

of the debt. This is not a good thing for the community.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Do you say that if the man is sent to prison, it wipes out the debt?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes, the whole of the debt, once he goes to prison. In order to avoid that, we take advantage of another section of the Act, and order the man to find security for payment of the money; and then, if he does not find the security, we adjudge him guilty of contempt and he may go to prison for six months.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And he still owes the money.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Yes. The maintenance officers of the department do the very best they can, but it is very difficult to get hold of these men, who travel about the country and change their names. Here is the State footing a bill of £6,000 odd in respect of men who ought to be supporting their wives and children.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: You may be qualifying to become an industrial magistrate!

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No; but I see these cases. I have been dragged into them, as into many things in my time. Those things I get into I take an interest in, and do the best I can. It seems to me quite wrong that because a woman whose husband is a waster and runs away, applies for and obtains a maintenance order which is not complied with, and the husband goes away for three or four years and perhaps is living with another woman, the wife should still be tied to that man. She cannot apply for a divorce by reason of the maintenance order, which the court holds negatives desertion. She is forced either to seek relief from the Charities Department or, as the evidence taken before the select committee shows, in some cases lives with some other man and produces illegitimate children for whom no one is responsible, and for whom the State has to provide. It seems to me better to allow the woman after three years to get a divorce, notwithstanding that there is a maintenance order in existence which has not been complied with. If the maintenance order is complied with, of course there is no desertion. This Bill seeks to make it desertion if the maintenance order has been in existence for three years and there has been no compliance. The other House agreed to that principle, and I do

not think any member here will object to it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

### BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Day Baking.
- 2, Land Drainage.
- 3, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment.
- 4, Primary Products Marketing.

### BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

#### *Assembly's Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read, notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendment.

*House adjourned at 9.8 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly,

*Wednesday, 21st October, 1925.*

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

### QUESTION—POLICE CONSTABLE, HALL'S CREEK.

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Justice: Is it a fact that the police constable in charge at Hall's Creek has been absent from town for the past month for the purpose of acting as guide to an explorer named Terry?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: In August, 1921, arrangements were made at the request of the Manager of Billiluna Station, for Constable Flinders, of Half's Creek, to periodically patrol to that station. As Mr. Terry was proceeding via Billiluna to Godfrey's Tank the opportunity was taken to permit the constable to make the patrol at the same time.

### QUESTION—SEAMEN'S DISPUTE, POLICE PROTECTION.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL asked the Minister for Justice: 1, Does the following sentence, contained in an interview with the Minister published in the "West Australian" of the 20th, express the decision of the Government in this matter: "Whenever police protection was sought, and the crew were willing to work the boat, it had always been, and would always be, forthcoming?" 2, If so, on what ground has this decision been arrived at?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, Yes. 2, On the ground that if the crew is willing to take the vessel to sea and police protection is asked for the purpose of preventing disorder, it will be provided.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Richardson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to the member for Irwin (Mr. Maley) on the ground of urgent private business.

### BILL—NEWCASTLE SUBURBAN LOT S8.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands and read a first time.

### MOTION—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

*Select Committee—As to publication of evidence.*

MR. DAVY (West Perth) [4.35]: I move—

That in view of the conflicting nature of the evidence given before the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the Bills of Sale Act Amendment Bill, so much of the Standing Orders relating to the publication of evidence before Select Committees be suspended to permit of the evidence being published in the

Press before the presentation of the Committee's report to this House.

I am by this motion endeavouring to fall into line with the unanimous wishes of the members of the Select Committee. The evidence called and given to that Committee will, I am sure, when it is read by hon. members, satisfy them very fully as to the justification of referring this matter to a select committee. It is quite extraordinary that thoroughly responsible people have expressed entirely different views as to the advisability or otherwise of amending the Bills of Sale Act. In view of that the Committee desire that the fullest publicity should be given to the evidence, with a view to any other person who may desire to express his opinion on the matter being able to do so after perusing the statements that have been made by other witnesses.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [4.37]: I intend to oppose the motion. When I first became a member of this House I thought it wise that inquiries by select committees should be thrown open to the Press. Of late, however, I have felt that it is a dangerous proceeding to suspend the Standing Orders for that purpose. A select committee is supposed to take evidence in camera, and that evidence is subsequently presented with the report for the information of members, who may then form their opinions upon that which is laid before them. There is always a liability, if the proceedings are open to the Press, that witnesses will not give the evidence they otherwise would give. I have been supported in that view of late years by most hon. members of this House. On the last two occasions when a motion of this nature was moved, the House objected to the suspension of the Standing Orders. I think they should be adhered to, so that persons who give evidence may know beforehand that their statements will not be published except for the information of members of the House. An inquiry of this sort is not for the public in general. It is conducted to enable members to form an opinion upon the subject of the inquiry. The procedure adopted on the last two or three occasions should be adhered to. It is becoming a common practice for select committees to ask that the Standing Orders should be suspended for this purpose. I hope the House will deal with this motion in the same way

that it did with similar motions in 1923 and 1924. The evidence should be taken in camera, and I can see no reason for making it public. There is no occasion for the Press to be invited to comment upon the evidence that is tendered, for members are quite able to form their own opinions without that. It is possible that the publication of the evidence may draw some members away from the principal points upon which they desire to form an opinion. The select committee appointed to inquire into the establishment of the Perth markets put forward the same request, and met with a refusal. The same thing may be said of the select committee appointed to inquire into soldier settlement. Only under special circumstances should the House allow these Standing Orders to be suspended. They were framed not only for the purpose of protecting select committees, but of protecting witnesses. I cannot see that this is an occasion when the publication of the evidence should be permitted. The subject is purely of a private nature, and the evidence should be submitted and the report furnished in the ordinary way. I hope the House will not agree to the motion.

**HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL** (Northam) [4.42]: It is true that we have on other occasions resisted motions for the suspension of the Standing Orders, but I doubt if they were parallel cases with this one. This select committee is dealing with legislation, and the committee was appointed in order that the people concerned might give information with regard to proposed legislation of vital importance to them. This is quite different from appointing a select committee to deal with returned soldiers. I do not suppose anyone who appeared before this select committee would object to the publication of his evidence. In a few days the whole question will be discussed by the House, and a copy of the evidence will be placed before every member and will then become public. I do not know that any objection, therefore, should be raised to the evidence that has been taken, being published now. It may be contended that witnesses should have been informed that the evidence would be published before they gave it. That certainly would have been better. In the opinion of members of the select committee it is advisable that the public should know what evidence has been given. Undoubtedly

it is evidence that will influence the House when we come to deal with this particular legislation. I could understand the Minister objecting to the suspension of the Standing Orders in other cases, but not in this one. I do not suppose it would be necessary to give the names of the witnesses.

The Minister for Lands: There is nothing to stop it when the evidence is made public.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister knows that the evidence is taken by the "Hansard" staff and the evidence could only be supplied to the Press from their reports. The names, therefore, could be omitted.

The Minister for Lands: But the Press representatives can attend if the motion is agreed to.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They have not been present to date and the evidence referred to has been given already.

The Minister for Lands: Under our Standing Orders newspaper reporters are not allowed to be present at select committee proceedings.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so. The only means by which the evidence can be supplied is from the "Hansard" reports. The Press representatives could be excluded from the proceedings of the committee if deemed advisable during the taking of evidence. I can understand the Minister objecting to abbreviated reports of evidence of this description.

The Minister for Lands: That sort of thing has been done.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so. Such a publication might easily lead to wrong impressions being gathered. If a reporter were expected to condense into two inches evidence that should take 20 inches to cover, a wrong impression could easily be created. However, the evidence is not very lengthy and it could be supplied in full. Evidence taken before a Royal Commission is published.

The Minister for Lands: We know that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Well, I am telling you that it is so.

The Minister for Mines: The hon. member is always telling us what we know.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I could not tell the Minister anything.

The Minister for Mines: That is so. You could not tell me anything.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL. It is not in the mind of the Minister to be informed.

It is utterly impossible to tell him anything. On the other hand, of course, it is possible to inform the Minister for Lands from time to time. I hope the House will agree to meet the wishes of the select committee.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [4.48]: I hope the Committee will not agree to the motion. I will tell the Leader of the Opposition something that probably he does not know. Evidence given before a Royal Commission is privileged, but that tendered to a select committee is not privileged, and therein is the distinction. Because evidence given before a select committee is not privileged, it may lead people who give information into serious trouble. I know what I am speaking about, and I know that what I say is correct. I was at one time the chairman of a select committee.

Hon. G. Taylor: I do not think your memory is too good on that point.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES**: Yes, it is. The select committee I refer to was appointed to inquire into the sweating conditions under which labour was employed in factories.

**The Minister for Lands**: The evidence before that select committee was not published.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES**: It would have been published, but for the advice given me by the officers of the Crown Law Department. They advised me not to publish it, because it was not privileged and some of the statements might have been libellous and might possibly have led to others taking legal action. Although my action in the matter was misunderstood in the country, I refrained from publishing the evidence on the advice tendered to me by the Crown Law authorities on the ground that the evidence was not privileged. If the advice tendered at that time was sound, I have not been informed that it has been since considered otherwise. If that is still the opinion of the Crown Law authorities, we should not agree to the motion.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Did you submit the evidence to the Crown Law Department?

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES**: Yes, and I asked for advice.

Mr. Davy: Did you not commit a breach of Standing Order 352?

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES**: We are not discussing that point.

**The Minister for Lands**: I have always thought that that evidence should have been published, because it would have stirred up the country.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES**: The Attorney General at the time advised me strongly not to publish the evidence. I hope the motion will not be agreed to.

**HON. G. TAYLOR** (Mt. Margaret) [4.50]: The memory of the Minister for Mines has not served him well. There may be a confusion in his mind between printing and publishing. We know that evidence before a select committee is reported by members of the "Hansard" staff, and under Standing Order 352 it is not to be printed by anyone until presented to this House. On the other hand, the evidence is printed by the Government Printer from the typewritten reports of the "Hansard" staff. Copies are handed over to members of a select committee so that they may read the evidence given from day to day, thus enabling them to become more acquainted with the evidence submitted to them. That evidence, however, is not published in the Press. That is where the Minister has confused printing with publishing. On occasions the mover of a motion for the appointment of a select committee has moved for the tabling of a typewritten copy of the evidence only, thus saving the expense of printing. The argument has been advanced that a motion in favour of the printing of the evidence would lead to a discussion regarding the cost of printing. As hon. members know, the typing of reports does not cost much compared with the printing of the evidence. However, I think it would be a dangerous proposal to agree to if the evidence were published in the Press from day to day. Witnesses would read the evidence prior to appearing before the select committee, and when they came forward the ideas they propounded would be built up on evidence that had been tendered by others. We might as well expect all witnesses in a court of law to be present when the evidence of all other witnesses was being tendered. Members of a select committee examine witnesses to the best of their ability, without prejudice, and with a mere desire to get at the bottom of the subject under consideration. I see no extenuating circumstances regarding the present application,

and no reason has been advanced why we should suspend the Standing Orders referred to. I have always combated such a motion, and my long experience in connection with Parliamentary affairs merely serves to confirm the importance of Standing Order 352. At one time I was of the opinion that all such evidence should be published in the Press. but I am not of that opinion now.

**MR. HUGHES** (East Perth) [4.54]: As hon. members are aware, I tried to kill the Bills of Sale Act Amendment Bill at the second reading stage. When it was referred to a select committee, however, I agreed that there was some need for provision being made in our existing legislation to cover the position. To my mind the provisions in the Bill were too drastic. The members of the select committee were entrusted by the House with the duty of inquiring into a technical subject. The evidence tendered as to the results to be expected from the Bill and the best method of achieving the object of those who desire the Bill to be passed, without injuring others who should be protected, has been of a conflicting nature. I agree with the Standing Order prohibiting generally the publication of evidence before a select committee. Surely, however, that Standing Order is not to be taken as of cast iron! Surely it is not to be regarded as one from which no departure is to be made, notwithstanding circumstances that may arise! This is a special case, because experts have appeared before the select committee and expressed their opinions, and these opinions have shown a distinct diversity. The committee asked for suggestions from witnesses as to the best means of achieving the desires of those seeking the passage of the Bill. One witness has made a suggestion, and he was followed by another witness, who put up a counter suggestion. The committee are not in a position to cross-examine the first witness as to the practicability of the suggestion proffered by the second witness.

The Minister for Lands: You can always recall a witness.

**Mr. HUGHES:** But if we recall a witness and put the suggestion to him, we then get merely the opinion of two individuals on that point. The committee are dealing with a subject that is doubly difficult. On

one side we have people who are lenders, and they suggest that bills of sale that are unregistered should be absolutely invalid. It is impossible to get the point of view of the borrowers, who are inconvenienced by the facilities regarding unregistered bills of sale. People of that description would not come forward and tell us that they had had transactions with unregistered bills of sale, and that the legislation would work a hardship. Thus, the committee have to work on *ex parte* statements.

