

and brigade charges were levied, with resultant hardship, reference could be made to the Minister; and I would give the matter every consideration.

Mr. BRADY: Is it not a fact that when a ratepayer pays rates to a municipality a fire brigade rate is included? Would it not then be the responsibility of the municipality or the Fire Brigades Board to give the ratepayer protection without the payment of any further fee?

Clause put and passed.

Clause 10 and Title put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 9.14 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, the 13th August, 1959

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The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTION ON NOTICE

WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT

Sale of Nelson Location 12053

1. The Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Minister for Local Government:

Referring to the question asked by me on Wednesday, the 22nd July, 1959, relating to war service

land settlement, will the Minister now supply answers to No. (2) and No. (4) of such question?

The Hon. L. A. LOGAN replied:

The answers to the questions referred to by the honourable member are—

(2) No. An inspection of that district has not been made.

(4) Yes, for one week.

The file was tabled.

2. *This question was postponed.*

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by the Hon. A. L. Loton, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. H. L. Roche (South) on the ground of ill-health.

BILLS (8)—FIRST READING

- 1, Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act and Traffic Act Amendments.
- 2, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment.
- 3, Road Districts Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Hon. L. A. Logan (Minister for Local Government), and read a first time.
- 4, Museum.
- 5, Art Gallery.
Received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), read a first time.
- 6, Parliament House Site Permanent Reserve (A ↑ 1162) Act Amendment.
Received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. L. A. Logan (Minister for Local Government), read a first time.
- 7, Justices Act Amendment.
- 8, Fire Brigades Act Amendment.
Received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. A. F. Griffith (Minister for Mines), read a first time.

TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Third Reading

Read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland—Minister for Local Government) [2.43] in moving the second reading said: Members will recollect that in 1948, the electricity and gas works owned by the City of Perth

were purchased by the State Government and placed under the control of the State Electricity Commission. This purchase was agreed to by Parliament by the passing of the City of Perth Electricity and Gas Purchase Act.

The agreement between the Government and the City Council contained a provision that all employees should be taken over by the Commission under terms not less favourable than their existing ones, including superannuation. As the City of Perth Superannuation Fund was on a basis different from the far larger State fund, it was not possible to transfer contributors from one fund to the other. The Commission, therefore, created a new fund identical with that of the City of Perth fund. Only employees taken over from the City of Perth were admitted to the fund; all other employees, and those transferred, who so wished, joining the State scheme.

It will be seen, therefore, that as no new members can be admitted, the Commission scheme eventually will die out. The conditions of the scheme are contained in sections 29A to 29E of the principal Act. As ultimately there will be no members left in the Commission scheme, section 29E provides that when all liabilities have been met, any balance in the fund shall be transferred to the Electricity General Fund account at the Treasury. This was considered fair, as the Commission pays more than half the contributions to the scheme. The City of Perth subsequently altered its scheme to a certain extent. Last session its Act was amended to improve the scheme; particularly in regard to the retirement of female employees.

The arrangement was that any improved benefits to the council scheme should be followed by the Commission; and it is desired, therefore, in this Bill to permit the Commission, from time to time, to alter, with the Governor's approval, any term or condition of the superannuation scheme; and to publish such alterations in the *Government Gazette*. The Bill also allows any contributor to elect not to participate in any alteration, should he or she not desire to do so. It is considered preferable to amend the Act in this manner, rather than to have to amend it each time the City of Perth changes its scheme. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. E. M. Davies, debate adjourned.

FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE ERADICATION FUND BILL

Second Reading

THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—Minister for Mines) [2.47] in moving the second reading said: The introduction of

this Bill stems from a recommendation by the Australian Agricultural Council, after several meetings, that each State should have in reserve legislation enabling the establishment of an eradication fund should there be, anywhere in Australia, an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Draft legislation prepared by a committee of Commonwealth and State veterinary officers was approved by the Agricultural Council, and has formed the basis for the introduction of Bills in each State and by the Commonwealth. The Parliaments of Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia have already agreed to their Bills; and the Commonwealth Government, and Government of New South Wales, intend to introduce their legislation as soon as possible. The intention throughout Australia is to proclaim the various Acts, not immediately, but if an outbreak of the disease occurs.

As members representing the rural areas are aware, foot and mouth disease is regarded as the most serious of all livestock diseases. It is an acute contagious disease affecting cattle, sheep, pigs, etc., caused by a filterable virus. It spreads so quickly that control measures are extremely difficult. The symptoms are a high fever; and the formation of large ulcers and blisters in the mouth, and in the cleft of the hoof, and around the coronets. As a result, severe lameness occurs. Affected animals become emaciated; pregnant animals abort; and dairy cows go dry.

