

lutely sick of it, and I can only express the hope that if any more Bills are introduced they will be negatived.

The PRESIDENT: I must remind the hon. member that there is nothing before the Chair at present.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

House adjourned at 11.12 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Wednesday, 8th December, 1926.

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

QUESTION—WOOL PACKS, UNDER WEIGHT.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Has his attention been drawn to the fact that agents are supplying wool packs to woolgrowers 2lb. under standard weight? 2, Is he also aware that wool brokers are deducting the standard weight on wool packs when weighing in wool?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE replied: 1 and 2, No.

QUESTION—RAILWAY PROJECT, DWARDA-ARMADALE.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON asked the Premier: 1, Is it the intention of the Government before the close of this session to introduce a Bill for the extension of the Narrogin-Dwarda railway to Armadale, in accordance with the original recommendation of the Railway Advisory Board? 2, Are the Government aware that this extension, according to the Railway Advisory Board's report, will reduce the distance by rail between Narrogin and Fremantle from 174 miles via Spencer's Brook, to 117 miles via Dwarda and Armadale, or a total saving of 57 miles freight on all goods and produce transported between Narrogin and Fremantle?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, The Government are aware of all factors of this nature.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Justices Act Amendment Bill.

POLICE BENEFIT FUND AND SUPER-ANNUATION SCHEME SELECT COMMITTEE.

To adopt report.

Debate resumed from the 3rd November on the following motion by Mr. Hughes:—

That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that legislation be introduced this session to convert the Police Benefit Fund into a superannuation fund, in accordance with the recommendations of the select committee.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [4.33]: As one of the members of the Select Committee, I have much pleasure in supporting the recommendations made to the Government. It is quite idle to waste words in stressing the importance of the proposals at this stage, or to urge the Government to bring in legislation to give effect to them so late in the session. I realise that it is quite easy for a committee to take evidence and frame recommendations, and then to throw them at the Government with a request that they be given effect to. I am sure that if it is possible for the Government to carry out the recommendations, they will do so. I trust that at an early date the necessary

money will be found to give effect to the recommendations of the select committee.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. J. C. Willcock—(Geraldton) [4.35]: The motion before the House is for the adoption of the Select Committee's report, and, as the member for Claremont has just intimated, it is hardly possible at this stage of the session, even if the report were to be adopted by the House, for the Government to introduce legislation and have it passed by both Houses of Parliament before the close of the session. There are three main points included in the recommendations of the select committee. The first is that the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act shall be applied to the police force. Hon. members will remember that when we passed that Act two years ago, we specifically excluded members of the police force from the operations of the legislation. It was recognised that the benefits already enjoyed by the police regarding sick leave, accident pay and so on, were worth more to the members of the force than would be the advantages they would derive if the Workers' Compensation Act were applied to them. Because of that the House decided to exclude the police from the operations of that Act. The select committee say that the members of the force contribute to the compensation fund. That is not altogether correct because since 1919, when this matter was brought under the notice of the Government, the State has made an annual contribution of £300 to the compensation fund to cover any payments that might be made from the fund but which otherwise would have been made under the Workers' Compensation Act. I have no hesitation in saying that the payment of £300 per annum has more than compensated the members of the police force for any benefits they would have derived had they been brought under the Workers' Compensation Act. I have a list of the claims and it shows that the payments do not amount to £3,000. Looking through the list I can find only about £1,200 that could be really debited against workers' compensation if the police had been brought within the scope of that Act. That means to say that the annual subsidy of £300 for four years would cover that amount, whereas the payments have been going on for seven years, and the police have thus received over £2,000. Thus they are much better off than

they would have been had they been brought within the scope of the Act. The members of the Police Benefit Fund Board have been sympathetic in their dealings with officers who have been sick or injured, or have contracted any complaint that would entitle them to benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act. Payments under the Workers' Compensation Act are limited to 50 per cent. of the average earnings of the beneficiary, so that the members of the police force would receive payments up to £3 10s. only. On the other hand under the existing arrangements, officers who suffer from injuries or fall sick, are paid full wages, not half wages, as under the Workers' Compensation Act. In addition they receive medical attention and hospital treatment free. They receive those benefits irrespective of whether they are injured or merely suffering from ailments that the ordinary man may contract in the course of his employment, and which would not be covered under the provisions of the Act.

Mr. Sleeman: For how long are the men in receipt of full pay?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Full pay has been made to officers for as long as 12 months.

Mr. Sleeman: What is the usual period?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: As long as the officers are sick. If it becomes apparent that their illness will result in their physical condition being such that they will not be able to resume duty as members of the police force after 12 months, the officers are retired from the force on the grounds of physical unfitness.

Mr. Mann: But they can go before a board.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. Before they reach that stage, they can go before a medical board, and even then if the board consider that the illness of a particular police officer is such that he may recover within two or three months, thus enabling him to resume his duties as a member of the force, a further extension is granted, and the man is retained in the force. Thus the provisions operating at present regarding sickness and accidents are really considerably more liberal than those obtaining under the Workers' Compensation Act. The trouble is that the officers cannot have it both ways. They cannot have the Workers' Compensation Act applied to them, and at the same time

have the benefit of more liberal treatment. If the police are brought within the scope of the Workers' Compensation Act, they will be entitled to certain specific definite benefits, but respecting injuries or illnesses that do not come within the provisions of that legislation, they will get nothing; they will be in the position of ordinary workmen. The Government do not desire to curtail any of the benefits that the members of the force have enjoyed for years. While it is satisfactory to know that they have been in receipt of benefits greater than those available under the Workers' Compensation Act, the Government are prepared to continue along the present lines. On the other hand, if the members of the police force consider it is in their own interests to be brought under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act, the Government, I believe, will have no hesitation in agreeing to their request.

Mr. Heron: There have been many instances where the police have not received as much as they would have got under the Workers' Compensation Act.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not think that is so.

Mr. Heron: Yes, where the officers were killed.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so, but the hon. member has recently had some experience regarding what was done in connection with two police officers who were killed in the execution of their duty.

Mr. Heron: There were exceptional circumstances.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, but when we remember the precedent created by the payments to the dependants of those two officers, I believe any future Government will be no less sympathetic than the present Government in payments made to dependants of officers who may lose their lives in any circumstances.

Mr. Heron: But the circumstances may not be the same.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Provided the officers were on duty at the time of their deaths, it does not matter to the dependants of the deceased officers whether they are killed under exceptional circumstances or whether they merely lose their lives in the pursuit of their ordinary duties. The dependability is just the same, although the circumstances may not be so tragic. From the financial stand-

point the circumstances are exactly similar.

Mr. Heron: We had one instance where a payment of only £300 was made.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That was one instance.

