

his colour, he is not acceptable. Therefore, the great problem today revolves very largely around the standard of hygiene.

At this stage every possible encouragement should be given to the Christian missions to reach further out and to get in touch with natives who today are on the outskirts of civilisation. Because of the welfare work which they undertake and the training which they impart to the natives, they would be the most desirable first contacts with the natives, although there are not many natives in Western Australia who have not at some time come into contact with white people. That is because of the parties which go out in search of minerals. Most of these parties report that the natives require both medical and food assistance.

A study and research should be made of the natives as a people with a view to learning their natural and racial talents. Most races have particular talents and gifts which, if developed, make them leaders in particular fields of learning. These people would no doubt be leaders in their particular field; therefore more research and study could be given of the natives than is undertaken today.

Turning to the Bill, the point which concerns me most is the approach to the granting of citizenship. I see no difference in the methods of granting full citizenship in this Bill and in the legislation which already exists. Today the native is rewarded by the granting of a citizenship certificate. Under this measure we penalise him. I would say that nothing could be more calculated to destroy the self-respect and self-confidence of aborigines than a declaration that a native is deprived of citizenship.

Most of the natives who today have not been granted citizenship rights will be the first in line to be declared as natives; therefore nothing will be achieved because virtually the same number of citizens and natives will result, except that under this Bill they will be declared natives. Then there are the small groups of natives to be considered, like those who have refrained from seeking citizenship because of the implications. Some are not prepared to accept the responsibility; others say they are not prepared to lay themselves open to the many requests made of citizenship holders, such as the obtaining of liquor for those without citizenship.

To sum up, I would say that the flowery speech made by the Minister when he introduced the Bill in which he told us about the Utopia for the aborigines which the Bill proposes, completely fades into oblivion on close scrutiny of the Bill. I have no hesitation at this stage in opposing the measure.

On motion by Mr. Lapham, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 10th September, 1958.

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

### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

#### Presentation.

The PRESIDENT: I desire to announce that, accompanied by several members, I waited on His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator and presented the Address-in-reply to His Excellency's Speech, agreed to by the House. His Excellency has been pleased to make the following reply:—

Mr. President and hon. members of the Legislative Council: I thank you for your expressions of loyalty to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, and for your Address-in-reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament.

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

No. 1: This question was postponed.

### H.R.H. PRINCESS ALEXANDRA'S VISIT.

#### *Western Australian Itinerary.*

2. The Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of the Prime Minister's statement in "The West Australian" of the 4th September stating that the Commonwealth would invite Princess Alexandra to Australia for the Queensland centenary—

- (1) Will the Government make early representation for the Princess to visit Western Australia?
- (2) As Geraldton has been omitted from Royal visits in the past will the Government also make early representation for Geraldton to be included in any itinerary that may be arranged?

The MINISTER replied:

These matters will receive consideration.

### SUPREME COURT ACTIONS.

#### *Determination of Costs.*

3. The Hon. L. C. DIVER asked the Minister for Railways:

Referring to the Supreme Court action *Cruikshank v. Producers Markets Co-operative Ltd.* will the Minister inform the House—

- (1) What was the amount of the costs directed to be paid by the unsuccessful plaintiff?
- (2) By whom were the costs determined?
- (3) Did they bear any direct relation to the amount involved in the action, and if so, are costs now determined on the basis of the amount involved, or the basis of the work done?
- (4) If costs are determined on the basis of the amount involved, what would the difference have been if the amount involved in the action had been half what it actually was; and what would the amount of costs have been if the amount had been double what it actually was?
- (5) Under what statute or rule were the costs determined?
- (6) What right of appeal is there against the award of costs in this case?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) £4,000.
- (2) The senior puisne judge, the hon. Mr. Justice Wolff.
- (3) and (4) Costs are in accordance with a prescribed scale, but are limited to a maximum of £1,500 plus disbursements,

unless the court certifies otherwise. The court may fix the costs at any amount. In the particular case the defendant's counsel applied to the judge for scale costs beyond the limit of £1,500, on basis of amount involved exceeding £80,000. If that application had been granted on that basis alone, costs would have exceeded £4,000. Since judge fixed the costs at £4,000, it is obvious that the amount involved was not the only factor considered. The defendant's case in fact involved an immense amount of preparation. The statement of claim raised 34 issues, requiring an examination of, and preparation of case concerning the relevant affairs of the company, including the annual movements in respect of 29 reserve accounts, over a period of 28 years. Senior and junior counsel were engaged on both sides, and the hearing alone extended over four days. The plaintiff failed on every issue.

(5) Supreme Court Rules—Scale of costs.

(6) Notes of evidence in the case are being prepared on the undertaking of plaintiff's solicitor that an appeal will be made. It is understood that no application for leave to appeal to the Full Court under Section 60 (1) (e) of the Supreme Court Act has yet been made, but perhaps the plaintiff intends to appeal on other matters besides the question of costs, or direct to a higher court.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

### ROYAL SHOW WEEK.

#### *Sittings of Legislative Council.*

1. The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Minister for Railways:

Would he be good enough to inform members, when he is able, what his intentions are so far as sitting days are concerned during Show Week?

The MINISTER replied:

I will inform members when the position of business on the notice paper reaches a more advanced stage. At the moment it is not possible to forecast whether this House will adjourn as usual or not; but as soon as it can be foreseen I shall certainly let the House know.

### NORTHCLIFFE-MANJIMUP RAILWAY.

#### *Consideration of Closure.*

2. The Hon. F. D. WILLMOTT asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of the answer given to part (4) of the question asked by me yesterday, in which the Minister stated that consideration is being given to rail transport of timber from Shannon River and Pemberton to the drying kiln at Manjimup, does this also mean that consideration is being given to the closure of any part of the line from Northcliffe to Manjimup?

The MINISTER replied:

Definitely no. There is no consideration whatever being given to any further railway line closures or suspensions.

