BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

Clause 2, Subclause (2).—Insert after the word "applicant" in line five the words "or his predecessor in title":

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I see no objection to the amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—NEWCASTLE SUBURBAN LOT S8.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

Clause 2.—Insert at the end the following words: "for the purposes of the trust as stated in the schedule":

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

This will make the clause more clear so that when the area is vested again in the new trustees it shall be set aside for the purpose set out in the schedule.

Question put and passed.

Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

House adjourned at 10.40 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 26th November, 1925.

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

QUESTION—IRRIGATION, HARVEY WEIR.

Hon. A. BURVILL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is it a fact that it was proposed to erect shutters on the weir of the reservoir of the Harvey irrigation works? 2, If so, was the proposal approved by the ex-Engineer-in-Chief? 3, If approved, why has not the work been carried out? 4, Will the Minister lay the papers on the Table?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, Yes. 3, The late Minister decided that, as the ratepayers were not meeting their obligations, he was not justified in adding to the capital cost. 4, The papers are in use, but can be seen at the department by the hon. member, if he so desires.

SITTINGS, ADDITIONAL HOURS AND DAY.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.35]: I move—

That during the month of December the Council shall meet for the despatch of business on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday in each week at 3 p.m.

If the motion be carried, we shall sit on Friday in addition to the other three days and we shall start at 3 p.m. instead of 4.30 p.m. each day. I should like to close down about a week before Xmas. If we do this we shall have 12 sitting days up to and including the 18th December. A similar motion was moved on the 27th November, 1924, but that session was not closed until the 23rd December, and we finished after a sitting that extended over 21 hours. The legislation before us this year is not so contentious as

was that of last year and, if we all try to condense our speeches and speak to the point, I feel sure we shall be able to finish by the 18th December.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [4.37]: Without wishing to do other than help the Minister and without knowing how the proposal will affect other country members, I think it would be more convenient to fix the additional day for Monday instead of Friday. This would give members who travel down the Great Southern line more time at home and would give the Minister all the time he desires for the business. One of my colleagues intimates that he does not agree with me. The train service, however, makes it hardly worth while going down the Great Southern at the week-end if we sit on Friday.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Would the Monday train service suit?

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes.

Question put and passed.

BILL—DAY BAKING.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—DIVORCE AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. A. J. H. Saw, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 2.

In Committee.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan in the Chair; Hon. A. Lovekin in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 23 of Ordinance 27, Vict. No. 19:

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: At a late hour last evening I moved an amendment to paragraph 3 that unfortunately did not meet with the approval of the Committee. I sought to insert the words "for not less than two years" because I considered the clause undoubtedly would facilitate divorce in an undesirable way. The effect would be that if during the period of three years of separation the husband habitually or repeatedly refused to make payments for a period perhaps not exceeding six months, the woman would be entitled to go to the court and get a divorce.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Obviously that would not be habitually.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: There I join issue with Mr. Lovekin. This morning I took the opportunity to consult eminent counsel in Perth, and asked him two questions. The first was whether a court would be entitled to regard failure of payments for a period of six months as repeatedly and habitually refusing to pay. To that he answered "Yes." I then asked whether my amendment would tighten up the clause or whether it would have the effect, as was contended last night by Mr. Nicholson and, I understand, also by Mr. Lovekin, of loosening it. He said that undoubtedly the effect would be to tighten up the clause. I asked him to be good enough to give me his written opinion, and it has just reached me. It reads —

> I return herewith copy of the proposed Divorce Amendment Act, 1925. In Subclause (iii.) of Clause 2 you propose to insert the words "for not less than two years" after the first "has." In my view, those added words would very much tighten the subsection by requiring that the failures to make payments must operate—either entirely or repeatedly and habitually—over a period of two years. If I may say so, I think the word "habitually" is a confusing one if added to the word "repeatedly." This latter word should be sufficient.

According to a standard dictionary, the word "habitually" means "done or occurring constantly, frequently, or as if by habit." I maintain that failure for a period of six months would be a failure frequently repeated. Last night it was contended that the matter would be entirely in the discretion of the judge. But the judge's sole duty is to determine the meaning of the words "repeatedly and habitually."

Hon. A. Lovekin: It becomes a question of fact.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: It becomes a question whether the judge thinks that "repeatedly and habitually" would be included by a period of six months, or perhaps by a longer period, nine months. That is an undesirable state of affairs. A few years ago this Parliament passed an Act which within a few months created such a scandal—owing to the looseness of the wording and owing to the fact that Parliament did not clearly understand what it was doing—that the Chief Justice passed some strong strictures from the bench, and made representations to the Government of the day. A new Bill had to be brought in to obviate that defect

I do not want that to happen again. The amendment which I moved last night, and which I propose to move again now, will, if carried, without inflicting any hardship prevent a great deal of collusion, and many divorce cases being entered upon without due consideration. I move an amendment—

That after "has," in line one of paragraph (iii.), there be inserted "for not less than two years."

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I suggest that the amendment is perfectly meaningless as applied to this clause. The Bill, a small Bill, has been opposed most strenuously in many quarters, and why I cannot see. The only ground on which it has been opposed is that it may prejudice somebody who has deserted his wife and has been too poor to make payments under a maintenance order. Let us get down to facts. At the police court there are some 200, and at the Children's Court some 100, of these maintenance orders; and in no case is there any knowledge of any one of the husbands having failed to pay on account of poverty. On the other hand, there are many, many cases where the husbands have deserted their wives and are going about drinking, living with other women, neglecting their children, and, what is worst of all, when they get hard up because they have spent their money in drink, going home to their wives and asserting their rights as husbands to take the bread out of the children's mouths, bread that the wives have been slaving to earn. Suppose there were a few husbands poor and unable to pay: are we therefore going to sacrifice the large number of these unfortunate women? Even if there were one or two such husbands of whom we do not know, it would come within the discretion of the court to say whether a divorce should be granted or not. The Bill has been opposed on the ground I have mentioned, but we know that the religious aspect comes into the question. It always does. One cannot object to anybody standing for the faith that is in him and the principles which he holds. All the objection, as Mr. Stewart mentioned, has come from the Mothers' Union, a religious body. But the two great bodies of women in this State, the one representing the Labour women, and the Women's Service Guild——

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Neither of them has understood the meaning of the paragraph. I say so because I have interviewed them.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: They did not tell me that.

Hon. H. Stewart: Have you seen them since last night?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No, not since last night. But Mrs. Cowan, who is president or patron of the National Council of Women, tells me that that body is strongly in favour of the Bill. If Mrs. Cowan does not understand the meaning of the provision, I am afraid no other woman in the community understands it.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: I did not refer to Mrs. Cowan.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: No, but I am referring to Mrs. Cowan. It was, in fact, the Women's Service Guild that promoted this Bill. Besides Mrs. Cowan, Mrs. Jull and other members of the guild——

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Mrs. Jull has been out of the State for many months, so she could not have seen the Bill.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Dr. Saw wants to insert the words "not less than two years." Which part of the three years?

Hon. J. Duffell: Mrs. Cecil Andrews does not approve of the Bill, does she?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: She is in the Mothers' Union. Unfortunately we cannot in these days take notice of people's religious scruples, because we have a Divorce Act, and that is going to stand whether this Bill is carried or is not. Which are the two years contemplated by the amendment—the first two years, or the last two years? Failure to pay for two years, the hon. member says, would be habitual. I should say that, anyhow, 18 months would be necessary before the neglect to pay could be declared habitual. Taking the whole period, if a man paid for 18 months and did not pay for the other 18 months, that would be fifty fifty. But suppose he paid for 19 months and did not pay for the other 17 months, one might stretch it to say that he was habitually a defaulter.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Would you agree to the insertion of 18 months instead of two years?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: When the court comes to interpret "habitually," that is what it must mean. No court would say that a man did a thing habitually unless he did it for more than half the time, because otherwise his habit would be the other way. The Bill stands a good chance of being wrecked if the amendment is carried.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Must a man who is an habitual drunkard be drunk for more than half his time?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: That is exactly what the courts are declaring to-day, that the man who is an habitual drunkard is generally in a state of drunkenness, half his time drunk. Let us get down to practical politics for the sake of these women, and try to do some good. The Bill cannot do any harm except to the mythical poor men who have been referred to by hon. members. There are no such poor men, but there are, as a fact, these unfortunate women. I cannot agree to the amendment, and I hope the Committee will not carry it.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I certainly would stress the view which has been put by Dr. Saw. The question is one to be considered in the light of the clause as a whole. It is not sufficient to look at paragraph (iii.) as dominating the whole effect of the clause. Hon. members have, I think, been inclined to look upon this particular clause as being one ground on which the court might declare a divorce upon a petition being presented. That is not so. In the first place it is necessary for a separation to exist for a period of three years. In addition to that, there is the requirement under Subclause 2 as to an agreement to pay under a deed of separation, or else a maintenance order; and now Dr. Saw suggests the addition of words providing that the failure to pay must be for a period of not less than two years. The question is whether the amendment will improve the clause or otherwise. I recognise the value of the opinion from the very high authority consulted by Dr. Saw. It is an opinion that we bow to with every respect. But we have to consider the matter in the light of the facts that have come before us. The clause as it stands is much better without the addition of the suggested words. If a woman has entered into a deed of separation, she will be deprived of the right to apply to the court unless she proves all the facts that are set out in Subclauses 1, 2 and 3, and with the addition of the suggested words, she will also be required to prove that for not less than two years during the said period of three years, her husband has failed entirely or repeatedly to make the payments. The husband would be able to keep buffeting the woman about from time to time and not come within the purview of the Bill, whereas, had she not obtained an order of separation, she would be able to apply for her divorce after three years of desertion. The effect of the amendment will be only to inflict a hardship. In the Divorce Act of 1911 there is reference made to certain acts that may be habitual. One may apply for divorce on the ground that the respondent, being the petitioner's husband, has during three years and upwards been an habitual drunkard, and either habitually left his wife without means of support, or has habitually been guilty of cruelty towards her. Then it goes on to say, "or being the petitioner's wife has for a like period been an habitual drunkard and habitually neglected her domestic duties, or rendered herself unfit to discharge them." The court has frequently had before it cases wherein it has had to interpret the law under that section. If the court has to interpret the meaning of "habitual" in the clause it is proposed to amend, it will interpret it in the same way as it has been interpreted under the 1911 Act. Why should there be any difficulty about interpreting the word? It will be much better to leave the clause as it is.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is no doubt that "habitual" has been inserted for a definite purpose. Paragraph 3 reads—