Mr. Chesson: We had more than one case.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That must have been a good while ago, because the list I have shows that during the time the annual subsidy of £300 has been paid there have been only two such cases. One related to an inspector at Broome who died from sunstroke. I do not know whether that instance would have come within the scope of the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. Chesson: He died while in the execution of his duty.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is problematical whether that officer did die while on duty at the time. I know that the particular circumstances in which the members of the police force find themselves, and particularly commissioned officers, are such that officers are on duty all the time. No matter what happens they are liable to be called out at any moment. That officer, who was stationed in a hot climate, happened to be bustling about on a very hot day. I knew him well; there is no doubt he was of an excitable temperament, and that more than the heat, I think, was responsible for his death. Whether in the case of death from that cause the dependants could claim compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act, I do not know, but that particular officer was receiving more than £400 a year, and by virtue of the provisions of the Act his dependants would have been debarred from receiving compensation under the Act. That case, therefore, can be definitely ruled out because, unless the Workers' Compensation Act were amended, the dependants of an officer receiving over £400 would not be entitled to receive compensation under the Act. There is another case, a police constable who was drowned while on duty. His dependants did not receive the benefits that would have been due to them had he been under the Workers' Compensation Act. Looking through the list covering the last six or seven years during which the Government have been paying the subsidy of £300 a year, the only cases I can find that would have come under the Workers' Compensation Act involve an amount of £1,175,

whereas the board, by dealing with the cases in a very much more liberal spirit, have made payments amounting to £3,006. An officer died from pneumonic influenza. That disease is not one entitling a worker under the Act to compensation, but that man's dependants received £206. Another man who sustained an injury to the eye received £100.

Mr. Heron: A certain amount of that would come out of the fund.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, that was extra. My information does not state that the man lost the sight of an eye or, as the Act says, a percentage of the efficient use of the sight of an eye, but I do not think that that policeman would have received as much under the Workers' Compensation Act as he received under the provisions of the Police Benefit Fund.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The main recommendation of the select committee was the pension scheme.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I shall deal with that later on. If the police were brought under the Workers' Compensation Act the provision for the payment of full wages during sickness would immediately cease and the men would receive only half-pay. At present they receive full pay during the whole of the time they are off duty sick or suffering from injury. It must be recognised that the police could not have it both ways, and that under the present system when they are sick or suffering from injury sustained in the course of duty they receive double as much as they would get under the Workers' Compensation Act, were they brought under that measure. Any change in that direction would doubtless create serious discontent. Summed up it appears that if the police were brought into line with ordinary workers under the Workers' Compensation Act, we would have to amend the Workers' Compensation Act and arrange to insure them. That, of course, could be done. The Government would cease paying the subsidy of £300 annually, and would have to revise the rules of the death benefit fund so that there would be no clashing of interest amongst those under the Workers' Compensation Act and those receiving benefits under the benefit fund. I have already mentioned that in the Police Department are a number of men whose wages exceed £400 per annum. If the Act were applied to the police force at present, offi-

cers receiving over £400 per annum would not be entitled to come under the Act and special provision would have to be made to meet their case. This would not affect the rate at retirement or the payment of a gratuity after 12 years' service. Having considered the figures, I think most members of the police force would agree that the men are considerably better off under the present system than they would be if they were brought under the Workers' Compensation Act. If they desire to be brought under the Act, I do not think the Government would offer any objection, because it would mean considerably less cost to the Government. We do not wish to save money at their expense, but if the police think they would be better off under the Workers' Compensation Act, that aspect could be considered. The second point in the report deals with the basis of calculated benefits. In 1917 an alteration was made in connection with the benefits payable to police on their retirement. Members of the force who were contributors to the fund prior to 1917 are entitled to receive on retirement one month's pay for each year of service. Those men who have joined the force since 1917 are entitled to receive only one fortnight's pay for each year of service. The statistics show that there are now 229 men in the force who have joined since 1917 and that there are 307 who joined prior to that year. In 1917 we reached a stage when the Government, having received repeated reports from the Government Actuary that the police benefit fund was going insolvent and had only to be continued on the existing basis for a few years to break down entirely, decided that it was necessary to make an adjustment. The payments being made to the fund were not sufficient to provide the benefits that the men were receiving. It was of no use going on blindly and refusing to face the responsibility. The Government of the day decided that some adjustment with respect to the contributions and the benefits must be made. An adjustment was made; it was arranged that the men who joined in 1917—I think it was after the month of April—instead of receiving on retirement a month's pay for each year of service, should be entitled to receive only the specific benefits then set out. If there is some dissatisfaction in the force on account of the differential treatment meted out, it cannot be said that the police were not aware of the

altered conditions. Everyone who joined the force after 1917 knew that, by making certain contributions to the fund, he would be entitled to a specific benefit. There was no suggestion of hoodwinking the men. Some of them have stated that the men did not make any inquiries, but most people make some inquiry when a percentage of their pay is deducted for a specific purpose. They want to know why it is being deducted and the specific benefits they are likely to receive for the deductions. I do not think anyone would blindly submit to a deduction from his pay for a specific purpose without ascertaining the particular benefit to which he was entitled.

Mr. Chesson: Officers of the force stated that while on probation they did not know.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If any man undertakes employment, he finds out what the conditions are. The police have only to ask in order to ascertain the conditions. They know that there is a benefit fund and that, provided certain conditions are complied with, they receive certain benefits in return for certain payments. If they do not know, it is not the fault of the department. Everyone can be supplied with a book of rules and can see exactly the benefits to which he is entitled for the deductions from his pay. The Government had for years been receiving reports that the fund was likely to become insolvent, and everyone admitted the necessity for making an adjustment. Rather than alter the benefits due to those who had been contributors to the fund for years past, it was decided that the alteration should apply to newcomers only. If the newcomers were dissatisfied with the conditions, their obvious course was to refrain from joining the force and accepting the new conditions. The state of the fund being such that an adjustment was necessary, an adjustment was made, and every man joining the force subsequently knew just what benefit he would receive. While the difference in the benefits payable to those who joined the force prior to 1917 and since may seem somewhat anomalous, I do not think the alteration has prevented any applicant from joining the police force, even if he was aware that the benefits were not what they had been previously.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: There has been dissatisfaction on account of the different rates.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Then let me give an analogous case. Every classified officer in the Government service prior to

1904 was entitled to a pension. Those who have joined the service since 1904 are not entitled to a pension. There is doubtless dissatisfaction and discontent in consequence, but that has not resulted in anyone refraining from joining the service. Everyone who joins the service knows that he is not entitled to a pension. Some of them say, "I wish I had joined the service before 1904. It is unfair that those who got in before 1904 should receive pensions and that I should not." It is well known that the system of no pensions has been operating for the last 22 years. Successive Governments of all shades of political opinion have made it the policy of the country that pensions should not be paid, and applicants for positions in the service know the conditions under which they enter. Similarly with the police: the men who joined the force prior to 1917 are entitled to specific benefits, while those who joined later are entitled to specific benefits, though not on the scale payable to the men who joined prior to 1917. If it were desired that the old order of things should be resuscitated it would mean, according to the Government Actuary, the certain insolvency of the fund, and I do not know where we can get reliable information if we do not accept the word of the Government Actuary. The Government would also have to find £40,000 or £50,000 to make the fund solvent, after which it would be possible to continue for only a certain time and then once more the Government would have to face the position. As the older officers retire from the service and new personnel come along, the men will gradually reach an equal footing and the fund will be quite solvent.

Mr. Mann: It is not in the interests of the service that the men should retire.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I agree with the hon. member. In reply to the interjection of the member for Williams-Narrogin, I have shown that Parliament decided that officers joining the public service after 1904 should receive no pensions. That Act has operated ever since. In the case of several Governments and all shades of political opinion the same policy has been adopted. This has gone on for years. Even now there has been no direct move by any section to resuscitate the position with regard to pensions being payable to classified officers of the public service. As that is the position I do not know how we could particularise in the case of the police. I should

perhaps be more pleased than any member of the House if the police could be given pensions. We are all sincere in our desire that every officer employed in the service should receive pensions if it were possible to finalise those things. It is not easy to do so. It would cost between £400,000 and £500,000 per annum to provide a pension scheme for the officers now in the Public Service. The financial position is such that this kind of payment cannot be made. It would disturb the whole of the finances of the State. Whilst I am sympathetic towards the police, and would desire as much as most members that they and every section of industrial workers of the State, and every officer of the Public Service, should receive a pension, I cannot see that there is any great argument why the police should receive specific benefits to an extent greater than is accorded to any other employees of the Government service, in the matter of pensions.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: There are more dangers and risks in their occupation.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not know that that can be substantiated. There is a large element of risk in the case of railway men, or men engaged in the State Sawmills. Indeed, they run more risk of injury and accident than do members of the police force.