### **BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.**

- 1, Legal Practitioners Act Amendment. Passed.
- 2, Licensed Surveyors Act Amendment. Transmitted to the Assembly.
- 3, Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act Amendment. Passed.

### **STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

Report of Committee adopted.

### **PLANT DISEASES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND** (Minister for Railways—North—in reply) [4.41]: The proposals suggested by speakers to the second reading debate on this Bill have been examined by the department, and are not thought desirable in some cases, or practicable in others. The hon. Mr. Willmott suggested that the registration fee for backyard orchards should be increased to £1 per annum; however, I think that the hon. member should have looked at another Act as well as this one. It is the other Act that requires amending if it is thought desirable that registration fees should be increased. That matter is covered by the Plant Diseases (Registration Fees) Act. It is rather confusing, but there are two separate Acts in connection with the matter. It is not practicable to amend this Act in the manner proposed.

However, the department feels that to increase the registration fee to £1 per annum would not provide sufficient funds to enable it effectively to control the fruit-fly, let alone eradicate it, with the present known methods of control. The department considers that there would be considerable difficulty in organising a force to carry out baiting on a State-wide basis. It is ascertained that in a community fruit-fly baiting scheme area, the cost of baiting non-commercial orchards was in excess of £2 per season, and this did not achieve eradication. The department has some other remarks in connection with that aspect, and I will mention them when I deal with some of the proposals which have been put forward by other hon. members.

The hon. Mr. Thomson suggested that those people who choose to register on a five-year basis should be notified when reregistration is due. The department does not consider that the suggestion would be

a desirable practice. Under the Act as it stands, people with orchards are required to register annually, and they are being granted a concession by being able to register for a five-year period. Anyone registering for that period will certainly reregister, the same as is done on the annual basis. That is the department's view on the matter. The same proposals were suggested in another place, and the Minister for Agriculture did not favour them, for the reasons I have mentioned.

The suggestion that more inspectors should be appointed temporarily, in order to look over backyard orchards, would obviously be a cause of considerably increased costs in connection with fruit-fly control. One of the important points of discussion at present is the means of raising further money in order to carry out more effectively the programme as at present organised. Apparently the department has under consideration proposals for raising more money, so that a better and wider attack can be made upon the fruit-fly menace.

As regards the hon. Dr. Hislop's comments; the Department of Agriculture regards fruit-fly infestation seriously, but takes the practical view that the pest is thoroughly established, and that, economically, measures aimed at control are all that can be undertaken. Under present conditions eradication cannot be attempted, as it would involve the expenditure of millions of pounds, and would probably mean the stripping of all fruit from trees in infested areas, for one or more years. Buffer areas around infested districts would also have to be similarly treated and an enormous amount of fruit would be removed in this way.

The department's responsibility is to advise of control methods, and to make inspections to see that measures for control are in fact carried out. However, as pointed out previously, the Government has made contributions to help finance concerted efforts, made by growers in baiting schemes, in order that the control practices should be more effective. These schemes have been extended in recent years. The onus for control of insect pests and diseases affecting fruit trees is on the backyard grower, or the commercial orchardist, each in his own sphere. The Department of Agriculture is, of course, continuing its research, with a view to finding material and methods which will reduce losses from this pest.

In spite of what has been said, seasonal conditions do affect the severity of infestation by fruit-fly, just as they affect the amount of fruit set, or the size of the fruit. In recent seasons, unfavourable to fruit-fly, the amount of infestation has been quite small. Seasonal conditions are, of course, outside the control of any department. That is the advice received from the department.

I did inquire if there were any natural host plants and I interjected, when the hon. Mr. Willmott was speaking on the Address-in-reply debate in connection with host plants, because I had in mind then that to attack the backyard fruit trees, or commercial orchards, is one matter, but to get at the natural host plants is a much more difficult problem—that is, for complete eradication. I do agree that control of any fruit trees, or any known host trees, is possible, if you can get at the trees.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: I do not think they attack these host plants except during unfavourable seasons.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is true. I am advised that the box thorn is one host plant, and there are several others. They say that all commercial fruits are hosts, and there is the particular berry that one hon. member mentioned during the Address-in-reply debate. I understand that capsicums are also hosts and that the mulberry is very susceptible to attack. Of course, as we all know, fruit-fly probably attacks figs more than any other fruit. That is where the backyard orchardist seems to be a great nuisance, because he does not keep his fig trees stripped and, with the ripening fruit, the fly has an open go. I am told that in only very few instances have tomatoes been attacked by fruit-fly; but there is a tomato-fly which is most destructive.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: They attacked my tomatoes only last year.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It is obvious that the department, as well as hon. members, is concerned in regard to fruit-fly infestation; and this is a live question with the department at the moment. I cannot see that this Bill could be amended in any way which would help to effect the desire of hon. members to eradicate the pest. I hope the second reading will be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

### **JUNIOR FARMERS' MOVEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

#### *Second Reading.*

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

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

### **NOXIOUS WEEDS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

#### *Second Reading.*

**THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND** (Minister for Railways—North) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: As hon. members will be aware, the object of the parent Act which was introduced in 1950 was, together with the Agriculture Protection Board Act, to give further effect to the method of weed control recommended by a royal commission. Perhaps the most important provision in the parent Act is the division of noxious weeds into two groups, one of which is known as primary noxious weeds, and the other as secondary noxious weeds. A plant which is declared a primary noxious weed throughout the whole, or part, of the State, becomes the responsibility of the Agriculture Protection Board. Secondary noxious weeds are declared at the request of local authorities and become the responsibility of the particular local authority.

