

## AYES.

Mr. Coverley  
Mr. Cross  
Mr. Fox  
Mr. Graham  
Mr. Hawke  
Mr. W. Hegney  
Mr. Hoar  
Mr. Kelly  
Mr. Leahy  
Mr. Marshall  
Mr. Needham

Mr. Nulsen  
Mr. Panton  
Mr. Rodoreda  
Mr. Smith  
Mr. Styants  
Mr. Tonkin  
Mr. Triant  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wise  
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Abbott  
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver  
Mr. Collier  
Mr. Doney  
Mr. J. Hegney  
Mr. Hill  
Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Keenan  
Mr. Leslie  
Mr. Mann  
Mr. McDonald

Mr. McLarty  
Mr. North  
Mr. Owen  
Mr. Perkins  
Mr. Read  
Mr. Shearn  
Mr. Thorn  
Mr. Watts  
Mr. Willmott  
Mr. Withers  
Mr. Seward

(Teller.)

## PAIRS.

## AYES.

Mr. Telfer  
Mr. Millington

## NOES.

Mr. Brand  
Mr. Stubbs

Question thus negated; Bill defeated.

*House adjourned at 11.32 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Thursday, 7th November, 1946.*

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### RAILWAYS.

(a) As to "S" Class Locomotives.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Will he inform the House for what purpose the "S" class locomotive was designed?

2, For what class of work are such engines now being used?

3, For what reasons were the "S" class locomotives taken off express trains?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, Principally for heavy goods trains on severe grades.

2, On goods services.

3, "S" class engines have not been used on express trains such as the Kalgoorlie express, excepting in emergency. They were used for heavy military leave trains during the war.

(b) As to Improving Perth-Kalgoorlie Service.

Hon. G. BENNETTS asked the Chief Secretary:

Owing to the introduction of air transport between Perth and the Goldfields, can the Chief Secretary inform the House what the Commissioner of Railways intends to do regarding a better and more up-to-date train service between Perth and Kalgoorlie?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Prior to and irrespective of the introduction of air transport to the Goldfields, planning has been in force to continually improve the Perth-Kalgoorlie train service.

New all-steel sleeping cars are now being built at the Midland Junction shops and will be equipped with modern amenities. Designs are in hand for new air-conditioned dining and kitchen cars, and quotations have been called for special equipment for same. New passenger locomotives with roller bearings and other improvements will also be built. The time schedule of the Perth-Kalgoorlie express has already been reduced approximately one hour since 1944 by providing additional trains for intermediate traffic, opening additional staff stations, etc. Renovation of existing coaching stock is in hand, but has been delayed by the shortage of floor coverings, lavatory pedestals, basins, etc.

Sheets for 2nd class passengers on the Westland and on Kalgoorlie Express are proposed as soon as material is obtainable.

### MOTION—URGENCY.

*Fremantle Waterside Dispute and Wool Hold-up.*

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Loton has informed me that he intends to take advantage of Standing Order 59 in order to move the

adjournment of the House. He has complied with the provisions of the Standing Order by submitting to me the subject matter of his motion, and the reason for it, and I understand has also acquainted the Chief Secretary accordingly. The letter I have received from Mr. Loton is as follows:—

I desire to inform you that at the commencement of the sitting of the Council today, it is my intention to move, under Standing Order No. 59, the adjournment of the House to discuss a matter of urgency, namely—

That this House views with the gravest concern the shipping hold-up in Fremantle, which is resulting in the—

- (a) accumulation of wool which has been sold and is awaiting shipment;
- (b) congestion of the wool selling stores thus preventing wool being received into store for sale;
- (c) postponement of wool sales, thus causing financial loss to the growers;
- (d) overcarriage of urgently needed commodities required for the harvest and to meet urgent demands for housing;

and calls upon the Government to—

- (a) make immediate representations to the Prime Minister requesting action to restore shipping facilities at the port;
- (b) explore any other avenue in order to expedite the settlement of the dispute.

It will be necessary for four members to rise in their places to support the proposal.

Four members having risen in their places,

**HON. A. L. LOTON** (South-East) [4.38]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Friday, the 8th November, at 2.30 p.m.

The purpose I have in moving the motion is to give members of this House an opportunity to express to the Government their views on the very serious position that has arisen as a result of the wharf dispute at Fremantle. As most members are aware, a dispute occurred at Fremantle on the 26th October, when a boat with a cargo of sulphur arrived there and the waterside workers refused to work the ship unless they received an increase in pay. They were offered an additional 1s. an hour, which they declined, and from that date onwards no work has been done on the waterfront.