The Minister for Lands: There are more accidents in their case.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes.

Mr. Teesdale: But they are not biffed out with bottles.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It does not make much difference whether a man is biffed out with a bottle or whether an engine runs over him and chops off an arm. In both cases the injuries would be severe, and the men would be entitled to compensation. Men have also been jammed between trucks and severely injured. There is not so much difference in the case of the individual. If the man is wounded or maimed he receives compensation.

Hon. G. Taylor: Trucks do not make organised attacks upon employees.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There have not been many cases of serious injury to members of the Police Force as a result of organised attacks.

Mr. Sampson: It is one of the dangers to which they are liable.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. Whilst it is a danger, any man in any occupation can put forward a special plea concerning it. Some men in the printing trade have claimed to have suffered from lead poisoning. On many occasions men have contracted a form of disease which makes its appearance in poison in the system, as a result of lead fumes inhaled in the printing trade.

Mr. Sampson: I have not heard of a case for the last quarter of a century. I am doubtful whether such cases have occurred. Insanitary printing offices cause most of the trouble, not the fumes from the type.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: People associated with printing offices have been said to have contracted this particular form of disease.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Many people suffer because of printing offices.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. The only good reason made out for the recommendation of the Committee is that there is a certain amount of money in the fund, and that it would probably be less expensive to institute a pension fund for the Police Force than it would be in the case of any other set of industrial employees. The fund amounts to about £40,000, and with the interest received from its investment there would be a considerable annual income. Nevertheless it would cost £24,000 to institute a pension scheme.

Mr. Mann: That is for the first year only, not for every year. The amount is reducible as the years go on.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The personnel of the force is ever increasing, as is every other phase of development. The population is increasing, and contributions to the fund would also increase with the increase in the size of the personnel of the force. Every year we are creating additional stations, and adding to the strength of the force. The same thing appertains in the Railway Department, in the public service generally, and in every industry. The liability of any Government which was contributing to a pension fund would increase proportionately. It is a question whether the financial position of the State would warrant the introduction of a general pension scheme. The matter would have to be seriously considered, and debated from all standpoints. A great deal of information would require to be collected from

all sources. Consideration would be had to the question of increasing taxation in order to make good the sum that would be taken from the Treasury, a sum of between £400,000 and £500,000, for a general pension scheme. The whole policy would have to be outlined.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The police are hardly on the same level as other sections of the community.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I agree with that, but they do receive benefits that no other section of the public service receives. No other section of the service receives a subsidy of £1 on the amount that members of the police force like to put into their superannuation fund, that is the benefits they receive from the fund. If a person joins the public service as a classified officer, a regulation says he must either insure his life or make certain payments into a fund that will be given to him on his retirement. The Government have not subsidised any of those payments to the extent of pound for pound. As the police have a hazardous employment, various Governments have recognised that to the extent of subsidising to the extent of pound for pound the payments that are made by policemen for their own benefit.

Mr. Chesson: That is recognised in every force in the British Dominions.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That may be so. It is a moot point whether that aspect has not been stressed with regard to only one industrial section of the community. It would cost another £14,000, but the committee, by certain suggestions and arguments, think that this can be reduced to about £9,000 per annum. It is very doubtful whether that would be so. We cannot get an authoritative report from the Government Actuary, because of the fact that it would be optional whether a man remained on the Police Benefit Fund or whether he came under a pension scheme. Whilst this remains optional no actuarial calculations can be made. The Government Actuary would not know how many men would continue to receive the benefits of the fund, and how many would elect to come under the pension fund.

Mr. Chesson: The committee suggested a period of six months in which to decide.

Mr. Mann: The men must decide within a given time.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. We cannot get an actuarial report on which to calculate the cost, because the Actuary would have no idea as to how many men within six months would elect to remain on the benefit fund, or how many would come under the proposed pension scheme. When I asked the Government Actuary for a report as to the cost, in order that I might give the information to the House from the greatest expert we have in the service on these matters, I found he could not supply it because he had not the data on which to base a proper calculation. Since this Government have been in office the conditions of members of the force have been improved to the extent of £25,000 per annum. In other words, it is costing the State that additional sum more than it did before to pay members of the force.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The conditions were improved before the Government assumed office.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. Mr. Teesdale: Is that in salaries?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, and additional allowances.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: And there are more men engaged now.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The board which considered their industrial conditions recommended certain alterations which have cost the State an extra £25,000 a year. In the time of the Mitchell Government a considerable increase was made to members of the force. The £25,000 was spread over a personnel of a little more than 500 men. The higher paid officers received slightly more than the others, but on the average each member of the force has received £1 a week more than he did two or three years ago. In the circumstances the Government would have to consider carefully giving one section of the public service, which had received benefits to the extent of £50 a year, some further concession which would probably involve a sum of £10,000 or £12,000, making an additional increase of £20 or £25 a year, and limiting that to one section of Government employees.

Mr. Mann: The increases the force have received are no greater in proportion to those that have been paid to the public service.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, they are.

Mr. Mann: Better than the railways?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The average increases in the pay of the railwaymen during the past few years have been about 8s. a week. I have got into trouble for making that statement before.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What do you mean?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The hon. member said I should not talk about that. In some instances the railway men have received a little more than an average of 8s. a week. The average was about 8s. 6d. spread over the whole of the service, whereas in the case of the police force, the average increase is £50 a year. That is £50 a year as against £23 or £24.

Hon. G. Taylor: But this is the only increase the police have had for years.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No. During the Premiership of the Leader of the Opposition they received a considerable increase. So satisfied were they at that time that they said, "We will never ask for anything more while conditions remain as at present." After the present Government had been in office for three or four months, the police came to me with a request for a further increase. Having looked up the file, I said to the deputation, "Upon the granting of the last increase you expressed yourselves as so satisfied that you would not make any further requests while conditions remained the same. The cost of living now is practically the same as then. What have you to say about it?" The reply I received was, "Well, the conditions of the police in every State of the Commonwealth have altered since then, and if they had not, probably we would not be here asking for so much. But we want to keep in line with the members of the police forces in other parts of Australia." Practically on that ground alone they base their request for increased remuneration.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They should be a well-paid service.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I think everyone recognises that.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: The police in every State except Western Australia and Tasmania have pensions to-day.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The same argument might be used with regard to public servants. In several Australian States public service pension schemes are in operation. Certainly the Commonwealth has a pension scheme covering all classified

officers. This State discontinued that practice 22 years ago, and has not reinaugurated it since. Now we have the request that a pension scheme be made applicable to the police, and to the police only.

