel it will be time enough, this day 12 months hence—or even two years hence—to consider whether the tax shall continue after the 30th June, 1962.

I believe that even within the next two years the tax paid should be allowed as a rebate from land tax. I support the request made by Mr. Wise to the Minister for Town Planning that he should not proceed with the Bill during the present session. By all means let us pass the complementary Bill, but I suggest that this measure should not be proceeded with. If it is proceeded with, I am afraid my attitude towards it will not be dissimilar to my attitude last year, and I will be inclined to vote against the Bill.

THE HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan [63]: I found myself in difficulty in speaking to a measure similar to this one last year, and I am not in any less difficulty at the moment. Perhaps I should correct that by saying that my difficulty is probably less this time than it was last year because, at that time, I felt the Bill had to pass; but I am not so certain that there is the same urgency about passing this measure. Certain things occurred last year that led me to believe there was a necessity to pass the measure then before the House, but I doubt whether they exist today.

One of the points made by the Minister when speaking to the measure was that if we failed to raise the £140,000—which was the amount it was anticipated would be raised by the implementation of the Act—the Grants Commission would penalise us to that extent when considering our needs. Now I wonder what is going to happen. Will we get credit for having raised £212,000? We were told by the Minister that the tax of a halfpenny in the pound would supply the amount required, which was estimated at £114,000. However, whoever made that estimate for the Minister was exceedingly wide of the mark.

If I remember rightly, Mr. Wise, and others, suggested that the tax might be a farthing; but the Minister, in reply, said it was quite impossible for him to accept that amount for the simple reason that it would not bring in the required total. However, on the figures we received this year, a farthing in the pound would have been ample to bring in the estimated £114,000.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is often easy to be wise after the event.

The Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I realise that; but having got that far, I wonder whether it is required of us to make the halfpenny

in the pound the permanent rate of tax when, over the next few years, we must realise that this amount will increase. In my opinion, every one of us left this Chamber last session with the view that the money that was to be raised by the tax was for the purpose of funding a loan. We left this Chamber with the idea that the Town Planning Board would have the authority to raise a loan of £2,000,000 on that £114,000.

I, for one, have been waiting to see whether this would occur during the year; or whether, like the State Electricity Commission, the Town Planning Board would go to the people for a loan. We are now told that because there was a limitation in the Town Planning and Development Act, the board found, as a result of Treasury advice, that it was not empowered to raise a loan. Surely the Government's advisers last year must have realised that the Treasury would object on those grounds. Surely the Treasury officers would have been consulted on the possibility of raising a loan; and surely they would have made it quite clear that, in their opinion, if there were a limitation on the whole scheme, there would be no possibility of the Town Planning Board raising a loan.

So it strikes me it is not entirely the fault of this House that the loan has not been raised. If we consider that £212,000, instead of the estimate of £114,000, has been raised as a result of the tax for the purpose of funding a loan of £2,000,000, then the amount of £212,000 would have been sufficient for the funding of a loan of £4,000,000. One year's raising of the tax would have covered practically two-thirds of the requirements of the Town Planning Board for several years. One of the reasons why, eventually, we were agreeable to accepting the passage of the third reading of the Bill last session—I voted against some of the clauses—was because we had been told that this amount was necessary inasmuch as certain areas of land must be free of this tax; that is, all the agricultural land in the community.

My interpretation of the reason for that was that this land had been rated by the municipalities or road boards as subdivisational land; that the owners were paying a high rate as a result, and therefore they should be exempt from the payment of this tax. Surely there has been time during the year to readjust that position and put this land into the category into which it should be placed; that is, as agricultural land on which the amount of tax would not have to be paid as it would on subdivisational land. The whole of this area could then be made subject to the tax and, as a result, a substantial reduction of the tax would be possible.

I am not very happy about making this tax—as is laid down in this legislation—a fixed, permanent amount because I believe

there is every possibility that at least half the amount—if it were used to raise a loan instead of being spent as capital—would provide the Town Planning Board with all the money it wanted for a considerable period. Finally, before I could be satisfied with the measure, I would like to have a definition of what expenditure is justifiable under the heading of town planning.