> has during the period aforesaid failed to make such payments periodically as required by the decree, order or covenant, either entirely or repeatedly and habitually.

The decree would probably set out that payments would have to be made once a week, but it is possible that they would not be made once a week. They might be made in a lump sum. The Bill does not deal with desertion; it deals with cases of mutual separation. Both husband and wife may be respectable people, though they may not be able to get on well together, and then may decide to separate. The husband may be supporting his wife and family and he may not be making the periodical payments on the dates required, though, as I have said, he may eventually make them in a lump sum. This position may be brought about by the husband being out of work. Then the wife would seek for a divorce. Not only in Perth but in the country districts there have been protests against the Bill going through. Mr. Kirwan has received

a letter from the Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Bunbury. It reads—

On behalf of the Mothers' Union in the Diocese of Bunbury may I thank you for the stand you have taken against the Divorce Bill now before the Legislative Council. The Mothers' Union believes in an equal standard of purity for men and women, and that there should be equality in matters of redress. It also recognises that the Bill purports only to remove such an inequality arising out of a technical point. Seeing in the Bill a further menace to family life, the Mothers' Union can only repudiate it with all its power and appreciate gratefully the services of those like yourself who seek to throw it out.

Hon. H. STEWART: It is unfair of Mr. Lovekin to say that this is an attempt to wreck the Bill. I assure him there is no such intention, certainly not so far as I am concerned.

Hon. J. Nicholson: No one has said that.

Hon. H. STEWART: Mr. Lovekin definitely said he looked upon this as an attempt to wreck the Bill. That is farcical. The hon. member is very intolerant in connection with this measure that he has brought forward. I believe this came originally from the legal profession, who found that the disability existed, and thought there was an injustice which should be removed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I am a member of the legal profession and I say they have not considered this matter. It has never come before me in any way, nor did I hear of the Bill until it was introduced.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am not talking about the profession as a whole. A member of the legal profession and of one of the leading firms in the city has told me that he approached Mr. Mann with regard to legislation of this kind. He also said he was largely responsible for it, and that in practice this disability was found to exist.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to speak to the amendment.

Hon. H. STEWART: This gentleman also told me that the words Dr. Saw proposes to insert would do no harm, and would be an improvement.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: I have no desire to wreck the Bill. When it was first introduced I pointed out to Mr. Nicholson the ambiguous nature of the subclause, and suggested that an amendment on these lines should be introduced. I have not approached the subject from a religious point of view.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I did not say that.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: The hon. member said there was opposition to the Bill from the religious point of view. I have not said anything with reference to the poor man who may be a scoundrel and who is neglecting his obligations. I regard the clause as it stands as offering the easiest opportunity for divorce. People who do not want publicity will merely have to agree to a separation. The husband then fails to make the necessary payments, and the wife gets a divorce. I know how quickly the legal profession seizes upon these loopholes. Within a few months of the passing of the last Bill people were getting their divorces. If the Bill goes through as it is, we shall arrive at the stage that is arrived at in Mohammedan countries, where all that a man has to do is to take his wife back to her family and say, "I no longer own you." That constitutes a divorce. I do not want that kind of thing to occur here.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Dr. Saw's reasoning is not sound. If a man wants to desert his wife he can do as Dr. Saw says and his wife can get a decree. The case contemplated by the Bill is one in which the wife has endeavoured to stick to her husband and children, and wants him to maintain them. She obtains a maintenance order, and this may prove to be worthless. I cannot understand why members should try to make out a case for the scoundrel who deserts his wife and family, and spends his money on drink instead of in their support. It would be hard to find a poor man who can put up the plea of poverty as a reason for not obeying an order. These people do not pay because they are drinking and otherwise knocking about.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: No one is trying to wreck the Bill. Dr. Saw, however, is under a misapprehension in the matter. The fact that the parties separate, and that the wife applies to the court or enters into a deed of separation from her undesirable husband, is the best evidence that there is no collusion. If parties want to enter into a collusive bargain, they can live apart. The husband can then either desert his wife for three years, or be found guilty of adultery, in which case the wife can get her divorce. If a woman wanted to get a divorce straight away the last thing she would do would be to obtain a decree of separation or an order for maintenance.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member not to deal with the general principles of the Bill.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If there was any collusion, they would require to act in a manner different from that rendered possible under this Bill. Evidence has to be given that there has been no collusion.

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

Ayes	9
Noes	15
Majority against ..	6

AYES.

Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. W. T. Glasbeen	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. W. H. Kitson	*(Teller.*

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. M. Macfarlane
Hon. J. R. Brown	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. J. Duffell
Hon. A. Lovekin	*(Teller.)*

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and passed.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—NEWCASTLE SUBURBAN LOT S8.

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—ROADS CLOSURE.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [5.51] in moving the second reading said: The main feature of the Bill is the provision of means for raising funds from which to pay bonuses for the destruction of wild dogs, foxes, eaglehawks and such other pests as may be declared vermin. In a House such as this, representative largely of the pastoral and agricultural industries, there is no need to stress the great losses that have been sustained through the depredations of dingoes. In many of the outlying districts our flocks have been decreased considerably in consequence of the ravages of these animals. Not a few settlers have found it difficult to carry sheep on their holdings. The necessity for a determined crusade is, therefore, obvious. To a lesser degree foxes and eaglehawks are also causing losses to farmers and pastoralists. In this as in every other effort to protect industry, the wherewithal is necessary. Funds are essential, and the principal contributors should be those whose assets will be improved as a result of the contemplated campaign of extermination. It will be noticed that it is proposed to raise the necessary money by the imposition of a rate: In the case of pastoralists, an amount not exceeding one penny in the £, and on the other holdings one halfpenny in the £ on the unimproved value. The assessment will be on the lines followed by the Commissioner of Taxation under the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act, and it is hoped by this levy to raise sufficient funds to deal drastically with pests. From the central fund a uniform bonus will be paid through the Vermin Boards as at present, and on the certified statement of the chairman of the board. The Department of Agriculture last year paid £3,500 for wild dog bonuses and 9,000 dogs were killed. The bonus paid within the South-West portion of the State was 10s. per scalp and outside that area, 5s. per scalp. On the dogs destroyed in the South-West portion of the State an average rate of £2 per scalp was paid by the Vermin Boards. The total unimproved value of land in the State, less the metropolitan area, is, approximately, £16,000,000. This includes pastoral holdings, valued at £2,630,000, and farming lands, at £13,978,161. In addition it is estimated that other lands such as timber leases and other Crown leases will be assessed at £1,000,000.