Mr. Heron: The select committee did not say that.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Probably, if the hon. member had been on a select committee dealing with a pension proposal for all public servants, he would have agreed to the making of a similar recommendation. I personally would be in favour of compulsory insurance for everyone. The Commonwealth have had a Commission inquiring for three or four years into the establishment of a scheme of compulsory insurance for people, enabling them to receive a fixed amount upon reaching a certain age. The proposal is, I understand, to establish pensions under a contributory scheme. As regards this particular matter, however, nothing can be done at the present stage of the session. I am quite agreeable to the carrying of the motion, but it cannot get us very far. At this stage it is too late to go into the question of a pension scheme and deal with a Bill. I subscribe to the terms of the motion. In my opinion the Government should provide a pension scheme for every section of the public service, provided the necessary financial arrangements can be made. If the project is impossible from the financial aspect, that does not alter my desire to create a pension scheme: but it alters the present position to this extent, that a Bill cannot be brought in during the current session. Many things are desirable, but from the financial aspect they are impracticable. Therefore, no matter how desirable they may be, they cannot be brought into force. I am not objecting to the motion. I would not even oppose it. I hope it will be carried. But at this stage of the session the carrying of the motion will not make much difference, because time does not permit of the bringing in of a pension scheme which would be acceptable to Parliament. Certainly there is not sufficient time to make the necessary investigations for formulating a pension scheme. I will leave that aspect of the matter and deal with another point which was touched on by the select committee. I refer to the position of Chief Inspector Duncan and Inspector Mitchell relatively to the Police Benefit Fund. In 1908 a regulation which was probably wrong, and probably illegal,

was introduced excluding inspectors from the Police Benefit Fund. The regulation provided that their contributions should cease, and that they should receive from the fund whatever benefits were due to them on the scale provided. The money, accordingly was paid.

Mr. Mann: When they became commissioned officers.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. All contributions to the fund, and all their rights in it, ceased at that moment.

Mr. Mann: The matter was optional, of course.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: No. The arrangement was forced on the inspectors under protest.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. There is no doubt about that.

Mr. Heron: In fact, a cheque was sent to one of them by way of finalising the matter.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, and he did not want to accept it. However, we are now dealing with something that occurred in 1908. The Leader of the Opposition was in Parliament at that time; I believe he was a member of the Government then in power. At this date, 18 years later, we can hardly remedy the anomaly.

Mr. Heron: I think the question was raised three or four years ago.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: For years and years there was an agitation that these officers should be allowed to get back into the fund. No positive objection was raised to their getting back; the only thing that held the matter up was the question of the terms on which they should get back. This continued for years, the two inspectors refusing to agree to the terms. Finally, about four years ago, an arrangement was made which I consider eminently fair, and which I believe most members will regard similarly. If the two inspectors had continued to contribute to the fund, the moneys contributed by them would have been invested so as to return about three per cent. per annum. The inspectors had the benefit of that money for all those years. I do not now what they did with it. I shall not inquire into their private financial transactions. However, an amount of £300 or £400 was handed over to each man. I suppose the inspectors are ordinarily thrifty men.

I do not suppose they immediately splashed the money. I presume they invested it

to good purpose. If they did invest it, they would place it in some investment which would return them more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. They might have bought houses with it. If they had put it into the State Savings Bank, they would have received interest at $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4 per cent. over the whole period. They might have placed the money on fixed deposit and obtained a satisfactory return. On being readmitted to the fund, they were only asked to repay the money, of which they had had the use all the time, with interest at the rate of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. There is nothing in the nature of Shylock about that. Had the money remained in the fund, the fund would have benefited from it to the extent of 3 per cent. per annum, that being the average return from the investments. The inspectors were only charged $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum. The then Minister for Police, Mr. Scaddan, agreed with that proposal. When I was asked to review the matter, I arrived at the conclusion that Mr. Scaddan had been generous. He proposed to charge the inspectors $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for the use of money which, placed in the savings bank or on fixed deposit, would have returned them 4 or $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The Minister for Lands: Five per cent.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If the money had been placed in a savings bank the inspectors could have received $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on it and had it at call. I repeat, Mr. Scaddan dealt with the matter on a generous basis.

Mr. Hughes: There is such a thing as safeguarding a man against himself.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: These two officers would not be such unthrifty people as to splash up £300 or £400 immediately they got it. I have sufficient confidence in both these gentlemen to believe that when they got the money, they invested it.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: I think that with families growing up and small salaries it soon went.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If a man gets £300 or £400 which he knows to be in the nature of provision for his old age, and if he spends it simply because he happens to have it in a negotiable form, nobody but himself can be held blameable for that.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Any way, when he gets a family that is something.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: But if the money had remained in the fund, he would not have had it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Which would you rather have—money or a family?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not think this matter of £300 or £400 influenced either of the officers in regard to having a large family. On re-entering the fund they were only to be charged $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest on the amounts they had been paid. Mr. Scaddan dealt with the question in a generous spirit. I doubt whether I would have dealt with it quite so generously.

Mr. Heron: The Minister's recommendation was turned down by the Police Benefit Fund Board, not by those two officers.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The matter was not decided by the Minister, but by Cabinet on the recommendation of the Minister.

Mr. Heron: And it was turned down by the board.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The board had no authority in the matter. It was decided by the Minister to whom the appeal was made.

Mr. Heron: The Minister made a recommendation, and the board turned it down.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: In view of all the circumstances, a generous settlement was made as regards contributions to the fund. I have no more to say on the motion, but wish to reiterate that at this stage anything practical can scarcely result from carrying it.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [5.27]: I was pleased to hear the Minister say that he would not oppose the motion. He pointed out, however, that at this late stage of the session it was almost impossible for the Government to bring down a Bill to deal with the matter, as proposed by the select committee. We all appreciate that aspect. I hope that the motion will be carried and that the Government who may be in power when Parliament meets again, will make the necessary provision to give effect to the select committee's recommendations. The committee made an exhaustive inquiry, and I consider that their report should be acted upon.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.28]: Everyone appreciates the difficulty which the Government experience in facing this matter from the financial aspect. At the same time,

that aspect has been dealt with by the select committee, who also have stressed the importance of maintaining a satisfied police force. This, of course, is of paramount importance. I note that the adoption of the select committee's scheme involves an expenditure of £9,000. It is urged by the select committee that the expenditure of an amount such as that would be well justified, in view of the importance of the object involved.

The Minister for Lands: Is it not £9,000 annually?

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. The fact that at the moment there are varying benefits accruing to different sections of the police force must tend to create discontent. That is inevitable. Where some officers and constables enjoy a certain benefit, it is only reasonable that others, doing exactly the same class of work, should desire to be similarly treated.

Mr. Mann: The conditions made the difference inevitable.

Mr. SAMPSON: I realise that the conditions in regard to certain members of the force require to be altered. I am pleased to hear the Minister has dealt with the matter, and I hope it will be possible to give effect to the committee's recommendations.

MR. HERON (Leonora) [5.31]: I hope the Government will see their way clear to putting the recommendations of the committee into effect. Two main points were raised by the committee. One was that the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act be extended to cover officers of the police force. The Minister said there have been only two cases of injury that would come under that Act. But the committee dealt with some 13 cases.

The Minister for Justice: You do not say what injuries were sustained.

Mr. HERON: In one case the officer whilst on duty received an injury that caused the loss of sight in one eye. He was granted £100 compensation. Another officer retired through failing eyesight brought about by injuries received in the execution of his duties. He was granted £255 10s. Another was granted £45 as compensation for having his thumb shot away whilst on duty. Then another officer who was retired as medically unfit claimed that his ill-health was caused through the nature of his duties. He was granted £401. Then there was the case at Broome. Certainly that was a doubtful case. Compensation of one year's pay £380, was granted. For permanent injury to leg, caused in the execution of duty, an

other officer received £255 10s. Still another resigned and claimed compensation for injury to eye, caused in the execution of his duty. He was granted £100. Another officer resigned through illness, suffering from malignant growth caused by shot pellets in the neck, received in the execution of his duty 15 years previously. He was granted £255 10s.

