

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 15th August, 1979

The PRESIDENT (the Hon. Clive Griffiths) took the Chair at 4.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS

Questions were taken at this stage.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

On motion by the Hon. G. E. Masters, leave of absence for nine consecutive sittings of the House granted to the Hon. G. C. MacKinnon (South-West—Leader of the House) due to Government business overseas.

BILLS (2): INTRODUCTION AND FIRST READING

1. Property Law Act Amendment Bill.
2. Administration Act Amendment Bill.

Bills introduced, on motions by the Hon. I. G. Medcalf (Attorney General), and read a first time.

DENTAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Lands), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Lands) [4.58 p.m.] : I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill proposes amendments to six areas of the Dental Act with the intention of overcoming anomalies and inadequacies which have developed due to changing monetary values, and a change in patterns of training and supply of dentists.

The first of these amendments is to change the spelling of one word "specialities" in the Act to make it agree with the word "specialties" which appears in the rules under the Act and which refers to the same category of practices.

Although there is no significant difference between the definition of each word, it is considered that the word "specialties" has the more correct meaning and this amendment will remove this minor drafting anomaly between the Act and its rules.

The next amendment proposes to bring the monetary penalties in the Act up to a level which

will be some deterrent to the committing of the offences described in various parts of the Act.

Most of these penalties have not been amended since they were first introduced with the Act in 1939 and are no real deterrent to anyone at their present values.

The offences for which these penalties are prescribed relate mainly to the unprofessional behaviour of registered dentists or to unlawful practising, advertising or employment and the penalties proposed, while not being excessive, are considered to be at a level sufficient to be a deterrent to the committing of an offence.

Another amendment proposes that the successful committee on overseas professional qualifications—certificate of dentistry—be made an acceptable qualification for registration of those overseas graduates, whose qualifications are not normally acceptable for registration by the Dental Board of Western Australia, under the present provisions of the Act.

The recognition of this certificate, now accepted by most other States, will automatically provide professional assessment of the competence of those overseas graduates and will ensure that those who are awarded this certificate, which can be gained only through passing a series of examinations, will be of a sufficiently high standard to practise anywhere in Australia.

A further amendment is included to restrict the numerous registrations of the overseas dentists to those who genuinely propose to settle and practise in this State.

The Dental Board of Western Australia is receiving many applications for registration from visiting overseas dentists many of whom do not propose to settle in this State and practise dentistry, unless the political developments in their own country force them to leave.

This has the effect of inflating the dental register and making it meaningless for use in planning the intake numbers of local dental courses because of the lack of knowledge of whether these overseas dentists will arrive and commence practising.

It is proposed that a registered dentist who is not a resident, and who has not taken up residence and commenced to practise within six months after registration was granted, will have his name taken off the register and will not be eligible to make further application for registration within a period of five years from the date that registration was originally granted.

The Bill proposes to widen the number of places at which the Act presently allows dental

students to undertake their studies. Under the Act, dental students are allowed to train at Perth Dental Hospital and the facilities provided by the Faculty of Dental Science of the University of Western Australia.

As there is a serious shortage of patients suitable for the training of the students at these places, it is proposed that places other than those stipulated in the Act, such as the School of Dental Therapy, be permitted to be used by the University of Western Australia for the training of these students.

A faculty regulation allows the training of dentists at such other institutions as are approved by the faculty, but it is necessary to amend the Dental Act to permit such an approval to be given by the faculty.

The final amendment makes provision to allow for the registration of male dental therapists, as the Act now specifically limits registration of dental therapists to females.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Lyla Elliott.

RADIATION SAFETY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Lands), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH
(South—Minister for Lands) [5.03 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The purpose of this Bill is to enlarge or extend the criteria that the Radiological Council may apply in granting or refusing applications made for licences, exemptions, and registrations under the provisions of the Radiation Safety Act, 1975.

The intention of the Radiation Safety Act is to protect the public and those in employment against the dangers of radiation. This is achieved by requiring that persons using radioactive substances, irradiating apparatus, and electronic products be licensed, and that the premises where they are used, together with the apparatus or product, be registered.

In general, the criterion that the Radiological Council must use in granting an application is whether any person, other than a person undergoing treatment or diagnosis, is likely to receive a dose of radiation in excess of the

prescribed levels. These levels are based on the recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Protection and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

The use of radiation in Western Australia has been largely under the control of persons qualified in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, and other areas of science and industry, and the provisions of the Radiation Safety Act were adequate to protect the public, patients, employees, and others likely to be exposed.

