

Mr. Moir: What about the hole in the ground?

Mr. COURT: A hole in the ground that is not worth tuppence until someone gets the iron ore out of the ground, transports it, and sells it for us! If there is some Japanese capital in the background—and I do not know whether there will be—what of it? They are going to be the best and the most likely buyers of the huge quantities of iron ore that we want to sell.

Mr. Tonkin: Of course, it is ridiculous to say that the iron ore is not worth tuppence.

Mr. COURT: I would ask the honourable member, in all sincerity, what was Koolya-nobbing worth until we made a deal with B.H.P.? It would have stayed there as an ugly mass for all time, not earning a shilling.

Mr. Tonkin: Nonsense!

Mr. COURT: It would not have employed a man or a woman. There would not even have been a caretaker. We tried to turn it into something that is living, a real industry that will create economic activity in our time.

The honourable member referred to the fact that we should be getting the upgrading plant earlier. We would like it earlier. When we are negotiating agreements of this nature we have to fix the minimum commitment of a company, so that it has to do certain things within a prescribed time, always hoping that the company will fulfil its commitments quicker. I am confident, from my discussions with the company, that it will do it quicker.

The trend in the world is towards partly processed materials for blast furnace feed. The company will want to use the fines and convert them into pellets and other partly processed materials, so that the company can compete with the rest of the world.

In conclusion, I want to make this final observation: It is the Government's desire that we get these deposits opened up; and that roads, railways, ports, and towns be established. It is our desire to get this done in our time, and not leave the iron ore lying in the ground, hoping that somebody will come along and do something about it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

House adjourned at 11.28 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 16th October, 1963

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The PRESIDENT (The Hon. L. C. Diver) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m. and read prayers.

BILLS (4): ASSENT

Message from the Lieutenant-Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1. Stamp Act Amendment Bill.
2. Bunbury Harbour Board Act Amendment Bill.
3. Albany Harbour Board Act Amendment Bill.
4. Motor Vehicle Drivers Instructors Bill.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

WOOL

Branding before Sale

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

- (1) Are there any regulations in force whereby wool either in bales or bags shall be branded by the producer before being offered for sale?
- (2) If the answer to No. (1) is "No", would it be possible to promulgate regulations to give effect to the above requirements?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) Consideration could be given for the promulgation of regulations if thought necessary.

RAIL AND BUS SERVICES

First and Second Class Fares

The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What are the first and second class fares, including sleeping berths where applicable, for—

(a) single; and

(b) return

tickets for the following combined rail and bus services—

Perth to Kalgoorlie;

Perth to Norseman;

Perth to Salmon Gums;

Perth to Grass Patch;

Perth to Scaddan;

Perth to Gibson; and

Perth to Esperance

and for the following bus services—

Kalgoorlie to Norseman;

Kalgoorlie to Salmon Gums;

Kalgoorlie to Grass Patch;

Kalgoorlie to Scaddan;

Kalgoorlie to Gibson; and

Kalgoorlie to Esperance?

- (2) Is an increase in these fares contemplated; and, if so, what will be the new rates?
- (3) Is it correct that goldfields workers' concessions will be discontinued?

Privilege Tickets

- (4) (a) Is it correct that railway employees are debarred from travelling on road bus services when using privilege tickets?
- (b) If so, why?

Increase in Fares

- (5) Is it a fact that all fares will rise on—
- (a) W.A. Government Railways;
- (b) W.A. Government Road Bus Services;

(c) (i) first class; and

(ii) second class sleeping berths?

- (6) If the answer to No. (5) is in the affirmative, what percentage increase will it be in each case?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

I am advised that the department is in the course of compiling the information required by the honourable member. The information is extensive and it will be made available to the honourable member as soon as possible.

LIVESTOCK

Diseases Introduced since World War II

3. The Hon. G. C. MacKINNON asked the Minister for Mines:

- (1) What diseases affecting livestock, previously unknown in Australia, have been introduced since World War II?

- (2) Which of these diseases are now prevalent in Western Australia?