As a result of that hold-up, wool that was sold on the 14th and 15th October is still lying in the stores at Fremantle. Wool received into the brokers' stores up to the 14th October represented 184,000 bales, approximately, of which 48,000 have been sold. Of the total sold, 21,000 bales have not been delivered to the buyers, and the producers are awaiting payment for their wool. The following announcement appears in "The West Australian" of this morning:—

#### Wool Proceeds, Payment to Growers Withheld.

Owing to the inability of buyers to ship their purchases at the October wool sales in Perth as a result of the strike on the waterfront, the four woollselling brokers announced yesterday that the buyers had invoked the "strike" clause in the conditions of sale. In consequence, payment for their purchases would not be made until shipment could be effected. Unfortunately, therefore, the "prompt date" for payment of proceeds to growers had had to be further extended. The extension would be on a day-to-day basis in order that brokers might be in a position to issue account sales and pay over proceeds immediately the dispute was settled and delivery could be given.

Although the brokers made no mention of the sum involved, it is conservatively estimated that the proceeds from the October wool sales are in the proximity of £680,000.

This amount belongs to the producers, who are awaiting payment. They are entitled to it, and why should a handful of men at Fremantle, who do not want work, hold up the industry and delay payment to the men who produce the wealth of the country—the producers? There are still 136,000 bales of wool to be sold. It had been arranged that 30,000 bales would be offered on the 11th and 12th November, but that sale has now been postponed until the 25th or the 26th November. Once again the producer has to wait. He may have to wait indefinitely until the wool is taken delivery of by the purchasers, because the latter have invoked the strike clause in the conditions of sale.

On top of all this, a vessel called at Fremantle on Tuesday with cornsacks and jute. Most of our primary producers have, during the last few months, been asked by the superphosphate manufacturers to take early delivery of their superphosphate requirements in order that the bags might be returned as quickly as possible, as they were in short supply. The vessel has taken 500 tons to the Eastern States, and it has been

reported to me that when the vessel arrives there—it did not stop at the port of Fremantle—it will be declared black. We must wait to see whether that eventuates, but I would not be at all surprised if it did. The sulphur that was the cause of the strike is essential to the manufacture of superphosphate. If we do not have superphosphate we cannot produce; and if we do not produce we shall have no income. If we have no income we shall have once again to go to the Government for sustenance.

A plea has been made recently by leaders of the Commonwealth Government for increased production. We have people producing wool. They shear the sheep only once a year and then hand the wool to the brokers for sale. The buyers come along and purchase, and then we find one set of men in the chain refusing to handle the wool, and consequently the producers are forced to wait for payment. In many cases they are working on borrowed money for which they are paying five per cent. or more. For their super requirements they are paying  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest. They have other commitments to meet, but are not receiving any interest whatever on the money lying idle because a few men refuse to handle the wool.

I do not know whether the postponement of the sales is a matter than can be overcome. I take it that, as a result of the alteration in the sales, it will be necessary to alter the sales roster throughout Australia. It looks as though all sales will be two or three weeks behind schedule. Up to date the Government appears to have taken very little action. Mr. Craig has been sitting to adjudicate on the claims of the men, and I quote once more from today's issue of "The West Australian"—

It is understood that certain fresh proposals will be placed before them, but no indication that a settlement was likely could be gained last night.

Mr. Craig has been inquiring into the trouble on instructions from Judge Foster, of the Federal Arbitration Court. The inquiry opened on Monday, but was adjourned to enable the lumpers' representative to report at a mass meeting of the union at the Fremantle Town Hall on Tuesday morning. On Tuesday afternoon there was an abortive meeting of the Fremantle Employment Committee of the Stevedoring Industry Commission, at which proposals made by the lumpers at the morning meeting were not accepted by the employers' representatives.

Yesterday the inquiry was continued, and after about two hours was further adjourned to allow the lumpers' representatives to report once more to the members of the union.

So it goes on. At present the following vessels are at Fremantle:—

"Gorgon," "Koolinda," "Kybra," "City of Derby."

The last-named vessel has been waiting outside since the 3rd November. She is to load 5,000 tons of wool. In addition, there are at Fremantle the "Hoppecrown"—the sulphur vessel—and the "Beltana." All these vessels are tied up owing to the refusal of the men to work. I hope the Government will make urgent representations to the Prime Minister to bring about a settlement of the dispute. I submit the motion.