There is developing an increasing use of radioactive substances in devices which are intended to be sold over the counter for domestic use or which are not used under the control of a qualified person. The International Commission on Radiological Protection has reminded licensing authorities that a single product which of itself may be not significantly harmful may be only one of a number of such sources of exposure and that we must take into account the additive effect of all these.

The international commission has recommended that all exposure to radiation be kept as low as reasonably achievable and that the use of radiation be not permitted unless its use produces a positive net benefit over the alternatives already available.

The amendment proposed in this Bill will permit the council to refuse to grant or renew a licence or exemption or effect registration if the council is satisfied that a safety requirement, immediate or long term, will not be met.

The council may also similarly refuse if it is not satisfied that a positive net benefit will result from the use of the radiation source, that the function can be fulfilled only by the radiation method, or that it is the most advantageous method available. The council may so refuse if it is of the opinion that a refusal is in the public interest. In its deliberations it may have regard to the guidelines and recommendations of those bodies mentioned in the Bill which are regarded as possessing expertise in the field of radiation protection.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. Lyla Elliott.

MARGARINE ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Lands), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH
(South—Minister for Lands) [5.07 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

The main purpose of this Bill is to make provision in the Margarine Act, 1940-1973, for the exclusion of a new product known as "Dairy Blend" from the definition of margarine.

"Dairy Blend" is a mixture of butterfat and vegetable oil and has been developed and is being test marketed in South Australia by the Australian Dairy Corporation.

The dairy industry has suffered a considerable loss of revenue in recent years due to the steep decline in butter consumption within Australia. In Western Australia, for example, butter consumption has declined from 9.98 kg per head to 4.66 kg per head during the last 10 years.

Butter which is not consumed within Australia has to be sold at a considerably lower price on the export market.

The industry has sought to stem the decline in the home consumption of butter by providing a more spreadable product comprising a mixture of butterfat and vegetable oil.

It has been contended that the lack of spreadability of butter under refrigeration or low temperature conditions has been a major factor in the decline of its consumption. Although many consumers are thought to prefer the flavour of butter to that of margarine, they have tended to shift consumption to margarine because of the ease with which this product spreads.

It is also proposed in the Bill to amend section 30(1) of the principal Act to enable margarine to be sold in weights in excess of 500 grams by providing for such maximum weights to be prescribed by way of regulations.

The opportunity is taken to repeal section 5(2) of the principal Act which relates to the Dairy Industry Act, 1922-1939, and which is no longer in existence.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. T. Leeson.

**SKELETON WEED (ERADICATION FUND)
ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

Receipt and First Reading

Bill received from the Assembly; and, on motion by the Hon. D. J. Wordsworth (Minister for Lands), read a first time.

Second Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH
(South—Minister for Lands) [5.09 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Legislation was first enacted in 1974 for a levy on grain producers to fund the treatment of skeleton weed outbreaks in Western Australia.

The levy imposed was a flat \$30 for each producer delivering over 30 tonnes of grain. The original Act covered three crop years, and in 1976 Parliament approved its extension for a further three years to include deliveries made up to the 1978-79 crop year.

The Bill now before the House is to extend the collection of the levy, at the same rate, for the three years up to and including the 1981-82 crop year. This extension has the support of both the Farmers' Union and the Pastoralists and Graziers Association.

It is important that the control campaign be continued because since skeleton weed was first identified in Western Australia in 1963, 56 outbreaks have been discovered on farms—as distinct from all areas such as railway reserves—nine of them in the 1978-79 season.

Of the 47 found previously, it is considered that eradication has been achieved on 31 of the properties. In some cases this cannot be established with certainty for another year or two because eradication is not claimed until an area is found to have remained clean for four years after the discovery of the last plant.

On properties where the weed is still known to exist, the areas of infestation are being reduced each year, and the total area which required spraying in 1978-79 was less than 25 hectares.

A pleasing feature in more recent years is that farmers have learned to identify the plants on their land and report them to the Agriculture Protection Board.

A vital part of the work has been the inspection of suspect properties and the reinspection of the areas where treatment has been carried out previously. This work is labour intensive and therefore expensive to maintain. Farmers have assisted to an enormous extent by acting as volunteer searchers, but even with this assistance the cost is high.

The Minister for Agriculture is optimistic that if the campaign is continued at its present level the APB will be able fully to control this serious weed in Western Australia, but it would be unwise to relax vigilance at this stage with known infestations still remaining.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by the Hon. R. T. Leeson.