The Minister for Lands: Do you think the borrowers will come forward if they know that their statements are to be published in the Press?

**Mr. HUGHES:** We find that they will not come forward when their statements are to be made confidentially. If the inquiries of the committee are to be limited, I think I am right in saying that it will be the death knell of the Bill. The committee desire to secure information not only from the legal and commercial fraternities, but also from members of the general public as to the probable effects of the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: And do you think the publication of the evidence in the Press will get over that difficulty?

**Mr. HUGHES:** A resume of the evidence will interest people who at present know nothing of the Bill. If certain people engaged in the primary industries saw in the newspaper to-morrow a statement that there was before the House a Bill likely to prevent them from getting credits with which to carry on their industry, they would sit up and take notice.

The Minister for Lands: They do not get much assistance without a mortgage.

**Mr. HUGHES:** The evidence is that a lot of financial assistance is given on the strength of unregistered bills of sale. It would be a revelation to those people to read that there was before the House a measure likely to interfere with the usual practice. As to the point raised by the Minister regarding the evidence not being on oath, and the danger of involving people in the consequences of giving evidence, the evidence is entirely on a question of business procedure and law, and there is no danger of any witness bringing himself into trouble. Should there be brought before the select committee evidence at all doubtful in that respect, surely the House can trust the committee to use some discretion in publicity! But it is not expected that there will be any evidence that

could not be published. The cases published will be simply quoted as cases, without names of persons or firms. In supporting the motion I am speaking for my colleague member of the select committee on this side of the House. On this occasion the House, without setting up a precedent, would be quite justified in suspending the Standing Orders to meet the wishes of the members of the select committee.

**MR. DAVY** (West Perth—in reply) [5.3]: It is difficult for a new member to support a proposition that is condemned by some of the most experienced Parliamentarians. I suggest that a few of those have become a little conservative through long sitting in the House.

The Minister for Lands: That is very handy for protection sometimes; you always harness an old horse beside a young one.

**MR. DAVY**: The old horse is all right until an emergency arises, when perhaps you want the spring of youth. But apart from flippancy, speaking only as one capable of reading Standing Order 352 and appreciating the arguments of the House on this question, if ever there could be an instance where the Standing Order should be suspended for this purpose, it is the instance before us now. Firstly, the so-called evidence before the select committee is not evidence at all, but argument. We have had one man stating facts that we already know and then saying that in his view if we do this such and such will happen. It is expert opinion argued. The ideal way to have this matter thrashed out would be per medium of straight out argument between various people, but that cannot be.

**Hon. G. Taylor**: Then you want a conference.

**MR. DAVY**: Something like it. But as I say, that is impossible. We felt that we ought to have all the views expressed and inferences drawn, and opinions advanced and propositions put before us carefully checked by one skilled man, and our original intention was to hand a copy of all the evidence to one of the Crown Law officers. However, under Standing Order 352 we cannot do that. We may not disclose or publish to anybody the evidence given. The simplest way to get over that, we thought, was to publish the evidence in the newspaper, in which event it would be available to the Crown Law Department.

The Minister for Lands: That would be no good, for no lawyer would form an opinion on evidence published in the Press.

**MR. DAVY**: At all events, that would give us the right to hand a copy of the evidence to the Crown Law Department, which we cannot do now. The alternative to that is that we should get a Crown Law officer before us and put to him what we remembered of the evidence—for we could not hand it to him—and say, "So and so suggested this; what do you think of it?"

The Minister for Lands: Nobody would object to that.

**MR. DAVY**: But the Standing Order proscribes it. Even the Minister for Lands will admit that there may be an instance in which the Standing Order should be suspended in order that the evidence might be published. But we cannot even show the evidence to the Minister for Lands, else he would agree readily that that evidence ought to be published. There is no possibility of the ills suggested by the Minister for Mines, because, as I say, the evidence is all opinion as to what may happen if certain things be done. So there can be no danger to anybody through the publication of the evidence. I hope the House will agree to the motion.

Question put and negatived.

## BILL—JURY ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Council's Amendments.*

Message received from the Council notifying that it had agreed to the Bill subject to amendments.

## BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Primary Products Marketing.
  - 2, Day Baking.
  - 3, Land Drainage.
  - 4, Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

## MOTION—ABATTOIRS ACT.

### *To Disallow Regulations.*

Debate resumed from 14th October on the following motion by Mr. Mann—

That the regulations of the State Abattoirs and Saleyards (Metropolitan District) published in the "Government Gazette" of 7th

August, 1925, and laid on the Table of the House on Tuesday, 8th September, 1925, be disallowed.

### THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [5.14]: I have admiration for the way in which the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) addressed himself to the subject, because so far as he could, with the information at his disposal, he dealt with the subject very fairly. But I hope that when I shall have given the departmental view of the matter and submitted the facts as we understand them, the hon. member will see his way clear to withdraw the motion. The member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson) was quite correct when he said that I gave an understanding that within a reasonable time I would revise the regulations if I found the charges oppressive. When he came to me with the suggestion that he should move to have the regulations disallowed, I told him that the butchers knew of my promise and that they had agreed with the suggestion. I think it has since been suggested that the time for making the revision has elapsed, but I point out that that did not concern the butchers, because they approached members to move for the disallowance of these regulations long before the time had elapsed. Even though a month has elapsed since the regulations came into force, the time has not been sufficient to enable the department to get together the information necessary to enable me to consider the facts, together with the costs of and the receipts from operations. That matter is now in the hands of an accountant whom I instructed to prepare full information for me. When I have considered the figures put up by the accountant I shall, if the necessity arises, revise the charges now operating. The promised revision of the rates is not the outcome of the motion moved in this House, nor is it the result of any agitation by the butchers: it is the fulfilment of a promise that I gave to the butchers themselves. The metropolitan abattoirs were first organised under Government control in 1915, and I admit that the charges for slaughtering were then 8s. for cattle. The Government did the slaughtering and the cleaning. But conditions have changed materially, not only in Western Australia but all over the world, since 1915. What

could be accomplished for 8s. then could not be accomplished for 15s. now. Costs everywhere have altered and conditions have been revolutionised.

Mr. Mann: The only increase in this instance is labour.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In those days the costs of fuel, power and everything else were more favourable. Until last year the slaughtering for the metropolitan area was confined to the Midland Junction abattoirs, while at Fremantle the slaughtering was done at the Anchorage abattoirs, the Union abattoirs, and the North Fremantle abattoirs. The premises owned by the West Australian Meat Exports Co., Ltd., Fremantle, were rented by the Mitchell Government in order to concentrate the work there. The then Government took over the works at a rental of £7,000 a year for a term of 10 years. I am inclined to think that their action in the circumstances was a proper one.

Mr. Mann: The Government have made a good deal by it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We are not in a position to say whether it is a good deal or a bad deal. In those premises the Government have a sum of £110,000 involved, and it was due to them to look after the asset in order to secure their money and help the company to win through in the purpose for which it was initiated. I do not say anything about the business aspect, because as yet it is too early to make any statement, but I consider that the object of the Government was quite a proper one. Before that time a demand was raised for better conveniences at Midland Junction. On one occasion a strike occurred amongst the master butchers of Midland Junction because of the want of accommodation—it was when the Hon. C. Baxter was Honorary Minister for Agriculture—and the Minister had to go out to the abattoirs and arrange to effect certain temporary improvements. There had been a demand from time to time for additional conveniences and it last the demand was met. Preliminary arrangements had also been made to put a sum on the Estimates to increase the accommodation at Midland Junction and provide the conveniences that the master butchers considered were absolutely necessary for their business. As a result there has been expended on the improvements approximately £42,000. When the actual

cost is assessed, it may prove to be a few pounds more. This expenditure was incurred in providing ample slaughtering accommodation, which has been more than duplicated, provision for refrigeration, hanging space in the slaughtering hall and the chilling room, and in addition to the other slaughtering halls, a pig slaughtering hall has been provided and an extension has been made of the by-products house. We have also provided up-to-date scales at a cost of £400. I think it is admitted that the accommodation at Midland Junction is second to none in the Commonwealth, and that it is very suitable for our purposes.

Mr. Mann: You have provided power enough for many years to come.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We cannot say that; but in the lay-out we have provided for the making of further extensions—

Mr. Mann: Without increasing your power.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Without inconveniencing the present arrangements or altering the present premises. While the improvements were being made at Midland Junction, the killing was concentrated at Fremantle. The Perth and Midland butchers were sent to Fremantle, and in the interval the department provided at Fremantle chilling accommodation, yarding and water for the stock, free of charge to the butchers.

Mr. Mann: I said that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is a matter of regret and disappointment to me that the butchers, for whom so much was done, are the only men responsible for the present complaint. The agitation has been largely initiated by the butchers who received that big concession at Fremantle extending over a term of nearly 12 months. While the abattoirs showed a loss of £5,000 last year, I do not admit that the whole of that loss resulted from the conveniences we provided for the metropolitan, Fremantle and Midland butchers. It has been asserted by them that the £5,000 loss was incurred in that way, but even if it was, they have shown themselves utterly ungrateful by pocketing that £5,000 without giving any consideration to the consuming public, and by now charging the Government with profiteering by reason of the charges imposed under the new regulations. The attitude of the butchers is utterly inconsistent and cannot be jus-

tified. There was a loss of £5,000 on the abattoirs last year.

Mr. Mann: The free services you gave the butchers last year only compensated for the inconvenience to which they were put.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: And to-day they have to pay for those conveniences at Midland Junction. The butchers admit that they must pay something for the improvements, and the member for Perth has not objected to their being charged something for the additional conveniences. The butchers, however, are not prepared to admit that the conveniences they enjoyed last year free of charge were of any value whatever to them. They give the Government no credit for having done that for them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What would be your extra cost of handling?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I shall give those figures later.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That is what you ought to cover.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: On the completion of the Midland abattoirs, the Perth and Midland butchers returned to Midland Junction, while the slaughtering for Fremantle is now concentrated at the West Australian Meat Export Company's premises. We have closed down operations at the Anchorage and Union abattoirs, which were rented from Mr. Copley and from Messrs. Copley and Patterson, respectively, and we have also ceased operations at our own abattoirs at North Fremantle. The whole of the Fremantle slaughtering, which is about 50 per cent. of the metropolitan kill, is now concentrated at the West Australian Meat Export Works, Fremantle. At Fremantle the butchers enjoy similar privileges and conveniences to those who kill at Midland Junction. The department's slaughtering operations at Midland Junction were commenced on the 17th August last, but even then the new rates did not apply. The butchers started at the old rates, and the new rates were not imposed until the 7th September. For three weeks, therefore, the butchers had the advantage of the additional accommodation and facilities at the old rates. As we have now reached the 21st October, it will be realised that the new rates have operated for only a few weeks over that period during which the butchers enjoyed the advantages of the new system at the old rates. I admit that at first sight the new rates appear to be very high. The rates



are 12s. for cattle, 2s. for sheep and 3s. for pigs, but in all the arguments advanced by the butchers, they have endeavoured to lead the community to believe that the increase for cattle is 12s. per head.

Mr. Mann: No, they have not.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

As a fact, during the whole of the controversy in the Press, the butchers made it appear that the added cost was 12s. per head.

Mr. Mann: I did not do that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

And the butchers have made it appear that they were compelled to pass that 12s. on to the consumer. The member for Perth knows it is not so; he knows that the increase is the difference between the old rate and the 12s. rate. Had the butchers confined themselves to dealing with the real increase, there would not have been very much in their arguments.

Mr. Mann: There is an increase of 9s.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

The member for Perth produced certain figures by which he endeavoured to convince the House that the profit made by the Government on these charges would amount to £20,970. I do not blame the hon. member in respect of those figures, because they are figures which he could not get except from interested persons, and he has had no opportunity to learn the departmental standpoint. Those figures were put into his hands by the butchers, and I do not blame him if it is shown that the figures are most unreliable.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Can you show where the figures are not correct?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

Of course I can. The figures are absolutely preposterous. The Government could not possibly make the profit which has been suggested. The hon. member's figures were based on the kill for this month, October. If the figures were correct, the argument would not be fair, because this month's kill represents the peak month for sheep. The cost of killing a bullock is 12s., and the cost of killing a sheep is 2s. Taking the average sheep at 40 lbs. and the average bullock at 600 lbs.—

Mr. Mann: That is not the weight of a bullock.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

That is how the butchers work it out. On that basis it takes 15 sheep to make one bullock. For 15 sheep, at 2s. per head, the department get 30s., as against 12s. for a

bullock representing the same weight of meat. During February, March, April, and May there would be very few sheep in the market and the killing would be practically confined to cattle at 12s. per head. I have here a diagram showing the killings for the various months. In October, 1924, 26,193 sheep were killed; but in June, 1924, there were only 13,883 sheep killed. In September of last year the killings of sheep were 21,000, in August 21,853—

Mr. Mann: Last year was a drought year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

In October of last year 26,193 sheep were killed, in November 18,987, in December 14,937, in the following January 17,768, and in February—here the number went right down—14,133. During February, March, April, May, and June the number of sheep slaughtered at the metropolitan abattoirs was under 15,000 per month.