Primary noxious weeds are those considered by the Agriculture Protection Board to be a major threat to agriculture. These include cape tulip, blackberry, mesquite (North of the 26th parallel) and Bathurst burr. Some primary noxious weeds do not exist in Western Australia, but are declared so as to assist in the prevention of their transference from other States. Other weeds, such as Guildford grass which occurs throughout the whole of the State, have not been declared primary noxious weeds, as there appears to be no hope of their eradication. Weeds of minor importance which occur only in certain districts are classed as secondary noxious weeds. Examples are Patterson's curse in the Northam area, and carnation weed in the Geraldton district.

Some months ago the Bridgetown Road Board, and the Road Board Association, recommended that the Noxious Weeds Act be amended to give power to local authorities to assist in the control of primary noxious weeds in the same way as they are empowered to assist in the control of secondary noxious weeds. Although they have no legal right to do so, a number of road boards, with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture, are actually financing co-ordinated regional programmes against primary noxious weeds. Such campaigns are in operation against the blackberry menace at Bridgetown and Manjimup. These operations are financed by the local authorities from general rates or from their noxious weeds rates. The Department of Agriculture assists by providing equipment and other facilities. These operations have been conducted mainly on private property and the results have been surprisingly good. In Narrogin, for instance, the local authority has financed a quite successful campaign against cape tulip.

The parent Act empowers a Local Authority to assist with the control of secondary noxious weeds on private land, and the Agriculture Protection Board has similar powers in the case of primary noxious weeds. Because of the success of these regional programmes by the local authorities on private land as well as along roadsides back to the fence lines, and in view of the request of the Road Board Association in this regard, the Bill seeks to enable local authorities to enter into arrangements with private owners or occupiers for the destruction of primary noxious weeds. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

### ARGENTINE ANT ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE) BILL.

#### *Second Reading.*

**THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND** (Minister for Railways—North) [4.58] in moving the second reading said: This is a most desirable measure, to continue the Argentine Ant Act. The Bill provides for a continuance of the operations of the principal Act for a further year until the 30th June, 1959. Before explaining why this action is considered necessary, hon. members may be interested to hear a review both of the conditions which lead up to the introduction of the Act, and of subsequent activities. It will be remembered that the Argentine ant was first discovered in Western Australia during the early stages of the last war, both in the metropolitan area and in Albany. By 1949 the nuisance had spread to such an extent that it was placed under the Public Health Department for an attempt at adequate control. Certain powers were also given under existing legislation to assist operations by local authorities.

Householders were encouraged to deal with the nuisance on their own properties. local authorities sprayed the streets and public property, insecticide and baits were supplied at cost price by the Government and experiments were undertaken to tackle the problem with D.D.T. which was the only poison then available which was at all effective.

By the end of 1953 it was apparent that at least 40 square miles of the metropolitan area were definitely infested, as well as many country centres. Infestation in some of the outports such as Albany and Bunbury, was also extensive. Some success was achieved in experimental activities by the use of chlordane. At that stage it was costing the Government approximately £25,000 per annum, and local authorities and householders were also being put to expense. There was, however, no co-ordination, and the efforts were being defeated by individuals who allowed their properties to remain infested

and thereby re-infest surrounding areas. As a result, the area of infestation rapidly spread.

As the Argentine ant is not considered to be a menace to public health but a distinct household nuisance and potential danger to agricultural production, it was decided, at the beginning of 1954, to hand over the control to the Department of Agriculture, particularly as that department had experience in control measures for this type of pest. It was considered that success in control and possible ultimate eradication could only be achieved by a carefully co-ordinated campaign. It was thought it would require a period of five years to cover the known infestation, and that the cost would approximate £500,000.

A conference with local governing bodies took place in the Perth City Council Chambers in February, 1954. This meeting asked the Minister to appoint a committee to work out details to submit to Parliament for the essential control powers and the authority to collect the necessary funds. This committee, in addition to departmental officers, included representatives of the Local Government Association, the Road Board Association, the Country Municipal Councils' Association and the Perth City Council, which was the local authority most vitally concerned. It is felt that a great deal of credit for the co-ordination and co-operation obtained, which has led to the success so far achieved, comes from the constitution of this committee, in which the local authorities and the Government were able to balance their interests in the form and detailed planning of the campaign.

The parent Act was designed from the recommendations of the committee. Basically the Act provides for—

- (a) A control committee representing the Government, the City of Perth, the Local Government Association, the Country Municipal Councils' Association and the Road Board Association. The committee is responsible under the Minister for supervising operations and finance.
- (b) The levying of contributions on a basis agreed to by all the parties concerned, and the method of collection. In brief, this provides for a maximum total collection of £105,000 in any one year, made up as follows:—

	£
State Government .....	35,000
Agriculture Protection Board .....	4,000
Local Authorities .....	66,000

The largest contribution from any one local authority is £26,164 from the City of Perth. Uninfested areas in the South-West

portion of the State pay at a rate equivalent to one-third of the infested areas. Areas outside the South-West Land Division do not contribute as the possibility of infestation was not considered serious, although an infestation did occur in the Esperance district.

- (c) Power for the committee or its representatives to enter and treat premises and to obtain the co-operation of property owners.

Turning to the results achieved; the committee first planned the sequence of the campaign to obtain maximum control as quickly as possible, and at the same time the earliest relief to householders.

Hon. members will appreciate that in the early stages the risk of re-infestation from the untreated areas was proportionately high. In the first season, therefore, the known infested areas on the south of the Swan River were tackled, the first action being to undertake a detailed survey, ahead of the spray teams, to establish the actual boundaries of the infested areas. The spraying organisation also needed to be brought into being and it was decided that a number of teams operating under the Government Entomologist, as well as a larger number of teams operating under the local authority whose area was being treated, would be most effective. The local authorities, of course, were recouped in full for the expenditure incurred. This system worked very well as the local authorities had a direct interest, and achieved a high standard of co-operation, particularly as they were able to some extent to provide equipment from their own resources.