RESERVES BILL

Third Reading

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH
(South—Minister for Lands) [5.12 p.m.]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

I said I would endeavour to obtain information for the Hon. George Berry in regard to three former residents in his electorate.

I am informed that the three graves are located on Reserve No. 13805, side by side, and their position is about 200 metres on a bearing of 300 degrees from Milly Soak. The site is marked on the plan which has been tabled. Each grave has its individual plaque of flat galvanised iron, with the following respective inscriptions in black paint—

Sacred to the Memory of
George Hamersley
Died 1893

Sacred to the Memory of
George Hardy
Died 1893

Sacred to the Memory of
Harris
Died 1893

According to the shire clerk of Cue (Mr G. Foster), the story is that the three men perished on the reserve, which is adjacent to the stock route. They had heard that water existed there and they went in to get it. They had even found the marked tree, but could not find the water. They died together about 100 metres west of the grave site.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Assembly.

BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 14th August.

THE HON. R. T. LEESON (South-East) [5.15 p.m.]: The purpose of this Bill is to allow Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited some latitude in the payment of water rates in respect of its complex at Kwinana. I suppose I could not do anything but support the Bill, especially with the chairman of directors of the company sitting alongside me; and I noticed the glance I received

when I rose to speak. However, the Opposition does support the Bill.

CBH has had quite a long history in this place. The complex to which we are referring was constructed during the term of the Tonkin Government, and our party has shown a keen interest in it and its operations ever since. Bills have passed through this House from time to time containing specific mention of this project.

It appears that under existing rating arrangements CBH would be required to pay \$132 000 each year for the privilege of having water on its property. I understand the company does not use a great deal of water and, therefore, it is a little unfair that such a heavy charge should be imposed upon it, bearing in mind that the company has incurred capital expenditure of \$38 million to construct the complex.

I wonder whether—and probably a question was asked in another place—there are other industries at Kwinana which are in a similar position. I wonder if other industries have applied for this concession, and whether there are industries in the same position, but which have not applied for the concession.

I am a little concerned about this Bill in that it may appear to create a precedent. I am concerned about whether we should allow some people a concession in relation to water charges, particularly at this time when the price of water is constantly increasing and the amount of water available is becoming less, as can be seen if one flies over the dams. Members who have recently received their water rate notices will know that the increase in the amount paid for water by people in Western Australia has again been tremendous. Water has trebled in price.

If this sort of thing is allowed to continue, what would be the situation in a residential area where there is one house with a value of, say, \$50 000 on a quarter-acre block surrounded by lawns, trees, and shrubs and using a large amount of water each year, whereas nearby there is another property of three times that value, but with a modern garden consisting of wood chips and vegetation that does not require a great deal of water? The owner of the second property could be required to pay more water rates than the owner of the first property, who would actually be using more water. We could create all sorts of problems if we started fiddling around with values and making concessions for one while ignoring another.

As I said, the Opposition supports the Bill. I have some reservations, particularly in respect of where we are going and what will happen in the

future. No doubt Mr Gayfer will want to say a few words on this matter, and it will be interesting to hear his thoughts from a personal point of view. However, from a broader point of view I think we must give this matter a great deal more consideration.

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Lands) [5.20 p.m.]: I thank the Opposition for its support of the Bill. I note the remarks made by Mr Leeson. I assure him that when Cabinet considered this matter the Treasurer looked very closely at the amount of money he would not receive as a result of it. The comparison made by Mr Leeson applied to a residential area, whereas this complex is in an industrial area. The company has spent an amount of \$38 million, and that amount is completely unrelated to what would be spent on most industrial sites. Rating is usually determined at the time agreements are made with companies in respect of major industries, and before the agreement comes to Parliament.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

CATTLE INDUSTRY COMPENSATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from the 14th August.

THE HON. R. T. LEESON (South-East) [5.24 p.m.]: This Bill gives the cattle industry the opportunity to use for other purposes the funds which previously have been used solely for the fighting of disease. Apparently some controversy has arisen over this measure. I understand some cattle producers are a little worried about where the money may be spent. I certainly do not blame them for that. However, it does appear that the incidence of tuberculosis and our old mate brucellosis has slowly decreased within Western Australia and, therefore, a lesser amount of funding is needed to fight the diseases, leaving money available to be used in other areas.

The Bill does not really spell out in what other areas the money may be spent. I notice it was mentioned that the Minister will establish a small committee to advise him regarding the expenditure of the money. I am a little concerned about the administrative costs involved in such an

operation. In many cases these costs tend to get out of hand.