Mr. Mann: You have taken last year, which was a drought year, as you know. Moreover, we had frozen meat all the year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

The member for Perth cannot mislead members who know anything about agricultural conditions. We are all aware that sheep are always scarce during February, March, April, May, and June. I will tell the member for Perth that if he does not know it. If one holds sheep till May or June, one can always realise a good price for them, because during those months there are very few sheep in the market. Members opposite should know that, because any person in the country who has a few sheep to sell knows it. It is a peculiarity of our stock conditions, and one which always obtains. It has never been otherwise, except after the breaking of a drought on the Murchison, when conditions have quickly fattened stock for the market. I can show that in the months when sheep are scarce, cattle are high. The member for Perth had better not stress the fact that we had frozen meat last year, because, if he does, the inference is against him. As much frozen meat took the place of mutton as of beef.

Mr. Mann: Of course; and that is my point.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

But the hon. member is not making his point properly. He cannot apply the point against this scale, because the scale deals with slaughtering, and not with the quantity of meat sold. The scale shows that in October, when the number of sheep slaugh-

tered is high, the number of cattle slaughtered is low, and that in May and June, when the number of sheep slaughtered is low, the number of cattle slaughtered is high. Therefore, since the Government get more money for the slaughtering of sheep than for that of cattle, it is not a fair thing to base an estimate on a month when the number of sheep slaughtered is at its peak. The hon. member has erred in making the comparison. I do not blame him for his error, because the information he had was given him by interested parties. Let me give an instance of how the hon. member was misled. On his own figures, this month the fees collected by the Government for the slaughtering of sheep exceeded those paid for the slaughtering of cattle by £7,500. That is evidence, on his own figures, that he took the peak month for sheep and made it the basis for the whole year. It is only fair in a business calculation to base receipts and expenditure on the operations of the previous year.

Mr. Mann: Then you are on wrong premises to start with.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Because of the quantity of frozen beef?

Mr. Mann: Exactly.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That condition will always arise in this country.

Mr. Mann: It was due to last year being a drought year.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no doubt that owing to drought conditions in the South-West of Western Australia, in the wheat belt, where the greatest number of sheep are grown, there will be a shortage of sheep early next year. We know perfectly well that in the whole of the wheat belt and the Great Southern district, where the largest number of sheep are produced, there is a great shortage of feed. As a result we shall not next year have the stock for market that we had last year. The Government have to calculate on the possibilities, and upon the circumstance that drought conditions may obtain at any time. The department have to fix their charges on conditions that have been proved to operate here over a period of years. The number of cattle slaughtered for the year ended on 30th June, 1925, was 23,274, the number of sheep and lambs 204,266, and the number of pigs 9,221. Basing their calculations on the same num-

ber of cattle, sheep and lambs, and pigs, the department estimated a revenue of £35,773. Against this must be set off depreciation on the capital invested; and the capital invested, I may inform the member for Perth, is not £42,000. Interest charges cannot be calculated on £42,000, but must be calculated on £72,975, which figure represents the capital cost of the whole of the abattoirs.

Mr. Thomson: Was that the original cost?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not including North Fremantle. The total capital cost was £93,910. The depreciation to be allowed on that amount is £5,838; the interest is £4,744; the health fees amount to £2,180, and the running expenses to £20,000. Those charges make a total of £32,912 against an estimated revenue of £35,000 based on last year's operations the only calculations on which we could work at the time when we fixed the abattoirs fees.

Mr. Mann: On the capital cost, the abattoirs paid their way with the previous charges.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Last year they lost £5,000, and that loss cannot be allowed to recur.

Mr. Mann: It occurred in one year only.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member gave the House certain figures, calculating on which he endeavoured to prove that by making certain charges on a certain number of cattle, sheep, and pigs slaughtered the Government could get a revenue sufficient to cover costs and liabilities; but his figures in that connection are not reliable, and I will show him just how he has erred in taking for the basis of his calculation figures which cannot in any sense be justified. Here are the hon. member's own words—

We have investigated the costs and have endeavoured to allow for every item of increased expenditure. The Lutchers suggest what they consider would be a reasonable scale. The approximate killing for a year at Midland Junction would be 12,844 bullocks, 169,000 sheep, and 4,524 pigs.

And he makes the same calculation for the Fremantle abattoirs. Calculating on that number to be slaughtered he arrives at a figure which would enable the department to cover the whole of its liabilities. I want to show the hon. member that in any circumstances his figures cannot be correct. He states that the butchers calculate they will slaughter this year 25,688 cattle. Last year

the number slaughtered was 23,274. Last year there were slaughtered 204,000 sheep.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Is that for the year ended June, 1925?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The member for Perth states that this year we are going to slaughter 338,000 sheep—169,000 at Midland Junction, and the same number at Fremantle.

Mr. Mann: Can you give the figures for the year ended last?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The member for Perth calculates that the slaughtering of sheep will be increased by 60 per cent. in one year. I am taking the hon. member's own figures, which are the butchers' figures. He estimates that we are going to increase our consumption of mutton by 60 per cent in one year. He calculates that this year we are going to slaughter 338,000 sheep, as against 204,000 last year, or an increase of 133,754 over last year.

Mr. Mann: So you will. Last year was a drought year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The estimate is positively absurd. It cannot possibly be realised. That sort of calculation is grotesque, and it is where the hon. member finds himself wrong. Members must understand that figures based on calculations of that character are of no value and cannot help anyone in the consideration of the matter. Take the hon. member's figures a little further. If we killed in the metropolitan abattoirs 2,414 cattle more than we killed last year, and 133,000 more sheep than were killed in the previous year, we should have an additional revenue of £13,821. Here we have nearly £14,000 of the alleged £20,000 which the department is supposed to make. Inasmuch therefore as the figures are wrong, we could not possibly slaughter 133,000 more sheep than were slaughtered last year. It is a ridiculous assertion for the hon. member to make. We cannot possibly derive a revenue from stock that will not be slaughtered or required for slaughter. The hon. member having quoted his figures, insists that the department is profiteering by making tremendous revenue.

Mr. Mann: You persist in quoting from a drought year.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think the House is satisfied that the figures quoted by the hon. member are absolutely ridiculous. We killed 204,000 sheep last year, and the hon. member says that we will slaughter 133,000 more this year. No man in his senses will accept the hon.

member's figures. The new charges did not operate until the 7th September, and for about three weeks the abattoirs, with all the costs against them, were operating on the old charges, and of course at a loss. We are not in the position to say how far we can make calculations for the whole year on the operations of one month. The butchers state that they were compelled to operate on the higher scale of fees, but I pointed out that there was an alternative charge if the butchers cared to avail themselves of it.

Mr. Mann: That is the nigger in the woodpile.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The butchers are wilfully operating on the higher scale and are using that scale as a lever to bring about the reduction of charges.

Mr. Mann: In order to keep possession of their property.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the butchers were to avail themselves of scale A, which provides for a slaughtering charge of 7s. as against 12s. under scale B, and in the case of sheep and lambs the slaughtering charge of 1s. as against 2s. under scale B, it would be distinctly to their advantage. But they will not do it because they want to use the higher charges as a lever by which they can bring about a reduction of the charges all round, and when they do so, it is quite possible that a number of them will come in under the alternative charge which is called Schedule A.

Mr. Mann: Explain what Schedule A means.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Under Schedule A, the by-product is retained by the department. Under Schedule B, by which the butchers pay a higher rate, the by-product is retained by the butchers. To-day the butchers are endeavouring to show that whereas the lower charge is 5s. less than the higher charge, the inedible offal is worth 5s. or more to them. At this time of the year, of course, all stock is in the best condition. Later on, the stock fall off, but just now the inedible offal would be greater in quantity and better in quality than at other periods of the year. Just now they may say that the inedible offal is worth so much to them. That, however, is not a fair calculation, because over the whole of the year, taking the good with the bad, it is not worth anything like the value placed on it.

Mr. Mann interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member has interjected frequently; he will have an opportunity to reply to the Minister's statements. I ask him, therefore, to cease his constant interruptions. I hope I shall not have to call the hon. member to order again.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will give the House the benefit of the figures in support of the position. I will take the kill at Midland Junction for one week. The slaughter of cattle numbered 194, sheep and lambs 3,422, and pigs 69. The cost of killing under Scale A would be £245, and under Scale B £463. It is estimated in the department, which has some knowledge of the position, that the value of the offal is £156. Therefore, including the offal, under Schedule A, which is the lower price for killing, the total is brought up to £402. The figures which I have given under Scale B, £463, are evidence that the butchers to-day are losing £60 a week because they insist on slaughtering under the higher schedule. If all stock were slaughtered under Schedule A, we would get these figures: 23,274 cattle at 7s., £8,145; sheep and lambs, 204,266 at 1s., £10,213; pigs, 9,221 at 2s., £922, a total of £19,280. The increase in charges would thus only amount to £9,640 under Schedule A. To this we add the value of the inedible offal which we take. We estimate that if the butchers would slaughter under Schedule A and allow us to retain the offal, they would save £4,290.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Of course they ridicule that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the department revises these charges, I am prepared to think that quite a number will come under Schedule A, and including Fremantle, where 50 per cent. of the slaughtering is done, there will be a saving of an additional amount which will bring the total saving to £9,500, if the butchers slaughter under Schedule A. The butchers would be well advised to accept Schedule A and kill under the alternative conditions, leaving the viscera and inedible offal to the department. The owner says, "Why should we not retain the inedible offal?" My reply is that we can treat the inedible offal more economically than can the butchers. I admit they are pooling their product, but they are pooling it only for the time being. They have adopted

that system while they are together. On previous occasions they treated this offal separately. They put the inedible offal aside. If a person is treating for half a dozen customers as against treating in bulk, the work cannot be done economically. The charge must be made against the butchers, because they will not permit of economy and efficiency being practised in the treatment. From the hygienic standpoint it is undesirable that butchers should be able to put aside the inedible offal, and hold it for periods which lead to the creation of insanitary conditions. I do not say that happens now. For the purpose of this fight they have pooled. This, however, did not operate in the past, and I do not expect it to continue. Instead of the system being carried out efficiently, and in a hygienic manner by the department we have, at the abattoirs, butchers who want to put a bit of offal here and another bit there. It is impossible for the department to carry on the abattoirs as they are carried on in the Eastern States, where these conditions are not permitted. By refusing to slaughter under the reduced rates, the butchers constitute an obstacle to the department with regard to administering the abattoirs under the best possible conditions.

Mr. Thomson: How do our charges compare with those in the Eastern States?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Our charges are higher than those in the Eastern States, because we do much less slaughtering here. The administration, in the case of a large population, costs very much less than it does in the case of a small population such as we have. As our population grows, our consumption goes up and as the amount of slaughtering increases, our charges will be spread over greater ground and will be proportionately reduced. In the circumstances, however, we cannot expect a position such as that. The department would have been wise in the beginning if they had insisted that the butchers should treat at the lower rate. I sometimes regret that an alternative was offered, and that we did not insist that the slaughtering must be carried on at the State-owned abattoirs under hygienic conditions. The abattoirs, of course, belong to the people.

Mr. Mann: You could not have done that without an Act of Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We might have attempted it. Had we in-

sisted upon the butchers conducting their business as is done in the Eastern States, they would have been compelled to accept the lower rate. The work at Midland Junction would then have been carried out under more hygienic conditions, and in a more economical and efficient manner.

Mr. Panton: There are no wholesale butchers in South Australia as we know them here.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The wholesale butchers should be the last to complain, and yet they are doing the most squealing. In South Australia the abattoirs do everything and take everything. The butcher there never sees his beast between the time it is branded in the yard and when it is landed in his shop. The butchers are not allowed to argue, and to say what shall operate and what shall not operate at the abattoirs. They are not allowed to insist upon this that or the other being done. The authorities say, "These are the conditions under which you must operate." In South Australia the abattoirs are administered by a trust. Here we have butchers dictating the conditions under which the abattoir system shall be run. Even though it may require an Act of Parliament, in the interests of the people, of cleanliness, and of better conditions, it may have to be attempted. The butchers undoubtedly receive advantages from the new system, which they are not prepared to admit in controversy. Although they are prepared to admit to me personally in my office that the conveniences are all that could be desired, and that everything is to their advantage, they have never made a public profession of that during this controversy. I will tell the House some of the advantages that the butchers have received. For the first time they have chilling accommodation attached to the abattoirs at Fremantle and Midland Junction.