Therefore, at the maximum rate, the following amounts would be raised: From pastoral holdings, £11,000; farming lands, £29,121; other lands, £2,083; making a total of £42,204. The Agricultural Department will contribute to the destruction of dingoes as previously. As a matter of fact provision has been made on this year's Estimates. It will be noticed that holdings not exceeding 160 acres in area are exempted from this levy, the only other exemptions being in respect of persons who can prove to the satisfaction of the Chief Inspector of Rabbits that their holdings are and continue to be wholly enclosed with vermin proof fencing. At the present time the 1918 Act only applies to the South-West portion of the State, and it is proposed to make it applicable to the whole of the State. This is necessary in order to combine the activities of the road boards and vermin boards under the one administration. In the south-west portion of the State, under the 1918 Act, a road board automatically becomes a vermin board, effecting a saving and greater efficiency in administration, as well as providing an equitable system of rating. This Bill repeals the Rabbit Act, 1902, the Vermin Boards Act, 1909, and the Vermin Boards Act Amendment Act, 1915. The Rabbit Act, 1902, applies to all portions of the State excepting the South-West, where the administration is under the Vermin Act, 1918, which embodies the Rabbit Act, 1902, for the purpose of its administration within the South-West. The Vermin Boards Act, 1909, was framed for the purpose of allowing vermin boards to raise funds within the boundaries of the board for the erection of fences. The Bill also provides that timber leases may be rated. This is necessary, particularly in the South-West, where leases cover a large acreage and are the breeding grounds for dingoes, thereby constituting a source of perpetual danger to settlers. The Bill provides that any bird or animal may be declared vermin in any portion of the State to be defined by proclamation. As instances, I might mention that it may be necessary to declare quoggas vermin in the South-West, emus in, say, the Victoria district, and euros in the Kimberleys. In the existing Act any bird or animal declared vermin must be so declared throughout the State, and it has happened that animals that do damage in one portion of the State are protected in another portion and, in consequence, have not been declared vermin. It is proposed in the Bill to give the vermin boards power to charge interest on overdue rates. This will give them the same powers as are conferred upon road boards. A vermin board can obtain from the bank an overdraft on which interest must be paid, and it is only reasonable, as the board may have to pay interest, that ratepayers who neglect to pay their rates should be charged interest on overdue rates. As a set-off against this, it is provided that discount may be allowed by the board if rates are paid within 30 days of receipt of assessment notice. Section 87 of the principal Act is amended. Under Section 74 the Minister or board may erect vermin fences and rabbit-proof fences, and improve existing fences and alter, maintain, repair, or renew fences. In such cases any mortgage arranged had to be given to the Agricultural Bank, which institution under this Act did not make such advances. This Bill provides that the mortgage may be given to the Minister or the board as the circumstances warrant. In the past it has been found that a number of scalps which we pay for are certified as having been received at Eucla and places adjacent to the South Australian border. As our bonus will probably be much greater than the bonus paid in the neighbouring State, it is necessary to provide in the Act a penalty for trafficking in scalps. Clause 11 provides for a penalty in this connection of £50, or, in the alternative, three months' imprisonment. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. J. J. HOLMES (North) [6.0]: The Bill is long overdue. There are many difficulties about the destruction of vermin in this State under the existing legislation. I do not want to be always paying compliments to my friends opposite, but I do say this is a further evidence of their desire to do the right thing in the right way.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: It is not what you say, it is what you do.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Unlike the Trades Hall, I stand up for the welfare of the general community.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I think you are not understood.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: The position was so acute that, about 18 months ago, I had a one-clause Bill drafted to deal with it.

But I was told that the matter would be officially dealt with, and so I dropped the Bill. However, nothing has since happened until now, when the present Minister for Agriculture has introduced this Bill. The Bill is for the purpose of raising a specific rate for a specific purpose. The whole of the pastoral leases and Crown lands in the North are to be subject to a rate, which is to be used for the destruction of dogs, foxes and eagle-hawks. In the past the difficulty has been that some boards paid a high rate for scalps, while others paid a low rate, with the result that all the scalps, no matter where they were taken, drifted into the road board office where the high rate was being paid. In one instance the board exhausted all its funds by paying more than other boards, and so, in the end, could not meet its obligations, and had to tell applicants to wait until the rate was struck again in the following year. The Bill applies to the whole of the State, irrespective of where the vermin are destroyed. That will solve the difficulty. But then we are faced with the problem of the introduction of fox skins and dog skins from the Eastern States. That is going to be very difficult. The only amendment I wish to see made to the Bill will increase the penalty for that offence. To ask the people of this State to provide funds for the destruction of vermin in this State, and then allow dog skins and fox skins to be brought from the Eastern States to mop up the fund, is nothing short of fraud. The penalty provided in the Bill is £50 or three months' imprisonment. I intend to ask the House that the penalty shall be £250, and the alternative 12 months' imprisonment.

Hon. V. Hamersley: What about the man who makes scalps?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: He can be dealt with under the existing Act. One of the difficulties we have suffered in the past is that, to declare an animal a pest in any given portion of the State, it had to be declared a pest over the whole of the State. This has resulted in serious anomalies. For instance, in the South kangaroos are used as food, and it would be a serious injustice to destroy them wholesale down there; whereas in the North for years past they have been a serious pest, and we have not been able to have them declared vermin up there, because they were useful in the South. The Bill gets over that difficulty by providing that the Government by proclamation may declare animals vermin in given parts of the State. We have been looking for that for a long time. If the Government wish to have kangaroos or euros destroyed in any particular locality, they will declare euros and kangaroos vermin in that locality, and the road boards in that locality will raise a rate for the purpose of paying a bonus on the destruction of those animals. The Bill provides that everybody within the State shall pay into a fund for the provision of bonuses for the destruction of dogs and foxes.

Hon. H. Stewart: Not everyone in the State, but everyone interested in agricultural or pastoral pursuits.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Everyone with a holding; the whole of the agricultural and pastoral community will have to pay. The Bill contains a provision which was inserted in another place providing that the fund shall be controlled by an honorary board consisting of one representative of the pastoralists, one representative of the agriculturists and one officer of the department appointed by the Minister. Seeing that the landholders of the State are providing the money, that both sections interested will have representation on the board, and that the measure will cope with the difficulties that have been known to exist for many years, I support the second reading.

HON. H. STEWART (South-East) [6.8]: This measure, like the Land Drainage Bill, contains a provision for increased taxation on the unimproved capital value of the land. I wish to point out, as I have done in recent sessions, the necessity for considering the question of the valuation of land in order that an equitable system might be adopted, because an equitable system is essential to equitable taxation. A Federal Royal Commission, appointed a few years ago to inquire into all forms of taxation, considered an equitable system for the valuation of land. From information supplied recently by the Leader of the House I understand that before I became a member of this Chamber, the Government of which he was then a member introduced a measure which, however, was not passed. I would be prepared to support such a measure if it were based on principles of equity such as are embodied in the Valuation of Land Act of New Zealand under which the Valuer General is as independent in his position as is our

Auditor General. The Federal Royal Commission pointed out that in no State was there what could be called an efficient and equitable system for the valuation of land, though New South Wales had adopted legislation on the lines of the New Zealand Act, but had not put it into operation. That was two years ago. The commission were unqualified in their recommendation that the States should adopt a uniform system of valuation of land and provide simple methods of appeal, and that the Federal Government should use the State valuations for their purposes. The commission considered that it was not for the Federal Parliament to pass legislation of this description. The system in vogue here to-day is purely empirical and is dependent on the individual opinions of men selected as valuers, some of whom proved failures when working on the land for a living. New Zealand has had legislation since 1909, and it has given satisfaction to all sections of the community. The Land Drainage Bill and this Bill will directly affect the men on the land. It is essential to have a basis of valuation. Revaluations are being made at present by Federal officers and are being adopted by the State, and there is no law to provide for appeals. Whatever is done is done under the Land Tax Assessment Act. The Royal Commission maintained that it was not proper that the persons responsible for recommending and collecting the tax should also be the valuing authorities. Under the Bill the initial income derived from a tax of 1d. on pastoral and ½d. on farming properties would amount to approximately £30,000. On the valuations given by the Premier, the Leader of the Country Party in another place contended that there would be a contribution of £10,000 by the pastoralists and £35,000 by the agriculturists. I think those estimates will be found to be correct. If they are correct, the representation should be made proportionate to the contributions. I shall look further into that matter and shall probably refer to it again in Committee. The introduction of this Bill is due largely to the representations made by people suffering from the ravages of dingoes. Although dingoes cover great distances and are dealt with more or less all over the State, there are areas where they do not penetrate.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. H. STEWART: The Bill will probably receive support from all sections of the House. It makes vermin legislation applicable to the entire State, whereas it had previously been restricted to the South-Western division as defined in the principal Act. It would be a good thing if people could feel when they are going to be taxed on land values, that it will be on an equitable and acceptable basis. Land taxation touches the owner in so many ways. There is the Federal land tax, the State land tax, and the various rates. During this session we have, I believe, had two other measures affecting land taxation. In April last year the pastoralists and the primary producers—the latter term embracing not only members of the Primary Producers' Association, but also other persons interested, whom members of the association might perhaps regard as blacklegs—met to confer with a view to arriving at something mutually helpful to the pastoral and agricultural industries. The conclusion of the committee which inquired into the matter was that it would be a fair basis if the two sections, pastoralists and agriculturists, contributed practically equal amounts towards the object expressed in the preseut Bill. On the figures supplied, the committee, who subsequently waited on the Minister for Agriculture, arrived at the conclusion that at a rate of one farthing the pastoralists would contribute £6,250 and that at a rate of one-eighth of a penny the farming section would contribute £9,375, making a total of £15,625. That amount, the committee considered, would be sufficient if a pound for pound subsidy went with it. That subsidy was regarded as justifiable, having regard to the national importance of the question. Municipal districts are exempted from the Bill, and so are townsites and residential areas. That point will probably exercise the thoughtful consideration of the House in Committee. Without having gone very closely into the definitions, I believe that municipal districts in the metropolis will be exempted. but that road board areas, such as Spearwood or South Perth, or even the district of the Perth Road Board, might come in and be subjected to this taxation. I do not make that statement in a spirit of antagonism, but merely by way of drawing attention to the matter. My inference may be wrong. The Leader of the House will be able to inform us what is the correct interpretation. The investigating committee I