However, we trust that the people who are closely associated with this industry, and the public servants who guide them, have steered us in the right direction in respect of this Bill. We must assume they know what they are doing.

Under those circumstances, we support the Bill.

THE HON. NEIL McNEILL (Lower West) [5.26 p.m.]: It is my intention to support the Bill and to make some observations about it. The first observation—which is not so much about the Bill as about the manner in which it was introduced—is that in this case the term “second reading notes” is something of an overstatement. That may be acceptable because the Bill is a brief and simple one, and can be readily understood by members. I refer to the Minister’s second reading speech wherein he said that the capital contained in the fund will be retained and will continue to be available for the prime purposes of the legislation; that is, the administration of the Act and the compensation of producers. The Minister went on to say that it is proposed the interest received as a result of investment of the capital will be used for the new purposes outlined in the Bill.

That is the very point I make. In his speech the Minister said the funds will be used for the purposes outlined in the Bill. In fact no elaboration or description of those purposes was given. I think that is really the point Mr Leeson was making. I do not know whether this situation rates the term “controversy”, but certainly some speculation has occurred regarding the use to which the funds will be put in the event of the Bill being passed.

I suggest the opportunity might well have been taken when the Bill was introduced to elaborate at considerably greater length on what is in mind regarding the application of the funds. Mr Leeson has pointed out that a small advisory committee will be established, the members of which will be drawn from the industry and will be people with an understanding of the industry who can make proper recommendations for the consideration of the Minister. Nevertheless, I suggest that clearly a great deal of thought surely must have been given to the use to which the funds will be put. In other words, a need must have been established to which the funds may be applied.

I do not express regret about the second reading notes because I think that is too strong a term; I simply say that perhaps the opportunity might well have been taken to elaborate on that matter.

In addition, the opportunity might well have been taken to elaborate on what is really an epic in agricultural disease control in Western Australia. The Minister contented himself with the comment that Western Australia has been to the forefront on the Australian mainland in relation to the control of these two diseases. I think Western Australia has done more than that. It is true to say that this State pioneered the control and eradication procedures up to a point in respect of tuberculosis, but more particularly in respect of brucellosis. I am sure the reason for this is well known. Essentially that was to meet the requirements of those countries which imported considerable quantities of meat from Western Australia. In particular, the requirements were laid down by the United States of America which was then, and still is, a major buyer of Western Australian meat.

Nevertheless, while there was an incentive—in fact, there was an absolute necessity—to control brucellosis which was a well-established disease in the Western Australian cattle industry, a great deal of pioneering work was done. That work commenced in the days of the chief veterinary officer, who was then Mr Cyril Toop, and continued in the days of his successor, Dr Gardiner.

The establishment of this scheme was not accepted totally by the farming industry. In the first place, it was not accepted that there should be a levy; and, in the second place, the necessity for stringent control measures was not accepted. The farming members of the House will be aware that many difficulties of a practical nature were encountered in an attempt to achieve total eradication. There was a great deal of work involving the entire farming community and the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Primary Industry.

The establishment of this fund is something of an epic. Therefore there should have been greater elaboration of the history of it in the introduction of the Bill. In that way, the fund would have become more widely known. There would have been greater knowledge of the effort involved in its establishment. That effort was on the part of the administration of the Departments of Primary Industry and Agriculture. It was also on the part of the farmers and the farmers' organisations which have backed the scheme to a great extent.

In addition to the people and organisations I have mentioned, a great contribution was made to the scheme by the taxpayers of Western Australia. The Government makes an equal contribution to the scheme, based on the stamp duty by which the levy is paid. Therefore, the

taxpayers of Western Australia have been contributing an equal amount to the scheme.

In the telling of the story, the Minister should have taken the opportunity to indicate some of the statistics. I feel they are interesting, particularly to the agricultural community. People would understand how important this industry is and has been to the economy of Western Australia.

One has to consider only the change that has taken place and the developments that have taken place in the industry. There has been a rather meteoric rise in relation to the marketing of beef. In simple terms, there has been a tremendously satisfactory increase in beef prices. A result was a boost to the entire economy, not just to the agricultural economy. This has been quite a revelation. People should realise what it means to have a buoyant primary industry in the State and in Australia. One needs only to consider the situation over the last 12 months to realise what a tremendous boon this is.

Some aspects of the improvement cannot be measured in real terms. One aspect is the attitude of confidence which has been created in the minds of meat producers in Western Australia. Advantage ought to be taken of this attitude, because many people still are not fully aware of the effect that has had. At no time in our recent history is such an improvement more appropriate than now.