Mr. Panton: Which was badly needed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This chilling accommodation is provided free for 24 hours, and also for all holidays and week-ends. The butchers pay nothing for that convenience, but they are not prepared to admit that this is valuable to them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: This is included in the charges so that they do pay for it,

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, they have to pay but they do not want to pay. They now have adequate accommodation for slaughtering which they did not possess before. Because they could not get

slaughtering done within the required time, and because they had no chilling accommodation in which to hold the meat, they had to pay heavy overtime rates to butchers to do the slaughtering. Now that they have been given slaughtering conveniences, and space and accommodation to enable them to hold their meat, they need not pay overtime.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There are no losses of meat.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member has said it. There are no losses. Prior to the introduction of these conveniences and, this accommodation the butchers took their meat hot and steaming from the abattoirs, put it into lorries, and brought it to Perth. There were no hygienic conditions about that sort of thing. Mr. Walder has admitted to me that he lost hundreds of pounds because of that condition. That statement is recorded on the file as the outcome of the deputation that waited upon me.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Are you charging too much for it?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We may be doing so, but I am going to revise these rates. If we are charging too much, as I said long ago, I will revise the rates. I wanted a fair period, however, to satisfy me that the department was not carrying on at a loss. I have no personal interest in this matter. It would not worry me, if I had no Ministerial responsibilities, whether the abattoirs paid or not. It would be a pleasant thing for me to be able to say to these gentlemen, "Have what you like at whatever cost you like." I could make a good fellow of myself. I have, however, to see that the finances, that are provided by the people to enable the butchers to carry on their business, are not being spent at a loss to the people.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Or at a profit either.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If I find that our charges are excessive, I propose to revise them. I assure the butchers that I am not going to fix a rate that will enable them to carry on their business profitably and which will provide them with all the conveniences, if the public pays the piper.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The ace is on the down with the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Department of Agriculture has lost money as a consequence of providing chilling

accommodation free to these butchers. A number of the butchers rented rooms at the State Markets, and also paid for chilling accommodation at the Government refrigerating chambers in Perth. Several of these gentlemen have long ago given up these premises, and are no longer utilising the refrigerating space at the Government works. In the summer time it cost the individual butchers £8 a week by way of rent for these premises. In addition they had to suffer all the losses in bringing the meat from Midland Junction to Perth. They had to employ additional labour at these premises, and employ additional men for the extra work required in handling the meat. They now adopt the principle that they want everything for nothing. They say that the chilling accommodation is no good to them. When a thing is actually provided it never is any good, because once people have a thing they attach no value to it. Although they say the chilling accommodation is no good to them they are utilising it.

Mr. Mann: Are you referring to the chilling accommodation in Wellington-street?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. We provided premises at Wellington-street and the butchers rented them, and also occupied refrigerating space at the Government Refrigerating Works. This accommodation is now provided for them at Midland Junction, and there is no need for them any longer to rent the other premises. They now conduct their business at Midland Junction. They have this refrigerating space for nothing.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The wholesale men will have to take the refrigerated space in Perth.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Some of them must do so. Many of those gentlemen who made the most noise have taken advantage of the new conditions. My regret is that they have not expressed appreciation through the Press of what has been done for them. I do not want them to thank me, but an appreciation in the Press would have been better understood.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: If you charge them too much there is nothing for them to be thankful for.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They might admit that they have been given all these things, that the conditions are much improved, though contesting that our charge is too high. They now suggest that we should reduce the rates by nearly 50 per

cent. That cannot be done. We cannot provide conveniences of this sort for nothing.

The Minister for Lands: They want the conveniences but do not want to pay for them.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In the future, when the Government are thinking of work of this nature, before anything is done they will have to get an agreement with the people concerned that they will pay the cost of the undertaking. Otherwise they will bring pressure to bear upon Parliament to defeat the Government in their object of securing repayment for services rendered.

Hon. G. Taylor: It makes it almost impossible for the Government to act as traders.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. I am informed that a number of these wholesale butchers are now making use of the abattoirs as a distributing centre. They were previously compelled to rent premises in Perth as distributing places for the other butchers. Now they are using the abattoirs for this purpose, and are said to be conducting all their business there. If this is so it cannot be allowed to continue, for it means greater loss to the department. If the abattoirs are to be used as a distributing centre for other butchers it must lead to congestion there, for there will be beef and mutton on the premises until it is sold that should long ago have been sent away. As a result of that congestion we shall have to employ extra hands, and shall pay overtime. Whilst we are prepared to provide these facilities, we cannot allow the butchers to make the abattoirs a business centre where all the wholesale butchers will carry on their operations.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: During the course of his speech the member for Perth (Mr. Mann) made some reference to the amount paid weekly to the Government by Mr. Copley, of the Anchorage abattoirs. He alleged that the Government made £50 a week out of Mr. Copley. That was largely due to the fact that a big percentage of the stock was slaughtered at the Anchorage abattoirs. As a matter of fact, the business conducted by Mr. Copley is a large one, and he should not complain of the fact that he paid £50 a week to the Government. It was greatly to his per-

sonal advantage because he was able to carry on his business in his own abattoirs. If he had rented the premises from the Government, he would still have been placed in a more advantageous position than any other butcher. He was able to retain all the blood and manure from his own slaughtering, as a result of the State operating in his abattoirs. In all other abattoirs the blood and manure become the property of the State.

Mr. Mann: He paid you for the blood.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Mr. Copley had an advantage because he was able to operate in his own premises, make use of his own by-products plant, and thus had opportunities over and above all other butchers. Mr. Copley was well aware of that fact and I have no doubt, if we had not closed down the Anchorage abattoirs, he would still have gone on cheerfully under the conditions that previously obtained. There is no doubt about that. Other butchers are satisfied that Mr. Copley had a great advantage under those conditions, and I believe that in due course they will admit that the existing conditions, under which all are placed on the same basis, provide a fairer deal to the trade. I have no doubt that Mr. Copley has complained, seeing that, under the existing conditions, he is placed on the same business footing as other butchers. If there is disadvantage to anyone, it is to Mr. Copley, because he has not now advantages over and above his competitors in the trade. I do not think I need say any more about the position. I wish, however, to stress one phase. The member for Perth endeavoured to make a point out of the fact that last year a quantity of frozen beef was unloaded on the market because stock was not available. He stated that the losses at the abattoirs were due to the fact that frozen beef was unloaded on the market. The House will be well advised to remember that the butchers made no loss because the frozen beef was placed on the market. They handled it at a profit and saw to it that they got their profits. The only loss that was made in connection with the whole transaction was made by the Government at the abattoirs. It must be remembered that seasons will always occur when the conditions then present will obtain. We will always have our drought periods. Every hon. member representing a sheep-growing district knows very well that there will be a mutton shortage early next year, be-

cause the feed is not available. At the present time stock owners are rushing sheep to the market for sale, and as a result we have had an abnormal peak period this month. The marketings during the present month are out of all proportion to marketings during any previous October, which, as I have indicated, is always the peak month of the year for sheep. Owing to the large percentage of sheep in the market this month, I say that this October is not to be regarded as a fair basis on which to calculate fees for a period, neither is it fair to fix those fees on that basis. I have already told the member for Perth, the member for Guildford (Hon. W. D. Johnson), and the butchers, when I met them at a conference, that I would go into the position. I have asked the accountant at the Agricultural Department to take the matter up and get out the figures for me. If I find that the fees charged are too high, I will revise them. At the same time, I must conserve the interests of the State as well as of the butchers. The consumer must obtain his meat under the best possible conditions. The butchers will be well advised to kill at the lower rate and if they do so, they will have no cause for complaint. In other countries they are compelled to do so; here they were given an alternative. I regret that they adopted the higher rates as a means of effecting an all-round reduction. I hope the member for Perth will withdraw the motion. At the first opportunity, as soon as I can get the figures before me, I will go into the charges and if I find that the rates levied by the Government are not fair, I will be prepared to reduce them. I make no promise that I will make any refunds, because those payments would be to the butchers and not to the consumers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course, you must have a fair charge.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, I will get a fair charge, but there will be no refund unless it is given to the consumer.

Mr. Mann: The increase has not been passed on to the consumer.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is ridiculous to say that it has not been passed on. I would point out, moreover, that stock has never been cheaper than during the past month or so. The butchers admitted that they had not passed it on because the price of stock had gone down.

If they have not had stock cheaper, the butchers are not entitled to pass on a charge that does not exist. In their statement in the Press the butchers admitted that the stock market had declined, and that they had purchased supplies at a lower cost.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They must pass it on.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course they pass it on to the consumer. I hope the member for Perth will withdraw the motion.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

Mr. LATHAM: I move an amendment—

That after "council," in line 3 of Subclause (3), the following be inserted:—"and may be leased."

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## BILL—AUCTIONEERS ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading Defeated.*

Debate resumed from 14th October.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle) [7.47]: This is a very dangerous Bill. It will alter the whole system of trading throughout the State. It merely provides that second-hand motor cars may be auctioned by night, but that is done to reintroduce the system of night trading, which is prohibited under the Factories and Shops Act. It will place the sellers of second-hand motor cars in a privileged position. I do not think it good that second-hand motor cars should be sold by night.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Can they be sold by night now?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not at auction. Primarily no night auction selling is allowed of any description of goods, but there is a provision in the Act allowing wool to be so sold if it has been catalogued so as to admit of previous inspection. Under the same provision land may be auctioned by night. That, too, is open to previous inspection. I do not see why the proposed privilege should be given to the sellers of second-hand motor cars. It is introducing a system that has not been permitted in the past. I hope hon. members will not agree to the Bill.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [7.50]: I am surprised that the member for Coolgardie (Mr. Lambert) should have introduced the Bill. It shows great want of consistency in him, for only last week we found his assisting the Minister for Works in preventing bakers from working by night; now we have him in all seriousness suggesting we should make auctioneers work by night. Night baking has been condemned on the score that it is bad for the men's health. Surely if it be

## BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

*In Committee.*

Resumed from 14th October. Mr. Lutey in the Chair; Mr. Latham in charge of the Bill

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 1.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—Power temporarily to close roads not in use:

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause (2), "road" be struck out, and the words "street or way" inserted in lieu.

In Subclause 1 "street or way" is used, and the amendment will bring Subclause 2 into conformity with it.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause, to stand as Subclause (3), be inserted as follows:—"The Council shall serve a copy of such notice on the owners and occupiers of all land abutting on the street or way with a notification endorsed thereon that if the application is objected to, notice of such objection must be given to the Minister within one month from a date to be stated in such endorsement."

The object of the amendment is to enable the owner of any block of land abutting on a street or way to have notification regarding the application for the closing of any such street or way.

Amendment put and passed.



unhealthy for bakers to work by night, it is equally unhealthy for auctioneers to work by night; in fact, worse, for whereas the baker works in a comfortable kitchen away from the cold night air, the auctioneer will be called upon to sell either in the open or in a big draughty garage where the germs that thrive by night will be considerably multiplied. Why should it be necessary to single out one article for this privilege?

Mr. Lambert: Why wool?

Mr. ANGELO: That is entirely different. The wool is always inspected before sale. It is appraised and its value cannot well be altered. I am afraid the Bill has been introduced in the interests of certain garage owners who desire to get an advantage over their competitors. It means that a lot of unwary people from the country will be taken down. Moreover, wool is a necessity and so, too, is land, whereas motor cars to a great extent are mere luxuries. Surely if a man wishes to purchase a motor car he can do so in daylight.

**MR. LAMBERT** (Coolgardie—in reply) [7.52]: I am surprised at the show of opposition to the Bill. It has passed in another place, where it met with almost unanimous approval.

Mr. Richardson: Is that a good recommendation?

Mr. LAMBERT: At all events it represents the mature deliberation of those so very dear to the member for Subiaco. As for the superficial argument put forward by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Angelo), that the proposal in the Bill can be likened to day baking, there is no such analogy. The product of baking is foodstuffs, and for reasons of health foodstuffs should not be handled by night. Underlying the hon. members' true opposition to the Bill is the fact that nine-tenths of our secondhand motor cars, representing a big waste product, are sold to dealers, usually firstclass mechanics. These working men can afford to pay £40 or £50 for a car and in their spare time recondition it. This they do instead of attending racing and trotting meetings so dear to the member for Gascoyne. Rather than encourage men to stand on street corners during Saturday afternoon and in other ways waste their time on Sundays, the hon. member should be ready to give them the opportunity to purchase secondhand motor cars and recondition them in their own time.

Hon. G. Taylor: That looks like overtime.