The Minister for Justice: He would not have received anything under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. HERON: But surely it was due to an accident. He was shot through the neck.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: One of the risks of his employment.

Mr. HERON: Another officer received injuries in the execution of his duty, causing nervous breakdown and ultimate resignation. He was granted compensation of £246. Then we have the case of another officer retired medically unfit caused by breaking his ankle in the execution of his duty. He was granted £118. Still another retired medically unfit through being subject to fainting fits brought about by an injury to the head whilst on duty. He was granted £228. Another died through injury received on duty. His widow was granted compensation of £219. Still another was drowned in the execution of his duty, and the compensation granted was £228. The last case we had was that of an officer who died through contracting disease whilst in the execution of his duty. His widow was granted one year's pay, £206 16s. 8d. So there were many more cases than the Minister mentioned.

The Minister for Lands: During what period were they?

Mr. HERON: Since the Government have been paying the additional £300 per annum.

The Minister for Lands: One man got a good job, in addition to receiving compensation.

Mr. HERON: The other matter dealt with by the committee was the question of dissatisfaction. We had evidence from many officers on that point. All agreed that the variation in benefits payable under the scheme had set up a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst the members of the force. Of course that was only natural.

The Minister for Lands: You find that in friendly societies.

Mr. HERON: But in friendly societies one does not pay the full contribution if he draws only half the benefits.

The Minister for Lands: There is always dissatisfaction in every body of men.

Mr. HERON: At times the Minister himself is dissatisfied.

The Minister for Lands: I am.

The Minister for Justice: Out of dissatisfaction comes progress.

Mr. HERON: We found the dissatisfaction general right through. However, the question has been pretty well discussed, and I sincerely hope the Government will see their way clear to giving effect to the select committee's recommendations.

MR. HUGHES (East Perth—in reply) [5.35]: I should like to touch upon the Minister's contention that when an official is off duty, sick, his pay goes on for a given period. That is so. The committee realised there were certain advantages that might be lost by bringing the force under the Workers' Compensation Act. But the committee also realised that the men could not have it both ways; that if they got the advantages of the Workers' Compensation Act, they would have to forego certain slight advantages, as, for instance, the right to draw sick pay whilst off duty, sick. The man off duty, sick, may get three months sick pay; and then in the following week it may happen that a widow whose husband has been killed in the execution of his duty will get compensation to the extent of £219. I do not think the fact that one officer might get three months' pay whilst sick, as against three months' half pay from the insurance company, justifies us in giving to the widow of another officer who has been killed so small a sum as £219.

The Minister for Lands: Very rarely is an officer killed.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It happens sometimes.

Mr. HUGHES: In this list are three or four who were killed or who died as the result of injuries received in the execution of their duty, and their widows were paid £219. I do not know of anything that would justify the State in paying to the widow of a deceased employee so small a sum. I would sooner sacrifice what little advantages accrue from the right to draw

sick pay, in order to ensure the widow of a deceased officer getting the £500 provided under the Workers' Compensation Act. We did not lose sight of that. We recognised there might be some loss of privilege by coming under the Workers' Compensation Act, but that when the two sides of the ledger are balanced it would be to the advantage of the officers to be brought under the Act. We ought to lay it down as a general rule that all employees, irrespective of whom they are working for, should be under the Workers' Compensation Act. It has been said it is too late to do anything this session. I do not know. If the House is favourable to the motion, it would not take long to draft a Bill and put it through, this session. The House is likely to be closing earlier this session than for many sessions past. I do not see that there is so formidable a task involved in drafting a Bill to give effect to this recommendation as to warrant leaving it till next session.

The Minister for Justice: There is also the task of finding £9,000 per annum.

Mr. HUGHES: Surely that is not going to upset the Budget!

Mr. E. B. Johnston: We found 4½ millions last week.

The Premier: We did not; we merely gave authority to borrow that sum.

The Minister for Lands: Personally I think the figures submitted require to be scrutinised.

Mr. HUGHES: They are all based on a scheme in operation, and they have actual blessing. I should like to see the Government bring in a Bill this session. There is not a great deal of work involved and, after all, the right time to do it is now, for we do not know what may happen between this and next session; it is highly problematical.

Hon. G. Taylor: East Perth is all right. Don't worry.

Mr. HUGHES: I do not know that I should be very much concerned if it were not all right. If the House pass this resolution it will be an indication to the Government that they will have no difficulty in getting a Bill through. I hope they will bring down a Bill this session.

Question put and passed.

BILL—DRIED FRUITS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 1st December.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [5.40]: The need for organisation and control of the dried fruit industry is so widely recognised that there is no necessity for saying much on the Bill before us. For a considerable time past there have been expressions by the growers that a Bill on the lines of the legislation in operation in Victoria and South Australia is required here. The Dried Fruit-growers' Association have sent out a letter, I believe to every member of the House, reading as follows:—

Dear Sir,—At a meeting of my executive held on the 6th December the provisions of the Dried Fruits Marketing Bill, at present before Parliament, were fully discussed, and entirely and unanimously approved. As this legislation is so urgently needed to stabilise the industry, I trust you will use your best efforts to have it enacted before the close of the present session.

Mr. Marshall: Well, sit down and let us get it through.

Mr. SAMPSON: I join with the secretary of the Dried Fruitgrowers' Association in hoping that the Bill will have a speedy passage through Parliament. The present position makes a call on the loyalty of growers. For many years the Australian Dried Fruits Association have made great efforts to secure organisation of the industry. But whilst the great majority are in favour of a measure to control, there is always a small minority who, to a large extent, undermine the efforts of those who desire organisation. Victoria and South Australia have already Acts of control, and the Federal Government have one also. A little time ago a visitor from South Australia called on me and asked who were the best growers to see with whom he might arrange for the purchase of dried fruits. His object was to obtain Western Australian dried fruit and unload it on the South Australian market. In my opinion that would have been a very improper thing to do. It is owing to the existence of measures in Victoria and in South Australia, and to an understanding arrived at between the Australian Dried Fruitgrowers' Association and the growers of Western Australia, that dried fruit produced in the Eastern States has not been placed on the market in competition with the Western Australian product. The main principle in connection with the Bill is the

export quota and that I understand is contained in Clause 17 where power is given to the board in its absolute discretion from time to time to determine where and in what respective quantities the output of dried fruits produced in any particular year is to be marketed, and to take whatever action the board thinks proper for the purpose of enforcing such determination. The need for organisation has been stressed so often and the importance of care in packing and grading so emphasised that I am doubtful whether there is any great need to say much on those points. Recently the Hon. H. H. Smith, a member of the Legislative Council of Victoria, who had just returned from a visit to the Old Country, moved the adjournment of that branch of the legislature to draw attention to certain disabilities that prevailed in connection with the marketing of Australian fruit in London. He had a little earlier drawn attention to the lack of quality in connection with the marketing of fresh and canned fruit. He pointed out that much of the dried fruits he had examined had been badly packed and graded, and in certain cases it was maggoty. That was a very serious charge, and its seriousness was increased because the maggoty condition mentioned was limited to Australian fruit. That was not a condition found in the Mediterranean product. I was one of a party of 50 pressmen who had the privilege, under the leadership of the late C. J. De Garis of travelling through the Sun-Rayssed districts from Mildura in Victoria to Blanchetown in South Australia and later to Angaston and Clare. The difficulty of infection by insect life was mentioned to the delegation and Mr. De Garis pointed out that he was endeavouring to overcome it by establishing an evaporation plant at Pyap, a settlement on the River Murray controlled by De Garis at that time. At Mildura, too, we had the opportunity to see what was being done in regard to making raisin fruit confectionery. Here again the difficulty was the protection of fruit from contamination. It was very difficult. The confectionery factory was carefully enclosed with a net of very small mesh and at Pyap an evaporator was used. Notwithstanding these efforts I understand that the maggots did make themselves manifest at a later stage. It seems that the same trouble is showing itself in Australian produced fruit in the Old Country. Undoubtedly one of the ways in which this difficulty will be over-