While this has nothing to do with the Bill, perhaps you will be indulgent, Mr Deputy President. No time is more appropriate than now when one considers the disastrous drought situation affecting so much of our State.

If ever there was a time when we needed the full understanding of the community of Western Australia it is now. Because of the great social changes and because of the large amounts invested, people will need more than an understanding and more than compassion. They will need the financial backing of Western Australians and Australians generally.

I know that the drought situation is not restricted to Western Australia. In fact, drought areas exist also in other States. This highlights the importance of a measure such as this.

There are good times and there are bad times. This fund has been available during all those periods. The fund has been contributed to by way of a levy of .3c in the dollar, to a maximum of 50c per beast; and there has been an equal contribution by the Government.

Now there has been a significant deterioration in meat prices. The fund exists, and it is very healthy. Even though the fund is concerned with

disease, it is a healthy fund. Now the money will be applied to certain other purposes.

This measure demonstrates the value of forethought and the value of anticipation. It demonstrates the value of those who are prepared to project years ahead from the current attitudes, policies, and actions. This scheme has been in operation for a long time. Long sight is needed in order to justify fully the initial steps which had to be taken in many cases against considerable opposition, to say the least. However, the scheme met with a lot of apathy on the part of many people.

Let me consider for a moment the provisions of the Bill and the purposes of the amendment which I glean from the Minister's second reading speech as follows—

..... that the interest received as a result of investment of the capital, will be used for the new purposes outlined in the Bill.

I repeat that the Bill is quite a simple one. Part of it reads as follows—

(2) Subject to this Act, the Fund shall be applied—

(a) for the purposes of administering this Act;

That provision was contained in the parent Act also. It continues—

(b) to the payment pursuant to this Act of claims for compensation;

(c) to the payment of the costs of the provision of, or the promotion and encouragement of, scientific research for the improvement of cattle health and production; and—

Now that I have read those words, the significance of Mr Leeson's words will become evident. The terms of the Bill are very general. I do not disagree with any of the purposes mentioned in the last two paragraphs.

I must agree that there is a wide term of reference. The funds can be used for the promotion and encouragement of scientific research. Members with experience in agricultural legislation—and certainly we see a great deal of it in the House—become accustomed to funds being devoted to scientific research. However, this provision emphasises the encouragement of scientific research and the promotion of it; so there is an additional purpose.

I believe there are sufficient incentives for the greater part of that money to be applied to research, without the necessity of spending a great deal of money on uses such as the promotion and the encouragement of scientific research.

I am sure that most, if not all, the money which is devoted to the purpose detailed in paragraph (c) will be for scientific research rather than its administration, promotion, and encouragement.

The final paragraph reads as follows—

(d) any other purpose that, in the opinion of the Minister, will promote and encourage the cattle industry.

Here we are entering a very wide field. I do not disagree with that provision. Nevertheless, there needs to be careful supervision of the use of the money.

I am sure that most members would be aware of the controversies which have occurred in sections of the rural industry from time to time. The question arises whether there should be promotion of the cattle industry. Another Bill introduced in this House today dealt with dairy products, margarine, and so on. There have been controversies over those products in regard to the promotional funds to be spent in relation to them. In the Bill which was introduced today, the promotion aspect takes a rather strange form as it is in effect promoting a product other than a dairy product. The new Bill is involved in the promotion of a mixed product which consists of the two great antagonists in the "dairy" field—

The Hon. D. K. Dans: Whether you die from a heart attack or you do not?

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL: Yes. It depends on the level of cholesterol. I am sure members would appreciate it more if I kept my comments on that Bill until the appropriate time. It is relevant to make the point, nevertheless, that what is contained in that Bill will provide for the investment interest of various funds to be used for promotion.

I agree that there is a need for promotion. I do not think I have ever deviated from being one who advocates and encourages promotion. Like charity, promotion must surely start at home. Therefore, to a large extent promotion should be carried out by those who are in the industry; that is, the producers themselves.

Because the Minister's speech was so abbreviated, I felt it necessary to elaborate at a little greater length.

I should like to refer to another point. Members will be aware that I asked the Minister a question without notice today in order to obtain a little more material so that I could comment on this Bill. The Minister had not told us the amount of money currently held in the Cattle Industry Compensation Fund and I felt we should have this information. According to the figures given by the

Minister, an amount of approximately \$1.35 million stands to the credit of the fund as at the 30th June. That is a considerable sum of money, particularly when one bears in mind that half of it has been contributed by Treasury and the other half by farmers at the rate of 0.3c in the dollar or 50c a beast. It can be seen that amount represents the contributions made in relation to a large number of beasts.