Mr. LAMBERT: It is not necessarily overtime. If the opposition came from the moneyed interests in another place, if it came from those who desire to sell new motor cars to the unfortunate farmers and working men who cannot afford to pay for them, I could understand it. As for the contention of the Minister for Lands that this is likely to prove merely the introduction of night trading, I say that is altogether wrong. There is no such suggestion. If big firms such as Messrs Dalgety & Co. and Messrs. Elder, Smith & Co. are allowed to catalogue wool and offer it for sale by night, it is equally right that we should extend the same privilege to those who want to buy and sell second-hand motor cars by night. Why should we debar a first-class mechanic who wants to buy a second-hand motor car from attending an auction sale at night, and there purchasing the car?

Hon. G. Taylor: You know why the limitations are there.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not know that it can be seriously contended that the limitations should operate against the interests of the community. There are people who would surround our general conduct of life with all possible restrictions. The further we can remove such restrictions, the better.

Mr. Thomson: Come over here.

Mr. LAMBERT: Views must be expanded. What was right 100 years ago is not necessarily right to-day.

Mr. Sampson: The Act was passed in 1873, and has not since been amended.

Mr. LAMBERT: That is so. The Minister for Lands should subscribe to more advanced views. The idea of his not being prepared to move one step since 1873 suggests that if we wait for him we shall not get very far in furthering the democracy of this country. I do not know that the Minister for Lands was over-serious in his opposition to the Bill.

Hon. G. Taylor: Cannot you bring in the widows and orphans also? We might sympathise with you then.

Mr. LAMBERT: No one is so good on the low pedal as is the member for Mt. Margaret. This Bill has been fairly presented to the House. I have given all the conceivable reasons against the passage of the Bill.

The Minister for Lands: I agree with you there.

Mr. LAMBERT: And I have given the reasons in favour of the Bill. I have answered the contention of the Minister for Lands that there is objection to the measure from the point of view of the worker. Is it contended that the worker shall be present to hold up the auctioneer's catalogue? My object is to provide opportunities for the young working mechanics of the city. Men who have £20, £30, or £40 by them might inspect a car in the day time and they would know what they were going to buy. We should encourage such men to carry on legitimate work on their own account, and to become more self-reliant. I commend the second reading to the good judgment of the House.

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

Ayes	..	..	11
Noes	..	..	16
			—
Majority against			5
			—

## AYES.

Mr. Brown	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. Mann	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Millington	(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Panton
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Heron	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Miss Holman	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Munster
Mr. Lutey	(Teller.)
Mr. McCallum	

Question thus negatived; Bill defeated.

## BILL—MUNICIPALITY OF FREMANTLE.

### Second Reading.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [8.7] in moving the second reading said: This is one of those little measures containing nothing contentious.

Mr. Thomson: Not like your racing Restriction Bill.

Mr. SLEEMAN: No. The object of the Bill is to give the Fremantle Municipal Council power to resume land required for the extension of Queen-street from Adelaide-street through to Cantonment-street. Any

one who knows Fremantle will agree that the width of the streets and the nature of the turnings cause traffic to become very congested at times, and it is necessary that Queen-street should be carried through in order to relieve the congestion. Later on it is proposed to take steps to widen certain portions of streets in the municipality. That is a very necessary work.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I suppose you imagine you are in London.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am pleased that it is intended to do something in the way of town planning at Fremantle. I understand that originally the town was laid out very nicely, but people who came afterwards narrowed the streets and did not carry them through.

Mr. Sampson: It is certainly pretty well laid out.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The extension of Queen-street to Cantonment-street will relieve much congestion, particularly in the evening time.

Hon. G. Taylor: Has another place considered this Bill?

Mr. SLEEMAN: Yes, it has come from the Council. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; Mr. Sleeman in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Power to widen streets.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I understand that this Bill is on all-fours with the City of Perth Bill recently passed.

Mr. Sleeman: Yes, word for word.

Hon. G. Taylor: Except, of course, that it is made to apply to Fremantle.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 9, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th October.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Norham) [8.13]: This Bill is intended to amend Section 105 of the Land Act which

provides that in certain circumstances the boundary of a pastoral lease may be adjusted by the approval of the Minister and on payment of a fee. Reading Section 105, one would imagine that the application must be made for land not already leased, but in the hands of the Crown; in other words, that the adjustment must be made before the Minister approves of an application for a pastoral lease. But that is not very clear. The Minister wishes the House to say that he may approve of an application to alter the boundaries of a pastoral lease even if by doing so he must disturb the boundaries of an adjacent lease, where improvements have been made on another man's land in error—or deliberately, by the way—so as to secure to the man who actually made them, the improvements, or failing that payment by the innocent person. The proposal seems highly dangerous. These pastoral leases are not surveyed, and it is the responsibility of the pastoral lessee to have the survey done. The survey is an expensive business, and therefore the lessee has taken the risk of not having it done. That position has existed for years. A prominent landmark, say a hill or a lake, has been incorrectly plotted on the map. An applicant for land knows just where he wants to start, taking the prominent landmark as a starting point. He sends the Lands Department a description of the land, naming the starting point. The Lands Department take the map as it is. The starting point may be Mt. Jackson, and the department take that point on the map, where it may be 20 or 30 miles out. So confusion has arisen and trouble exists. Some of the maps are 25 or 30 years old. The Bill asks the House to agree to something we have never agreed to before.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: Do you not think it only fair that improvements should be paid for?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If they are of value to the man on whose land they are and can be used by him, but not otherwise. The man, already having a well of his own, may not want a well put down by another person. If so, why should he pay for another well, or failing that, surrender some of his land? The man who makes the improvements takes no risk whatever; nothing can happen to him.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: The man who makes improvements is the man we want to encourage.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Improvements on his own land, yes.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: He makes them under the belief that he is on his own land.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This measure, if enacted, might encourage a man to do improvements on another man's land, if he wants some of that other man's land. Take the case of a recent selector, say a soldier settler. If someone made improvements on the soldier settler's land and the latter were told he must either pay for the improvements or let go part of his holding, he would have only the latter alternative. Of course the Minister would refuse his approval if he were not convinced that it was a case of honest mistake; and no doubt he would also refuse his assent if the exercise of the power meant the ruin of the station of an innocent man. There is no reason why before making improvements a pastoral lessee should not have his land surveyed.

The Minister for Lands: That does not cost much.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know it costs a good deal.

Mr. Teesdale: It is advantageous to leave the survey for some time, until the pastoralist has a chance to get on his feet.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Some of these leaseholds have existed for 25 years. Before it can be proved that the improvements are on the wrong lease, a survey must be made. I know of a recent case where a fence was erected by a pastoral lessee just a few chains inside his boundary. When the adjoining man decided to put up a fence, he wanted to buy a half of the other man's fence, and of course the narrow strip of land. But the man who had the fence said, "No: put up a fence on your own country." The man had to do it, and to-day there are two fences a chain apart.

Mr. Munsie: They would make a good street or roadway.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not think any of us can approve of the clause worded as it is. The original section in the parent Act was never intended to do more than authorise the Minister to adjust boundaries where he could reasonably do it. A very hard case came before me some time ago; I think it has since been adjusted. It occurred at Onslow. There was a starting point on the coast, and the contention was that in the course of years the point had moved further down the coast or up the

coast, as the case may be, and that boundaries were in consequence altered.

Mr. A. Wansbrough: Something like a willy-willy.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The result was to put some valuable improvements on another man's land.

The Minister for Lands: No; you are wrong. The other man took up the land with the improvements on it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is a different case.

Mr. Marshall: I can quote a recent case in that regard.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Does the Minister mean that the original lessee made the improvements on Crown lands?

The Minister for Lands: Before the other man had the land.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: From the Crown? If it was Crown land, the Minister could of course adjust the matter. I cannot agree that we ought to give protection to a person who makes improvements on another man's land.

The Minister for Lands: That has been done in the past. There has been bluffing.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am incapable of it.

The Minister for Lands: Oh, are you?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Probably the Minister for Lands has done some bluffing. I cannot agree with the Minister that the Bill should be passed. To rectify errors may be right, but it is wrong to make it possible for wrong to be deliberately done in order that the wrongdoer may gain some advantage. If this Bill becomes law it will be a sort of invitation to a man to go on his neighbour's land in order that he may secure it.

MR. TEESDALE (Roebourne) [8.25]: I support the Bill, which I regard as highly necessary. I can utterly disprove the Opposition Leader's contention that the measure is unfair. A certain headland on the coast in the North was accepted as a datum point for the taking up of pastoral country. That datum point was positively shown on the coastal survey. It is a prominent headland on the coast, and people frequently speak of something being 10 miles east or 10 miles west of that headland. Certain work was done within about half a mile of the headland by a pastoralist. A drought being on, it was necessary to sink wells near the headland, as there was good feed in the neigh-

bourhood. When a new coastal survey was made by the survey boat some two or three years ago, this particular headland was thrown some miles down the coast—which, of course, immediately aroused the attention of the man holding that country, and also the attention of his neighbour, who then claimed that his block extended a little below the headland. The consequence was a dispute which lasted some time. The departmental file on the subject is 4 or 5 inches high, and all sorts of threats were made by the pastoralists. Two Ministers, I think, dealt with the case; and only lately has the aggrieved man received justice. It was indeed a hard case, and I did my best for him, and found it an uphill fight. Eventually the department recognised that an injustice had been done, and they made reasonable reparation. Naturally, the man was not satisfied. However, few people in his position ever are. The man holding the property now is in distressed circumstances by reason of the delays that have occurred. There was a good patch of feed available when he had sheep to put on this country. Had the sheep been put there they would have been saved. The Government might reimburse him the value of the sheep he lost, 35s. to 40s. per head. There was a clear case of injustice due to the neglect of the Government. We want a measure like this to enable justice to be done in such circumstances, and therefore I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [8.29]: Since the Bill was introduced by the Minister for Lands, I have considered it carefully and also discussed its provisions with quite a number of pastoralists. The result is that I intend to support the second reading. I consider that the Minister is to be thanked for his desire to improve the provisions of the parent Act.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [8.30]: When a man selects pastoral country, he plots his homestead, and puts down a dam, well, or tank, on what he believes is his own land, on the land which the Government have approved of his taking over. It is only when the surveyor comes along that the man finds he is a few chains in on Crown land, or land applied for since by someone else. I know of a distressing case of that kind which occurred some time ago, and the error was not found out until the survey was actually

made. It was then discovered that the improvements had been carried out some three chains from the boundary on Crown land. Fortunately no one else had taken up the land, and the owner of the property was able to take up another block, which embraced the improvements that he had made. In that way he saved some £500 or £600 worth of improvements. The Bill will give anyone falling into a similar error the opportunity to secure compensation for the capital invested. In another instance I know of a holder who, in order to save his property, was compelled to take up another block of land that he was hardly capable of handling at the time. I am convinced that the Bill will not work a hardship upon any person; therefore I shall support the second reading.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. W. C. Angwin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [8.32]: I am surprised at the remarks made against the Bill by the Leader of the Opposition. I did not think that any possible objection could be raised to it. The hon. member stated that the Bill would prove dangerous. I really cannot understand such a remark. In the past pastoral leases have been taken up from some given point from which to work. Then everything went on all right until someone else came along to take up land adjoining. A survey perhaps revealed that the holder had carried out his improvements on what he thought was his own land, when, as a fact, the improvements had been made outside what proved to be his boundary. Of course there were no surveys to work upon; it would cost the State too much to carry out surveys so far inland. Only to-day a case was brought under my notice which will be affected by the Bill. Some returned soldiers desired to sell their area, and it was discovered that their fence was a small distance from the boundary. Then the person who wished to buy declined to do so. I gave an assurance that there would be no difficulty because the adjoining land was Crown property. If the adjoining land had been privately held I could not have made the promise. If a person willfully erects a fence, or sinks a well, or effects other improvements, outside his boundary, the position will be different, but that is hardly likely to occur.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I do not object when a man has made his improvements out-

side his boundary and the improvements are on Crown lands.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** In the case quoted by the Leader of the Opposition, after the improvements had been made, certain alterations were made to the boundaries, and the person who took up the land found that his neighbour's improvements were on the land that he had taken up.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I suppose the improvements were made when the land was Crown land; you should adjust that.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** But it was not Crown land when it was discovered that the improvements had been made.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: In that case it is all right.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** There is still another instance which, to some extent, was responsible for the introduction of this Bill. An old family had a pastoral lease. They sank wells and constructed dams and eventually found that those improvements were made outside their boundary. Someone else took up that adjoining area and, of course, claimed the improvements. We had no power to rectify that position.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: On Crown land?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** It was Crown land when the bores and wells were put down.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I would not object to an adjustment there.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The Bill will apply to areas taken up many years ago, and where other people have since come along and taken up adjoining properties. We propose by the Bill that the new selector may have the improvements, provided he pays the value to the person who made them, and if he does not agree to do that, the boundary will be altered so as to preserve the improvements for the man who made them.

Mr. Teesdale: How will you arrive at their value?