Action was taken to prevent as far as possible re-infestation from untreated areas, and the public responded very well in notifying outbreaks and in co-operation with the spray teams, although, as was to be expected, there were a few exceptions in this regard. A great deal of specialised equipment had to be purchased or made. A disturbing factor was the discovery, from the detailed survey, that the boundaries of infestation were greater than had been anticipated. It was planned that the original season would cover 4,800 acres, but an additional 2,000 acres of new infestation in this area was discovered in the detailed survey.

The arrangements developed, however, finally resulted in a total area of 7,246 acres being sprayed in the 1954-55 season, which it will be seen covered not only the original area scheduled and the additional 2,000 acres, but also a small portion of the area north of the river scheduled for the next season. A start had been made also with the country areas, new infestations receiving priority. In that season some 10,000 properties and locations were treated at an average of 10.81 man-hours

per acre, using an average of 66.5 gallons spray mixture per acre, at an average cost of £11.

In 1955-56—the second year of the campaign—spraying was commenced on the eastern and western flanks north of the river, working in towards the city. On the basis of the previous season, 8,000 acres were scheduled. The schedule also included the treatment of survivals in the 1954-55 zone and provision for control measures by group spraying outside the main operations. The number of teams was increased until a total of 144 men were operating in the various districts.

At the end of the season a sprayed area of 12,142 acres had been covered, including some substantial areas in the country. Considerable progress was made in the Albany and Bunbury areas, as well as dealing with new infestations. In this season some rough country in the metropolitan area was dealt with, particularly the river foreshores at Bayswater and small swamps in the Wanneroo area, for which special equipment had to be devised.

Once again the detailed survey showed an extension of the previously known area of infestation which amounted to a total of 2,308 acres. However, not only was this additional 2,308 acres absorbed in the season's programme, but once again considerably better progress was achieved than had been scheduled. The costs were very satisfactory, being 12,142 acres at an average of 9.3 man-hours, 62 gallons and £10 per acre, which was a significant reduction on the previous season. This improvement was no doubt due to greater experience and improved organisation.

In the 1956-57 season no target was set, but the area decided upon included 800 acres of infestation at Albany, the remaining area of infestation in the Perth City Council area, including the city proper, the balance of the Swan River foreshore, the Herdsman's Lake area, and as much as possible of the market gardens and nurseries in the Osborne Park area, together with survivals from the 1954-55 and 1955-56 zones.

In this season properties dealt with totalled 8,755 acres, varying from a quarter acre to more than 100 acres. These comprised houses, shops, factories, offices, market gardens, nurseries, parks and grazing areas. Some difficult areas were dealt with, particularly the Swan River foreshore from Maylands to the Bunbury bridge, and various areas in Mosman Park and Herdsman's Lake. A total of 1,783 acres of additional infestations was noted by survey. Survivals from the two previous years amounted to 165 acres from the 1954-55 zone and 518 acres from the 1955-56 zone, but they followed no recognisable pattern and cannot be ascribed to any particular cause. The costs for this season were also satisfactory, being—8,755 acres at an average of 9.2 man-hours, 65 gallons

and £11 per acre. Although the man-hours had been further reduced the cost per acre had returned to that of the first season.

At the end of the third season, therefore, more than 28,000 acres, approximately 44 square miles or 88% of the known infested areas in the State, had been treated and on an acreage basis the programme was well ahead of schedule.

The 1957-58 season was commenced with the knowledge that the closely settled part of the metropolitan area had been covered, that the campaign against major country infestations was well up to schedule, and there was a prospect that the main campaign would be completed well ahead of schedule, leaving a margin for the treatment of survivals.

The results, however, did not achieve the same rate of progress as the previous seasons, the principal difficulty being the appalling working conditions in the market garden and swamp areas north of the city; particularly in the Wanneroo district.

In addition, the new areas of infestation in this locality were found by survey to have increased considerably on the original estimate, being approximately a further 5,000 acres.

It is not possible to by-pass the swamps by putting down any form of enclosing perimeter, as the risk of re-infestation through market garden produce, firewood, stable manure, etc., to clean areas is considerable. In fact, during this season, an infested area of 12 acres in the Geraldton municipality was discovered. There is evidence that this originated from market garden produce consigned from the metropolitan area. This additional outbreak was dealt with immediately, but is an example of the extent to which a minor infestation can spread.

Although every device or system which could expedite progress in the heavy undergrowth of the swamps was considered, it very largely comes down to manpower and the equipment previously in use to achieve the control necessary. The spray machines must be hauled through the rushes and ti-tree scrub, so that direct application can be made. Apart from dangers to the surrounding livestock grazing area, it would not be possible to achieve the direct application necessary by aerial spraying. As can be imagined, working conditions for the men in these swamps are physically trying and are most difficult. This is reflected in the overall results achieved during the last season. The area sprayed amounted to 6,542 acres, which is not much more than half that of the second season. The average cost was 15 man-hours, 100 gallons of spray material and £15 per acre. Even these figures do not reflect the conditions in the swamps themselves, as they are the overall average for the season. In the Oswald-st. swamp, an area of approximately 300 acres, the cost was 48 man-hours, 325 gallons and £47 per acre.

This reduction in progress, therefore, in view of the area and the nature of the country still remaining to be covered, means that instead of completing the whole of the infested area ahead of schedule, it will now require an extra season in addition to the five years originally planned, to be sure of covering the known infestation. This assumes that the conditions to be faced in the next two years in the known swamp areas from Wanneroo to Yanchep, are the same as were faced in the last season. It cannot be hoped that conditions will be any better, and if the whole of the effort so far put into the control of this pest is not to be wasted, the additional season's work must be undertaken.

To stop at this stage would mean that half a million pounds and five years' work would have covered 95 per cent. of the infested area. Although the remaining 5 per cent. will be comparatively costly to treat, it must be covered, unless re-infestation is to be allowed to occur throughout the State. We would then return to the conditions of 1953, and the whole of the money used and the very considerable efforts would have been wasted.