Is it possible that the money spent on roads can be placed as a town planning cost? Surely not! Is the resumption of property, in order to make roads, a proper charge to town planning? Surely that comes into the basic cost of road building. If the House eventually arrives at a decision on what constitutes town planning expenditure I will have no objection to the Bill, but I do not believe that we should agree to give *carte blanche* in regard to a tax on a limited number of people without knowing exactly how the money is to be spent. We should have a very clear definition of what is town planning expenditure, and what should come under Consolidated Revenue, main roads expenditure, etc. Until we arrive at that definition, I would not be very happy about the passing of this measure.

On motion by the Hon. L. A. Logan (Minister for Town Planning), debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

STATE CONCERNS (PREVENTION OF DISPOSAL) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 28th September.

THE HON. N. E. BAXTER (Central) [7.30]: I believe this measure has some merit. That may seem a broad statement to some members of this House; but when one considers that the total capital value, or the fixed asset value of these concerns is over £6,000,000, one must realise that they have very real assets. This is no small matter, and must be considered in true perspective.

When addressing himself to the measure, the Minister for Mines referred to the speech made by my late father some 30 years ago, when a particular section of the Act was taken out to enable the Government of the day to dispose of State trading concerns without reference to Parliament. It must be remembered, however, that the position in 1930 was entirely different from that which obtains today.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Why?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: During those years we had a Government which came into office at the time of the depression; practically every fund in the State was

overdrawn; and the Government was absolutely stony broke. As I said, we had the depression around our ears; people were out of work; and money had to be found to provide sustenance. Altogether, chaotic conditions prevailed. The conditions which obtain today are a far cry from those I have just described; particularly as they refer to financial affairs.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: No mention was made of that sort of thing in the debate.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The fact remains that if at that time any Government could have found a person with enough money to buy a State trading concern, it would have been a case of "shut the gate before he gets away"; because, as I have said, at that time losses were proportionately so high that nobody would have attempted to touch the State trading concerns with a big stick, let alone pay money for them. A different set-up obtains today. So I do not see any reason why the proposed sale of any State trading concern should not be referred to Parliament.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Don't you think the value of money would be purely relative then, as compared with today?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That may be so, but there was a difference in the financial set-up. After all is said and done, what is the difference between the Government today selling one of these State trading concerns, and the Government reaching an agreement with a purchasing party and then asking Parliament to ratify that agreement? That has been done on other occasions—in connection with the Chase Syndicate, Kwinana, and the Chevron Hotel.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: There is a lot of difference.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I fail to see the difference. They were agreements signed by the Government and brought to Parliament for ratification.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Those were not State trading concerns.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: That does not matter. Those negotiations involved finance, just as these do. The same principles are applicable irrespective of whether State trading concerns, racehorses, or buildings are concerned, so long as finance is involved. In both cases agreements are made, and both can be ratified. The Government apparently has not much confidence in Parliament if it is not willing to make an agreement and ask Parliament to ratify it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I do not think you ought to say that.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: When it suits Governments they make agreements and bring them to Parliament for ratification, knowing full well that Parliament will not refuse to ratify the agreements.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do not blame Governments in an endeavour to justify your statements.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If a State trading concern is to be sold, the agreement should be referred to Parliament for ratification.

Another difference between the conditions that obtained in 1930 and those that exist today is the workers' position. In 1930, superannuation was on a different basis. It operated under the old 1871 Act, and was a non-contributory scheme. But today Government employees in these concerns are paying contributions into superannuation and family benefit schemes; and they have an interest through their superannuation payments in the concerns. Are not they entitled to know when one of these concerns is sold, how they will stand in relation to their superannuation? Are they merely to get back the contributions they have made, plus perhaps portion of those made by the Treasury? Or are they to get the benefit of the continuity of that superannuation and the entitlement due to them on retirement? Then again, they must consider their position of employment. If one of these concerns is purchased by private enterprise, they do not know whether or not they will be granted continuity of employment. For example, let us consider the State brickworks at Armadale. Is there any guarantee, if private enterprise purchased that concern, that there would be a continuity of employment and production? The history of the brickmaking industry in relation to private enterprise proves otherwise.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What does it prove?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: It proves that when there is a recession in building, the average brickworks closes down for two or three months, or for a period during the recession, and starts production when the building industry shows an upward trend. That has been the history.