This Bill is concerned with interest on funds invested and, according to the information provided by the Minister, there is presently an amount of \$300 263 held in interest-bearing accounts yielding approximately 10 per cent to 10.5 per cent interest.

A number of institutions, whether they be academic or of some other nature, would be glad to obtain \$30 000 a year to finance a research programme. I am sure the money would be most welcome. Of course, it could be applied in the most advantageous fashion so that it would improve further our beef industry. It is a very valuable industry and it would benefit from more research. Improvements can be made in a number of ways.

The other observation I wish to make concerns the questions I have put on notice and which will be answered by the Minister tomorrow. I did not wish to burden the Minister with a number of questions without notice. Therefore, I have placed further questions on notice to ensure all the information relevant to this measure is made available to the public.

There is a further matter which needs publicity, because I do not believe people are aware of the situation. Those involved in the industry, including the inspectors, the administrators, and the farmers, have been aware that the Act provides that the compensation payable in respect of any beast is a sum agreed to between the parties concerned. In other words, the farmer and the inspector may arrive at a figure which is subject to the agreement of the chief inspector of stock. In the case of a disagreement an arbitrator may be consulted.

The relevant clause of the Bill provides for certain maximum payments for various carcasses or for particular categories of beef. Despite the meteoric rise in the price of meat, and particularly in the price of beef, in the past 12 months the fixed maximum price has not altered automatically. In fact I believe 1976 was the last time the maximum price was fixed. At that time market prices were at an all-time low. The maximum price would have been reasonable at that stage; but, of course, in the last 12 months of

high prices the maximum figures were hopelessly out of date.

I was surprised to witness how little controversy this situation created and I believe it was an indication of the effectiveness of the Cattle Industry Compensation Act. In other words, very few people were vitally concerned about the matter, because of the small amount of payouts. As a result, only a few people were aggrieved by the maximum price at that time.

However, I mention this matter only to acquaint the House and the members of the agricultural industry of the fact that in April of this year the fixed maximum prices were changed. I shall read the new figures which were published in the *Government Gazette* of the 27th April, 1979. They are as follows—

- (a) \$450 in respect of the destruction of any diseased animal that is not a bull;
- (b) \$800 in respect of the destruction of any diseased bull;
- (c) \$350 in respect of the condemnation of any carcass, or portion of a carcass, of any animal that is not a bull, as unfit for human consumption;
- (d) \$500 in respect of the condemnation of any carcass, or portion of a carcass of any bull, as unfit for human consumption.

These figures are vastly different from those established in 1976. However, when viewing these figures members should bear in mind that a number of animals achieved a market price in excess of \$900. It is clear the rate of compensation, whilst more satisfactory than previously, is certainly not excessive.

In April of this year I discussed the rates of compensation with an officer of the Department of Agriculture. At that time there was doubt as to the rates which were to be established. I did not see the necessity for establishing an upper limit, because the Act provided for agreement between the parties concerned. In the case of disagreement, the matter could go before an independent arbitrator. The rate of compensation could have been established at a very high level—the sort of level which may never be achieved—but there would be room for negotiation so that a lower figure could be arrived at. In particular, I felt the situation should have been more open-ended, because who can say what the ruling market values will be at any one time? Our recent history in the agricultural industry, particularly in the beef industry, has demonstrated how difficult it is to forecast future prices.

I am most uneasy when I see the projections of experts published. I become very worried when experts forecast that during the next one, two, three, or four years the market will be buoyant and meat prices will be at high levels. It worries me, because when such projections are made the actual prices achieved are frequently less than anticipated. The value of agricultural projections is always in doubt because of the number of variables which affect the industry.

I do not want to digress too far whilst explaining the general philosophy of the marketing of animals; but I would like to sum up by saying I support the legislation. Despite the state of health of the cattle industry the farmers are still contributing willingly to the fund through the levy and the Government is contributing to it also. As a result, we have a continuing fund which can be put to good use, as long as we ensure adequate safeguards are exercised and correct thinking is applied when determining the use to which the investments arising out of the fund are put.

I support the Bill.

THE HON. D. J. WORDSWORTH (South—Minister for Lands) [5.54 p.m.]: I thank members for their support of the Bill. The member who spoke on behalf of the Opposition (Mr Leeson) referred to the cost of administering the legislation. I do not believe great costs are involved in administering this account, because it pays for the cattle only.