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Central) [4.46]: I second the motion. It has come as a complete surprise to me and I congratulate Mr. Loton. I take the opportunity to say that there is far too much delay. These men had been holding up the unloading of a ship for a full week before we read in the newspaper that Mr. Craig, the local Commonwealth Conciliation Officer, had received instructions to make inquiries. I realise that the Government would be quite justified in saying that we have no part in the dispute. Still, this is a House of Parliament representing the people of the State and I consider a member is only doing his duty in moving the adjournment of the House, as Mr. Loton has done, in order to let the people know that members of Parliament realise the difficulties facing the producers. By this means we will be enabled to get a statement from the Government as to what it has done in the matter.

**HON. H. L. ROCHE** (South-East) [4.48]: I support the motion. It seems to me to be an extraordinary position that the Commonwealth authorities—who are really concerned in this matter—should allow the unsatisfactory state of affairs at Fremantle to drift along in the way they have. It is well known that, in the circumstances, there is not likely to be much wool going to Fremantle in the next few weeks, but there is a big accumulation of wool there now rostered for sale in November, and this will take precedence over

other sales. If those sales cannot be held owing to the hold-up by the lumpers, and in consequence the wool is not shipped, it will mean that the whole of the wool selling season in Western Australia will be thrown out of gear. The sales will be deferred because of the delay which is forced on the industry by the refusal of these men to work.

We could wish that some of the courage which has been displayed by the State Government in very recent times in connection with some industrial troubles of its own, could be imparted to the Federal authorities, if they are sufficiently interested in what is taking place. While we in Western Australia claim to be comparatively free of hold-ups in our industries, there is no doubt at all that the waterside workers have been largely a law unto themselves. The fact is that their claim for extra money for handling sulphur, which may not be pleasant stuff to unload, was investigated and an award was made by the properly constituted body, which is one reputedly supported by the Commonwealth Government. Then the lumping profession snapped its fingers at that authority, and the Commonwealth Government did nothing for a week and the whole thing drifted. I commend Mr. Loton for bringing the matter before the House in order to give publicity to the resentment that people, engaged in industries dependent on the export trade, feel as the result of the arbitrary and unfair action of the waterside workers at Fremantle.

**HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH** (Metropolitan) [4.52]: I should be the last to say anything that might in any way embarrass the Government. I sympathise strongly with the Minister in the many and great difficulties by which he and his colleagues are confronted at present. We know only too well that industrial unrest is world-wide, and perhaps it is an inevitable consequence of the long continued war. But we may well consider the effect that this unrest is having in other countries, in many instances leading to civil war and in others to something approaching wholesale starvation. I do not know that the least important consequence is the one we see today in the United States—a swing towards the old Republican policy; a

swing resembling that which occurred when Woodrow Wilson was deposed after the last war. There is some reason to fear that it may result, as it did then, in the abandonment of international policy by America and a return to isolationism, which might be disastrous for the world at large.

But there is another point: Australia escaped all the worst consequences of the war, and it would not be going too far to say that when hostilities ended the Commonwealth was in a better position than almost any other country, not only to restore pre-war conditions, but to improve on them. The Prime Minister, Mr. Chifley, has over and over again emphasised that there are two essential things if we are to get back to pre-war conditions and gradually to improve on them. One of those things is the building up of an exportable surplus adequate for the meeting of our overseas obligations and for the purchasing of those things which we must have if Australia is to make progress; and the other essential is the preservation of the purchasing power of the Australian £. As Mr. Chifley has said so often each of these things depends upon maximum production.

I am wondering whether something more could be done than has been accomplished up to the present to impress upon the people generally, not only the trade unionists, the importance of these two things and what depends on them. Without these two factors there can be no successful rehabilitation of the soldier, no considerable progress in the housing of the people, no general improvement in our living conditions; and without these two considerations value cannot be given to the millions of pounds that are at present in the pockets of the people. It would be well if some campaign could be started, not to tell the people that they should not strike, and not to put forward dictatorial arguments, but, on the basis of the Prime Minister's repeated assertions, to tell the people, "Unless you are prepared to continue and increase production you cannot improve your conditions; you cannot rehabilitate the soldier; you cannot have houses and you cannot get value for the millions of pounds in your pockets."

As previous speakers have said, we have a system by which, without suspending pro-

duction, grievances can be settled and have been settled in the past in a way that has, I think, not been unsatisfactory to the worker. Things have gone almost too far to base much force on the argument that these strikes are lawless. We know they are lawless, but I do not know what steps the Government can take to enforce the law. I do feel, however, that something might be done in the way of inducing the people to understand that without increased production they can have none of the things they desire, and that at present Australia is throwing away the advantageous position it occupied at the end of the war, and is commencing to drift.