come will be by organisation which can only be effected if there is 100 per cent. control. I must acknowledge that the difficulty to which Mr. Smith referred has occurred, notwithstanding the operation of the Federal Act. Still, as time goes on I have no doubt it will be possible to take steps to render the dried fruits immune from attack. I realise that is absolutely imperative. Mr. Smith was criticised because of the fact that he drew attention to what was a great disability. I think he is to be thanked. We do not cure an evil by closing our eyes to its existence. Having drawn the attention of the Victorian State Parliament to the disability, it is only reasonable to presume that the best efforts of the experts and pathologists will be given to it so that sterilisation may be made possible, and that fruit sent from Australia may reach the Old Country and elsewhere in a clean condition. The dried fruit industry is beset with many difficulties. A few years ago Mediterranean fruits held the markets of the world. To-day California and South Africa are keen competitors and Australia is coming into prominence. But Australia cannot be successful unless there is organisation similar to that existing in other countries. In the United States there is control, although not on lines similar to those set out in the Bill. Still, the organisation is complete, and the position is the same in South Africa. The Union Parliament early realised the importance of organisation. During the recent visit of the Parliamentary Delegation I had the privilege of discussing this matter with two of the South African visitors. I was interested to learn of the efforts that had been made and I am pleased indeed that the Minister for Agriculture has realised the importance of giving to the growers of Western Australia assistance similar to that prevailing in other countries, by bringing down this measure. Naturally the Bill will be criticised, but that it is wanted there can be no question. Hitherto those who have not belonged to the voluntary organisation, the A.D.F.A. have to an extent sheltered themselves behind that organisation. The export of a quota overseas has long been recognised as the means for stabilising prices. Those who pay allegiance to the A.D.F.A. have supported the principle and exported a certain percentage, but those who did not belong to the organisation sought to exploit the Australian market to the detriment of their

fellows. Where a certain percentage has to be exported, it is but fair that all should bear some portion of the loss occasioned by the lower prices secured from oversea in comparison with those obtained in Australia. Reverting for a moment to the work of the A.D.F.A. I would point out that during the war period that organisation made it possible for Australia to secure dried fruit at a price much below world parity. It has been stated, and never contradicted so far as I am aware, that one grower at Denmark, by virtue of his loyalty to the A.D.F.A. sacrificed no less than £5,000 in one year because he refused to take advantage of the scarcity that existed in foreign markets by exporting to those markets, and instead allowing Australia to have what it required at a price lower than parity. In addition to the Acts in existence in Victoria and South Australia there is a Federal Act of control. We have as our representative Mr. A. Yeates. He has carried out very important work and has done much to assist the Board of Control. It must have been a matter of sincere regret and some shame to Mr. Yeates to know that while in Victoria and South Australia there were Acts to permit of the exercise of control, Western Australia had no such legislation. The Bill we are now considering has been drafted on the South Australian and Victorian legislation and will put the matter in order. I hope that the principle embodied in the Bill will be approved by the growers. Whilst the local association have expressed themselves as being in accord with the measure, there will undoubtedly be found some growers who are not in favour of the Bill. It is impossible, however, to obtain 100 per cent., but the percentage who do not support the measure is very small indeed. It is realised that the Mediterranean countries are Australia's greatest competitors, at all events in regard to currants, and that in those countries the wages paid to workers in the dried fruits industry amount to 3d. or 4d. an hour, whilst the wages in Australia are 1s. 9d. This in itself is a fact that indicates the importance of organisation. Organisation will improve the output; it will make possible better facilities for the production of the fruit and for the packing of it. The Australian fruit is produced and packed under ideal conditions. In Mediterranean countries packing is sometimes done by stamping the fruit with the bare feet. That, of course, if widely known,

would be very distasteful to the consumers. In Australia there is no such custom. In the report of the Imperial Economic Committee there appear some very wise words regarding the importance of marketing. The committee state—

The day when the individual producer brought his fruit to market and received for it a final cash payment is coming to an end. The marketing of fruit is now a complicated and delicate operation, often conducted at vast distances from the point of production involving unknown risks and uncertain results and demanding both special experience and skill.

Further on, the committee state—

We are convinced that the whole tendency towards closer organisation of fruitgrowers is desirable and indeed inevitable, and we would give general and emphatic support to the principle of their organisation in the overseas parts of the Empire. We are convinced that in the case of fruit, at any rate, the general competitive situation described in this report and the constant pressure of predominating foreign supplies justifies the view and expectation that their operations, as far as can be now foreseen, will not be to the disadvantage of the consumer.

From that standpoint I do not think there can be any objection. In conclusion I would say that I appreciate the fact that the Minister has brought down this Bill. I would have been better had it been introduced last year, but that it is before us to day is gratifying indeed. I hope the Bill will have a safe passage and that the principles of the Bill will not suffer any injury.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON (Williams-Narrawong) [6.2]: I desire to support the general principles of the Bill, which I am glad the Government have introduced. Last session they introduced a more comprehensive measure which dealt with other fruits.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You helped to defeat that measure last session.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We urged that it should be confined to dried fruits.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are rejoicing because you did that.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: We thought it better to do that. An influential section of the growers, by resolutions carried in various centres, supported the action we took on that occasion.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Vested interests.

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I am not aware of any vested interests concerned in the action.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: What about the Mt. Barker people? I know that!

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: I know the co-operative movement at Mt. Barker were concerned about the matter. All we asked for was that a measure of this description should be placed before Parliament.

The Minister for Agriculture: Were you the only person who asked for it?

Mr. E. B. JOHNSTON: No; the Country Party desired this action. However, I do not desire to refer to what took place last year but to support the action of the Government in introducing the Bill now before us. There is one point I will suggest for the consideration of the Government. I refer to the desirability of taking a referendum, if required by a certain section of the growers, before bringing the Bill into operation. I am told that some growers desire a referendum to be taken, and I hope the Minister will consider that phase of the question when the Bill is being dealt with in Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time

In Committee.

Mr. Panton in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 15—agreed to.

Clause 16—General powers of the board:

Mr. THOMSON: While not opposing the Bill in any shape or form, I would draw attention to the fact that the clause vests very wide powers in the board. I am in accord with that, but I would like to know if it is the intention of the Government to make a referendum of the growers regarding these powers, before entering upon the election of members of the board? We have had a request that a referendum should be taken before the Bill is put into operation.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We can hardly make provision for a referendum now, because the opportunity has passed. I considered that question at the time but there is no chance of taking a vote now. Otherwise I would support the making of a referendum. As it is, we have to make arrangements for the election of board members and so forth. In the second year the growers will have the right to elect their own representatives to the board and

that will give them certain powers of control.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The trouble is to keep the roll of growers up to date.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have to prepare for the registration of growers, the method of election, and so on.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You could deal with them by way of regulation.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Perhaps so.