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** In the same way as in regard to the resumption of land for agricultural purposes. A referee will be appointed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 105:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I agree that where improvements are made on land whilst it is Crown land, the boundaries should be adjusted. Where a pastoralist makes improvements deliberately on another man's land, perhaps with the idea of securing a good well site, he should not be protected.

Mr. Marshall: This clause will not apply to cases of that description.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: With all due deference to the hon. member, and with all due respect for his judgment, I say it will apply to the man who deliberately makes improvements on his neighbour's property.

Mr. Marshall: He would be trespassing.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Every care will be taken in the direction to which the Leader of the Opposition refers. What he suggests may happen, but it is not at all likely to happen. I do not think anyone would run the risk of spending £1,000 in putting down a bore if he knew it to be outside his boundary, unless he had made some arrangement with the other man first. The alterations we have to deal with are in regard to areas that were taken up many years ago and where the adjoining land has been taken up since.

Mr. ANGELO: There is a safeguard in the last portion of the clause which says "unless the holder of such other land is willing to pay the applicant the fair value of such improvements." That means that if the adjoining lessee puts down a bore on the other man's property, the proper owner of the lease simply pays a fair value for the improvements. If the bore is a failure, the owner pays nothing.

Mr. TEESDALE: When these boundaries are adjusted, surveys will have to be made. The applicants or contestants will have to pay the cost of the surveys. This may mean a sum that is greater than the value of the land.

The Minister for Lands: It is not likely there will be any surveys for some time.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

**BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.***Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read, recommending the Bill.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [8.50]: This is another of those measures which mean a heavy tax upon the people, particularly upon the land owners. The Minister has said that dingoes, foxes and rabbits are doing much damage, particularly the first named. We agree with that, but when it comes to a question of dealing with the matter I am afraid many of us will be objecting to the proposal. The Minister is right in saying that much more stock can be carried on the land if these pests can be eradicated. Land owners must destroy the dogs on their holdings. In various parts of the State there are boards that control the work. The same trouble has been experienced in the other States. I should have been glad if the Minister had told us what had happened there, what steps had been taken to meet the difficulty, and what success had followed. When dealing with a matter of such vital importance we ought to be told what has happened in other parts of Australia, and what the cost has been to the man on the land. The Minister has brought down a Bill to set up another board. It would be a good thing if this work were regarded as a national undertaking. We have inspectors employed, who could just as well compel landowners to play their part as a board could do. It would be right for the Government to deal with the matter because it is a national one. Three-quarters of the land in the South-West is Crown land, and one-quarter of it is owned by the purchasers. Dingoes and rabbits do not care where they go. Their breeding grounds are nearly all on Crown lands. It might be as well to treat this as a national question to the extent that the work of destruction should be a matter for the Crown to regulate. This Bill is a tax upon a tax. It is a super tax. The present boards are to continue. They are to exercise their powers and responsibilities, and the present right to tax will stand. They will collect the tax, so that there will be two taxes for this one purpose. That is bad in principle. The Minister did not explain why he proposed this. Appar-

ently the idea is held that the man on the land can stand any kind of taxation.

Mr. Thomson: He is getting it well in the neck.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. He has had it in the neck during the last few weeks. The water rates have been increased from 5d. to 1s. in the pound.

The Minister for Lands: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. Lambert: It is a terrible thing to think that they will have to pay for their water.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We passed the Bill here, and unfortunately it passed another place, increasing the maximum rate from 5d. to 1s. in the pound.

The Minister for Lands: We have power to strike a rate of 5d. now, but they are only paying 3d. Do not make statements that amount to misrepresentation.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I repeat that we passed the Bill here, and another place passed it too.

The Minister for Lands: It did not raise the rate a fraction.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It gave power to raise it.

The Minister for Lands: That is quite a different matter.

Mr. Mann: Then why did you want it?

The Minister for Lands: To use in some areas where there is now no water.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have been taught that when we are dealing with legislation we must expect the worst that the House says may happen, to happen, and it generally does happen in the end. I do not know if members thought that in passing that Bill it would be necessary to impose a rate of 1s. If they did not intend that the Government should go beyond 5d., as provided in the Act, why were we asked to allow them to go to 1s.?

The Minister for Lands: In some cases the water could not be provided for that. If the rate could not be struck, it would mean that the farmers would not get any water.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The work has been done previously by agreement. It is one thing for people to say they are willing to pay—

The Minister for Lands: One man is to be allowed to stand out while another man has to pay for it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is another thing for the Government to say they are going to tax people right through the country, and that they will have to pay for their water whether they want it or not. I know more about these matters than the Minister does.

The Minister for Lands: You know what you say is incorrect.

Mr. Lambert: You did not bother about what the goldfields had to pay.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Government will charge up to 1s. There is no doubt about that. They said so.

The Minister for Lands: We said we would not do it.

Mr. Lambert: What about the 1s. 6d. in the pound that the goldfields had to find until they had paid for the water scheme?

The Minister for Lands: What has water got to do with it?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We are dealing with the tax. It is impossible to go on increasing the taxes.

The Minister for Lands: Put the position fairly and squarely, and do not make misrepresentations.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not misrepresenting the position. I cannot understand why, when one is repeating the words of the Bill, one should be thought unfair.

The Minister for Lands: You say it so often that you will come to believe it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know it is so. Now we are asked to give greater power under this Bill, and to impose another tax.

The Minister for Lands: This is what has been asked for by your people.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Never.

The Minister for Agriculture: Who are your people?

The Minister for Lands: I admit you do not represent the farmers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not misrepresent them.

The Minister for Lands: You are doing so in this case.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is more than I can say for some members in this House.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It may be a laughing matter with some members. They are not going to pay. They will live comfortably in Perth, and go to picture

shows or other attractive entertainments. What we have to do is to consider seriously this new proposal. There is to-day a vermin tax, and we have vermin boards dealing with the question. Inspectors and other people are employed throughout the State. All that is expended to-day will be expended when this Bill is passed. All that happens to-day in connection with the administration by the boards will happen when the Bill is passed.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is not so. Wherever vermin rates are paid to-day they will cease if the Bill passes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The vermin rates are not affected by this proposal.

The Minister for Agriculture: Vermin boards will not be required to tax for the destruction of dingoes while this Bill operates. It is a matter for themselves.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The vermin rate as it applies to-day under the vermin boards system will stand.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is no use trying to convince the hon. member.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is the duty of every member to read this Bill carefully and compare it with the Act. That is what we are paid to do, and what we ought to do. The Minister proposes to tax holders of pastoral lands to the extent of 1d. in the pound and to levy a tax of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the pound against agricultural land. He proposes to collect from the pastoral lessee on the ordinary basis of taxation. Pastoral leases, of course, are not valued, but for taxation purposes the valuation is arrived at by taking what the lessee pays as rent and multiplying it by 20, the result being regarded as the taxable unimproved value of the land. If a man pays £1 for 1,000 acres of pastoral land, the unimproved value is assumed to be £20. The Minister, therefore, will tax that 1,000 acres of pastoral land to the extent of 1s. 8d. On the other hand, the Minister will tax 1,000 acres of agricultural land at Bruce Rock, for instance, where the unimproved value is £2—it is more in some instances—and that means that the tax on that 1,000 acres of agricultural land will be £4 3s. 4d. That is to say, the Minister will tax 1,000 acres of agricultural land fifty times as much as he will tax 1,000 acres of pastoral land in the Murchison district. I do not know whether members representing agricultural districts agree with that pro-

posal. It is largely an acreage benefit in these districts.

Mr. Angelo: The pastoral country will carry a sheep to 12 acres, but the agricultural lands should carry a sheep to the acre.

The Minister for Lands: You will lose more in one night from dogs than the whole thing would cost in five years.

Mr. Angelo: That is so.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have had that experience myself.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: However, the benefit is largely on an acreage basis. If we take it that 10 acres of pastoral land on the Gascoyne will carry one sheep, it will be seen that to protect one sheep in the Gascoyne, the tax will be one-fifth of a penny per sheep. If it takes four acres of land in the South-West to carry a sheep, the tax will be 4d. per sheep. Let us be just and reasonably fair. I am not prepared to ask the land owners in the South-West to pay twenty times as much for the protection of a sheep there as the land owner has to pay in the Gascoyne.

Mr. Marshall: You have not protested during years past against the people in the North paying 50 times as much as those in the South-West, in order to keep down the dogs.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It would have come well from the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) if he knew that, had he himself protested. I did not know of it, and it would take a good deal to convince me.

Mr. Marshall: Your land in the South-West has been protected for years because of the payments made in the North to keep down the dingoes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Dingoes were destroyed on the land referred to before the hon. member was born and before he cuts his wisdom teeth they will still be destroyed in the North.

Mr. Chesson: Do you say that it takes four acres to keep a sheep in the Beverley district?

Mr. Angelo: That is merely an exaggeration.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There are 4,000,000 sheep on 28,000,000 acres held in the South-West, and that works out at a sheep to seven acres.

Mr. Angelo: That is because the dogs have cut down the flocks.



Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We are here to legislate for the whole State and not merely for the spot we come from.

Mr. Chesson: The Bill is for the State as a whole; it is not legislation for one part only.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course, and therefore the State as a whole should pay a reasonable amount and we should not say that a man holding 1,000 acres in one part should pay 50 times as much as a man holding 1,000 acres elsewhere. It is not fair. Neither, if we regard it from the standpoint of the protection of a sheep, is it fair to say that for that protection a man in one part should pay one-fifth of a penny as against the payment of 4d. by a man in another part of the State. Again, the Minister said he would receive £34,000 from this tax. I do not know how those figures were prepared for the Minister.

The Minister for Agriculture: The only difference is that you have taken the improved values and we have taken the unimproved values. You refer to improved values at Bruce Rock.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is not so.

Mr. Thomson: That is the basis on which they are taxed, as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition.

The Minister for Agriculture: I have to pay the tax and I should know something about it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We can take the Minister's own figures and convince him that he is wrong.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are speaking of taxes on the improved value, not on the unimproved values at all.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I assure the Minister that I am dealing with the unimproved values in each case.

The Minister for Agriculture: But I have to pay.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not for the whole State. At Bruce Rock the unimproved value is £2, although land is selling up to £3, including improvements.

Mr. Thomson: And people are taxed there on an unimproved value of £2.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: On the 19th December, 1924, the Minister gave this information to the House. He told us that the total taxable unimproved value of the lands amounted to £40,000,000. Of that total, £19,000,000 represented the unimproved value of agricultural land, while the unim-

proved value of Crown lands, such as pastoral leases, was £2,500,000. When those figures were made up last the land had not been revalued. If we may take the Treasurer's estimated revenue from land tax as an indication, this amount will be nearly double.

The Minister for Agriculture: And a good job.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have no objection to that, because the value is there in the land to-day. The Minister, however, says it is a good job, because he will get more taxation! On the Minister's own figures, however, it shows that on the basis of £19,000,000 as the unimproved value of agricultural land, he will get, under the Bill, £39,417, or nearly twice the sum he mentioned. On the pastoral lands, based on the figures I have quoted, the tax will be £10,414. Thus, he will get, on the basis of his own figures, taxation amounting to £49,831. On the top of that there will be the additional tax due to the increased unimproved values of the land. Therefore, the Minister will get not less than £60,000. Yet he told the House that he would get only £34,000!

The Minister for Agriculture: You know the tax is not to exceed 1d., and it may not be 1d.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: When we are dealing with taxation we must deal with the worst that can happen. If the Minister does not want this amount of money, let him say so.

The Minister for Agriculture: What a pessimist you are when in opposition.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not pessimistic, but I do not want to act like a fool here.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are a Jeremiah.

Mr. Chesson: Do you exempt from your calculations the people who have vermin-proof fences round their holdings?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There will be no money spent there. If everyone fenced their properties there would be no necessity for this.

Mr. Chesson: Then how can you arrive at your figures?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am basing them on the figures supplied to this House by the Government. Under the Minister's proposal, timber leases are to be included. I do not know why that is so, because there are no grazing rights in connection with timber leases.

Mr. Chesson: Timber country is a breeding ground for dingoes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In the South-West a timber permit gives the holder the right to cut the timber, but it may be that the Minister will give grazing rights over the same area.

Mr. Heron: That has been done already.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Then that man will have to pay. Are both the timber lessee and the man having grazing rights to pay? I do not know how the payments will be arrived at. Then, too, this money has to be collected by the Minister, and he will spend it as he pleases. He will get this £60,000 and disburse it as he likes. Under the Bill he could pay £5 for a dingo at Northam and £1 for a dingo at York. No one can say him nay. He keeps a war chest, sets up a treasury unto himself, and the Premier and the Government will have no control over him. Are we going to agree to that? The Minister has no right to have absolute control over the money to do with it as he pleases. He could collect all the money in the South-West and spend it in the North, or alternatively he could collect it in the North and spend it in the South-West.