Foot and Mouth Disease

- (3) Is the Department of Agriculture concerned about the possibility of the introduction of foot and mouth disease via Papua and New Guinea now that Indonesia controls West Irian?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

- (1) Diseases which have been recognised in Australia within the last few years include sporadic bovine encephalomyelitis, virus diarrhoea in cattle, equine infectious anaemia, infectious bovine rhinotracheitis, low-grade swine fever, inclusion body rhinitis and talfan disease in pigs.

It cannot be concluded, however, that these diseases are necessarily recent introductions; it is generally assumed that they have been present, although unrecognised, for some time, and that their recognition now as independent entities has been largely due to the development of new laboratory techniques and procedures, particularly in respect of virus work.

- (2) Virus diarrhoea in cattle, infectious bovine rhinotracheitis, low-grade swine fever, inclusion body rhinitis and talfan disease in pigs have been diagnosed in Western Australia.
- (3) The Department of Agriculture is concerned with the possibility of the introduction of foot and mouth disease via Papua and New Guinea now that Indonesia controls West Irian.

The veterinary authorities in the Territory of Papua New Guinea have recently taken active steps to strengthen quarantine precautions in order to ensure that foot and mouth disease, as well as other exotic diseases, does not enter the Territory from West Irian.

RAILWAY ROAD SERVICE: KALGOORLIE-ESPERANCE

Location of Kalgoorlie Terminus

- 4 The Hon. R. H. C. STUBBS asked the Minister for Mines:

Will the Minister give consideration to locating the terminus of the Kalgoorlie-Esperance road bus service in front of the Kalgoorlie platform exit instead of the present location which is poorly lighted and in close proximity to the station toilets?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH replied:

Buses departing from Kalgoorlie leave from the front of the station building immediately east of the main exit in front of the booking office and the rear of the refreshment rooms. This is in daylight and the question of lighting does not arise.

Incoming buses arrive at 8 p.m. and are halted immediately in front of the parcels building which is also the cloak room and is considered to be as well lit as the front of the station proper. It is also equipped with a verandah providing shelter.

This has been found the most suitable arrangement owing to the necessity to keep the main exit and surroundings clear due to the arrival of the incoming westbound transcontinental express, and to avoid excessive congestion.

FISHING INDUSTRY

Inquiry by Select Committee: Motion

THE HON. R. THOMPSON (West) [4.42 p.m.]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the Fisheries Act, 1905-1962, in its application to the crayfishing industry in particular, and make such recommendations as are considered necessary to safeguard the future of the fishing grounds and the industry generally.

Over the past few years I have had many approaches made to me by professional fishermen—crayfishermen—regarding what

is taking place in the industry. We know that from time to time many fishermen are prosecuted for having in their possession undersized crayfish. These fishermen are the ones who are ruining the industry for the sincere and legitimate operators. At the request of the legitimate operators, just after Christmas of this year, I undertook a survey along our coastline and I inspected for myself, at first-hand, some of the things that are taking place in this industry.

I visited Geraldton, Jurien Bay, Dongara, Lancelin, Ledge Point, Fremantle, and areas around Safety Bay from where a few crayfish are still brought in. I found that the main complaint the fishermen have is the catching by some operators of what is termed in the industry as "furries." These are fish which do not come up to the required 3-inch measurement—that is when measured by the standard gauge, one of which I have in my hand.

This gauge must clamp between what is commonly known as the horns on the crayfish and the carapace at the back, and the clamp must hang upside down. On the furries this gauge will not stick in position and therefore they could be a 32nd or 16th of an inch under size. If fishermen are caught with undersized fish in their possession, they are definitely prosecuted.

However, in some processing plants, situated conveniently to the fishing grounds or anchorages, undersized crayfish are being processed wholesale—unrestrictedly. On freezer boats the same sort of thing is taking place. It is estimated that at shore-based plants, 60 to 80 bags of furries are being processed daily, and on the freezer boats 100 bags a day are being processed. When one realises that there are 80 to 90 crayfish in a bag, one can appreciate the magnitude of this processing, and how many undersized fish are being caught and handled.

The peculiar thing about the whole business is that although the gauge will not hold fast to an undersized crayfish, because it does not measure the required 3 inches, if one goes to the trouble of removing the tail from the head, in nine cases out of ten one finds that the tail will weigh more than the required 5 oz. minimum weight.