The Hon. C. R. Abbey: Do you say that the State trading concerns should carry on regardless?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The State trading concerns have proved their value, in that they have been ready to stockpile; and figures show that they have not been a liability to the State.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Are you aware of the trading results of the State brickworks over the last few years?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Do you think those losses are warranted?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do. The State brickworks were started by a Liberal Government; and nearly every one of the State trading concerns was commenced when this Chamber held a

majority of Liberal members throughout the years.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What has that to do with it?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Were any serious objections raised then? No objections were raised, because those members knew that unless some of these concerns were started we would have to import materials that we could not produce in the State.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Dear, oh dear!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: In his statement during the election campaign, Mr. Brand said that he would make these concerns pay, and then put them on the market and sell them. The point is this: Has much effort been made to make these concerns pay so that they can be sold on a reasonable market? One glaring example is the State sawmills. To my knowledge the State sawmills today has a stockpile of timber. What great effort has been made, overseas, to reduce that stockpile? Has there been any high-pressure salesmanship with regard to it?

We saw the same position exist in the depression years. We had a market in South Africa; but we lost that market during the war years, and it has never been regained. It is possible that a market of that type can be recaptured, but has any effort been made to recapture it? Unless we send high-pressure salesmen into other countries to sell timber, there is no chance of making the industry pay; or even of putting it on a reasonable basis.

I would like to quote a few figures of the total capital value of four of the State instrumentalities which I believe it is possible the Government may sell. The instrumentalities to which I refer are the State Engineering Works, the State Building Supplies, the Wyndham Meat Works, and the Wundowie Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry. Let us have a look at the total capital value shown as at the middle of 1957-58. The figures involve a total capital value, or fixed asset value, of £6,314,971.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What do they owe the taxpayers?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: What they owe the taxpayers cannot be recouped; so it is no use the Minister worrying about that. The fact is that those State trading concerns have that fixed capital value today; and I believe that capital value warrants ratification by Parliament if agreement is reached to sell any of those concerns. After all is said and done, we in this Chamber, and those in another place, were elected by the people to look after their interests. When a sum of £6,000,000 is involved, surely, as custodians of people's interests, we are entitled to some say as to what should be done.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are playing a different tune from that which I have heard you play before.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Is the value to which you have referred the book value?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: Yes. Let us have a look at the profits and losses sustained in those industries in the last year's trading. They are as follows:—

	Loss £	Profit £
State Engineering Works		39,789
State Building Supplies— mostly from State saw- mills; the State brick- works made a profit	35,371	
Wyndham Meat Works		88,276
Wundowie Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry		50,549

It does not present such a very bad picture.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What year was that for?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The last trading year—1959-60.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Why not quote some other years?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I am dealing with the present position. I am not concerned with other years. I am concerned with the present-day position which can be maintained if these State trading concerns are allowed to function as they do now.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: What a convincing argument! You are dealing with one year only.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: If the Minister wants me to go back to the depression years I could probably show him some most drastic figures.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You could not run your own business like that.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: We are dealing with present-day matters; and since the war practically every business has boomed. It is only necessary to look at the figures released by private enterprise. Those figures are going higher and higher each year. There is no reason why the trading concerns I have mentioned should not continue to do well providing they are maintained as they are at the present time.