Mr. Lambert: Who do you suggest should administer it?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not the hon. member. I suggest it should be necessary for this money, when collected, to be re-voted by Parliament to the Minister or somebody else.

Mr. Lambert: What about the Forests Act?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have taken possession of most of the money collected under that Act. In any event, the department's estimates of expenditure have to be submitted to Parliament for approval.

Mr. Lambert: It is the first time you have made a protest against a department spending money.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have always asked Parliament to vote the money I required. If all revenue were to be dealt with in the way proposed in the Bill, we should not require Estimates at all. Much as I respect the judgment of the Minister, I do not propose to support a Bill containing a clause giving to the Minister this extraordinary unlimited power.

Mr. Lambert: The subsidy on a few dingoes!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Very few dingoes but a great many pounds, and it is

the pounds we are discussing. Then the Minister provides in the Bill a penalty on the man who defrauds the Government. In South Australia only 5s. is paid for a scalp, and the Minister fears that if he gives £1 or £2 for a scalp South Australian scalps will be brought over the border. The penalty is £50. The man who will do that sort of thing is the worst kind of thief, and if caught should be imprisoned.

Mr. Heron: It is being done now as between road board districts.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is not fair, but it is a great deal worse when the scalps are brought in from another State. The punishment provided does not fit the crime at all. I repeat that this is a tax upon a tax. The boards are to exist. I think the Minister, rather than taking the matter in hand in this way, ought to abolish the boards and control the whole thing himself. Certainly that would be very much better than having two taxes for the same purpose.

Mr. Lambert: It is only a tax for services.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is a tax superimposed on the existing tax. It may be regarded by the Minister as a simple Bill. He says it is payment for services. But sometimes we pay too much for services. We shall be paying far too much if we pass the Bill. The tax will yield, not what the Minister says, but twice that amount, and it will be paid very largely by the agriculturists. It is true that if they fence their holdings with vermin-proof fencing they will be exempt. That is right. But there are many other holdings where there are no dogs, no pests, and where consequently vermin-proof fencing is not wanted. Those holdings have just as much right to be exempted.

The Minister for Agriculture: My own is amongst those, yet I will pay the tax.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What is the difference between the Minister's holding, served with a six-wire fence to keep the sheep in, and another holding served with a vermin-proof fence? Land at Osborne Park, where there are no dogs, will be taxed under the Bill. So, too, will land at Jandakot be taxed.

Mr. Heron: So it should be.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But there is nothing there to protect the holdings against.

Mr. Heron: Because the other holdings are keeping the dogs back.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There have been no dogs at Northam for the last 35 years.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: Because the pioneers eradicated them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course they did, and that without any tax at all.

Mr. Chesson: They would soon find the dogs there again were it not for the people outback.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The people in the older settled districts have fought the dogs and eradicated them, and the pest cannot get in there again. In the South-West, of course, where kangaroos and rats are plentiful, the dogs increase rapidly. The trouble is that people in districts where there are no dogs will have to pay tax, and that upon the unimproved value of land, which has appreciated in value because of its wheat-growing capabilities.

Mr. C. P. Wansbrough: And the only vermin they have, the rabbit, is not included in the Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Much land within reasonable distance of Perth has become very valuable. That will be taxed. I do not know whether we have in the House the voting strength to defeat the Bill, but at any rate we will test the feeling of the House.

The Minister for Lands: In the Toodyay district the dogs are so bad that the sheep have to be brought in at night?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Whereabouts in Toodyay is that? The district reaches almost from the sea to Newcarrie, 200 miles.

The Minister for Lands: Around Dowerin there are any number of dogs.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Well, I shall let the dog experts have a say on this matter. The Minister proposes to impose taxation on land that has acquired considerable value, not because of its stock-carrying capabilities, but because of its agricultural capabilities. Orchard land and wheat land will be taxed on the value as found by the Taxation Department. We are not entitled to levy tax after tax upon the people. The Government were never in a better position to do something to eradicate this pest than they are in to-day, when the finances have greatly improved. We are going to collect over £8,000,000 this year, one way and another. Of that money surely

some amount could be set aside for this work without imposing a special tax! If it is to be the custom to impose special taxation for every purpose, I do not know where we shall get to. High taxation is retarding the progress of the country now. Factories cannot start here, because our taxation is so much higher than that in the Eastern States.

The Minister for Agriculture. What has this to do with the Bill?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Everything, because the Bill is a taxation measure. We have in this country very many taxes. The Federal taxation strikes the man on the land very heavily; our own taxation strikes him heavily, and the local authorities tax him heavily. Then we have water rates and vermin rates, and on top of the vermin rate we are to have this new 'vermin rate. I hope we are getting near the end of the many taxes imposed upon the individual.

The Minister for Agriculture: Why does he pay a water rate?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Because he is compelled to.

The Minister for Agriculture: But why?

Mr. Chesson: For services rendered.

The Minister for Agriculture: Does he get no service for it?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I would be glad to be cross-examined by the Minister if you, Sir, could permit him to do it. Of course he gets some service, but I do not know that the Minister would like to pay the excessively high rates that have to be paid for water.

The Minister for Agriculture: Because I did not lean on the Government for water.

Mr. Thomson: There are not many farmers who have leaned on the Government for water.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There are many farmers paying water rates to-day who had their lands well supplied with water before the goldfields scheme was put in. There are men who are paying the water rates and not drawing on the scheme.

Mr. Lambert interjected.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is a shocking admission that for 20 years the hon member did not see a cup of water. My sympathy cannot go out to him; he must have had something decidedly better. Other people are paying for many cupfuls of water that they do not get. I hope the House will not agree to this measure, and I suggest to

the member for Coolgardie that he had better devote careful attention to the Bill before he endorses it.

**MR. LAMBERT** (Coolgardie) [9.32]: Apparently it has become a practice to put up a wail on behalf of the farmers directly the slightest amount is charged them for services rendered.

Hon. G. Taylor: Do not you think there is justification for it after having heard the Leader of the Opposition?

**Mr. LAMBERT**: I cannot remember having heard the Leader of the Opposition to greater disadvantage or more barren in argument than he was to-night.

**Mr. Teesdale**: Except when he voted against you on the "Tin Lizzy" Bill.

**Mr. LAMBERT**: Under this measure the farmers and pastoralists will be called upon to pay an amount representing only a very slight insurance for the service rendered.

**Mr. Sampson**: It means an added tax.

**Mr. LAMBERT**: I agree that taxation is high. Every industry in this State, with the possible exceptions of drink, gambling, and farming, is outlawed; no one has any interest in it.

**Mr. Latham**: Surely you do not include farming! That is taxed heavily enough. The farmers pay all the taxes.

**Mr. LAMBERT**: Largely on account of our unfortunate position in Federation, all our activities are overtaxed, but Parliament will not deal comprehensively with taxation in order to levy it upon those who should bear it.

Hon. G. Taylor: You are on the side to do it.

**Mr. LAMBERT**: We have not the power to get it done. Members know that taxation in this State is too heavy. They know that we ought to be taxing absentees, who are merely using the State as a medium for amassing wealth while they pay taxation elsewhere. To strike a rate for vermin destruction is analogous to imposing a rate for any other service performed by the Government. If there is one question surpassing all others in importance, it is that of dealing effectively with the vermin menace, and it can be dealt with rightly only by asking those to pay who benefit from the lands of the State. Why should a poor man on a living wage be asked to contribute to the eradication of vermin?

**Mr. Thomson**: He does not contribute.

**Mr. LAMBERT**: He does!

**Mr. Latham**: He does not.

**Mr. LAMBERT**: The Premier has suggested that, on account of the state of the finances, it will be possible to draw from the general revenue to subsidise vermin boards for the eradication of the dingo. Why should we ask the people generally to perform a service for the pastoralists of the State?

**Mr. Latham**: Who pays the taxes?

**Mr. LAMBERT**: The worker, to a very great extent. It would be unfair to draw money from general revenue for the eradication of vermin. I do not suggest that the pastoralists are not prepared to pay for effective service to eradicate the pests that are causing so much damage. I believe the day will come when the whole of our lands right through to the South Australian border will be carrying flocks and herds, but it will first be necessary to adopt a comprehensive scheme of water conservation. All sections of the House extend the greatest consideration to the farmers and they deserve it, but they should at least pay for effective services rendered by the State. The destruction of vermin will not be effectively undertaken until we view the question from a really broad standpoint.

Hon. G. Taylor: Under this Bill some people will be taxed who will get no services.

**Mr. LAMBERT**: That is true. The member for Murchison could cite many instances where, immediately efforts to deal with the dingo pest were relaxed, a big encroachment occurred.

**Mr. Sampson**: Do you support the imposition of the tax in a road board like Bayswater?

**Mr. LAMBERT**: Yes, all over the State. Why make exemptions, apart from the general exemption contained in the Bill for the benefit of the man who has already provided for the safeguarding of his flocks?

**Mr. Sampson**: There is no possibility of dogs at Bayswater.

**Mr. LAMBERT**: The petty amount that would be involved in places like Bayswater, Osborne Park, and Jandakot—

Hon. G. Taylor: That kills your argument about paying for services rendered.

**Mr. LAMBERT**: I hope that members will not be influenced by the mere argument that the passing of this Bill will inflict upon pastoralists and farmers additional taxation.

Hon. G. Taylor: And nothing for it.

Mr. LAMBERT: I do not say that. The hon. member knows that a few dingoes in an hour could do damage equivalent to the small amount that would be paid by a big pastoralist.

Hon. G. Taylor: Such a man should pay.

Mr. LAMBERT: Yes. I think I would be prepared to go so far as the hon. member and say that, if we could exempt certain areas where no service can be performed for the tax, we should do so. I do not know whether it would be possible to make exemptions of that kind, but if it was, I would go that far.

Mr. Lutey: The people outside are stopping the invasion.

Mr. LAMBERT: To a great extent they are. I know of one Murchison property where effective steps were taken on three sides to combat the dingo pest, but on the other side where no provision was made, considerable damage was done. It is probably impossible to exempt certain portions of the State. However, we should deal with this matter more comprehensively. When I was in the Eastern States recently, I saw a machine designed to exterminate rabbits, and a very simple and effective contrivance it was.

Mr. Thomson: This Bill does not deal with rabbits.

Mr. LAMBERT: I refer to that only to show the lack of knowledge displayed in our own State where we have a big spending department dealing with the question. I hope members will take a broad view and insist that where service is given, it shall be paid for by the people who benefit.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [9.42]: I am afraid the Leader of the Opposition cannot count upon my vote to assist in defeating the Bill. I intend to support the second reading.

Mr. Teesdale: He does not want to see it defeated.

Mr. ANGELO: A Bill to deal with the rapidly increasing dingo and fox menace has been asked for by the pastoralists and farmers for the last six or seven years. I consider that every member representing a pastoral or farming community should vote for the second reading. Then, if he is not satisfied with all the provisions of the Bill, he should do his best in Committee to get it altered in conformity with his ideas. We are told that this Bill is to benefit only the

farmers and pastoralists. I wish to correct that statement. The pastoral and farming industries of this State are so important and so far reaching and exercise such a big effect on the financial position generally as to react upon every person living in the State. If the dingoes are allowed to increase so rapidly as to cause the flocks of sheep to disappear, merchants, traders, transport workers, shearers, and in fact every class of the community will suffer. The dog menace must be checked, and checked immediately. If we look back upon the papers we find that deputation after deputation has approached various Ministers of Agriculture, and pointed all this out.

Mr. Heron: Every time.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes. They have brought forward their desire that some Bill like this should be introduced. Every time Ministers have gone into the country the matter has been brought before them. Governments in the past have done very little in the way of checking the dingoes. They have not done half enough. That can be proved by the fact that dingoes are rapidly increasing in number, as well as those that are crossed with the one-time domesticated dog. Our Ministers from time to time have not realised the importance of this matter.

Mr. Teesdale: We would have had a good Bill years ago but for another place.

Mr. ANGELO: Last year, after several efforts, we had a Bill brought down to deal with the subject, but unfortunately it received the axe in another place. I hope this Bill will not meet with the same fate.

Mr. Heron: Some there will meet with the axe if it does.

Mr. ANGELO: From what I gathered from the utterances of pastoralists and farmers, and their representatives, I should say what they wanted was the legislative machinery necessary to enable them to look after this menace on their own behalf.

Mr. Teesdale: That is the point.

Mr. ANGELO: They were not in a position to do it themselves, and invited the Minister for Agriculture, as the official head of the pastoral and agricultural industries, to give the lead. They said, "We want you to call a conference, and allow us to discuss the best methods of dealing with the dingo and fox menace. Give us the necessary legislation and we can tax ourselves, and control the campaign for getting rid of these pests."