I have in a freezer at Fremantle samples of undersized crayfish, but unfortunately I could not bring them here today to show them to the House, as was my intention. A large consignment of fish is stacked on top of the samples and they are not readily available. However, I will attempt to obtain these samples so that some other member can demonstrate them to the House during the course of this debate.

I have seen the processing of under-weight tails with my own eyes on numerous occasions, and it appears that some companies are not being properly policed, or the inspectors are not paying sufficient attention to them. I have seen in some processing plants, where the tails have not weighed the 5 oz. minimum, processors smashing the tails and making up the required weight with portions of other fish by pushing pieces under the shell, or up the centre portion of the fish which had been removed from the head. That is the sort of thing that goes on.

The most glaring instance I witnessed was at Ledge Point where fishermen bring their legitimate catches of crayfish ashore in their dinghies. Various processing firms, usually using 4-wheel drive vehicles, drive down to the beach and pick up the bags of crayfish from the dinghies. They take the bags back, weigh them, and then put them on trucks for transportation to the processing factories.

At Ledge Point there is a further method used, an illegal one, and fishermen there are partly processing furies on board small boats. The fishermen pull the tails from the heads and put them in ordinary bags with roughly 40 to 50 lb. of tails to a bag. When they have disposed of their legitimate-sized crayfish they leave the other bags of furies in their dinghies. Shortly after leaving their dinghies, a jeep or a land rover drives along the beach and takes possession of the tails that have been dealt with on the small craft. These are taken to a processing factory where they are weighed, and where the fishermen receive 5s. a lb. for them. That is the price set on them by the processor. In actual fact the price is about two-thirds the price of a normal sized crayfish.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: What is the penalty if they are caught?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is up to the magistrate. There could be a penalty for every tail in their possession. The Act, however, specifically states that it is illegal to process crayfish unless a license is issued for that purpose. The freezer boats and the processing factories have such a license.

This small factory at Ledge Point has been in operation for some years, and I would say that 99 per cent. of its crayfish are illegally processed on board small craft, after which they are picked up by the works jeep and transported for further processing. If the Fisheries Department would like to make a check, it would find that the size of tails that the man in question—the processor—has processed would be of a minimum weight throughout. Yet this same man has been allowed to carry on for quite a number of years, during which he has built up a reasonable business.

The fishermen at this particular place considered that certain fishermen at Ledge Point were allowed to do as they pleased. They could sell undersized crayfish without suffering any penalty at all, while those legitimately engaged in this business for a number of years, and who wished to continue in the trade, found that if they made a mistake they were penalised.

This fact incensed the fishermen there to such an extent that they decided to bring the matter to a head. Accordingly 10 owners of craft in that vicinity decided to place on the Fremantle Fishermen's Co-operative truck 10 bags of undersized crayfish, and on the 19th March this is just what they did. They decided to consign one bag of crayfish each. As I have said, while the driver was absent on the beach they placed 10 bags of crayfish, which were unlabelled, on his truck.

They let it be known throughout the Ledge Point area that they were going to consign undersized crayfish. As a result at 5 p.m. on the 19th March an inspector approached the Fremantle Fishermen's Co-operative truck and inspected the 10 bags of crayfish which were undersized. The driver was not present, and the fish were put on the truck unbeknown to him.

I have here with me a transcript of the evidence of the case which came before the court of petty session at Fremantle on the 26th of August, this year. I think it might be as well to quote some of that evidence, so that the Minister and the House will know that the Act under which the department is asked to operate is not watertight—not by any stretch of the imagination. The case is one between the Fisheries Department and the driver of the truck, whose name is Joseph Pittorino. The evidence of the inspector concerned is as follows:—

On the 19th March, 1963, about 5 p.m. I was at Ledge Point. I was inspecting Fremantle Fishermen's Co-op truck. I observed 10 bags on rear of truck without labels. I spoke to Joe Pittorino the driver of the vehicle and who was changing a tyre. I asked why bags did not have labels on them. He replied I have not put them on yet. I inspected the bags and found all crayfish were undersize. I spoke to Joe Pittorino, the driver. I asked him if he knew that they were undersize. He said he was instructed to cart them for Fremantle Fishermen's Co-op. I measured these crayfish. All undersize 890 of them. I measured them with standard 3 inch gauge for crayfish. I checked them with Vernier Callipers and was correct.