We hear a lot of talk about establishing industry in Western Australia—a terrific lot lately. This has been going on for some years. Both the previous Government and the present Government have been talking this way. What has been the result up to date? We must remember that this is a State of only 700,000-odd people, and we will not encourage industry to come here until such time as we have the population to carry that industry. That is the crux of the whole situation. It is no use establishing large industries in this State when we have not the raw materials available, and when it is necessary to travel by rail or ship approximately

1,500 miles, to find a market; and when a market is located we find competitors producing the same article at the door of that market.

I would refer to Courtalds a firm which came here some years ago to see whether it would establish a secondary industry in this State. Why did it not? For the simple reason that within 300 miles of the city we have a population of 400,000, but within three miles of a capital city in the Eastern States, there is a population of 400,000; and the company has to sell its products. That would be the reaction of any big company when it was requested to come to this State.

The Hon. C. R. Abbey: How do we get the population?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The sooner we build up the population the sooner we will get secondary industries. However, we must build up the population.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Which comes first, the chicken or the egg?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The chicken, if the honourable member wants to know; and the chicken is the primary-producing areas which should be developed in order to increase our population. If more land is developed secondary industry will come to this State because the primary producer is the main buyer of its products.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: After those statements, I am satisfied you can solve anything.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: We all know that for every farm developed in this country employment is created for five to eight people in the city and the demand for the products of secondary industry is increased. I am not trying to solve any problems by speaking nonsense, Sir. This State requires additional population before it can sustain heavy industry of any type. The small industries get along. However, when an industry is of any size, a big population is needed to carry it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I bet Captain Cook thought like that!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I do not think this Bill should incorporate every State instrumentality, because we have instrumentalities such as ferries, State ships, and the railways. Nobody would buy them. Therefore, we do not need to worry with regard to their being sold. Over the 30 years that the parent Act has been on the statute book, how many State trading concerns have been sold? We have the Wongan Hills Hotel.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It is not necessary to come to Parliament.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: The Wongan Hills Hotel has been sold to the community. I think the Gwalia Hotel, too.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: A Labor Government sold it, too.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I understand the hotel at Kwolyin is in the process of being sold. Therefore, three State hotels have been or are in the process of being sold after 30 long years.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Don't you know that half the State trading concerns can be sold now without an Act of Parliament being required?

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I realise that.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Why put a restriction on them by passing this Bill?

The PRESIDENT: Order! The Minister will please save his remarks until he replies to the debate.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: He has already spoken!

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: As I said earlier, there is no reason why some of these State trading concerns should not be referred to Parliament before they are sold because of the capital value involved and because of matters relating to employment and employment conditions. A question was asked of the Minister for Industrial Development in regard to one of these State trading concerns. The Minister in his reply said the Government was conscious of the rights and privileges of the employees and would give them full consideration in the event of a sale; and he said that a committee of senior departmental officers from the Treasury, the Public Service Commissioner's Office, and the Superannuation Board would examine the conditions of employment in the State Building Supplies and make its recommendations to the Government in order that employees could be safeguarded in respect to their equity and existing conditions of employment at the time of any changeover. He also said that ample opportunity would be given to the unions to discuss the conditions when the occasion arose.

I would like to know what ample opportunities will be given to the unions that will not be given to Parliament. Ample opportunities are to be given to unions, but not to Parliament! I would say that Parliament should more particularly have an opportunity to discuss these matters. If Parliament does not have this right, it should not have the right to handle the affairs of the State, which, no doubt, some people would like. The Government will say, "We have a mandate to do certain things; we will carry them out and have them ratified by Parliament in one Bill." Perhaps some people would like things done that way; it would create a nice little dictatorship.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are talking nonsense tonight.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I have heard others talk what I considered to be nonsense.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I said tonight.

The Hon. N. E. BAXTER: When this Bill reaches the Committee stage, it is my intention to move an amendment which will apply to the State Engineering Works, the State Building Supplies, the Wyndham Meatworks, and the Wundowie Charcoal, Iron and Steel Industry; and, as I said before, the reason is that these undertakings involve a large capital value. I do not intend to include State hotels, because these concerns are small in the general run of things. However, when it comes to things of a bigger nature, involving employment conditions and capital, I think Parliament should have a say. I am prepared to support the second reading of this measure, but will endeavour to amend it in the Committee stage.