have referred to were of opinion that smaller rates would be sufficient, and that a fair basis would be to raise equal moieties from the two sections interested. A large proportion of those who would be rated on holdings other than pastoral have none of these vermin pests. They feel that they have not got them because other people pioneering prevented the pests from coming in. In many cases, however, the people in districts which are now free from the dingo had to deal with that pest at considerable expense in the past. Thus there is a great difficulty in connection with the matter. Anything I say is designed purely to arrive at the most equitable way, all things considered, of raising the necessary funds. Another purpose of the Bill is to equalise the bonuses paid for the destruction of wild dogs, foxes and eagle hawks. If it should be found that an unnecessarily large amount of money is raised in the first year, then the Minister for Agriculture will no doubt reduce the rates. The honorary advisory board, too, will see that no unnecessary collection is made from people engaged in industry, and that a departmental office staff is not built up simply because revenue is being provided. That will have to be guarded against. Those concerned will watch the position closely, and in view of the fact that accounts and regulations will be laid on the Table of the House, there is no reason to anticipate trouble. A phase of the position which seems to me hard is that a large proportion of holdings other than pastoral—I do not necessarily mean farming land—are already paying vermin rates for the purpose of holding in check and wiping out the rabbit, while the dingo, even if present, is by reason of the nature of their business giving them no trouble. Such people will receive no set-off in respect of what they are now paying to deal with the vermin that is inimical to their interests. The matter is one to which attention might be directed in Committee. Perhaps in Subclause 3 of Clause 10 there might be inserted a proviso that all people already being rated to a certain extent for rabbits shall be exempted, either wholly or partly, from contributing to combat the dingo pest if they have no dingoes. No definite figures have yet been supplied as to the contributions on the basis proposed by the Bill, though different estimates have been put forward indicating that the pastoral section might only be paying one-fourth the amount to be paid by the other section. On the other hand, the Minister's figures tend to show that the total revenue received will be far less than elsewhere estimated. In any case, the balance of opinion is that the contribution by the pastoralist, who is vitally concerned, will under the proposal of the Bill be twice or thrice that of the other section of contributors.

HON. H. A. STEPHENSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [7.45]: I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill. I agree with Mr. Holmes that it is long overdue. The majority of the people in the State do not realise the great loss that is caused to farmers and pastoralists by the dingo and the fox. As has been pointed out, the destruction by kangaroos in the North is in some seasons considerable. Some time ago I had occasion to proceed to the North, and beyond Onslow I was at a station for about a month. Although I had never shot kangaroos with a rifle before, during that visit I shot no fewer than 105 in four weeks. Whilst riding through some of the paddocks, I counted as many as 150 in one mob. The amount of feed that they were getting away with was a very serious matter to the owner of the station. The Bill will prove of benefit to the State and will be of great service to the pastoralist. I have not gone through all the clauses, but there is one to which I would refer, the clause providing for a penalty in the event of any person producing scalps obtained elsewhere, and on those scalps demanding a bonus. The penalty provided is £50. I would favour increasing that to at least £100 to obviate the possibility of fraud. The bonus being paid is high, and there is no doubt that some people might be tempted to practise deceit by bringing in scalps on which they should not have the right to claim the payment of the bonus. A severe penalty should be imposed on such people in order to make an example of them. I support the second reading.

HON. T. MOORE (Central) [7.50]: I am pleased to know that members recognise the necessity for combined effort in dealing with the dingo menace. In the past only spasmodic efforts have been made to rid the country of the pest. As Mr. Holmes has stated, the work should have been commenced a long time ago. What has really been taking place is that those men who have been pioneering in the pastoral areas,

those men who have been intrepid enough to go further and further back, have been saving the pastoralist and others who are settled along the inner circle. Not only have the pioneers been building up their stations, but they have been destroying the dogs. Recently I was at Wiluna, and I was surprised to learn the number of dogs that were being killed by station owners in that district. Men were being employed to kill the dingoes. I realised also, while I was there, that but for the pioneers, the people who are settled in the agricultural areas, and the areas closer to the coast, would be to-day taking active measures to save themselves from the pest. These people in the vicinity of civilisation have been going along quite airily and have remained content with what has been done in the outback districts without even rendering anything in the shape of financial aid. When we realise that no fewer than 9,000 dingo scalps were paid for last year, it will be admitted that those who believe that the agriculturists should not be called upon to pay towards the fund for the destruction of the vermin, cannot any longer contend that that necessity does not now exist. In addition to the 9,000 scalps that we know of, I have not the slightest doubt that in the process of poisoning, many thousands of others were also accounted for. I appeal to those who represent the settlers along the inner circle to take notice of what is happening. The pastoralists in the distant areas have been paying to their road boards and vermin boards substantial sums of money. In the agricultural districts that border on the pastoral areas, good work has also been done in the way of destroying the pest, and quite a number of dogs have been accounted for. Despite all this the dingo seems to be thriving. I venture to say that there are as many dingoes in the back country to-day as there were 20 years ago, if no more. I know that in the Northampton area, which might be said to be along the inner circle, and at the Murchison House Station, dingoes are becoming a serious menace. It must not be forgotten either that the fox has arrived, and people who do not understand the ways of the fox may be led to believe that he is an easy chap to deal with. Victoria was settled by having a farmer on every half-mile square of the country, but despite that fact, in the district in which I was brought up, and where families lived at distances of about half a mile apart, foxes found it possible to thrive.

Hon. J. Duffell: The fox is a wily cuss.

Hon. T. MOORE: He is so. Hon. members can form an idea of what may happen in the event of the fox getting a substantial footing on land that is unoccupied. Unless something is done quickly it will be found that the fox will be a difficult proposition to handle in Western Australia.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: They are within a hundred miles of Perth now.

Hon. T. MOORE: No one seems to have been very much worried about the advent of the fox in this State. Foxes were heard of here only four years ago, and now we know that the pest is distributed over an area of 300 or 400 miles.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The first fox was caught about seven years ago.

Hon. T. MOORE: Everyone should be made to realise the menace the fox is likely to prove. One thing that has struck me in connection with the killing of these pests is that instead of paying bonuses for scalps we should employ experts to trap and destroy them. We have in this State men who are really expert in exterminating the pests, and we should employ these people on the work of destroying both dogs and foxes. After all a bonus on the scalp does not make it anybody's business to destroy the pest. What that really means is that while we kill dogs now and again, or trap or poison them, the work is not continuous. It would be much better to have men constantly occupied in the work of destruction. There are in the Kimberleys men whose services could be secured in the direction of exterminating the dogs. I hope that when the Bill is in Committee, and amendments are suggested, the one thing that will be taken into consideration will be the necessity for combined effort, otherwise we shall have the dingo always with us and killing a number of sheep every year, though not perhaps in any great numbers. In many of our agricultural areas to-day where sheep should be running, we find that the holders of the land are not prepared to stock the properties, because of the dingo menace. The numbers of our sheep are seriously interfered with owing to the presence of the dingo inside what we may call the outer circle, and now we find that the agricultural areas are menaced. I consider that if as suggested any exemptions from taxation are to be made, the man on the outer fringe should be exempt from pay-

ment altogether because he has had to bear the burden of the cost of extermination.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from 5th November; Mr. Kirwan in the Chair, the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 57.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: May I offer a suggestion to the Committee which I think will meet with general approval. At a previous sitting we made some amendments to this particular clause, and we have now to proceed to consider the balance of the clause beginning with paragraph 102 (1). I suggest that when you, Mr. Chairman, put the question, "That the clause as amended stand part of the Bill," we shall say "No." The whole of the clause will then go out, including the amendment that we made at a previous sitting, the amendment that none of us now want. If we do that, we can on recommittal consider the new clause 57. I observe that on the Notice Paper there appears a new clause in the name of Mr. Holmes. We can discuss that clause at a later stage, paragraph by paragraph.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think that is the proper course to adopt.