It cannot be said that the original assumptions were unsoundly based, as in the first four years of operation the additional areas of infestation as shown by detailed survey were absorbed in the campaign. The fall-back in the rate of progress in this last season is due entirely to the difficult operating conditions, which could not have been foreseen when the original scheme was planned. The conditions must be seen to be appreciated.

As I have said, the position has now been reached when it is clear that an additional season will be required to cover the known infestation. It can be said that the area remaining to be treated has all been carefully surveyed, so that no extensive additional areas of infestation are anticipated.

On the information available from the survey and taking into account the experience of the difficult conditions during the last season, it is expected that the work required, to completely cover the known infested area, can be met from one additional season. It will be a full season with no margin for cleaning up, as had previously been hoped, and the cost will be the same as at present; that is, £105,000.

It may be of interest to know that consideration has also been given to the measures necessary to prevent re-infestation after the principal campaign has been completed. In brief these provide for a caretaker committee on the same basis as the present committee, with a small team of skilled operators, who would survey and deal with any minor outbreaks or residues which could occur after the main campaign has been completed. It is not anticipated that a major infestation could again develop; but in this

unlikely event, the caretaker committee would be able to recommend early action on a scale necessary to deal with the size of the outbreak and to recommend the amount of additional finance, if any, required for that outbreak.

The Government has agreed to meet the caretaker costs up to £5,000 per annum, which, it is anticipated will be adequate as the retention of the skeleton organisation should prevent re-infestation reaching major proportions.

The Government at this stage is contributing substantially. It is the largest contributor to the present control fund, paying £35,000 annually in cash, and providing officers and services from the Department of Agriculture, worth at least a further £5,000 per annum. There is not the slightest doubt that the Argentine ant is of high nuisance value and could to some extent be an economic threat. However, it is not a menace to health and it is therefore the responsibility of the local authorities rather than the Government to ensure its control. The Government considers, therefore, that it should not be expected to find any more than its present proportion of the cost of extending the campaign.

It is proposed, therefore, to extend the present Act, for the further year which is now obviously necessary. This, of course, in addition to the control powers would extend the financial obligations of all the contributing parties for a further year on the present scale. If the infested area has then been satisfactorily covered, the caretaker arrangements will be introduced as mentioned earlier. This will then relieve the local authorities of further contribution, unless an unlooked for major re-infestation occurs, which will be dealt with in the light of its particular circumstances.

Local governing authorities have been kept continuously informed of the progress of the campaign and through their respective organisations have agreed with the necessity to extend the Act in its present form. Resolutions to that effect have been carried by the Local Government Association and the executive of the Road Boards Association. The Perth City Council, although the largest contributing local authority has confirmed that it is agreeable to extension by one year.

It must be remembered, however, that there is now no margin, and although not anticipated, it might be that working conditions may be even more expensive than have so far been experienced. It could also be that one or both of the next two summers might not be as suitable for ant spraying as has occurred in the last four years. Spraying cannot be effectively undertaken in wet weather and if there should be any extensive periods of broken weather during the summer the completion could be further delayed on this

account. However, although such delays mean that the labour must be paid for, and to that extent are expensive, should weather interference be so severe as to extend the spraying period beyond 1960, it can be assumed that the funds required to complete the campaign will have been contributed within that period.

That gives a complete coverage of the activities of the department, and the various road boards and municipalities, in conducting a campaign to combat the Argentine ant infestations and there is not the slightest doubt that there has been some extremely creditable work performed by all concerned. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**THE HON. J. G. HISLOP** (Metropolitan) [5.22]: The department should be congratulated for presenting to this Chamber such a detailed survey of the work that has been undertaken for the control of the Argentine ant during the last four years. There can be no hesitation, on the part of anyone in this Chamber, in agreeing to the extension of this measure for another year. It would, of course, be entirely futile—as the Minister has said—to agree that 95 per cent. of the area should be covered and that five per cent. should remain untouched as an infested area.

It is trusted, by all of us, that at the end of this period the ant will be under complete control and, in fact, will be exterminated; and that there will be no need for any further activity on the part of the caretaker committee. There are one or two interesting points to be learned about this Argentine ant measure. First of all, we must appreciate the combined action of the Government departments and the local governing bodies, in attacking a problem which was becoming a complete nuisance to every household, not only in the metropolitan area but also in many parts of the country where this pest was spreading. It is an example of what can be done by the combined action of Government departments and local authorities, in carrying to fruition a major task.

Another feature which must be apparent is that we should never again allow any pest of a character similar to that of the Argentine ant to reach such proportions as this one did. There should be a duty placed upon the caretaker committee, not only to watch for any reinfested areas, but also to watch for all types of pests that enter the metropolitan area for the first time or, in fact, any other areas; or watch for a type of pest which is going through, as it were, a reincarnation to attack freshly an older area.

I mention that because there are certain pests which could have entered the city area since the spraying campaign against



the Argentine ant was instituted. For example, I cite the ti-tree moth, which has become a real menace in this city. I suppose there will be hardly a ti-tree of any extent remaining in the metropolitan area within a year or two, unless action similar to that taken against the Argentine ant is commenced.

It is not easy for a private individual to take proper steps to combat this nuisance. If I remember rightly, I had to have sprayed a ti-tree hedge which covered about 250 ft., at a cost of £16, and it is now heavily reinfested with the moth. So I think that properly organised action will have to be taken and money spent accordingly. One of the great difficulties experienced by the private individual, in spraying to exterminate these pests, is that, unless they have taken the necessary precautionary measures, they run the risk of developing an irritation, an allergy or a toxic condition as a result of handling the substance of the spray. For instance, this ti-tree moth is sprayed by malathion and, also, fruit-fly is being eradicated with this same material mixed with DDT. Although it is not toxic as some related chemicals, it still presents difficulties.