Mr. Thomson: At any rate, you did consider the question and arrived at the conclusion that, owing to the short time at your disposal, it was not in the interests of the growers themselves to proceed with it?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. Then again the summer fruits are coming in, and there is no time to make arrangements for a referendum. There are certain rumours in circulation regarding the appointment of the board. I assure hon. members that I have no one in mind and I hope no credence will be given to the rumours.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am glad to hear the Minister say that. During the second reading speech the Minister said he would consult the people concerned, as far as possible. In view of the fact that the board will manage the affairs of the growers, I was glad to hear the Minister give that assurance. We should allow the growers to do their own business through their own board as far as possible. Instead of printing rolls and so on, I think we could simplify the problem by giving each grower a voter's right.

The Minister for Agriculture: In this instance the growers will be registered.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know the Minister will do his best to get the views of the growers, but I believe that if we gave them the right to vote, and thus avoided the necessity for printing rolls and ballot papers and so forth, it would be better. We should spend as little money as possible on such things. I merely make that suggestion for the consideration of the Minister.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 17 to 22—agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Clause 23—Registration may be cancelled:

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have been informed that the clause may give the board too arbitrary a power. It has been represented that the board might take drastic action to confine packing to a few sheds and that such action might be to the disadvantage of others. If we provide for the approval of the Minister instead of the discretion of the board, it will allow for the right of appeal. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 the words "in its discretion" be struck out, and the words "with the approval of the Minister" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 24—Unregistered packing sheds prohibited:

MR. J. H. SMITH: Will the Bill ensure that all growers of dried fruits shall register?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is necessary under the Bill.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 25, 26—agreed to.

Clause 27—Existing contracts for the sale of dried fruits:

MR. THOMSON: I understand the intention of the clause, but there are men who have been guaranteed by a certain company on the undertaking that the company would purchase their products. Would the clause interfere with such an agreement?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This clause is taken from an amendment made to the Victoria and South Australian Acts last year. It provides that all contracts entered into prior to the 24th November, 1926, shall be null and void, but it makes valid any contract entered into by a company or agent to supply a certain quantity of fruit. That quantity must be supplied by the board to fulfil the contract. If a person contracted to purchase the whole of the fruit of a grower, say 50 tons, and had contracted to sell only 30 tons, the contract for the sale of the 30 tons would be valid, but no contract for the balance of 20 tons would prevail.

MR. J. H. SMITH: The Minister had an interview with some people from the Upper Swan who claimed to produce one-third of the dried fruits in Western Australia—

about 600 tons—and they said they could dispose of the whole of their production in the Eastern States at a profitable price. If this measure comes into operation, will it affect those people?

MR. THOMSON: Undoubtedly it will.

MR. J. H. SMITH: If such a contract were declared null and void, hardship might result. Those people are not afraid of dumping from the Eastern States. They claim to be outside the pale of the associated growers. They say the growers' association is composed of big firms who wish to control the disposal of their fruit. I think that a man who can find his own market is a man we should protect.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The growers mentioned will be affected. I have discussed the matter with them. The measure was introduced to prevent their entering the Eastern States market, which was created by the act of the producers in the Eastern States as a result of which a quantity of dried fruit has to be exported, leaving a market in Australia for themselves. I pointed out on the second reading that the same people sent a quantity of fruit to the Eastern States last year and it was commandeered by the Victorian board, with the approval of the Victorian Government, and sold as their own fruit. The board could do the same thing this year.

MR. THOMSON: They have indicated that they will do so.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Eastern States producers have indicated that they will retaliate.

MR. J. H. SMITH: Our growers are not afraid of that.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They perhaps will not be afraid until it actually happens. The dried fruit production of Australia is so great that two-thirds has to be exported. That quantity is sold at a loss. If the Australian market is flooded, there will be nothing in the business for anyone. Legislation in the Eastern States gives the board power to insist upon an exportable quantity. Thus they provided a market for themselves and our growers entered the market and took advantage of the price created there. The Eastern States people say that if we do that, they will commandeer our product and retaliate.

MR. THOMSON: And without this measure we could not prevent them.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: On the second reading I said I did not like

this kind of legislation, but it has been impressed upon me at conferences of Ministers for Agriculture, during my visits to the Eastern States, and in my talks with our own producers that it is not reasonable to expect people in the Eastern States to make sacrifices of which our growers might take advantage and do nothing to help them. Our growers can get a market in the Eastern States, but it is quite possible that the Eastern States buyers of our product want to break down the conditions over there.

Mr. Thomson: So that they can afterwards break down the conditions here.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Possibly so. There are opponents of this legislation in the Eastern States just as there are here. I have had telegrams from the Eastern States recently asking if we intend to introduce legislation of this kind. I have been told that those States refuse to create a market for us, and that if we invade it, they will invade our market. No advantage can accrue to Western Australia by undercutting prices. In view of all the circumstances, this measure is necessary to protect our growers because of the legislation passed in the Eastern States.

Mr. SAMPSON: If our growers are to be protected, there is no alternative to passing this Bill. In view of the position in South Australia and Victoria, and the statement that New South Wales is considering the adoption of similar legislation, it is inconceivable that growers in the East would allow their market to be undermined by our growers without retaliating. Is it the intention of the Minister that all agreements made after the 24th November shall be in order, and that those made prior to that date should be annulled? Should not the date be altered to 1st January, 1927?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: When the Minister says he does not like this legislation he speaks for himself, not for the party. It represents the ideal of the party, so far as I know. It is a form of socialism, and as such must be welcomed by all who have studied the Labour movement and its ambitions.

Hon. G. Taylor: Now the Bill is shot.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I rejoice with all my heart that the Bill has been introduced. I rejoice in its ambitions and in its ultimate aim. It is not possible for the Australian producers to flourish except by organised marketing, such as is outlined in the Bill. Our wheat growers are flourishing

because of such action, begun under compulsion. Our dried fruit growers have been suffering for years. The member for Nelson speaks of the few who are flourishing in his district.

Mr. J. H. Smith: They are responsible for one-third of the State's production.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: They are flourishing because they are getting the benefit of the organised markets in the Eastern States, while the others are suffering because of the lack of such benefits. It is the responsibility of Parliament to help people who find themselves handicapped in their industries. In the grape-growing industry we have gone from bad to worse. The position of many of those engaged in it is pathetic, and we must do something for them. I want to make it possible for every producer to organise his market on up-to-date lines. I rejoice that I now have the principle before me, though in a limited sense. Co-operation is my ambition, and organised marketing is my goal. This is a form of socialism that I ask for.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The member for Guildford would say, "Down with those individuals who co-operate for their own benefit." If he believed in co-operation he would agree with me that the section of dried fruit growers, who produce one-third of the dried fruits of the State, have a right to retain the marketing facilities they have brought about as a result of their own co-operative efforts. Far from wanting that, he now desires that all the growers shall be placed on the same socialistic footing. He wants the growers, on whose behalf I am speaking, to sacrifice their own interests in favour of a socialisation of the industry. The Bill is bound to result in a decrease in the returns to growers.