Clause put and negatived.

Clause 58—Apprentices in building trades:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: On behalf of Mr. Nicholson, I move an amendment—

That in proposed new Section 115a (1), line two, after the word "board," the words "to regulate or provide for apprentices to be employed and the terms of employment" be inserted.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I oppose the amendment. It will give general power to the board that should be left to the court. The court with the approval of the Governor has power under Clause 61 to make regulations with regard to apprentices. I propose to add a further subsection to stand as Subection 2, to enable the Governor, on the recommendation of the board, to make regulations as to the wages to be paid to apprentices, when such wages are not fixed by industrial agreement or award. It would be unwise to give this general power to the board. We do not want to prevent consistency in apprenticing to the different trades.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The amendment is a reasonable one. The board mus. regulate or provide for apprentices to be employed, and for the terms of employment. If an agreement is entered into through the agency of the board, that is the proper party to determine the question and not the court.

Amendment put and negatived.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That a new Subsection (3) be inserted as follows: "Whenever any person who is indentured as an apprentice to the board shall have already served for some time as an apprentice to the building trade (including service with the parent of the apprentice), such service shall be taken into consideration in fixing the period of apprenticeship to the board.

There are no regulations prescribed for apprentices in the building trade. The amendment is the outcome of a conference between the Master Builders and Contractors' Association and the Minister for Labour.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added:—"Provided that the members of the said board shall not be personally liable under this Act or under any agreement or indenture of apprenticeship entered into with the said board, nor shall such members be liable to any action or proceeding at the instance of any apprentice or employer or other person joined in such agreement or indenture."

This will make it clear that there shall be no personal liability attached to members of the board.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That in proposed Subsection (4), line one, after the word "may," the words "on the recommendation of the court" be inserted.

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

Clause 59—Apprenticeship generally:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move an amendment—

That in proposed Subsection (4), line two, after the word "board," the words "in the case of apprenticeships in the building trade" be inserted.

This is intended to make the clause clear.

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

Clause 60—Registration of agreements of apprenticeship:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That in line seven of Subsection (3) of the proposed new Section 115c, after "agreement," the words "or such other time as may be mutually agreed between the union and the employer" be inserted.

The object of the amendment is to provide that where the parent of an apprentice may remove from one town to another, or from the country to the city, an agreement may be reached to enable the apprenticeship to be uninterrupted.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I suggest that the word "union" should be struck out of the amendment, and "board" inserted. The amendment is vague, and as it stands may apply to the union of employers. As this applies to apprentices in the building trades, for instance, the board will govern the position and therefore should be mentioned in the amendment.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: More than a reference to the board is required, because this applies to apprentices generally, whereas the board deals with the building trades. Perhaps the Minister will consider the point and deal with it on recommittal.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As it stands, the amendment is rather indefinite. We can agree to it now and deal with it further on recommittal.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I draw the attention of the Chief Secretary to the proposed Subsections (6) and (7) both of which appear to be contradictory when read in conjunction with Clause 58.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will have that point looked into too, so that it may be dealt with on recommittal.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 61—Regulations as to apprenticeship:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I move an amendment—

That in line two of paragraph (a), after "employers," the words "and the number of apprentices to be employed" be inserted.

At the present time this course is usually adopted by the Arbitration Court in making awards and it would be as well to give legislative sanction to the procedure.

Amendment put and passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be added as follows:—"(2) The Governor may, on the recommendation of the Apprenticeship Board, by regulations prescribe the wages to be paid by employers to apprentices when such wages are not fixed by an industrial agreement or award, and by such regulations may impose a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds for any breach thereof."

Hon. H. SEDDON: Will this meet the position in industries other than the building trades?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The apprenticeship board will operate only with the building trade, and the Arbitration Court has power to deal with other apprentices.

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

Clauses 62 and 63—agreed to.

Clause 64—Compulsory conference with commissioners:

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: In the absence of Mr. Cornell I desire to move the following amendment standing in his name—

That, after the word "the," in line four of Subclause (10) all the words to the end of the subclause be struck out, and the words "court of their proceedings on the matter in dispute as to which agreement has not been reached, and the court shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine any matter so referred to it as an industrial dispute under this Act" inserted in lieu.

The subclause provides that where a conference has been held before commissioners with a view to arriving at a settlement but an agreement has not been reached regarding the whole of the dispute, the commissioners are to furnish a report in writing to the Minister, who may refer to the court the dispute or the matters in dispute as to which no agreement has been reached. Under the amendment the report will be referred to the court.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The amendment is acceptable.

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

Clause 65—agreed to.

Clause 66 put and negatived.

Clause 67—Secretary of union to have power of inspector under Factories Act:

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: This clause ought to be struck out. It is proposed to give to the secretary or some other member of any union full power of an inspector under the Factories Act.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What is wrong with that?

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: Well, there are about 75 unions in the metropolitan area. Under the Factories Act each inspector is entitled to take an assistant with him and enter upon premises at any hour. That being so, we might have premises raided at any time of the day or night by 150 unionists, all having full powers of inspectors under the Factories Act. The clause ought to go out.

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

Ayes	5
Noes	16
Majority against ..	11

AYES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. W. H. Kitson	(*Teller.*)

NOES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. Nicholson
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. C. Potter
Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. J. Duffell	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. W. T. Glasheen	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. J. Holmes	(*Teller.*)
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	

Clause thus negatived.

Clause 68—Amendment of Section 125:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move an amendment—

That in line five "industrial" be struck out, and "police or resident" inserted in lieu.

This is consequential on what we have already done.

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

Clause 69—Amendment of Section 126:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I move an amendment—

That in line two all words after "by" be struck out, and "substituting for the words 'three months' the words 'twelve months'" be inserted in lieu.

The Act provides that a worker may recover an amount owing to him as wages, but that every action for the recovery of such amount must be commenced within three months of the time when the cause of the action arose. The Bill removes that limitation altogether, and so leaves the time for action quite open, indefinite. I object to that. There should be some limitation of time to the action. But instead of wishing to make it three months, as in the Act, I propose to make it 12 months.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Lovekin's amendment is an improvement on the provision in the existing Act, but it does not go far enough. Under the Statute of Limitations a debt may be collected any time within six years. That being so, I do not see why a worker should be debarred from recovering wages due to him up to any time within that set by the Statute of Limitations. He should not be debarred because 12 months have elapsed before he takes action for recovery of his wages.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: This is very different from an ordinary debt. The workman may be claiming wages due for work done on a building. It often happens that the contractor contracts that the owner of the building shall pay any increase in wages that may be declared during the time of the contract. The workman ought to know within 12 months of the increase of wages what is due to him, and ought to make his claim within that time. If the worker does not claim within 12 months, the contractor may not be able to recover from the owner of the building. Why should not a man make his claim within 12 months? Why hang it up till the employer has no means of challenging it?

Hon. H. STEWART: To extend the period to 12 months would be embarrassing to large employers of labour. The men who advise the workers should be able to find out within a shorter period whether there is any liability.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: There have been many cases where the employee has not been able to take proceedings for a much longer period than three months. Delays occur be-

fore a case can be heard, and it has often happened that the time has elapsed in which an employee is entitled to claim. Notwithstanding that the employer may have been convicted of a breach of the award, the employee has not been able to recover one penny in spite of the fact that he was underpaid for a considerable period. The worker should have the same privilege as has any business house to recover money due to him. Why make a distinction against the man who can least afford to lose his money? Mr. Lovekin's amendment would represent a big advance on the existing Act, but I hope the clause will be retained.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: A claim might arise not from a desire on the part of an employer to pay his men less than they were entitled to receive, but from a misinterpretation of an award. An employer might be committing a breach quite innocently and the employees might or might not know that they were being underpaid. If the employer knew in the first instance that he had to pay the higher rate, he might never have employed the men. We could overcome the difficulty by providing that within three months of the interpretation of the award being given by the court, the employee must take action or lose his right of action. That would be equitable to employers and employees.

Hon. T. MOORE: I am pleased with the tone adopted by Mr. Holmes and Mr. Stewart, who recognise that if a man earns a certain amount of wages, he is entitled to receive it. Sometimes an employer is on the verge of bankruptcy and cannot pay, and the employees refrain from taking proceedings on that account, but later on when the employer has recovered his financial position he has not paid the men's claims. If a man receives only the wages he has earned, no harm can be done.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: My proposal would meet the difficulty indicated by Mr. Moore. So long as an employee started action within three months, he could stand in with other creditors until such time as the employer was in a position to pay. The point is that the employee should take action with a given time.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Give him 12 months.

Hon. J. J. HOLMES: We should define the employers' liability, and within three months of the interpretation being given, should be sufficient.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: If Section 126 is amended as here proposed, it will be the beginning of many troubles. Frequently an employer up against a stiff proposition financially has struggled at the week end to raise the money to pay his employees, who have generally got the full amount of their wages, while he himself has not had much more than a pound to take home to his own wife and family.