The bags were at rear of truck with no labels. The bags with labels on were at front of truck. These 10 bags were separate from other bags.

His cross-examination brought out the following:—

Pittorino and I only present. Bags were sewn up. I did not know where came from. I tried to find out where came from. It is not practice of driver to inspect bags sewn up. These 10 bags separate from others. I did not see defendant put them there. I measured some crayfish on truck and undersize. I had supervising inspector there with me. Wrote out receipt, gave to defendant. Driver of truck changing tyre when I saw him. I put 10 bags into my vehicle. At first he said he did not know whose they where he said he was only instructed to cart them. He said OK they are undersized and I know these are undersized. They spoke to supervising inspector.

At this stage it was brought out in evidence that 20 of the fishermen approached and spoke to the supervising inspector who was a little distance away from the actual truck. I will continue to read the evidence from there.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Before you do, is there a transcript of evidence of a charge?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes. It reads as follows:—

I did not hear conversation. They were angry. Truck had not started to Fremantle. He said they had to be carted. I thought they were going to be carted as on back of truck. I am certain driver knew they were on truck. The other bags labelled to Fremantle. These 10 not labelled. Defendant did not say how he knew fish undersize. All bags sewn up.

That was the evidence of the fisheries' inspector. The sworn evidence of Joseph Pittorino was as follows:—

I drive truck which transports crayfish from Ledge Point to Fremantle. I get truck at Fremantle take to Ledge Point with bait and stores.

At Ledge Point I put these on a truck and take to beach and unload there.

On arrival of boats I pick up crayfish and take them to truck. Some bags labelled and sometimes I have to go and get fishermen to put labels on. If forgotten on beach fishermen put them on truck.

Arrival of Boats spread out over afternoon. I would make 4 or 5 trips to truck in 4 wheel drive vehicle. I have to fuel boats, weigh Crayfish. Write out dockets. Taking orders for next day. Others drive blitz as well as me. To carry pots or ropes. Sometimes they use it to take crayfish to their camp. They use it to put crays on my truck.

I never inspect bags of crayfish. It is not my job. So long as they have labels it is not my job. Bags all sewn up when delivered. When I have got all crayfish make sure all bags tagged and leave for Fremantle.

Still I more boat to come in when crayfish seized. I don't know where they came from. Had not inspected contents of bags. I started to change tyre. I don't know who owns all crayfish on truck. If I see without labels I go round and ask fishermen to put on labels. They are put on my truck as truck coming from beach. My truck has canopy over it. If I find bags unlabelled tell fishermen to put them on. If I don't get them labelled I leave them on 4 wheel drive vehicle. I told Inspector they were not my crayfish and I knew nothing about them. I did not know undersize. I did not see bags put on truck. I did not put them on truck. I did not intend to transport unlabelled bags to Fremantle. The crayfish were not measured by Inspector in my present. When fish seized I was changing tyre. Inspector Crawford came along, he said he wanted to look in truck. I said it was alright. He got up on truck I was changing tyre. He got down and said some bags without labels and I said they might have to put them on. He said they are all undersize. Do you know anything about it. I said no I don't know anything about it. 3 Fishermen helping me to change tyre and he said to them are they yours. They said no. Inspector said he would take them. I said he could do what he wanted with them. He got up in truck and took crayfish.

Quite a lot of argument on the section of the Act under which he was charged then transpired—section 24B, which lays down the penalty for the person or persons who transport or have in their possession undersized crayfish. This truck driver was adamant that he did not know these crayfish were packed on his truck and his lawyer called one of the fishermen concerned—one, Vince Carbonella, skipper of the boat *Messina*—as a witness. This was his evidence—

Remember 19th March, 1963. I put crayfish 1 bag on Pittorino's truck. No label on bag, would put one on later.

That is the tag, I take it—

Never told Pittorino I put bag on truck, nor size of crayfish in bag. We watched other Companies sending undersized fish and we thought we would send 1 bag each undersize to Perth to stop undersize fishing. A number of us decided to send 1 bag each. I saw Inspector after crayfish seized. I went to Melino's place. Crawford and Bramley were there.