In Europe, losses from the disease have amounted to hundreds of millions of pounds. Even more serious effects have been reported from Asia and Africa. A policy of eradication by slaughter was instituted in Great Britain, the average annual cost of which, during 1941-51, was estimated at £220,000. During a recent outbreak in Mexico, the United States, as a protective measure, co-operated in the Mexican eradication programme at a cost to itself of 130 million dollars. One million head of Mexican cattle either died or were destroyed. We are most fortunate, indeed, that Australia is free from the disease, particularly as all the major livestock countries of the world, except North America and New Zealand, are affected. The virus can withstand long periods of refrigeration; and most of the outbreaks in Great Britain have been caused through the importation of beef from the Argentine. I understand that recently the United States banned the import of Argentine beef for this reason. The disease can be spread directly by contact between animals; and indirectly through the agency of footwear, fodder, straw packing, bags, etc., contaminated by diseased animals.

While the strict observance that does exist of our quarantine laws lessens the risk of infection through normal channels, the inflow of migrants, and the faster

means of communication, have created serious risks. This can be realised when it is known that the virus can survive on clothing for several weeks.

Numerous parcels of meat products, such as various types of sausage containing uncooked meat, have been intercepted in the post and amongst the luggage of migrants. Although every precaution is taken by the disinfection of rural migrants and their effects; and the destruction of meat and other products of animal origin, there is always the possibility that infective material may escape detection. The risk of the introduction into Australia of foot and mouth disease has never been greater.

In the event of an outbreak, certain drastic measures would be taken immediately. Affected properties, and those in contact would be quarantined; the area cordoned off; and road blocks established. The entry or departure of any person, animal, or vehicle, would be prohibited except under special circumstances. No farm or dairy produce would be allowed to leave. All cattle, sheep, pigs, and goats, would be slaughtered, and the carcasses disposed of by burning or by deep burial. The premises would be disinfected; and fodder and certain other buildings not readily disinfected would be burnt.

A stand-still order would be imposed in a 25-mile radius, and all stock movements for the previous 30 days would have to be traced. A large field staff would be necessary to carry out these measures, and the assistance of the local authorities, police, and maybe the military, would be required. Prompt action would be the key to successful eradication; and heavy expenditure would be involved so as to limit the spread of infection and compensate owners.

The necessary authority and financial provisions for dealing, on a national basis, with an outbreak have been discussed, and a formula agreed upon, whereby the Commonwealth will contribute 50 per cent. of the total cost. The States will find the other 50 per cent. in the proportion of—

	Per cent.
New South Wales	14.5
Queensland	10.25
Victoria	9.125
Western Australia	5
South Australia	5
Tasmania	3.125
Northern Territory and Australian Capital Ter- ritory	3

Even if an outbreak is confined to the State in which it commenced, the Commonwealth and all the other States will contribute on this basis to the cost of eradication.

The Bill provides for the establishment of the necessary trust fund; and for the payment of compensation. This will be payable to the owner of any animal or property which is destroyed for the purpose of eradicating or preventing the disease; and for any animal which an inspector certifies has died of the disease on land that is in quarantine. The fund will also bear the direct cost of the eradication plan, apart from the salaries or wages of those employees of the State who are assisting in the eradication plan and who would be employed irrespective of the outbreak of the disease.

Compensation will be based on the market value of the animal immediately prior to its becoming affected or being slaughtered. In the case of property, compensation will be the market value at the time of destruction. No compensation allowance will be made for loss of profit; production loss; loss occasioned by breach of contract; or any other consequential loss. Applications for compensation must be made within 60 days of the death or destruction of an animal; or the destruction of property. Particulars as to the method of application will be provided by regulation.

The value of any animal or property can be agreed upon by the owner and a stock inspector. If agreement cannot be reached, the value shall be decided by a person nominated by the Minister for Agriculture; or, if the owner so wishes, a magistrate of the Local Court. Decisions of the magistrate and the Minister's appointee shall be final.

The Bill provides for a penalty of £100 for any person guilty of any act intended to obtain monetary benefit fraudulently; it also provides for the making of regulations for, among other things, the seizure and destruction of infected animals and property; the regulating of movement of persons and animals for the purpose of preventing the disease; the quarantining of animals, property and land; and the functions of inspectors, including authority to enter premises and inspect animals and property.

The inspectors will be those appointed under the Stock Diseases Act, and any other person authorised by the Government to act as an inspector under that Act. The Bill provides for the winding up of the fund and for the payment of any balance to the Commonwealth and the States in the same proportion as their payments into the fund. In conclusion, I most sincerely trust the necessity to proclaim the Act will never arise. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

House adjourned at 2.56 p.m.