Therefore, unless these sprays are handled by persons who are properly trained to do the job and who are protected against any irritation that may occur from handling these materials, the private individual might suffer considerably as a result. Another interesting feature is that it is quite obvious in the city, since the spraying campaign against the Argentine ant, that we have currently got rid of the small friendly black ant, because there appear to be few in the city now. If one cares to look around one's property I think it will be found that there is a complete absence of black ants.

In their place have appeared other pests and quite a few people have recently been troubled by a small flying cockroach. I call it a cockroach, but that may not be a true description. However, it is a small flying insect and it has resisted many attacks to rid the kitchens of homes of it. It is possible, therefore, that the absence of the black ant is responsible for the growing incidence of a number of these other pests. It is possible that, having got rid of the black ant, we have upset, as it were, the balance of power in the insect world.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Do you think the fly menace is greater now; since the campaign against the Argentine ant?

The Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It is possible. Many have said that the fly menace is worse now than it has ever been before, particularly the blowfly. It might be wise, therefore, for our entomologists to look at the question of reintroducing the black ant to the city; because that might be the answer to these other insect problems that have arisen. I am not an entomologist, but it is obvious, from watching

what is happening, that the black ant has been removed as a result of the spraying against the Argentine ant and, since then, a number of other pests have been apparent around the city.

I do not think we ever had any real trouble from the ti-tree moth until a little over two years ago and yet today it is a real menace throughout the entire city. I believe it is also capable of attacking lawns. So again we are faced with the problem of dealing with something that is widespread. If this is a menace—and I think it is going to prove a menace—it might be wise to consider attacking it at this stage. I put forward the suggestion that a caretaker committee might even be formed now, to watch the city for other pest infestations and to institute measures before such pests reach the stage that the Argentine ant did, and which has cost such an enormous amount of money to eradicate.

With these comments and with the suggestion that the proposed caretaker committee might begin to take action about some of the pests which are already spreading—in particular the ants—and with the further suggestion that these matters be looked at earlier rather than later, I support the measure.

**THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND** (Minister for Railways—North—in reply) [5.31]: I desire to inform the hon. Dr. Hislop that I will have his suggestions and remarks forwarded to the responsible Minister for consideration.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

## **BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.**

- 1, Acts Amendment (Superannuation and Pensions).
- 2, Land Tax Assessment Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

## **LAND ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE HON. E. M. DAVIES** (West) [5.35] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this small Bill is an amendment to Section 8 of the principal Act, which provides the Governor with power to acquire, with the consent of the owner, any land by the same means of purchasing or exchange. Where the estimated value of the land is more than £100, it is necessary, under the Act, to refer the matter to the Land Purchase Board for a determination of value in the case of a

purchase, or, where an exchange is involved, the value also of the land to be given in exchange.

As hon. members, no doubt, are aware, the Land Purchase Board is appointed under the parent Act, to advise the Government on the value of land offered for sale to the Government and its suitability for agriculture. The necessity to refer land, of an estimated value of over £100, to the Land Purchase Board was inserted in the Act as long ago as 1903. It is most apparent that this amount has no application to present day monetary values, and so the Bill proposes to increase it to £400.

That is the sole amendment in the Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham, debate adjourned.

## **RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE HON. E. M. DAVIES** (West) [5.37] in moving the second reading said: The intention of this Bill is to alter the bank's balance date from the 30th September, as required by the principal Act, to the 31st March. The commissioners of the bank in recommending this change, state several advantages would accrue from it. These are—

- (1) It would enable the bank's balance sheet and the Auditor-General's report to be tabled in Parliament while Parliament was sitting.
- (2) The balance sheet could be printed and distributed at a comparatively early date.
- (3) The balance would coincide with the end of one season and the opening of another; and would enable authoritative comments to be made in the report on the past season and reasoned estimate for the coming season.

While every section of the community is represented among the bank's customers, the farming community is the largest individual group. Many other customers are also associated with the farming industry and have parallel needs for banking service. The bank is of the opinion that this close association with the farming industry will remain a feature of its operations for very many years. The bank feels therefore that its banking should be as similar as possible to the farming year.

If the change of date proposed in the Bill is agreed to the bank's reports will enable more up to date reports of the previous season's activities to be made, and will provide a more authoritative indication of farming plans for the following season. This would apply particularly to cropping seasons in the wheat growing areas.

I would like to say that the Rural and Industries Bank is desirous that the bank's balance date should commence as from the 30th September, that is, this month, and it would be appreciated if the House would agree to the passing of this measure so that it might be assented to before that date. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**THE HON. A. F. GRIFFITH** (Suburban) [5.39]: The Minister must feel very pleased this afternoon, because he is getting quite a lot of legislation through without any opposition whatever. In the same spirit of co-operation, I would also like to help the hon. Mr. Davies, who introduced this Bill, to hurry it through as quickly as he wants to.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What are the chances of keeping up the record?

The Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: We are talking at the moment of the Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment Bill. It is obvious that the purpose of this Bill is to alter the date on which the bank will complete its financial year.

It seems to me that it has taken a long time for the commissioners of the bank to become aware of the fact that their report is not able to be placed on the Table of the House in time for Parliament to have a look at it. The operations of the bank have been going on for such a time that we would have thought it would have been evident before this; but apparently it has become evident only now.

The financial year, for the particular section of the community—the farming community—with which the bank professes to do most of its business, ends on the 30th of June; and I think most farmers complete their financial year then, to coincide with the taxation year; but perhaps that does not suit the purposes of the Rural and Industries Bank. I do not think that there is any need further to hold the Bill up and I support the second reading.

### *In Committee.*

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

## **BROKEN HILL PROPRIETARY STEEL INDUSTRY AGREEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**THE HON. R. C. MATTISKE** (Metropolitan) [5.44]: This Bill, on the face of it, is quite a straightforward one, but there are one or two aspects which warrant a comment. In presenting the Bill, the hon. Mr. Wise stated that it was the

intention of the Government to extend the provisions of the agreement, so that instead of being limited to any particular amount of iron ore required for the production of pig iron at Wundowie, it would be possible to obtain the full requirements to enable the works to operate at its maximum capacity.