This may have nothing particular to do with the motion, but it is significant that in almost all the Australian States there is a partial failure of the harvests. That is something for which no Government is responsible, but it will greatly increase Australia's difficulties. I think we should have fewer of these interruptions to industries. I would be glad if people could be made to realise that the fact of having a lot of money in their pockets does not make for prosperity or security, and that we are not only throwing away the advantages that we had over other nations, but are slipping badly and provoking a crisis that may be far worse than the depression we experienced after the last war.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.58]: I received notice of this motion from Mr. Loton rather late this afternoon and, in the time at my disposal, I have endeavoured to secure information as to the present position with regard to this dispute. In the first place may I say that waterside workers are subject to a particular procedure when a dispute occurs, and that procedure has been carried out in this instance, so it is of no use Mr. Loton's saying that the Government has been allowing the matter to drift.

The usual procedure, when a dispute of this kind occurs, is for it to be submitted to a board of reference and when the board gives its decision all parties are expected to abide by it. In this case the waterside workers did not. Because they did not, the Commonwealth committee, known, I think, as the Port Employment Committee, dealt with the position which had arisen.

The men who refused to work this boat were suspended. That was disciplinary action on the part of the employment committee, which consists of representatives of the employers and the employees with a Commonwealth officer as chairman. From then on there have been a number of conferences, because the Waterside Workers' Union refused to carry on with any work at all on the waterfront until such time as the original dispute had been settled to their satisfaction.

I understand that even today a further meeting was held. To deal first of all with the question of allowing the matter to drift, I would say that I have no knowledge of the procedure so far as the Commonwealth authorities are concerned, except that the usual method was adopted. The Commonwealth Arbitration Court was notified of the dispute, and immediately the Commonwealth Industrial Commissioner, Mr. Craig, was appointed to take action in connection with it. He is called the Conciliation Commissioner. He has held meetings with the parties concerned and has given certain advice but, unfortunately, nothing has come of it. Today we are still in the same position as, or perhaps in a worse position than, we were a week or ten days ago. At a further meeting of the parties today, I believe certain suggestions were made which were not acceptable.

Unfortunately, this organisation has now decided that all other members employed on the waterfront shall be involved in the dispute. Mr. Loton says we should get in touch with the Prime Minister and ask him to restore shipping to Fremantle. I ask him what suggestion he could advance to enable the Prime Minister to restore the shipping position at Fremantle. This is a very serious industrial dispute. Anyone would think from the remarks of the hon. member that the State and Commonwealth Governments, and the other people associated with the trouble, do not appreciate its seriousness. We do appreciate how serious the dispute can be, just as much as do Mr. Loton and his colleagues. It is our endeavour at all times to bring these disputes to a satisfactory conclusion as quickly as possible. I do not know what other steps are to be taken at present.

So far as the State Government is concerned, it has no jurisdiction. This dispute comes within the Commonwealth jurisdic-

tion at present, and the various bodies which have been authorised to deal with industrial disputes are handling this one. One cannot do more than get the parties together to explore every avenue to reach a settlement. If one side, the workers on this occasion, do not see fit to accept the decision arrived at in conference with the reference committee, I am afraid I cannot offer any other suggestion that would bring the dispute to a satisfactory conclusion. I regret very much that the dispute should have assumed such serious dimensions. It is true, as Mr. Loton said, that it is having a serious effect upon the country, and upon producers in particular. All I can say on behalf of the Government is that we are just as keen as the hon. member is to secure industrial peace and that the workers should carry on their usual avocations, whether they are dealing with primary produce or not. The hon. member may rest assured that this Government will do all it can to bring the dispute to a satisfactory conclusion as early as possible.

We must remember that the procedure adopted is that recognised by all parties as being the most satisfactory. Sometimes, however, there are delays in reaching a decision. Meetings of the parties are called and conferences are held, and the result of each conference has to be reported to those immediately concerned. Sometimes these matters can be arranged quickly and the necessary action can be taken without delay. At other times, there is a delay of many hours. These delays have become very irritating to those people who are being so seriously affected by the dispute. There is little else I can say except I believe that in Mr. Craig, the Commonwealth Conciliation Commissioner, we have a man who has been engaged in this kind of work for many years. He has a fine reputation with all parties and, if he does not succeed, indeed the position must be very serious. I hope Mr. Loton will accept my assurance that this matter is not being allowed by the Government to drift, and that we are just as keen as he is to bring it to a satisfactory conclusion without any delay.