Hon. T. Moore: But the employer has been known to miss paying.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: To miss paying himself. This clause proposes to abolish the three months limitation, and to substitute the statutory limitation of six years. Mr. Lovekin's amendment, suggesting 12 months, is most reasonable. Indeed, six months would be sufficient.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: In reply to Mr. Holmes, experience has shown that only a minority of the cases are interpretation cases, and that most of the cases are for wilful breaches of awards. The present clause refers to the length of time allowed before taking proceedings to recover. Suppose that during the whole of last month I had been employed at a wage 10s. less than the award rate, and that then the union took proceedings for a breach of the award: if that case was not heard until the end of this month, it would only be possible for me to recover over a period of two months instead of three months: every week's delay would mean a week less that I could claim from the employer. The result would be that if three months elapsed from the time the offence arose, my claim would be invalid. Such a state of affairs ought not to exist. I support the clause as it stands.

Hon. A. J. H. SAW: The real point to guide us in this question is, what is a legitimate term to allow in fairness to both employer and employee in view of the circumstance that after the lapse of a certain time it would be difficult for the employee to prove his case and still more difficult for the employer to refute an unfounded claim, owing to, say, the dispersal of witnesses over the State. The term of 12 months seems to me reasonable. After six years it might be impossible for the employer to disprove even a case that was quite groundless.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The existing term of three months is rather on the short side,

but six years would be too long because of the opportunities afforded for imposition. I have here the awards of the metropolitan shop assistants and also of the cardboard boxmakers, which provide for boys and girls starting at the age of 15 years at a prescribed rate advancing proportionately every year. On the goldfields there have come under my notice cases where awards have not been observed because of untruths told regarding the age of a boy or girl, with a view to his or her securing employment.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: There is collusion sometimes.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Sometimes. If a boy is a year older than represented, a breach of the award is committed from the day he begins to be employed. The boy—or girl—might remain with the employer in such circumstances until reaching the age of 21, and then because of some difference might leave, and thereupon take advantage of the untruth which had been told, to sue the employer in respect of the rates paid during all the preceding years.

Hon. H. Stewart: The employer could guard himself against that by requiring a birth certificate.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, but employers here are constantly having new employees. A period of six years might invite actions of the nature I have indicated. A term of 12 months is not unreasonable.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	6
Majority for	9

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. G. Potter
Hon. A. Burvill	Hon. A. J. H. Saw
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. E. H. Harris	Hon. H. A. Stephenson
Hon. J. J. Holmes	Hon. H. Stewart
Hon. A. Lovekin	Hon. H. J. Yelland
Hon. J. M. Macfarlane	Hon. W. T. Glasheen
Hon. J. Nicholson	(*Teller.*)

NOES.

Hon. J. E. Dodd	Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. W. Hickey	Hon. E. H. Gray
	(*Teller.*)

Amendment thus passed.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 70—agreed to.

Postponed clause 2—Amendment of Section 4 of principal Act:

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Certain words have already been struck out, and I propose to insert others. I move an amendment—

That in Subclause (6) the following words be inserted in lieu of the words struck out:—"The term includes canvassers for industrial insurance whose services are remunerated wholly or partly by commission or percentage reward."

For the purposes of this paragraph, the word "canvassers" means persons wholly and solely employed in the writing of industrial insurance business, and/or in the collection of premiums at not longer intervals than one month in respect to such insurance, but does not include any person who directly or indirectly carries on or is concerned in the carrying on or conduct of any other business or occupation in conjunction or in association with that of industrial insurance.

This amendment is the outcome of a meeting we had with some of the managers and insurance agents. It appeared to me that in many cases although the men were employed on commission, and to that extent were their own masters, they were in fact workers as described by Mr. Justice Burnside in one of his awards. It seems to me that this business is so complex——

Hon. H. Stewart: It is so complex that you do not understand it.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: The hon. member knows very well that I am dense and it takes time to get things into my head, but once I get them into my head, they remain there. These men were really workers although they were paid by commission, and it seemed to me that some tribunal was required to put matters on a proper and equitable basis. We were told that the men were employed to canvass particular districts, and for every policy a man obtained he got a certain commission, and in addition to that he had the right to collect weekly on which he also got commission. These men were started in this way: A company gave a man a book which had £10 worth of subscribers in it. The company had paid some other officer to get that book up to £10. Another man came along and the company handed to him the £10 book and told the canvasser to add to the book and that he would get commission on all the new business he secured and commission on all collections. In many cases, as soon as a man reached £30 or £40 in his book, the company thought that he was on

too good a wicket and so they took the book from him and passed it on to someone else. In the next stage the man has worked it up, off his own bat, to £30 and the company say again, "We will take £10 from you and give another man a start." What the companies wanted was not to employ men on collecting, and drawing commission on the collections; they wanted new policies.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Was the meeting that took place one of those semi-secret committees of yours?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: We hold no secret or star chamber meetings. It was a meeting of men interested. I was requested to see the officers, and I refused to do so unless the managers were there also.

Hon. V. Hamersley: How many managers were present?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Two or three.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: What was your position—arbiter-in-chief or dictator?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It was what I should call a select committee. There were several members who desired to get information so that they might know what course to adopt. If we followed that practice oftener than we do, we would give the people we represent better results.

Hon. H. Stewart: A select committee would have done better than that.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: What difference is there between five members of this Chamber sitting in a room outside and taking evidence, and the same five sitting in the same room but appointed by the House for the purpose.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Was the evidence taken down?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: All the evidence I wanted I took down.

Hon. H. Stewart: Are you able to reproduce it?

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I think I could do so. I took down the wages that were paid.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think this system of cross-examination is very desirable. I ask members to allow Mr. Lovekin to proceed with his speech.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I am not the only one who has been made an Aunt Sally.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not what the hon. member desires or does not desire; it is what is Parliamentary and what is desirable.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Sometimes members do not like what you say. They begin to snarl and make a noise. I want to give to members the best of information, and this is the way I tried to get it. I had five or six men introduced by Mr. Kitson, but I declined to see them unless I also asked the managers, so that I might not be unduly influenced by one side or the other. I asked each man what he was making, and what it cost to carry on his business. The managers admitted that in the two companies they represented the average commission earned per week was £4 10s. or £4 11s.

Hon. A. Burvill: You found there was a system of sweating.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Some of the men were canvassers, and were not employed by the particular companies who were represented by their managers. Some were representing the A.M.P., of which the manager was not present. I am giving these details to members because I want to give them all the information I have.

Hon. H. Stewart: We want it given correctly.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I like the impertinence of the hon. member.

Hon. H. Stewart: I wish to make an explanation.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member rise to a point of order?

Hon. H. Stewart: To make a personal explanation.

The CHAIRMAN: It would be better to wait until Mr. Lovekin has concluded his speech.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: It is a piece of gross impertinence for one member to say when another is making a statement that he wants it made correctly. There is only one inference to be drawn from that.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: The inference is that you may have been misled.

Hon. H. Stewart: You used the word "five" and Mr. Holmes said it was twenty.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish the hon. member would proceed with his amendment.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: I will not bandy words with the hon. member. Evidence was put before us to the effect that these men averaged £4 10s. or £4 11s. per week. One was getting over £6. They explained they had to spend so much in earning that money. Since this investigation was made the manager of the T. & G. Company said that some of his men averaged about £6 a week. These are commission agents. They have to run the risk of losing their customers,

and having to return to the company the money involved in the policies they have lost. They are getting little enough out of the business and ought not to have the fruits of their labour interfered with. For all new business the men should be entitled to reap the full reward of their labours. I understand that in England some of these agents sell their books. The business is a complex one. Before anything can be done between the man and the company there must be some tribunal that will go into the question. I want to give these industrial canvassers some chance of having their positions settled fairly by the Arbitration Court.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: As one of those present at the so-called conference, I cannot agree with Mr. Lovekin's remarks. He has got terribly mixed and has not altogether stated what actually took place. Certainly there were present two representatives of insurance companies and a great number of canvassers. No notes were taken and most of the time there were three or four speakers going at once. A canvasser would be asked by Mr. Lovekin, "What do you earn"? The man would reply, "About £4." Perhaps he would say "About £4 5s." or whatever the amount was. One man said that he earned £6 a week, but had to keep a pony and trap to enable him to earn that sum. The whole thing seemed to be complicated and tangled up. I did not consider that I had received information that would enable me to come to a decision, so I made an effort to get additional information. That which I gained threw a different light indeed upon the statements made at the so-called conference. In the course of his second reading speech, Mr. Lovekin said that so far as the A.M.P. was concerned that company was all right and it was a pity the other companies did not conduct their business on the same lines.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I did not say that; I said there was no complaint against the A.M.P.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: And then you said that if the other companies carried on their business in the same way there would be no complaint against them. As a matter of fact, some of the agents present were men who worked for the A.M.P.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And I said that.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: In fairness to the other companies I think it only right I should make that point clear. From the information I gleaned, I find that the statements made by a majority of the canvassers regarding their earnings were not correct. This has been proved by a letter I asked for from companies concerned, giving authentic particulars. The communication I received was as follows:—