The Hon. Neil McNeill: The answers you give tomorrow will contain the information.

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: I thank members for their contributions. I agree with the opinion expressed by the Hon. Neil McNeill that perhaps we dealt with this matter rather quickly, without outlining in detail the effect of the legislation on a very major industry. However, I believe the member has made up for any deficiencies on our part.

It was rather fitting that the Hon. Roy Abbey was present in the President's Gallery earlier this evening, because this matter was one of his favourites. Whenever Bills relating to the Cattle Industry Compensation Act were introduced he would comment or ask questions about the matter.

The Hon. D. K. Dans: I wonder why he did that?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH: This Bill is indicative of the success achieved in eradicating brucellosis and TB. These diseases concern greatly all primary producers, because if our cattle are infected our meat will be excluded from the American market. It is pleasing to see how well the eradication campaign is proceeding in this State. Tasmania's campaign has been totally successful and we hope all other States will catch up with it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

House adjourned at 5.58 p.m.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HOSPITAL

Devonleigh

129. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Health:

- (1) Does the Government have any intention of re-opening Devonleigh Hospital, Cottesloe?
- (2) If "No", then what does the Government intend to do with the site?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) No.
- (2) This is still under consideration.

PENSIONERS

Rates

130. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Leader of the House:

- (1) Is the Minister aware that many pensioners receive their council rates and metropolitan water, sewerage, and drainage rates almost at the same time, and that they are experiencing severe hardship in endeavouring to pay these rates in one payment when each notice is received?
- (2) Is the Minister further aware that as the 25 per cent concession is not granted to those exercising their deferment option, there is possible hardship suffered in order to meet the commitment?
- (3) Because of these circumstances, will the Government also extend the concession to those wishing to defer their rates?
- (4) If "No", will the Minister instruct the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage, and Drainage Board, to adopt a policy which will allow pensioners to pay their accounts by monthly instalments so that they are able to complete the payment of the rates within the ratable year so as to claim the concession?
- (5) If not, why not?

The Hon. I. G. Medcalf (for the Hon. G. C. MacKINNON) replied:

- (1) to (5) A registered eligible pensioner has until the end of the respective financial year to make payment of 75 per cent of metropolitan water supply, sewerage, and drainage rates. Progressive payments can be made at the discretion of the pensioner.

FUEL: DISTILLATE AND PETROL

Retail Price

131. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Fuel and Energy:

What formulae is used to determine the retail price of distillate and petrol to—

- (a) the Western Australian Ports delivered by Australian oil tankers from Australian refineries; and
- (b) the Port of Dampier by Shell tankers from Singapore refineries?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (a) The retail price is determined by adding the reseller margin at the point of sale, the Prices Justification Tribunal approved wholesale price for the product ex the nearest Australian refinery and the transport cost up to 88c a litre. Transport costs above 88c per litre are paid by the Commonwealth Government under the petroleum products subsidy scheme.
- (b) In the Dampier region pricing is on the same basis as (a) above, independent of whether the product is supplied from an Australian refinery or from Singapore.

TRAFFIC: ALBANY HIGHWAY

Pedestrian Refuge Island

132. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the Minister for Lands representing the Minister for Transport:

- (1) Will the Minister advise the date on which approval was given by the Main Roads Department for the construction of a 'pedestrian refuge island' on Albany Highway, east of George Street, Cannington, adjacent to the Cannington autumn centre?
- (2) Will the Minister supply an approximate date on which the facility will be available for use by pedestrians?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) The department reached agreement with the City of Cannington on the details of the facility on the 9th August, 1979.

- (2) Subject to there being no delay in the alteration of public utilities, it is expected that the refuge will be available within three months.

RAPE CASES

Number

133. The Hon. Lyla ELLIOTT, to the Attorney General:

- (1) For the year 1978-79, how many rape cases reached the Supreme Court in Western Australia?
- (2) Of these—
 - (a) what were the verdicts, i.e. rape, attempted rape, lesser offences;
 - (b) what were the lengths of the sentences;
 - (c) how many victims claimed compensation; and
 - (d) how many received compensation?
- (3) How many rapes or attempted rapes were reported to the police during the year?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

- (1) Forty five persons were accused of rape, some jointly and some for multiple offences.
- (2) (a) Guilty of rape: 27
 Guilty of attempted rape: 5
 Guilty of lesser offences: 1
 Not guilty: 12.
 (b) The sentences ranged from committal to the care of the Community Welfare Department up to an indeterminate sentence of imprisonment during the Governor's pleasure.
 (c) and (d) This information will take some time to compile, but will be conveyed to the honourable member as soon as it is available.
- (3) There were 96 reported cases of alleged rape or attempted rape during the year.