We tried to explain why we did it. Talked to Bramley, not Crawford. He asked me whose crayfish, I said 1 bag each. He asked Crawford to take our names.

Under cross-examination he said—

I admit I was in possession of 1 bag of undersize crays on 19th March, 1963. When I put bag on truck Pittorino in shed on jetty. Plan discussed night before, all fishermen present. Everyone knew about it. Did not tell Pittorino. We knew he would not take it if we told him. We would not get Pittorino into trouble.

I don't know what time Pittorino arrived at Ledge Point on 19th March, 1963. We discussed it night before.

I think that proves these fishermen are convinced of what is going on; and they thought that by appearing before the court they would open up this case—which they were prepared to fight—and expose the actions of many fishermen who are ruining the fishing grounds in Western Australia at the present time.

Before this court case took place, I wrote to the Minister for Fisheries on the 3rd April this year as follows:—

I have been requested by a group of crayfishermen, operating from Ledge Point, to obtain the following information from you:

On the 19th March, 1963, at 6 p.m. Inspector Crawford and another inspector (name unknown) confiscated 10 bags of undersized crayfish from the Fremantle Fishermen's Co-op. truck:

- (1) What action is contemplated against the fishermen?
- (2) Where are the crayfish at present kept?

I received an acknowledgment, and then, on the 10th April, I received the following letter from the Minister:—

Further to my acknowledgment to you dated 8th April, 1963, relevant to the confiscation of a quantity of undersize crayfish from the Fremantle Fishermen's Co-op. truck, I have now been advised by the Director of Fisheries that the greater proportion of the confiscated crayfish have been destroyed and the remainder are held in cold storage.

It is proposed to prosecute the driver of the truck under section 24B of the Fisheries Act for carrying or transporting unlabelled containers of crayfish. No action is contemplated against any fishermen.

Therefore, one can see that section 24B of the Act, when it comes to a point of law, is not too good, because in this case the magistrate in arriving at a decision

asked a lot of questions of the fisheries inspector and of Pittorino, who was the accused.

I think section 24B of the Act says that one is not permitted to transport undersized crayfish. If bags are labelled and sewn up the truck driver is not expected to inspect what he is carrying and he is not expected to know what is inside the bags. Therefore, the magistrate dismissed that charge against Pittorino for being in possession of undersized crayfish; but, on a second charge, the magistrate convicted him and fined him the sum of £10 for transporting undersized crayfish.

It seems rather ridiculous that although a person is not expected or supposed to know what is in the bags, because they are sewn up, he can be fined £10 for the transporting of undersized crayfish. Actually, the truck engine had not been started and the truck had not left the beach. I think it was a ridiculous decision to arrive at; and that is one of the things this Select Committee—should the House agree to its appointment—could have a close look at.

When I received this transcript, dated the 4th September, 1963, I also received a letter from the solicitor, who wrote as follows:—

Re: Fisheries Prosecution—Pittorino

I have pleasure in enclosing certified copy of the notes of evidence taken in the above prosecution.

I trust that these notes will be of some assistance to you in the presentation of your case before the House.

I wish you every success in your future efforts as I realise how vital the correct control of the fishing industry is to the future of this State.

That gentleman is a person who, in nine cases of 10, goes into court to defend people who are in possession of undersized crayfish; and he knows how rife the taking of undersized crayfish is in Western Australia.

When these crayfish were seized at Ledge Point, a group of 20 fishermen approached the fisheries inspector in a most hostile manner and demanded that their names be taken so that the whole matter could be cleaned up, even if it went to a Supreme Court action. However, no names were taken. I think they said that the truck driver knew nothing about these crayfish and they wanted the inspector to pinch them. However, as I said before, not one name was taken. These fishermen were prepared, voluntarily, to go as witnesses in this case when it was before the court. It was only necessary to have one witness there, because he admitted he was part and parcel of the offence, just as the other nine were. They realise what is going on. They know that 60 to 80 bags are taken from that coastline each day and sold, to the detriment of the industry.

I received another complaint from a fisherman regarding processing of fish at Fremantle. This man has been a fisherman for many years and has had no prosecutions whatsoever. The gauge I have here is usually hung on a piece of cord and when undersized crayfish are measured, the gauge is dropped and either hits the side of the ship or rests on the side of the ship and the gauge can be bent a fraction of an inch—as can be seen by this one. This can happen quite easily after several knocks, and one can be in possession of a gauge with a bent end and can use it to measure crayfish.