Hon. G. Taylor: How did you get on with the last lot of money you had for the Gascoyne?

Mr. ANGELO: The Gascoyne people are sticking to the agreement they made with a previous Government, and I defy any member to prove otherwise. The pastoralists go further and say that, because there are large areas of Crown lands, they expect the Government to contribute to the fund. That is what they hoped the Bill would provide for.

Mr. Thomson: Crown lands are the breeding grounds.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes. That is why the pastoralists and farmers, justly and fairly, ask the Government to give their quota towards the funds for the extermination of the pest. They are quite prepared to tax themselves. What they want is a uniform rate throughout the State. There should also be a uniform bonus paid for the destruction of dingoes.

Mr. Thomson: That is one of the reasons why they wanted the Bill.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes. Most road boards have been paying a considerably higher bonus for the destruction of dogs than their neighbours, with the result that they have been compelled to pay bonuses for dogs that have come from other districts as well as their own. This makes the uniform bonus a necessity. Members have asked why certain portions of the State should contribute when there are no dogs there. We might just as well ask why the mining industry, through the general tax, was asked to contribute towards cleaning up the rinderpest at Fremantle. They had to contribute their quota towards the general tax on that occasion.

Mr. Sampson: There are some cattle on the goldfields.

Mr. Lutey: They were the frontier then.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes. If a smallpox outbreak occurred in Fremantle, the pastoralists of the North-West would have to pay their share in suppressing it. Knowing what this pest will mean to the people of the State, I do not think it is too much to ask them to contribute. If the wool industry disappears, we shall have only wheat and one or two other smaller things left with which to carry on. Cattle owners should contribute, because they have to a large extent been responsible for the increase in the pest. They have done nothing in their areas.

Mr. Heron: And also for the defeat of the last Bill.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes. They have done nothing to cope with the pest. I know of a sheep station adjoining a cattle station, where the pest has been far more serious than it has been on other sheep stations away from cattle runs. Members should understand what this pest will mean to the State. The Minister quoted some interesting figures last night, and was kind enough to recall an article that I read last year taken from the "Bulletin" of the 31st July, 1924. The article is headed "The Tragedy of Western New South Wales." It says—

A group of men who know every phase of the tragedy communicate this as their considered appeal to the Parliament and people:—The following comparison of sheep numbers on properties in the West Darling before and after the invasion will indicate the effects of the dingo:—

The article goes on to give the number of sheep that were there before the dingoes really started to increase in numbers, and the reduced number that was left afterwards. One station had carried 490,000 sheep, but following upon the dingo pest there were no sheep left at the time the article was written. There are about a dozen stations which carried over a million sheep, and on these only 41,548 sheep were left. The article proceeds—

Similar figures could be given as to other properties, but the instances are ample to show the great loss to the State . . . . By this time the sheep numbers had fallen from 16,028,022 to 3,770,345; the great Momba station, which at one time carried 490,000 sheep and returned 7,000 bales of wool from one clip, had gone right out of sheep and was given over to cattle; scores of lessees, admirable pioneers, who had fought the dogs for years and understood the country and knew its needs, gave up in despair; thousands of square miles of some of Australia's finest sheep country saw the last merino go; stations which had employed 80 or 90 men all the year round supported less than half a dozen; Wilcannia, a thriving township with a population of over 3,000, drifted almost beyond recognition; stagnation superseded prosperity, and the country was fast losing the very type of men for whom the Outback calls. Where 1,000 persons are required in this country under cattle, 15,000 would be supported under sheep.

The last sentence is one which every member should consider. If dingoes are going to drive sheep away, and sheep are to be replaced by cattle, it will mean that only one man will be required where 15 were required before. There will be no droving, no shear-

ing or transport of wool to ports. It is desirable that the House should tackle this menace to the best of its ability. If anything happened to the wool industry it would have a serious effect upon the finances. I have many friends who have lived in the Gascoyne, and who have travelled through the country about which the article was written. They say it is similar country, and that what applies to one would certainly apply to the other unless the menace were checked. In 1891 there were 106,421,068 sheep in Australia. In 1922 there were only 78,803,261 sheep.

Hon. G. Taylor: That was partly due to the dry season.

Mr. ANGELO: To a certain extent, but the dingoes are accountable for the fact that some of the stations are turning from sheep to cattle. They say that sheep raising cannot be carried on in safety in order to make the necessary profit. In 1918 we had 7,183,747 sheep in Western Australia. In 1923, the last figures available, the numbers had fallen to 6,595,867. I do not say this reduction was due to the dingoes, but if we had had our natural development, and it had not been retarded by the dingo pest, there would not have been this reduction. When speaking in Queensland the other day the Prime Minister said—

The wool industry was the backbone of the country, and the backbone of our finances. The question of the continuance of our great wool industry and the maintenance of Australia's position in the world was probably the most vital one in Australia at the present time. If wool failed every single person in the Commonwealth would be affected. The world to-day wants wool, and wool was the best industry we had in Australia. The world's supplies of wool were short, and if they could increase Australia's production by 25 per cent. they could sell the whole of their wool. Increased production might mean decreased prices, but that might be an advantage, and not a disadvantage by the way.

We all know that Australia produces 24 per cent. of the wool of the world, and also produces 70 per cent. of the merino wool of the world.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the best wool of the lot.

Mr. ANGELO: Yes. It appears that Australia is specially favoured, among the countries of the earth, for the production of merino wool. Therefore, no menace must be allowed to develop that will affect this great industry. Australian exports, according to the latest figures available,

in 1924 totalled £117,870,000, of which sum pastoral products represented £71,974,000, and wool by itself approximately 61½ millions sterling. Wool represented 48 per cent. of the whole export trade of Australia. These figures refer only to export from Australia, and take no note of our home consumption. If the latter were included, the value would be a great deal more. Western Australia's wool exports last year were of a value of £4,631,000. It is surprising that a small community like that of Australia, comprising only 5½ millions of people, can produce 70 per cent. of the merino wool of the world. The dingo is not only dangerous as regards wool production, but is a big obstacle to further development. Two years ago, thanks to the member for Leonora, members of this House had the opportunity of paying a visit to that town. Those of us who had not previously seen that part of the State were greatly surprised at the wonderful area of splendid pastoral land practically lying idle there. We were told that there were 23,000,000 acres of the particular class of country we saw, with water available almost everywhere at a depth of 30 or 40 feet. At that time the land in question was carrying about 12,000 head of big stock. It should be carrying at least 2,000,000 sheep.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will be, too, with fencing.

Mr. ANGELO: The development and peopling of that huge province—for such it is—has been held back and is still being held back by the dingo menace. The same thing applies in a smaller degree to our huge wheat belt. Every one of our farms should be carrying sheep. Last year I travelled through practically the whole of the eastern wheat belt, and wherever I went I heard of the desire to carry sheep. All the farmers want to carry sheep, but are afraid to do so because they cannot afford the necessary wire netting and know what it would mean if they attempted to carry sheep without proper provision in that respect. Every encouragement should be given to these people to get rid of the dingo, and thereby enable themselves to carry sheep, because increase in our flocks means increased population, increased earnings, and increased wealth for the whole of the State. What is required is some legislative authority to enable the producers to tax themselves and control

their own finances in this particular direction. They need a contribution from the Government because of the area of Crown lands at present creating breeding grounds for the pest. One or two matters in the Bill will certainly have to be amended. The measure includes a clause bringing the whole State under the provisions of the Vermin Act of 1918. It will be remembered that there was serious objection to the inclusion of the North-West in that Act, the provisions of which were not at all applicable to that portion of the State. Anyone could see that they were designed for the smaller holdings in the south. One glaring provision of this nature was the insistence that waters should be fenced. I do not know how the Minister of the day thought that the pastoral lessee was going to fence an artesian bore drain running 10 or 12 miles. It is said that the pastoralists of the North could fence their windmills and troughs. It would be impracticable to fence the troughs at night, because in the hot areas the sheep come in to drink at night. Under the taxing section of the measure, the North-West pastoralist with 1,000,000 acres would have had to pay £500 annually, as against £50 payable by the holder of a similar area in the south. A point as to which the present Bill does not inform us is what will be the Government's contribution to the fund. In answer to an interjection of mine last night the Minister said the Government would subsidise the fund. But we want to know, to what extent? What will be the amount of the Government contribution? That is a thing we shall have to consider seriously in the Committee stage. Another provision which I hoped to see in the Bill, but which is not there, is the appointment of a central advisory board to control the funds, and dictate the policy of the various boards. The Minister, no doubt, will tell us that that will be done by the various vermin boards; but we know very well that the vermin boards will not be unanimous regarding methods for dealing with the pest. Therefore, a central authority should be created to dictate a policy of eradication, and also to control the funds. I am perfectly certain that the central board could be almost an honorary board so far as pastoralists and farmers are concerned. If, however, farmers and pastoralists are to contribute two-thirds of the total amount of the fund, each industry should certainly be

represented on the administrative authority by one or two members. The remaining members, or member, as the case might be, would of course be nominated by the Government. The measure would be administered by Government officials, but the people providing the sinews of war, the money, should certainly have some say in the expenditure, and as to the policy or policies to be pursued in carrying out the eradication of the pest. Another provision of the Bill is that any person who has fenced his area shall be exempt from taxation. With that I heartily agree, but I think the Minister could improve the provision by allowing a group of producers who have adjacent properties to put a ring fence round their holdings. That would be an economical method of fencing. The Minister will agree that it is rather bad economics to have several divisions of netting fences when one netting fence could do the job just as effectively. I hope that during the Committee stage the Minister will agree to an amendment in that direction. The question of netting is highly important. After all, to exterminate dogs by trapping is one way to get rid of them; but netting is undoubtedly the most effective method, because it deals not only with the dog, but also with the rabbit pest.

Mr. Teesdale: The cost of netting is £90 a mile.

Mr. ANGELO: I have obtained quotations to-day, and find that rabbit netting is procurable at £37 per mile in Perth, while dog netting, which would be erected above it, costs £13 per mile. The cost of the complete fence per mile would, therefore, be £50; and in addition there is the cost of erection.

Hon. G. Taylor: It takes £90 per mile to do the work to-day.

Mr. ANGELO: The matter is so important that the Government should seriously consider the advisableness of raising a special loan for the purchase of wire and dog netting, or its manufacture in the State. We want thousands of tons of netting to deal with the pests effectively. Only the Government can do it, because nearly all our holdings, both pastoral and farming, are mortgaged, though perhaps only to a small extent. To obtain the necessary moneys to purchase netting themselves, the holders would have to give a second or a third mortgage. If the Government did the



business, however, they could get the first claim over the property on account of netting supplied. I am perfectly certain that the present mortgagees would not object to the Government becoming first mortgagees in such circumstances, as the value of their security would be enhanced. I repeat, the matter is so urgent and important that a special loan is warranted. I think the Minister will agree that in addition to this Bill an amendment of the Dog Act is required. Sheep owners in the vicinity of towns are heavy losers by stray town dogs getting in amongst their sheep. As these dogs usually do the killing at night, it is very hard indeed to discover the culprits. Then there is the question of native dogs. An amendment of the law is necessary in that direction. I have known the police in my district to come home from a tour and report having shot from 200 to 300 dogs, mostly found around the native camps. The law allows the aborigines to have one dog each, but unless checked they collect as many as 20 and 30 apiece. I welcome the Bill, and I will support the second reading, while hoping that in the Committee stage the measure will be improved. I trust that the Minister will listen to reason, especially on the point that this proposed fund shall be controlled by a board, one member of which will be appointed by the Minister, and the remainder by the pastoralists.

On motion by Mr. Thomson, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.17 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 22nd October, 1925.*

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

### BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. E. H. HARRIS** (North-East) [4.35]: To rectify the unjust conditions that exist in employment and to minimise strikes, the Legislature in its wisdom passed an Arbitration Act and made it compulsory for litigants to go before the Arbitration Court. Experience has made it perfectly plain that it is useless to expect to get 100 per cent. peace. From time to time different conditions will exist, and while we were hopeful when the measure was placed on the statute-book that it would prevent strikes, we find that it cannot maintain peace. I am afraid the spirit of mankind will have to alter considerably before we reach that stage because, notwithstanding the bitter experience of want and poverty to women and children, strikes still occur and we may look forward to further outbreaks in future. The stubborn, reckless natures of different men, not only amongst employers but also on the employees' side, have not recognised the duty they owe to the community, but at their own sweet will they have brought about industrial conflict. We should therefore retain arbitration as a means to settle industrial strife. I mention this because Mr. Holmes suggested that we should abolish arbitration on the ground that it did not prevent strikes. It might be opportune to refer to the earliest recorded strike which was mentioned in a Brisbane journal recently. This occurred about 308 B.C.

Hon. J. Cornell: There were some before that. Was it Adam or Eve that struck?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The earlier strikes may not have been settled so amicably.