LAND

Karratha

134. The Hon. J. C. TOZER, to the Minister for Lands:

- (1) Are there any fully serviced allotments in the service trades area in the Karratha town centre?

- (2) What are the lot numbers, and what streets do they front?
- (3) Are these allotments available for purchase now?
- (4) If not, when will such land be made available to interested parties by auction, by tender, or Land Board selection?
- (5) On the assumption that the agreement between the Government and Farmers Stores does not introduce any inhibiting factors, is there any valid reason for not releasing service trades land forthwith?
- (6) As the responsibility for the release of Crown land lies with the Lands Department, will the Minister instruct his department—in concert with the Roebourne Shire Council and the Townsite Development Committee (DID)—to vigorously and seriously promote the development of service trades in Karratha by—
 - (a) having land readily available;
 - (b) detailing desirable and permissible trades; and
 - (c) inviting entrepreneurs to participate in such development?
- (7) If the Minister is not able to give an affirmative reply to (6), will he please advise in what way this important aspect of economic and commercial growth in this key Pilbara growth centre can break loose from the existing period of stagnation in service trades establishment?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) Yes.
- (2) Lot 1433 corner Sherlock and Warambie Roads
 1434 Warambie Road
 1439 Macroy Street
 1440 Macroy Street
 1947 Morse Court
 1948 Morse Court
 1954 Warambie Road
 1955 Warambie Road.
- (3) Yes subject to advertising and fulfilment of development conditions under leasehold.
- (4) Not applicable.
- (5) Experience with 1977 and 1978 releases creates doubt as to demand. Present information shows—

- 1977 of 11 lots released —
 four not allotted
 two are not paid for, development
 not commenced and forfeiture
 under consideration
 one forfeiture in course
 one development period extended.
 1978 of eight lots released —
 six not allotted
 two allotted but are still within
 the initial development period.

- (6) (a) land is readily available;
 (b) an indication of permissible trades
 is given at time of calling
 applications;
 (c) the invitation for the public to
 apply includes entrepreneurs.
 (7) Not applicable.

PORT

Dampier

135. The Hon. D. K. DANS, to the Minister for
 Lands representing the Minister for
 Transport:

- (1) Does the Minister have any plans to set
 up a port authority to operate the Port
 of Dampier?
 (2) If "Yes", on what date will the port
 authority for Dampier become
 operative?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) and (2) The Government is having
 discussions now with both Woodside and
 Hamersley on the means by which
 marine operations in the Port of
 Dampier will be controlled.
 When common ground is reached with
 both companies, I will be able to make
 an announcement about the nature of
 the port's administration.

HOUSING

Redcliffe-Belmont Estate

136. The Hon. F. E. McKENZIE, to the
 Attorney General representing the Minister
 for Housing:

With reference to questions No. 1937,
 1978, and No. 1980, 1978, asked in the
 Legislative Assembly on Thursday, the
 12th October, and Wednesday, the 18th
 October respectively, will the Minister
 now advise what the new policy is in
 respect of tenants residing in the
 Redcliffe-Belmont estate desiring to
 purchase the homes in which they
 reside?

The Hon. I. G. MEDCALF replied:

The Australian State Advisory
 Committee has recently recommended
 to the respective Ministers that a master
 plan of two options in respect of the
 Perth Airport be carried out before a
 decision is taken on the expansion of the
 airport.

In the meantime, the policy as
 previously indicated has not changed.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

STOCK

Cattle Industry Compensation Fund

The Hon. NEIL McNEILL, to the Minister
 for Lands representing the Minister for
 Agriculture:

- (1) What amount is currently held in the
 Cattle Industry Compensation Fund?
 (2) What amount derived from the fund is
 currently invested?
 (3) What is the rate of return or yield on
 that investment?

The Hon. D. J. WORDSWORTH replied:

- (1) \$1 355 299.38 as at the 31st July, 1979.
 (2) \$300 263.26
 (3) \$200 000 S.E.C. Loan 5 5/8 per cent
 Matures the 31st July, 1980.
 \$100 000 S.E.C. Loan 10.6 per cent
 Matures the 31st July, 1983.
 \$263.26 R. & I. Savings Account 5 per
 cent.