As to the requirements of Wundowie, the hon. Mr. Wise mentioned a figure of 80,000 tons which it was anticipated to take to enable, on an average quality high grade ore, the production of approximately 50,000 tons of pig iron per annum; because it takes approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons of high grade ore to produce one ton of pig iron.

That raises the first interesting aspect. According to a statement made in June, 1957, by Mr. Fernie, the chairman of the Board of Management at Wundowie, it was anticipated that the output from Wundowie, when the second blast furnace was fully in operation, would be in the vicinity of 36,000 tons per annum. From the figure mentioned in introducing this Bill—80,000 tons of ore per annum—it would appear that things are proceeding better than anticipated at Wundowie and they will be able to increase the output beyond the anticipated figure of 30,000 tons, up to 50,000 tons per annum; or alternatively, it may be that the board of management considers that the quality of the iron ore may not continue at its present level, with the result that it will take a correspondingly greater amount of ore to produce the anticipated maximum output of the works.

On the other hand there is the aspect that by permitting the complete removal of the whole amount which at present stands at 50,000 tons per annum, and conceding that the Wundowie works may take such an amount of ore as is required for the purposes of producing charcoal iron and steel, it means that the Wundowie works could be further expanded without any control at all by this Parliament.

I am not saying that the Government has that intention, but the power is there for those works to be extended even further, by the inclusion of a third or fourth blast furnace without it being necessary to refer the matter to this Parliament. On the other hand, to include a limit of any figure, such as 80,000 tons, would apparently be quite useless, because we have seen, up to the present time, where there has been a limit of 50,000 tons, and it has been necessary for the board of management to take a greater amount than that each year. Despite the fact that the law puts the limit at 50,000 tons, it has been taking in excess of that figure—quite a farcical situation, and one which would only be encouraged by putting a further limit of, say, 80,000 tons on it.

For that reason I feel the only sensible thing to do is to agree to the provisions of the Bill and leave it without any particular

limit whatever. When I mentioned just now that in suggesting a figure of 80,000 tons of ore per annum it appeared that the production at Wundowie was better than originally anticipated, I had the thought that I would like the hon. Mr. Wise, when replying to the debate—and if he has the information readily available—to give us the average monthly output of pig iron from Wundowie over the last six months and, also if he has the information, the anticipated output per month for the next six months.

The reason for requesting the two lots of information is simply that the second blast furnace has been in operation for only a few months, and naturally there must be certain teething troubles which would affect the output from it. If that be the case, the figures for the last six months would not be a true indication of what the blast furnace could produce; and for that reason it would be interesting to see what the board of management considers a reasonable output for the future.

There is another point on which I would like the hon. Mr. Wise to give us some information, because I think it would be interesting; it concerns one of the other principal ingredients of pig iron production, namely firewood. I understand that at Wundowie at present they have to cart the wood a distance of up to 50 miles by road. That is not an inconsiderable item of cost and if, for the greater production of pig iron, it will be necessary to go further afield, that will have an important bearing on the production costs at Wundowie. It takes six tons of wood to produce the  $1\frac{1}{2}$  tons of charcoal necessary for the production of one ton of pig iron. Therefore, on that basis, if the works are to have a capacity of 50,000 tons of pig iron annually it will mean that they will require 300,000 tons of firewood annually.

Further, we are all fully aware that at Wundowie a sawmill has been established, the idea being that the merchantable timber will be used for the building industry and the scrap will be used in the Wundowie blast furnaces after being charcoaled. Because of that, a far greater amount than 300,000 tons of firewood will be required each year. So I would like the hon. Mr. Wise, if he can, to give us some information on that point, in order to reassure hon. members in this House that there will not be any serious difficulties in the future, so far as the supplies of wood are concerned.

If, as could be the case if this Bill is passed as it stands, it is the intention of this Government, or some other Government, to extend further the activities of Wundowie, I would like to sound a word of caution, in that the production of Wundowie is mainly reliant on overseas markets. The quantity of pig iron used

locally by iron-masters is very small. At present at the Kwinana rolling mills the output is only in the vicinity of 30,000 tons per annum, and the whole of that output is not used in this State. On the average it takes about two days a week to produce all this State's requirements at the Kwinana rolling mills; the remainder of the output has to be exported either overseas or to the Eastern States. Until recently there was a good market in Indonesia; but now that source has dried up, with the result that after the requirements of this State have been satisfied the remainder of the production, which is by far the majority of it, has to be sent to the Eastern States.

As regards steel fence posts, which are being produced at Kwinana, the demand was so small that in December and January it was necessary to close down that section of the works, and at present by far the bulk of the output is being sent to Melbourne. I mention these things to show that although we have a steel rolling mill, with an output of 30,000 tons per annum, the amount actually consumed in this State is very small. So even if we had a steel works here, and that steel works were to supply the billets of steel required for rolling and processing at Kwinana, the project required to satisfy the Western Australian demand would not need to be very large.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Why is the demand for fencing posts so small? Is there a cost factor about it?

The Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: Yes. I think one of the primary factors, in recent months, has been the low wool prices. Because of these low prices farmers are not encouraged to carry out further fencing by this comparatively dear method, even though in the long run it may be the cheapest method. When speaking on the Address-in-reply debate, and from my remarks of a few moments ago, it may appear that I am rather pessimistic regarding the operations at Wundowie. But that is not the case; and I want to make it abundantly clear that I am not in any way criticising those technical persons engaged at Wundowie.