**HON. A. L. LOTON** (South-East—in reply) [5.8]: I would like to explain that I sent a message to the Chief Secretary at 2 o'clock marked "urgent," and asked that it should be delivered to his office at once. I understood that that had been done. In view

of the remarks of the Leader of the House, I ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

## **BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT** (No. 3).

Introduced by Hon. H. Seddon and read a first time.

## **BILL—MILK.**

Reports of Committee adopted.

## **BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.**

*In Committee.*

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. H. Seddon in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 59:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on this clause, to which an amendment had been moved by Mr. Wood, that paragraph (b) of proposed new Subsection (2) be struck out.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I do not desire to delay the Committee on this matter. I have here some figures which show how foolish it is for another body to lay down what local authorities should do in this connection. On the basis of a rate of  $\frac{1}{2}d.$ , the Moora Road Board has a revenue of £805 a year; the Narrogin Road Board, £269; Northampton, £422, and Bunbury, £215. These figures bear out my contention that the matter should be left to the local authorities concerned. The Moora Road Board would not spend £805 in the employment of an inspector and the other road boards would not spend the sums I have quoted in that direction. There is provision in the Act whereby a board may ask the Minister for exemption from payment of the rate if it has more money than it requires. Does not the clause we are dealing with over-ride that? Seeing that the Act does not provide for any minimum rate, I think there is conflict between the clause and the section concerned. I hope the amendment will be agreed to.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I support the amendment. The rating should be left to the local authority concerned. It is usual to rate according to requirements. The vermin funds cannot be used for any other work than the

eradication of vermin. If at the end of the financial year a board finds it has a substantial credit on the vermin account, it is customary to impose a lower rate in the ensuing year. In some districts vermin are not troublesome, and less money is required to deal with them. Boards should not have to strike a rate irrespective of whether or not the money is required. If a board does not strike a rate that will bring in the necessary funds, the department has the right to put a man on, at the board's expense, and charge it for the work done. I cannot see that the amendment will entail any risk and it will make the arrangement more businesslike for the local boards.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: This is not a recommendation of the Royal Commission; far from it. The commission recommended an urban rate of 5/16ths of a penny, a rural rate, central, of ¼d. and a road rate of ⅜d. A sum of £12,000 was to have been found by the Government for dealing with vermin in the North-West, and £2,500 by the Commissioner of Railways for dealing with vermin on railway property, and the Forests Department was to be held responsible to the central board for destroying rabbits on forestry holdings. Those rates would have produced £78,000 of which the urban contribution would have been £35,000. No urban rate is now proposed. This seems to be sharp practice on the part of the Government to get out of finding any money.

The Honorary Minister: How sharp practice?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The Minister has taken only one part of the report and told us that that was the recommendation of the Royal Commission. The Government, however, proposes to find no money at all. If the minimum rate were ¼d., I would feel inclined to support it, but a rate of ⅜d. would produce a substantial sum. Why should the people in urban areas who would contribute nearly half the total be excluded? The Royal Commission, after exhaustive inquiries, made sound recommendations, and surely the Government could have got nearer to them than it has in this Bill!

The HONORARY MINISTER: I regret that Mr. Baxter was so caustic in his

criticism. I have never yet put up a misleading statement in this Chamber. I stated the main points of the recommendations and what had been ignored, and explained that this proposal had been recommended by the commission. That is correct. I consider Mr. Baxter's criticism very unfair. Under Section 67, if a board has collected sufficient revenue to carry on in the following year, the secretary writes to the Minister and receives approval, and that is the end of the matter. Where, therefore, is the ground for the argument that a board would collect too much money and would continue to impose a rate? I do not know of any board in the State that has struck too high a rate. A road board would sooner raise money for roads than pile up a surplus in its vermin account. A majority of the Royal Commission understood the problems and we cannot afford to ignore the recommendation. Probably there would be a howl of disapproval if urban property were rated, but some boards do not stand up to their responsibilities and they should be made to realise what a menace vermin are. It is discouraging for one board that is doing its best, and rates accordingly, to find a neighbouring board doing nothing. That is why the Royal Commission recommended the imposition of this minimum rate, and I hope members will approve of it.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I cannot understand the Minister's statement. There are pages of recommendations in the report and the Government has adopted only about three of them. It has ignored probably dozens of others. Yet the Minister says the Government could not afford to ignore the commission's recommendations. Why adopt only a few?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The recommendations adopted have been agreed to by the departmental experts and advisers of the Government, and we cannot afford to ignore the combined opinions of those people. Nobody expected that all the recommendations would be adopted. Later we may find it necessary to adopt more of them, but this measure represents an attempt to awaken the people of the State to the danger of and economic loss occasioned by vermin. It will also have the effect of making local vermin boards that have not done their job realise their re-