This fisherman sent consignments of crayfish to Fremantle and on three days running they were confiscated. He was not notified by the department, and it was not until the co-operative sent him a letter that he was told his last three consignments of crayfish had been confiscated. As a result, he was fined £116; and this would not have happened had the department notified him that he was measuring with a bent gauge, or that a percentage of his crayfish were undersized. The department did not do that, and I think it is wrong so far as the industry is concerned.

If it is the intention of the department to prosecute a fisherman, he should be notified whether it is a first offence, second offence, and so on, so that he can rectify the position.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: In regard to the evidence you are quoting, when was this case heard?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: On the 26th August, this year.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Is there any question of the people appealing against the decision?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: No, because it was the truck driver who was prosecuted. If it had been the fishermen, they were prepared to take it to the Supreme Court. I have been told this afternoon that the fisherman who gave evidence has received a summons. I do not know whether it is because of his admission in court, and I do not know for sure that he received a summons.

I think I have proved to the House that this taking of undersized crayfish by indiscriminate people is rife in Western Australian waters. The legitimate fishermen, who wish to preserve the industry for their livelihood in the years to come, want some action. They have sent deputations to the Fisheries Department without any success whatever. They requested me to move for a Royal Commission, but under the circumstances I thought it would be the right action to have a Select Committee appointed. In this way members of this House would be appointed to take such evidence as they require. I think all members of this House want to preserve our

fishing industry, and particularly the cray-fishing industry, which is a large dollar earner for us.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The Minister for Fisheries has done a great deal for the crayfishing industry. He has appointed additional inspectors and turned his attention to a lot of the problems of the fishermen.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I was coming to that point. The inspectors have a difficult job to carry out, and no-one will deny that. Along the coast between Fremantle and Geraldton there could be 20, 30, or 40 places where fishermen could bring undersized crayfish ashore, load them on to vehicles, and transport them to markets. It is a difficult problem and one which will probably never be policed completely.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: They are even cooked in mobile cookers.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Yes; I saw on a property a cooker which was there unknown to the owner of the property. This cooker was being used by fishermen who were taking undersized crayfish.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: This Select Committee could also help the Fisheries Department.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That is so. I am not moving for a Select Committee which would react against the Fisheries Department. My object is to help the department iron-out and rectify some of the anomalies that exist at present.

Serious consideration will have to be given to a proposal for a levy on all crayfish taken. I think this will be necessary.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: The crayfishermen would not accept that condition.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It does not matter what the crayfishermen want to accept. I say that if the industry is to be preserved, the men who want to stay in it will not object to a levy. The men to whom I have spoken are in favour of a levy. It is the get-rich-quick people who do not want the levy, because they are only in the industry to exploit the crayfish and the industry, generally. That type of person usually gets out as quickly as possible and takes on another business.

Another point which I think should receive consideration—and this has been pointed out to me by the men in the industry—is the closing of the season while the crayfish are spawning. This would be for three weeks during January in our northern waters. This would ensure that the eggs were laid and there would be a regrowth right throughout the industry, and it would be kept going for years.

At present crayfish are caught while spawning. In the main, they are not taken for sale—they are not stripped of their

eggs. Such crayfish are thrown back into the water and when they hit the water they are usually stunned and eventually die. Those crayfish and their millions of eggs are lost, and so the fishing grounds are weakened year after year by this action of taking crayfish out of the water and throwing them back again.

As the Minister for Local Government mentioned, crayfish are being taken, cooked, and transported to country centres. There is an even worse feature than that. The crayfishing season is closed at present but some fishermen do not recognise the closing of the season, and I would estimate that at present there would be 40 or 50 boats working between Fremantle and Geraldton. Those boats work through the full season. I know that some prosecutions are pending. If processing premises could be policed it would be found that quite a lot of establishments are receiving fresh crayfish all the time, and, in the main, they are undersized at the present moment. They are being caught and cooked illegally.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I am wondering what policing efforts the Select Committee would be able to add to this situation.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: I think that if consideration were given to imposing a levy, the inspectors could be kept on the grounds all the year round rather than only during the season.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The Minister has appointed more inspectors without a levy.