As the two representatives of life companies who met you and other members of the Legislative Council on last Thursday evening, we would like to advise the following information in connection with that meeting, and in connection with Mr. Lovekin's amendment now before the House. Mr. Lovekin overlooks the peculiar difficulties appertaining to the duties of insurance agents, who work in their own time without supervision, and who undertake work in other directions. It would not be possible to carry out the stipulation that an agent should not engage in any other business or occupation. Were such a stipulation possible, a number of men would give up their insurance agency work. Mr. Lovekin acknowledges the peculiar difficulties in connection with agencies when he states that the question is too complex for the Arbitration Court to consider, and that we could not have an arbitration rate for insurance agents. Mr. Lovekin is apparently impressed mainly by two points. (1) In regard to adjustment of books, as they grow too large. Mr. Lovekin appears to consider this an injustice to the agent. This is a misunderstanding. A person insures with a company, and the agent's reward for the introduction of the business is his new business commission. There is not and could not be an understanding that the agent has the right to collect premiums on that business for all time. The company's business in any locality will keep expanding, and as the business gets too large for one man to satisfactorily handle, an adjustment must take place. It is a matter of what is a fair maximum amount of book for an agency, and any request so far by agents has been for books of £20. Mr. Lovekin mentions books of £40 and £50. Any party with a knowledge of the business will confirm that figure as an impossibility. (2) Mr. Lovekin makes reference to the average earnings of agents. It must be borne in mind that this average figure is affected by the lower earnings of men who are not devoting a good proportion of time to their insurance agencies. It must not be accepted as the earning power of an efficient agent giving a full or a good proportion of time to his agency. At the meeting on Thursday evening Mr. Lovekin asked the agents present for quotations as to their earnings, and he has formed conclusions from the replies given by the agents. We have since checked these replies, and find that where it was stated the income from the insurance agency was something over £4 or £5 the correct amount, taken from last income tax returns, was over £6.

I was privileged to go through a list in connection with one of the companies, and this showed the earnings of the men. I found that some earned from £6 up to £11 a week.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I saw that, too.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: Any number of the men were earning that money. As a matter of fact the whole thing has been misleading.

Hon. E. H. Gray: And that statement of yours is misleading, too.

Hon. H. A. STEPHENSON: We find that statements have been made here so that members have gained a wrong impression. When the matter is probed we find that the position is totally different. As a matter of fact I was anxious to do something for these men because I was under the impression that they were not being treated as they should have been. When I came to make inquiries, I found it was the same old tale, the employer was a vagabond, starving and grinding down the employees. In the circumstances, I intend to vote against the amendment.

Hon. H. STEWART: When Mr. Lovekin was speaking I interjected to the effect that I hoped he would give us correct information. I hope Mr. Lovekin will accept my assurance that I did not wish to infer that he would endeavour to mislead the Committee. I felt that he had made a mistake in not realising what the position really was. He mentioned that about five insurance canvassers were at the conference.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Now, be accurate!

Hon. H. STEWART: I will mention what has been told to me regarding the conference that took place. At that stage Mr. Holmes interjected, "About 20." I believe the actual number of canvassers present was between eight and twelve.

Hon. E. H. Harris: And how many members of the Council?

Hon. H. STEWART: I do not know. There were two managers of insurance companies.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I can give you the exact numbers when I get my notes later.

Hon. H. STEWART: I feel satisfied that the number of canvassers was more than five.

Hon. A. Lovekin: There may have been six or seven.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What does it matter anyhow?

Hon. H. STEWART: Mr. Lovekin says he did not arrange the conference. I was approached by one of the insurance managers who was present and, in explaining to me how the conference took place, he told me that Mr. Lovekin waited upon him in his office and asked him if he would come along with some other managers to meet members of the Council to discuss the insurance business. Then Mr. Lovekin said that he wanted them to meet Mr. Kitson and he told me that when Mr. Kitson came into the room eight or twelve insurance canvassers entered with him.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That is not a fact.

Hon. H. STEWART: This gentleman told me that they had not anticipated coming to the House to discuss the question in that way and the thing developed into a cross discussion with Mr. Lovekin interviewing the canvassers to ascertain what they received.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I said I would refuse to see the men unless the managers came too.

Hon. H. STEWART: I am stating what I was informed and the gentleman who saw me was Mr. Maynard, the manager of the Mutual Life and Citizens Assurance Company. I had not met Mr. Maynard until this morning.

Hon. A. Lovekin: There were only two of us at the interview and I say that that statement is not a fact.

Hon. H. STEWART: Then the House has before it Mr. Lovekin's statement and Mr. Maynard's statement.

Hon. A. Lovekin: I told Mr. Kitson I would not meet the men unless the managers were present.

Hon. H. STEWART: The manager of the T. and G. Company was at the conference. He also got in touch with me and gave me his version. This is the first time that I have been approached in any way regarding matters other than those with which I am more closely associated. I have made it my business to become conversant with this phase of the question, and I met these two gentlemen this morning and asked questions with a view to being in a position to reply to any criticism Mr. Kitson might advance.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Did you interview any of the men?

Hon. H. STEWART: Here we have a statement of fact.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: How do you know?

Hon. H. STEWART: Because it can be checked at the office of the Commissioner of Taxation.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Nobody is denying that statement.

Hon. H. STEWART: The manager of the T. & G., before he went to the East, left word for Mr. Maynard that the average earnings of the industrial canvassers of the T. & G. were over £6 per week. He made out a list comprising 53 agents, the total number employed for the full 12 months. Amongst the incomes earned by these agents were £560, £577 and £621. Of the 53 there were only 10 whose incomes averaged below £6 weekly, and they are accounted for by being men newly started in the business, or else men not efficient in their work.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: You are putting that forward as a fact?

Hon. H. STEWART: Yes. There were 72 agents in the service of the company but the difference between the 53 and the 72 is that the 19 had not worked 12 months with the company during the taxation year, and so the manager was unable to compile their incomes for the period. Of the 53, none took exception to these figures. That is the ground for saying that the document is accepted by the men. There were only two representatives of the company amongst the canvassers present, and one of those indicated that his income was certainly not in accordance with what is on this return. Another phase of this industrial canvassing has a vital bearing on Mr. Lovekin's amendment: that is the £20 book. The collectors receive only 3s. per week on the pound collected. It means that they are extremely limited in what they collect on the business done. They collect on the book. It shows that where these men averaged over £6, they got it from the seeking of new business. This new business would never have been built up under an arrangement such as Mr. Lovekin's amendment contemplates. It would mean an absolutely different principle from that followed in building up this business. It must be remembered that the industrial canvasser is not alone responsible for the work. There are other sub-agents who go out and get new business, on which they receive a slightly higher percentage. They have to retain responsibility for that new business for a certain period, collecting the premiums. In the T. & G. office they get 15 per cent., but they have to collect the weekly amounts for a period of 13 weeks. Then that business is handed over and made into a new book. During the strike the plea was put forward for a book of a minimum value of £20. The canvassers have been granted that as far as possible by the T. & G., but there are nine instances in which the book is of only £17. That amount will be increased as soon as possible. The managers present at the meeting and the manager of the T. & G. contend that Mr. Lovekin framed his amendment and came to his conclusion on wrong information, and that the canvassers who were present were not representatives of the canvassers employed.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Who was there?