sponsibilities. We cannot afford to ignore this recommendation.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Evidently the Government can afford to ignore the recommendation to impose an urban rate of 5/16ths of a penny and to provide £12,000 for the North-West, and for the Commissioner of Railways to provide £2,500 to destroy rabbits on his property. The Government has very conveniently ignored any cost to itself. Yet the Minister says the Government cannot afford to ignore the commission's recommendations. The Government has not ignored the unfortunate settlers who are now to be called upon to bear the whole off the burden. The destruction of vermin is a national duty affecting every person in the State, and therefore all should bear some of the expense. The annoying part is that the Government will not provide one penny piece. I hope members will support the amendment.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: The Minister has brought this argument on himself. He says that the Government is not able to ignore the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Here is a passage from the commission's report—

Hitherto, in our opinion, one of the greatest deterrents to any real concerted and whole-hearted attack upon the vermin in many districts has been the almost complete absence of activity on Crown lands, abandoned holdings and reserves.

Yet the Government has done nothing about that!

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

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	7
Majority for				8

#### AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. J. Mann.
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. R. M. Forrest.	Hon. C. H. Simpson.
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. J. G. Hishop	(Teller.)

#### NOES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. G. Frazer	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. E. H. Gray	(Teller.)

#### PAIR.

AYE.	No.
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. C. B. Williams

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

This deals with exemption from rating of rabbit-netted properties. Under the Act a man who rabbit-nets his property and keeps the fence in order is exempt from the local vermin rate, though he still has to pay the central vermin rate. That exemption is highly desirable. It has been said there are other vermin besides rabbits, but the principal cause of trouble in the agricultural districts is rabbits. In the Bill, the exemption is cut by 50 per cent., and I strongly object to that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Mr. Wood is quite right about this exemption for people who rabbit-net their properties. It is claimed that there are other vermin besides rabbits, but they are of little importance compared with rabbits.

The Honorary Minister: What about dogs?

Hon. L. CRAIG: A rabbit-netted fence is a great deterrent to dogs, also.

The Honorary Minister: It does not keep them all out.

Hon. L. CRAIG: An extra barb will just about keep dogs out, but dogs are of small importance in the farming areas. To fence a 640-acre paddock would cost £400. At five per cent, there is an annual charge of £20 a year, without depreciation, for the erection of the fence. That is a sufficient charge against the settler and it does not take into account the cost of maintenance. The elimination of vermin will never be a district or road board matter. It will always boil down, in the end, to action by the individual.

Today the people who are not suffering from vermin are those who have attended to their own affairs by erecting netting, poisoning, digging out burrows and so on. The people who are suffering from the depredations of rabbits and who are doing all the complaining are those who are unwilling or unable to cope with the pest. The greatest encouragement should be given to a man who is ready to spend money in erecting and maintaining a first-class rabbit-proof fence. Not only does he protect himself, but he protects his neighbours and



well. Two or three neighbours who instal a long fence drive the rabbit right away. The animals clear out of the timber country when they are cut off from their feeding grounds. It is wrong to deprive these people of half the exemption they have been enjoying in the past.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I hope the amendment will not be agreed to. This is what the Royal Commission had to say about the matter in paragraph 37 on page 14 of its report—

Exemption of Rabbit Netted Properties from Rates. 37. Hitherto properties that have been rabbit netted in compliance with the Act have been exempt from certain vermin rates, although subject to pay the cost of inspection in order that their effectiveness might be ascertained. This exemption appears to us to lose sight of the fact that there are many kinds of vermin other than rabbits which have to be dealt with and if we are to propose that practically every landholder in the State should contribute to the funds necessary for their eradication or better control, it is surely desirable that reconsideration should be given to the question of exemption of rabbit netted holdings. Indeed, were there any great increase in the number of holdings that were effectively rabbit netted, under the existing law the collection of local rates would be greatly minimised if it did not substantially cease; whereas the problem of other types of vermin would still remain.

Hon. L. Craig: They do not say what they are.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I will tell the hon. member. Evidently he has not been farming in the backblocks. This paragraph continues—

But we have in mind also the fact that there has been a statutory undertaking that such persons as rabbit netted effectively would then be exempted from rates. Taking all these aspects into consideration we recommend that the law be amended so that instead of a property being exempted from the whole of the rates as at present provided, it should be exempt from 50 per cent. only.

The reason that recommendation was submitted was that it was supported by a large number of boards in the State. I am informed that the Road Board Association has repeatedly requested that this amendment be made. I agree with what has been said about the man who nets his property, but there are half-bred wild dogs that can jump anything. Where I was reared as a farmer, a few wild dogs destroyed a number of lambs in one season, and every prop-

erty was effectively netted, with a barbed wire on top.