I am not competent to say whether or not they are doing a good, bad or indifferent job; but from inquiries I have made in various parts of Australia in recent months, it seems obvious that the persons in charge at Wundowie are held in very high esteem. I have made inquiries of competent people and that is what they have told me. I want to make that point very clear even though I am urging caution in regard to the expansion of pig iron production in this State. I am not in any way reflecting on anyone concerned with the management at Wundowie, nor am I reflecting on the quality of the article produced there, because it is generally agreed that the charcoal iron produced

at Wundowie is of a very high standard; in fact, for the ordinary castings produced by the local iron masters it is in their opinion of too good a quality.

Be that as it may, the fact remains that they are turning out an exceptionally good charcoal iron at Wundowie, but the world market for an exceptionally good quality charcoal pig iron is very small because, with different techniques in various parts of the world, the users of pig iron have found that it is far preferable to use the cheaper coke pig iron, because they can produce the finished article at a lower cost.

There are certainly some consumers who favour charcoal iron, but the number of these consumers is very limited indeed. Accordingly, we must proceed cautiously, because the amount of capital expenditure involved in this industry is very great, and it must be completely written off over a certain period. For that reason I feel justified in continually urging caution, before any major move is made in this industry.

It is essential that this Bill be passed, in order to correct the farcical position in which we find ourselves at the present time, and under which the Wundowie Board of Management is using a greater quantity of iron ore than it is legally entitled to use. For that reason I support the second reading of the Bill.

**THE HON. F. J. S. WISE** (North—in reply) [6.1]: I appreciate the presentation, from his point of view, of the case stated by the hon. Mr. Mattiske. I would like to deal first with the two points he raised as affecting Wundowie. As I have said, Wundowie is now using iron ore at the rate of 50,000 tons per year, and it is anticipated, when the two blast furnaces are in operation, that there will be an excess of production above the figure considered likely by Mr. Fernie, and quoted by the hon. Mr. Mattiske; namely, 36,000 tons per annum.

It is firmly believed that the figure will, at full capacity, approach the 50,000 tons mark. I can assure the House there is no intention of an extension of the blast furnaces. The capacity now anticipated and the quantity expected to be required to meet the needs of the two blast furnaces is set at a maximum of 80,000 tons per annum. It would, however, be dangerous to peg a figure for several reasons, the principal one being the point raised by the hon. Mr. Mattiske himself; namely, that a variation in assay and quality of iron ore could show a considerable variation in output and production.

The other important point referred to, respecting Wundowie, and on which information has been sought, is in relation to firewood, or the wood necessary for the

production of charcoal from which the processing of the iron ore is completed. Within an economic radius of Wundowie, it is anticipated that there will be no problem at all, for many years to come, because there are sufficient tonnages available to meet the anticipated requirements. There is still a large quantity of timber inside the mileage from which the loads of iron ore are now being drawn. Every safeguard has been taken. A survey has been made, and I have been assured by the board of management that they contemplate no difficulty whatever in that direction.

I must now refer to the comparison drawn by the hon. Mr. Mattiske with regard to the operating of the rolling mills. Had it not been for the agreement made in 1952, for the establishment of rolling mills, this Bill—even if Wundowie had been expanded to 20 times more than its present size—would not now be before Parliament. The reservation of Koolyanobbing iron ore was part, I suggest, of an exacting demand by B.H.P. in an effort to prevent any great quantity being used in excess of 50,000 tons, even by the State of Western Australia, which owns the deposits. It is not a good comparison to say that simply because steel standards are not in sufficient demand, the rolling mills are not fully occupied. That argument should not be put forward at all in condemnation of Wundowie. It is due to the action of the Government of the day in coming to this arrangement, and entering into this agreement. It may have been showing initiative, but I think its actions were rather premature, insofar as the State's demands are concerned. It goes much deeper than that, however, because that agreement was the means not only of giving B.H.P. the right to mine ore from the cheapest source in Western Australia, namely, Cockatoo Island, but also of adding to that the vast deposits at Koolan Island, which never before had been contemplated as belonging solely to B.H.P. It is necessary to state that, because the parent Act, which this Bill seeks to amend, has the far-reaching implication, that it has tied up 60,000,000 tons of iron ore of very high quality which, until forfeited by Brasserts, was not even available to anyone, but was handed over to B.H.P. in 1952, not with a 21 years limitation, but with the right to use and solely to use.

I am pleased that this Bill has received the support expressed by the hon. Mr. Mattiske. This is a farcical situation, as he said, and it is most necessary that this Bill be passed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

## **ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**THE HON. C. H. SIMPSON** (Midland) [6.11]: I have no intention of opposing this Bill, though it is my intention to suggest an amendment which can be discussed later on in Committee.

I am of the opinion that the Electoral Act could be amended in quite a number of directions; and particularly in regard to the innovation of postal voting. My electorate will not be affected by the Bill which is now before the House. When half of the polling booths are closed and the aggregate number voting is reduced by some 8 per cent. because of the closure of remote polls, something is required to be done, in order to restore to these voters the facilities they hitherto enjoyed.

It is my intention, after discussing the matter with the Minister for Justice, to move an amendment, which I hope will achieve in part what the Government desires and at the same time restore some of the facilities to the voters in remote areas.

All parties are affected by the legislation and I hope to effect an amendment to achieve that object. I have before me an application for a postal ballot paper and I consider it is unnecessarily complicated. It could be made much more simple. When an electoral claim card is filled in—which is straight-forward—it necessarily has to be witnessed by a responsible person, in order to verify that the signature on the card is that of the person concerned. When a person applies for an electoral ballot paper, the Electoral Office is already in possession of that card and can check the signature with the application. Therefore, there should be no need for a witness, in the case of an application for a postal ballot paper.

I suggest that consideration be given to this matter by the Minister when the Bill is in its Committee stage, with a view to deleting the whole of Section 94, which deals with the question of a witness to the application for a postal ballot paper. With those remarks, I support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by the Hon. W. R. Hall, debate adjourned.

### **ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.**

**THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND** (Minister for Railways—North): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 16th September.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.*