Hon. H. STEWART: Mr. Kitson, I think. I do not know that the two employed by the T. & G. are representatives of the 72 who have been in the service for a number of years, or of the 53 employed during the 12 months of the taxation period. Mr. Lovekin's calling together of a conference was certainly not in the interests of satisfactory legislation in this House. If a select committee had been appointed to consider this question, it would have been a very different matter. We have no guarantee that either side was representative. It was purely an informal gathering and the results seem to have been anything but satisfactory.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I had hoped that Mr. Kitson would enlighten the Committee as to what happened, in view of Mr. Lovekin's having made a lengthy statement and having been the one who, I understand, invited representatives of the companies and canvassers to be present. Mr. Stewart has read a statement of figures indicating that the insurance agents have considerably more money than they admitted to the members who met them in an adjacent room. I should like to be assured as to whether we can get from the men or from the company the exact sum they have earned. Are the members who were present prepared to accept or deny the statement put in by the insurance company as to what the actual earnings were in that class of work? We have been asked to decide whether the amendment is a reasonable one and the statement should be verified. I understood that Mr. Lovekin and Mr. Kitson, acting on behalf of the interested parties, had arrived at this amendment.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: That is not correct.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Then is the amendment acceptable to the canvassers? I understood they had agreed to it.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Last session when speaking on the second reading of the Ar-

bitration Bill, I made statements that were openly doubted by some members and even characterised as being untrue. This session I made similar statements. Notwithstanding the so-called facts presented by Mr. Stewart, I deny that the average remuneration received by these men is anything like £5 or £6 per week. The average net earnings of industrial insurance agents in the metropolitan area for the 12 months do not exceed £3 10s. per week. I have acted as secretary for the men for some years and I know. Those men are perhaps the most downtrodden of any section of workers. The number of agents quoted by Mr. Stewart is not correct. I have a document signed by roughly the number he quoted, and they comprise not 75 per cent. of the total. The men present at the meeting were representative of the insurance agents of the metropolitan area. One man claimed to average a little over £6 per week, but he has been in the occupation for over 30 years and is well and favourably known throughout the State. Yet he recognises that the majority of men employed by his company, and perhaps more so those employed by other companies, are deserving of something better than they are receiving at present. The men are simply asking for the right to place their case before an impartial tribunal. In Queensland the industrial agents are registered as a union and have an award. The system is working satisfactorily. The men are guaranteed a minimum of £4 10s. per week. At the end of every 13 weeks an adjustment is made. If they have earned more than the £4 10s. a week, they receive the balance. If they have earned less, the difference is a debit against their future earnings. If, during a given period a man proves to be incapable of earning £4 10s. a week, his services are dispensed with. That is what the men here are asking for. The employers should not have the sole right to prescribe the conditions under which the men shall work. The statement that men earned £11 or £12 a week might be correct. The men shown as receiving the lowest average amount have earned that much in one week, but during the ensuing weeks they earned not more than £2 10s. or £3 a week.

Hon. H. Stewart: But that is the average for a taxation year.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The society referred to conducts certain competitions towards the close of its financial year. A man with a book of £30 per week has been known to collect over £400 in the week.

Hon. H. Stewart: He would get his 15 per cent. on it. What is wrong with that?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The man had collected premiums for months ahead in order to put in big figures and win the championship medal. Yet such figures are used to prevent other men from getting anything like a fair deal. If members knew what took place in the establishments of some of these societies they would be astounded. I thank Mr. Lovekin for the interest he has displayed in the matter. Every statement I have made in this Chamber has been satisfactorily proved by what was said by the men and the managers who were present at the conference dealt with by Mr. Lovekin. One of the best of the canvassers in Perth has built up his book time and again only to have it reduced by the company.

Hon. H. Stewart: Is he being unfairly treated?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Yes, and others are too. When the year comes to an end the companies look round to see whom they can reduce. The reduction may mean anything from 5s. to £1 per week in a man's earnings. On the admission of the managers, unless a man has at least a £20 book he has to be more than an average person to make more than £4 a week. The agents are prepared to submit to the most searching examination into their case. I would indeed welcome a Royal Commission. If the figures that have been quoted to-night are correct, members will have nothing to fear from the inclusion of the amendment in the Bill. In one society the agents are not allowed to draw all the money they earn. The rest is retained by the society for the time being. The men are responsible for a given period for the business they write.

Hon. H. Stewart: In some cases five years.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Yes, and in other cases for all time. If a new agent takes on a book and he has collected for three or four months, and one of the policy holders decides not to continue with his policy, he has to pay back to the society the money originally paid for securing that particular business. Although the society

has received premiums for the whole of that period the agent has to make this refund.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Surely the companies set out the conditions before the men start?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The men sign what is termed an agreement, but cannot understand it until they have followed the occupation for some time.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: But many stay in the business for years.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The old hands are working under conditions different from the new ones. I go further and say that there is no business in the metropolitan area in which there are more changes in the course of a year than in this business, the reason being that when the men have had a short experience of it they discover the great difficulty they will have in making the minimum wage ruling in the metropolitan area, and accordingly seek some other avocation.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: The reason is that the failures in other businesses have a go at that.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Some of the forms which applicants for employment are called upon to fill in savour of the Criminal Investigation Department. The same objections apply, in varying degrees, to other companies. The least we can do for the employees, seeing that they are solely employed by one society——

Hon. H. Stewart: Are they employed by only one society?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: Yes, though one or two might earn a few shillings otherwise in the course of the week. One of these employees, who had a small engagement as a musician, was told by the company that he must give up that engagement. After the strike of the canvassers a six months' agreement was fixed up, and immediately the six months had expired most of the companies departed from the agreement. Again, some companies claimed that their obligations were only to the old canvassers, and not to the new. How can the union do anything for these men unless they are registered? When they are registered, they will be able to approach the court. Probably they would be referred to an industrial board, and then, if the employers showed themselves at all reasonable, there would be little difficulty in fixing up a satisfactory arrangement. These men have to carry out the instructions given to them. I know it will be suggested that no instructions are given to them, and that the inspectors are there merely to assist the canvassers. But experience shows what happens to canvassers who do not carry out the instructions or follow the advice given to them. Mr. Harris asked by way of interjection whether I was satisfied with Mr. Lovekin's amendment. I am not a party to that amendment. It was drawn up by Mr. Lovekin, and was submitted to me, when I suggested that for a certain reason it did not quite meet the position. I will state the reason. In at least two societies there is what is termed an accident insurance policy in respect of which premiums are collected weekly, fortnightly, or monthly. The remuneration for that work is on a lower scale than the remuneration for collecting industrial insurance premiums. The men engaged on the accident insurance work are exhorted by the society to endeavour, wherever possible, to secure ordinary business; that is, insurance business in respect of which premiums are collected half-yearly or yearly. In some cases that insurance business might amount to a fair sum in a year, but in others the amount is negligible. To agree to the amendment in its entirety would mean handicapping not only the men but also the societies. If the men come under the Act, they would have to refuse to do anything in the way of ordinary business. That would be a hardship to them as well as an inconvenience to the societies. Therefore I suggest that so long as these men are employed wholly and solely by one society, doing the work of that society as industrial insurance agents acting under the instructions of the society, they should be classed as workers within the meaning of the arbitration law. The arrangement should be on the actual work that they do. So long as they are not employed in any other business then I submit that would be more equitable to all concerned.

Hon. A. Lovekin interjected.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: It has been the custom with all the societies for a long time that when an industrial agent secures an ordinary insurance policy, he receives the first premium. That is in the interests of both parties. It gives the agent a chance to make up his returns and increases the business of the society. I claim that the business of each industrial society has been built

up by the efforts of the industrial insurance agents to a very great extent.

Hon. J. M. Macfarlane: With the assistance of the company.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I do not agree with that statement.

Hon. J. J. Holmes: Without the company there would be no agent.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: An agent for a bad company will make as much as the agent for a good company.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The figures published by one company showed an increase of 100 per cent. last year. Those contributing to a greater degree than anyone else towards that result are the insurance canvassers. There can be no question of the financial standing of these societies.

Hon. H. Stewart: But they deal with trust funds!

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The question of expense should not enter into it. It is one of fairness, and there should be no objection to this being dealt with by an impartial tribunal. I give notice of my intention to move a further amendment. We should endeavour to reach an agreement that will give satisfaction to each side.

Hon. J. DUFFELL: I admit Mr. Kitson's sincerity in his remarks, but he has allowed his feelings to be influenced by sentiment. I voted against this definition last session, but since I have met the insurance canvassers I have moderated my views. I was at the conference that has been referred to and I am satisfied that there are some industrial insurance agents who should receive the consideration that would be possible if the amendment were agreed to. At the same time I am not prepared to go too far. At present these insurance agents cannot be said to be in such a bad way as suggested by Mr. Kitson. Otherwise they would not have remained in the employment of the society for so many years. While it is true that we were told some of the agents were earning £4 and £4 10s. a week, it has since been shown that they have received considerably more than the sums I have mentioned. Irrespective of that point, we found that the agents who were receiving excellent returns were just as dissatisfied as the others. I accept the communication signed by two insurance managers as an ex parte statement, but the fact remains that if these agents are so dissatisfied one wonders why they have continued in their positions. They seem to be doing very well all round, although there may be exceptions. We should give the proposal set out in Mr. Lovekin's amendment a trial and if necessary, further amend it next session.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 26th November, 1925.

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

QUESTION—BORING, GOLDEN MILE.

Mr. LUTEY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Has the Mines Department reserved a portion of the country at the north end of the Golden Mile for the purpose of tests by deep boring? 2, If so, what is the approximate date of commencement of the deep boring operations?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied: 1, Yes. 2, So soon as arrangements can be finalised after the Loan Estimates have been passed.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Richardson, leave of absence for one week granted to the member for Roebourne (Mr. Teesdale) on the ground of ill-health.