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: It would not make any difference if the Minister doubled the present number of inspectors; they still would not be able to police the industry completely.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: How will a Select Committee help to police the industry completely?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: When the Select Committee takes evidence from the fishermen, it will hear points of view on how this can be done. I do not want to outline the fishermen's views at this stage. They will make their suggestions to the Select Committee.

The limitation of pots this year may assist in preserving the industry. Getting back to what the Minister said when he interjected and wanted to know how the industry could be policed, I would say that one of the first things to be done would be to have an inspector on every freezer boat. Those operators are under no supervision whatsoever. They are working miles off shore and they can process tails even though the crayfish do not measure the required three inches. Quite often an undersized tail is over the 5 oz. minimum required. Those tails are processed and no controls whatsoever are

exercised on the fishermen. Very rarely does a fisheries launch happen to pass by, as the freezer boats usually operate out of sight of land.

An important provision which should be put into legislation, and which the Select Committee would be able to investigate closely, is one which deals with the number of minimum weight tails processed by the freezer boats. When an inspector notices a processor who is continually processing minimum weight tails—and there is such a processor, who is processing perhaps 1,200 or 1,400 boxes of crayfish a year; and there would not be many boxes of crayfish over the minimum weight—then that operator should be watched.

Another angle which could be investigated is the complete cancellation of licenses of the boats and the crewmen. Also, crewmen could be registered with the Fisheries Department to work on particular boats. This would assist greatly, because at present if a man is prosecuted for handling undersized crayfish, he can straightaway get a job on another boat; and this, in fact, is what is happening. If a man was registered to work on a particular boat, and he was caught with undersized crayfish in his possession, then he would lose his license and not be permitted to work on another boat. Action has to be taken against the people who are ruining the industry.

The fishermen have, this year, formed an organisation, and within four weeks it had a membership of between 350 and 400. Those men are prepared to see this thing through and do all in their power to assist the department. They want to see a sufficient number of inspectors employed by the Fisheries Department, and they have other ideas to put to the Select Committee for the policing of the industry by their own members.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Would they be prepared to put their ideas to the Minister?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: They have put their ideas to the Minister.

The Hon. L. A. Logan: Did they put them to the advisory committee which meets every year, and which met only last week in Fremantle?

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: That I do not know. I did read in the Press that the advisory committee was going to take evidence.

Many ideas—and good ones—concerning the crayfishing industry have already been put to the Minister for Fisheries, but he has not acted on them.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

The Hon. R. THOMPSON: Irrespective of the good job that the Fisheries Department is attempting to do, if the industry

continues in the same way as it is going at present, in a few years we will not have a crayfishing industry in Western Australia, because we have seen that each year the catch has fallen below that of the preceding year.

The Minister has taken cognisance of that fact and this year has rightly limited the number of pots; but even limiting the number of pots is not going to prevent the taking of undersized crayfish. I trust the House will accept this motion for a Select Committee.

Debate adjourned, on motion by The Hon. L. A. Logan (Minister for Local Government).

CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT AND REVISION BILL

Third Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Justice) [5.36 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

I naturally assume that the remarks made by Mr. Willesee apply also to this Bill. The honourable member has indicated his assent by nodding his head.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

House adjourned at 5.37 p.m.

BILLS (2): RECEIPT AND FIRST READING

1. Fluoridation of Public Water Supplies Bill.
2. Iron Ore (Hamersley Range) Agreement Bill.

Bills received from the Assembly; and, on motions by The Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), read a first time.

CONSTITUTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Justice) [5.33 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

THE HON. W. F. WILLESEE (North) [5.34 p.m.]: The submissions made by the Leader of the House last night have been conveyed to Mr. Wise, my leader, who has expressed himself as being quite satisfied with them; and any doubt that may have existed has now been cleared up.

The Bill, so far as we can see, is well worthy of support. There is nothing contentious in it; it provides improved machinery for the betterment of Parliament in the future.

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Justice) [5.35 p.m.]: I thank Mr. Willesee for his remarks. There is no necessity for me to say anything further. I am glad the processes used appear to be satisfactory to all concerned.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 16th October, 1963

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