THE HON. J. MURRAY (South-West) [7.56]: I had no intention of speaking to this measure until I heard some support for it.

The Hon. E. M. Davies: A weather-beaten old phrase, that.

The Hon. J. MURRAY: This measure was introduced to ensure that no State trading concern could be sold in the future. No large firm with the necessary capital to invest in these industries would even negotiate with the Government if during the four months while Parliament was in recess it had to wait because the negotiations were completely held up.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: There could be a special session of Parliament, as there has been before.

The Hon. J. MURRAY: Furthermore, the matters to which Mr. Baxter drew attention, such as long service leave rights, and entitlement to certain employment conditions, are not questions to be debated in Parliament; they must be discussed during a round-table conference. We know at this stage what the entitlements of the employees are likely to be at the time of any sale.

The Government of the day made it perfectly clear, when it suggested selling these undertakings, that the rights and privileges of the employees would be protected. If this House in its wisdom, or otherwise, is going to turn around at this stage and say, "We know the Government has been elected by the people to carry out a certain programme which includes the sale of State trading concerns, but while the people trust this Government we do not," how far will we get with a legislative programme?

I do not intend to say very much more in relation to this question, because I do not think consideration can be given to the remarks of the previous speaker that Parliament must fully discuss the small intricate things which take place before a transfer of these industries is effected.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Is the security of the workers such a small thing?

The Hon. J. MURRAY: I am sorry I did not hear that interjection. In any case, it was probably not worth while.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Is the workers' security such a small thing?

The Hon. J. MURRAY: I still do not hear what the honourable member is saying.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That's different.

The Hon. J. MURRAY: The employment position regarding certain industries that Mr. Baxter referred to would, in my opinion—and in the opinion of a lot more people in Western Australia—be much more secure, and better conditions would probably apply under private enterprise than under Government control.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Ask some of those who are in the State Engineering Works.

The Hon. J. MURRAY: I am not referring to the State Engineering Works in any shape or form. I doubt very much whether this Government contemplates selling the State Engineering Works.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is taking all the trade away from them.

The Hon. J. MURRAY: I am talking, at the present time, about the State Building Supplies. When it comes to looking at the State Building Supplies, there are so many difficulties in the way of a transfer of this industry as a trading concern—that is, taking in both sections of it: bricks and sawmilling—that I would appeal to the House not to add this further difficulty to the Government in effecting such a sale. The bottom must have nearly fallen out of the Government purse for it to be able to continue subsidising this concern—and that is all it is doing at the present time.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: They are such bad managers; that's all.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. J. MURRAY: I am wondering whether the honourable member is referring to the Government of the day.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Yes.

The Hon. J. MURRAY: Or all Governments.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: The Government of the day.

The Hon. J. MURRAY: The State Building Supplies has suffered from a long-term sickness. No one Government, but all Governments are concerned in this problem. It has been a problem, because the only alternative to closing some of the mills would be to put the employees on sustenance work, since no other work is available in districts where the mills are situated.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: You are referring to the timber section?

The Hon. J. MURRAY: Yes.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Your hearing is improving.

The Hon. J. MURRAY: One member is in front of me, and the other is on the side.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: Aspro is a good cure for headaches!

The Hon. J. MURRAY: The main difficulty with the State Building Supplies concerns the timber section of it, and I am therefore stressing that side of it. At the present time the brick section is quite a reasonable profit-making concern. But even then, both sections when put together still end up with a loss. When the two departments were first amalgamated, the suggestion was made by the previous Government that it was going to be much more economical to operate as the State Building Supplies instead of as the State brickworks and the State sawmills. But the result of the amalgamation was no real economy at all.

There was to be a cutting down of staff in certain places to effect economies. Economy in book-keeping must have been negligible because the losses have really increased over the period. The main bone of contention with most people who object to the Government selling the State Building Supplies is that employment will suffer.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: Not only that.