Hon. L. Craig: It is the individual who gets the dogs.

The HONORARY MINISTER: But they have to be paid to get them. It costs money. We must take notice of what the local authorities and the local vermin boards and the Poad Board Association say.

Hon. G. B. Wood: What about the farmers?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The members of the Road Board Association are nearly all farmers. Mr. Tuckey is president of the association and I am looking to him to vote against this amendment. Seeing that the provision has been requested by the local authorities in the country and recommended by the commission and that it has received the concurrence of the Government, the amendment should be defeated.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I feel like taking the risk of supporting the amendment. With previous speakers, I consider that the rabbit menace is the worst with which the farmers have had to contend and we should encourage men to net their properties. To dig out burrows and to poison rabbits from year to year costs hundreds of thousands of pounds and that is why men go to the extent of erecting a fence rather than waste a certain amount of money every year. One of the ways to encourage others to do that is to allow this exemption from rating to continue. I do not know of any road boards or local authorities that have asked for this provision. I have no knowledge of it.

The Honorary Minister: Your association has.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: It seems to me to be quite a new thing for boards to ask for this provision. I do not consider that vermin other than rabbits are very serious at all. I shall vote for the amendment.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	16
Noes	..	..	..	6
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	10
				—

## AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter  
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch  
Hon. L. Craig  
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt  
Hon. R. M. Forrest  
Hon. E. H. H. Hall  
Hon. W. R. Hall  
Hon. J. G. Hislop

Hon. W. J. Mann  
Hon. G. W. Miles  
Hon. H. S. W. Parker  
Hon. H. L. Roche  
Hon. C. H. Simpson  
Hon. H. Tuckey  
Hon. G. B. Wood  
Hon. F. E. Gibson  
(Teller.)

## NOES.

Hon. G. Bennetts  
Hon. J. M. Drew  
Hon. E. H. Gray

Hon. E. M. Heenan  
Hon. W. H. Kitson  
Hon. G. Fraser  
(Teller.)

## PAIR.

Aye.  
Hon. A. L. Loton

No.  
Hon. C. B. Williams

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (c) be struck out.

Amendment put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## **BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

Report of Committee adopted.

## **BILL—CHARITABLE COLLECTIONS.**

### *Second Reading.*

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the previous day of the debate on the second reading.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: May I ask for a further adjournment of the debate, Mr. President, in order to examine the Bill?

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member has already had an adjournment.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I move—  
That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee.*

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

## **RESOLUTION—WAR FUNDS REGULATION ACT.**

### *Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying it had concurred in the Council's resolution.

## **BILL—FISHERIES ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *In Committee.*

Hon. H. Seddon in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Constitution of professional fishermen's advisory committee:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This clause provides for an advisory committee to be appointed. I will give the Committee information that I have obtained in reply to the remarks of Mr. E. H. H. Hall on the second reading. He desired information as to the Conference of Licensed Fishermen, and its contention that the Bill should remain in abeyance pending the introduction of another measure which it stated was being prepared for the control of the fishing industry. The information supplied to Mr. Hall was inaccurate. The measure referred to is a fish marketing Bill, which has been prepared, but in view of the fact that the recent Commonwealth referendum proposals were not carried, I think it certain that that Bill will have to be recast before being dealt with. It has no effect, as far as this measure is concerned.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: I have a letter from that body at Fremantle, asking me to oppose this Bill. I was not here when Mr. Hall spoke on the second reading, but the Fremantle fishermen particularly seem to be very much against the measure.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 and 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—New Section 36A:

Hon. L. CRAIG: This clause gives the Minister power to control the purchase and sale of all fishing equipment, and I take it that means within the State. Any fisherman can purchase equipment from another State—if he can obtain it—and unless it is controlled federally the Minister will have no control over it outside of Western Australia.

The Chief Secretary: We cannot prevent them buying gear from the Eastern States.

Hon. L. CRAIG: We can only control the gear that is sold in Western Australia.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is essential that this power be left with the Minister. Fishing gear and equipment are at present controlled under the National Security Re-

gulations, the idea being to prevent any person or persons obtaining a great portion of the equipment available at any time, and to ensure that those most in need of it receive fair consideration. Nothing in the Bill would prevent fishermen purchasing equipment outside the State, and I believe the other States are taking action similar to this. Owing to the war there has been a severe shortage of fishing gear over the last two or three years, particularly, and I understand it is likely to continue for another year or two. While that position exists it is felt that control is necessary to ensure fair distribution of supplies.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I think the clause is quite all right, and it really seeks, in effect, to extend for another 12 months what has been done under the National Security Regulations. I have not been in close association with fishermen, but I heard one man say that the outports had been at a disadvantage. I do not think we should interfere with the clause.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I would further point out to Mr. Craig that this provision will have application for 12 months only.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, I understand that.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—Protection of inspectors:

Hon. L. CRAIG: The proposed new Section 48A sets out that no inspector shall be liable under this Act for anything done or any seizure for which there was reasonable cause. I do not think such a provision would hold water for a moment in a court of law. Who will determine what is "reasonable cause"?

The Chief Secretary: The court.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not know how the court could determine that question.

Hon. W. J. MANN: On the evidence.

The Chief Secretary: It is the only body that could determine such a matter.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## BILL—LAND ALIENATION RESTRICTION ACT CONTINUANCE.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [6.3]: Seeing that the Act which the Bill seeks to continue was introduced in another place by the leader of the party to which I belong and that the Minister for Lands submitted the Bill now before us for consideration in order to continue that legislation, I shall offer no objection to it. I wish to take advantage of the opportunity, however, to inform the Minister that a considerable area of land suitable for the growing of tomatoes, which is situated just outside Geraldton, has been held up for some time.

I have received numerous letters from returned men who are anxious to engage in the industry of tomato-growing, asking me to make inquiries at the Lands Department about the release of the area. Upon making those inquiries, I was told, quite courteously, that the land had been withdrawn from selection. When the Minister for Lands introduced this Bill in another place he referred to this phase, and said, "This is the law, and that is all there is about it." That is all very fine, but we should be able to tell these returned men, on whose behalf we are anxious to do all we possibly can to fulfil the promises made to them when they were in the Fighting Forces, something more than that. They are already waiting to go on this land and, of course, the point I make about that particular area also applies to land in other parts of the State.

The land I have in mind in the Geraldton area is portion of a reserve. The size of a block adequate for tomato-growing purposes is not extensive, and in all about 234 acres are held up, which would enable quite a number of men to be settled there. When will we reach finality in the matter? That is what I want to know. If the Minister can give me some information on the point, I shall be satisfied with ventilating the matter. On behalf of the men concerned, I ask that a decision be reached.

The Chief Secretary: Why not approach the Minister?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: I hold the Minister in high respect, but I think we should have something more than just a mere statement that this is the law, and that is all there is to it. I would like the Honorary Minister to make a statement regarding the point I have raised, so that I may be able to inform the returned soldiers that a decision will be reached in the near future.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. E. H. Gray—West—in reply) [6.7]: Obviously, I cannot give the hon. member an official reply to the question he has submitted. I should advise him to see the Director of Land Settlement, Mr. Fyfe, and that should be very easy to arrange. Everyone knows the difficulties that have confronted Mr. Fyfe and his officers in regard to this problem.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Yes, but it is time something was done.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the hon. member were to approach Mr. Fyfe on the subject, I am sure he would receive a satisfactory reply.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

*House adjourned at 6.10 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 7th November, 1946.*

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

## QUESTIONS.

### FISH.

*As to Quantity Canned, Exported, Etc.*

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister for the North-West:

1, What weight of fish was exported from Western Australia during the year ended the 30th June, 1946?

2, What proportion of such exports were—(a) canned; (b) not canned; (c) sent to the Eastern States of Australia; (d) sent to other countries?

3, What weight of fish during the same period left this State as ships' stores?

4, Since operations commenced in Perth for the canning of Perth herring up to the 30th June, 1946, has the take of Perth herring from the Swan River for such canning operations increased or decreased?

5, What is the percentage increase or decrease?

6, To what causes is such increase or decrease attributed?

7, Is it a fact that the supplies of Perth herring in the Swan River have been seriously depleted?

8, Are exports of fish from this State to the Eastern States continuing?

9, Will such exports accentuate the shortage of fish for local food consumption?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 38,736 lbs.

2, (a) 23,690 lbs.; (b) 15,046 lbs.; (c) 19,895 lbs.; (d) 18,841 lbs.

3, As quantities of fish for ships' stores are purchased for cash, the providers are unable to furnish accurate details of such purchases.

4, Decreased.

5, 43 per cent.

6, During the war period Perth herring was being caught compulsorily by fishermen specially reserved from Army service for the purpose of catching this species, which was then being canned for the Armed Forces. Since the cessation of hostilities, no compulsion has been exercised and fishermen have to a large extent shifted their operations to species for which they receive a much higher