The Hon. J. MURRAY: It is the only valid excuse they have; the other is that the Government is removing competition from the business of timber getting.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What about the security aspect?

The Hon. J. MURRAY: There never was competition. Private enterprise can cut and produce bricks and timber at less cost than can the State.

The Hon. N. E. Baxter: Of as good quality?

The Hon. J. MURRAY: Taken by and large, I would say just as good quality. The expenditure at Byford—or just outside Byford—on the State brickworks has been phenomenal; and few private companies could go to the extent the Government has gone. The quality of the log timber is, of course, the same with private enterprise as it is with the State. I would say, in comparing the two, that when one purchases sawn timber, private enterprise probably supplies the better article.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It does make it easier when one doesn't have to pay taxes also.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I am glad the Minister thinks that; it will be a great help later on.

The Hon. J. MURRAY: It is not only tax they get away with. I do not intend to say anything further on this question.

But I do appeal to the House not to confront the Government with any barriers other than those which at present have to be overcome in getting rid of this, what one might call an octopus, because it has a stranglehold on the public purse at the present time in order that it may be maintained with full employment; and so that towns similar to Pemberton and Manjimup may be maintained on an economical basis; and in order that the shops and the mills that have been developed on a more or less false economy, may be kept going in the future. But they will not be kept going if we are to rely on the State Building Supplies. The State Building Supplies—and I am talking about the heads of it at the present time—have no foresight; no incentive to go out and sell at a profit the goods that are produced. I oppose the measure.

THE HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [8.10]: Unlike Mr. Murray, I have not been drawn into the debate; I did intend to say something. First and foremost, the Bill has been introduced here for one purpose and one purpose only; namely, that before any of the State's enterprises are disposed of, Parliament shall have an opportunity of expressing its opinion.

When we look back over the history of the parliamentary system, not only of Western Australia or of the Commonwealth, but of other parts of the British Commonwealth, we have always been led to believe that Parliament is composed of the mouthpieces of the people, and that those mouthpieces are there for the purpose of expressing an opinion.

As far as I can see, all the Bill provides is for the elected representatives of the people to have at least some voice in the question of the disposal of certain State assets. As one who has lived most of his life in this State, from a very early age, I would say that had it not been for Government enterprises when my parents came here, there would not have been a great deal of work available for people who came to Western Australia.

In saying this, I would suggest to the House that those people were some of the pioneers who built the State of Western Australia to the stage it has reached today. I can well remember that at one period, if a person was fortunate enough to be able to obtain Government employment, people usually said, "He must have some pull to be able to get a Government job." Such jobs had an advantage in that the people who were employed in them knew they had some security of tenure as far as employment was concerned; and in many instances they could say, "Well, I have security of employment at least until I reach retirement age."

Therefore, quite a number of people entered Government-sponsored industries, such as they were at that time, with that knowledge. On that basis they built homes

adjacent to their employment; and they reared their families. When all is said and done, what is the backbone of any country in the first place? If we have a land of many square miles with no person living in it, we cannot say it is of much value; but if there are people living there, it is necessary to create employment, since the people must have the necessities of life.

I venture to say that those people, when taking upon themselves the right to be employed in State enterprises, indeed played their part in the development of Western Australia. We have heard mentioned this evening that the rights of those who are employed in such concerns will be protected. I would like to say that since the present Government came into office, some of the State instrumentalities have been reduced very considerably as far as their personnel are concerned. So I do not know what protection those people have received; and I say that having in mind, of course, as I previously stated, that some of them served their apprenticeship in those industries, reared their families and built their homes in the belief that they would have security until they reached retirement age.

But what do we find? Today we see in the Press where private enterprise is advertising certain positions and stating, "Nobody over a certain age need apply." Have we reached the stage where the old age pension will be paid to those who have reached the age of 40 or 45? Because that is what it looks like. I read an advertisement in the paper not long ago that nobody over the age of 30 need apply.

It is quite common for people who have been displaced from some of these Government instrumentalities to be looking for work, only to be told that because they are 40 or 45 years of age they are not required. What protection have they received?

I have heard mention tonight of the investments of the people. During the depression years the Mitchell-Latham Government decided to do something about land settlement, and that Government opened up a district called Kendenup, and another settlement on the Peel Estate. Many thousands of pounds were written off, eventually, as a result of those schemes.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Millions of pounds.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Yes; millions of pounds were written off because of those undertakings. However, I would say that the money expended on those schemes was not wasted, because, although it was not an opportune time for the schemes to be inaugurated, the Government of the day did have the courage to try to build up those districts; and, although the money was written off, Western Australia today is deriving much benefit from what was attempted on those occasions.

We have heard statements tonight to the effect that no big business undertaking would endeavour to negotiate with the Government if Parliamentary approval had to be obtained for the sale of a Government instrumentality. I want to know what we are going to do about the people who are employed in these Government undertakings. Is anybody concerned about them? As a matter of fact, many of those who are now employed in Government undertakings are suffering great anxiety. They are still paying off their homes, and a number of them still have families to rear.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Do you remember the big song and dance you made about the employees in the Public Works day-labour organisation? There is none of them unemployed.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I would advise the honourable member not to have much to say about that. It is evident that he does not know too much about it. Other people are more fully aware of the circumstances of that issue than is the honourable member.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Don't you realise—

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: A number of those who are employed in the Public Works Department are not now in the building industry.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is right; they have gone east.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: I know a number of tradesmen who are now employed in the crayfishing industry, truck-driving for the meat works at South Fremantle, and working in the markets. Some of the people with whom I am closely associated are out of the industry and are working at other trades.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: They have got alternative employment.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Some of them have gone to the Eastern States because they could not get employment here.

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Driven out by Mr. Hawke previously.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: They have been told, "Because you are over 40 or 45 we don't want you."

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Rubbish.

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: Where have they gone?

The Hon. R. C. Mattiske: Do you know that there is a shortage of building tradesmen?

The Hon. E. M. DAVIES: The reason why we cannot get substantial secondary industries here is because, firstly, we have not the population; and, secondly, there is over a thousand miles of no-man's land between Western Australia and the more heavily populated parts of the Eastern States.

Our people can go to the Eastern States and obtain employment there. As a matter of fact the Victorian Government Railways Department has sent its representatives here, and they have told those who are employed in our various public instrumentalities that they can obtain employment in Victoria. Yet we find the Government of Western Australia endeavouring to get somebody to purchase our State instrumentalities. It would not be so bad if those instrumentalities were being sold at their true value; but instead of that they are being sabotaged.

We have only to look at the State Engineering Works to see what is going on, and to realise the number of men employed there. At one time those works were making a considerable profit; but today they are being deprived of work; and that can be done by only one source—the Government. Yet it is said that the people who are employed in these undertakings are to be protected. I have heard talk this evening of these people having contributed to the superannuation fund in the belief that they would be employed at these Government undertakings until they retired. But as a result of the Government's present policy they are suffering great anxiety. They do not know whether the industry in which they are employed is going to close down, whether it is to be sold, or what is to happen to it.

Some of them realise that they are over 45 years of age—they may be 50 years of age—and that private enterprise does not want them. They are repeatedly told that by way of advertisements in the Press. So it is idle for statements to be made in this House that the rights of these employees will be protected. As I said at the beginning of my remarks, as this Bill proposes that the disposal of State concerns shall be a matter for Parliament to decide, I fully support it.

Members of Parliament represent the people as a whole, and as all the Bill does is to state that those who represent the people shall have an opportunity to vote in accordance with their conscience on this matter, I fully support the proposition.

On motion by the Hon. A. R. Jones, debate adjourned.

STOCK DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Assembly's Message

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying it had agreed to the amendments made by the Council.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE: SPECIAL

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 11th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.24 p.m.