The Minister for Lands: The Bill is designed to keep up the price.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: When the products come to be exported it will be found that there will be a drop of 2½d. in the lb. It is not fair to deprive 60 growers of their market, and to annul any contracts they may have made prior to the 24th November. It is a scandal. I do not believe in Government control in any industry.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: This is not Government control.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Government may appoint their own board.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: Only for the first year.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: There is no provision for any election of the board. If I had my way I would drop the whole Bill. The member for Guildford wishes to socialise the whole industry, and penalise those who produce one-third of the dried fruits of the State. I understand the Minister himself has been asked to drop the Bill by a number of the growers. I shall vote against the clause.

Mr. THOMSON: I regret that the member for Guildford should have endeavoured to make political capital out of the Bill. I congratulate the Minister upon its introduction, and hope the member for Nelson will not vote against the clause. The majority of growers desire to have the compulsory handling of their dried fruits.

Mr. J. H. Smith: But this will affect all existing contracts.

Mr. THOMSON: Many returned soldiers, acting on the advice of the Government, which was tendered in good faith, embarked upon the industry.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You thought it was a good thing to do.

Mr. THOMSON: Yes. I am not reflecting upon the hon. member.

Mr. E. B. Johnston: It should have been entered into on a larger scale.

Mr. THOMSON: It has been necessary to introduce compulsory legislation in the other States. The products of the industry have to compete with the cheap labour of the Mediterranean. I hope it will be possible to market the produce on up-to-date lines, and to induce the people in the Old Land to support the work of those who fought for them during the war. That can only be done by co-operation. I disagree entirely with the observation of the member for Guildford that the wheat grower to-day is successful by reason of compulsion. The true reason is the voluntary wheat pool. If I saw any other method by which the dried fruits industry could be stabilised, I would not support this Bill. Does not the member for Nelson realise that the Eastern States will not allow us to flood their markets with dried fruits in the coming year? Unless the Bill is passed, the Western Australian grower of dried fruits will find himself in a parlous position. The Eastern States can commandeer our consignments of dried fruits and prevent them from being sold.

Mr. Sampson: But contracts have been made with the Eastern States.

Mr. J. H. Smith: What is the position under Clause 27?

Mr. THOMSON: That the whole of the growers of dried fruits shall benefit equally. At present, unfortunately, Western Australia is producing far more dried fruits than the State can possibly consume. The Bill proposes not socialism but compulsion. However, the majority of the dried-fruit growers have asked for compulsion. I realise that in the absence of the Bill the markets of Western Australia will be flooded with dried fruits at prices which will spell ruin to three-fourths of our growers.

Hon. W. J. George: Will this Bill remedy that?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Do you believe in repudiation?

Mr. THOMSON: No; but we must accept the Bill as it is if the industry is to be protected. While the Government will appoint the board for the first year, in succeeding years every grower of dried fruits will share in the election of the board.

Mr. Davy: Whether he likes it or not!

Mr. THOMSON: Parliament passes quite a lot of legislation which some of us do not like, but the decision of the majority has to be accepted. The growers will have an opportunity of either repealing this measure or appointing a board they approve of. The best judges of the position have been asking for legislation of this kind during the past two or three years.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have received a letter from the Dried-fruit Growers' Association of Western Australia, dated the 7th December.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That is Henry Wills & Co.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The writer describes himself as the secretary of the Dried-fruit Growers' Association of Western Australia, and says—

At a meeting of the executive held on the 6th inst., the provisions of the Dried Fruits Marketing Bill at present before Parliament were fully discussed and entirely and unanimously approved. As this legislation is so urgently needed to stabilise the industry, I trust you will use your best efforts to have it enacted before the close of the present session. Yours faithfully, W. W. Smith, secretary.

Evidently the Smiths do not agree among themselves. Not having had a direct com-

munication from the dried-fruit growers of the Murchison, I cannot speak authoritatively on the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 1 the words "twenty-fourth day of November, 1926," be struck out, and "coming into operation of this Act" inserted in lieu.

Mr. DAVY: The amendment would make the clause even worse. One of our great difficulties in legislating is that everybody's principles fall to pieces as soon as his particular interests are touched. I have heard the member for Katanning speak strongly against any proposition of this nature, but because the dried-fruit growers approve of this he is prepared to say that it should be given to them. The hon. member does not seem to bear in mind that the dried-fruit growers are only the producers, and that the public are entitled to some consideration.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is now discussing the whole clause, and not the amendment only.

Mr. DAVY: The amendment merely carries the clause further. What the Bill proposes is not socialism, but something rather worse than socialism, namely compulsory syndicalism.

The CHAIRMAN: We had better deal with the amendment first. These broad principles take us right away from the amendment.

Mr. DAVY: The amendment makes the clause even more objectionable to me. However, both the principles involved are so bad that there is not much distinction between them.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I shall support the amendment in the expectation of the clause being struck out. Still, the amendment certainly improves the clause.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That in lines 1 and 2 of Subclause 4 "the twenty-fourth of November, 1926," be struck out, and "coming into operation of this Act" be inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. DAVY: This clause is not socialism, but syndicalism. Whatever it is, it is a shocking move in the wrong direction. It means that because a majority of one tiny class in the community vote in a certain di-

rection, we are to cancel valid contracts without consulting the other parties to those contracts. It astonishes me that the members for Katanning and for Swan, having expressed the opinions I have often heard them express, are able to vote in favour of this. It astonishes me also that the member for Guildford should vote for it, the member who gave us the formula that the function of the Government is to do for the people what they could not do for themselves; not to do for the people what they could do for themselves.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Hear, hear!

Mr. DAVY: Now he postulates that the function of Government is to do for the people what they have not done for themselves.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The growers could not do it. They tried, but there were too many blacklegs.

Mr. DAVY: If they cannot do it, it is because they do not want to do it. The hon. member himself says it is due to the fact that too many do not want to do it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is only a limited number, but they undermine the majority.

Mr. DAVY: The hon. member says it is the function of the Government to make the minority do what the majority want to do.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No, no.

Mr. DAVY: And he proposes that if the majority of a class vote in a certain way, perfectly valid contracts made with another class shall be rendered null and void.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, they can supply the quantity contracted for.

Mr. DAVY: But the contract is broken and all the conditions thereof have gone.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I appreciate that the hon. member is opposed to this class of legislation, but I have been working for it ever since I have been here.

Mr. DAVY: The hon. member tells us it is socialism. Most of the members of his party would agree with me that it is just as far from socialism as is the doctrine of individualism.

The Minister for Lands: There is very little individualism to-day.

Mr. DAVY: I am sorry to say it is becoming less and less; although, as a matter of fact, I do not know a more powerful individualist than is the Minister himself.

The Minister for Lands: I agree with you that the Bill is syndicalism.

Mr. DAVY: Of course it is. This clause is absolutely immoral, and therefore I will

support the member for Nelson in his objection to it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No one, I hope, likes this kind of legislation. What it really does is to give the opportunity to growers to charge a higher price than the export value on all sales made to the people of the State. That is all this legislation can do; it cannot increase the London price. We want this legislation so that we can insist upon the surplus being exported, and so that the growers can then raise the selling price of what remains. The member for Guildford says it is socialism.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is pooling.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What we shall be doing under the Bill is to raise the local price to the import price. It is most objectionable legislation and only to be faced under extraordinary circumstances, when the very life of the industry demands something of the sort. When the hon. member says this is socialism, what he really means is that under it we compel the growers to export a proportion of their produce in order that the rest may bring a bigger price when sold locally. All this legislation is bad. I remember that not very long ago we had much the same sort of thing discussed in relation to beef.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is being done today in relation to pearl shell.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I would have no hesitation in putting up the price of pearl shell, which is not used in the State at all. I would gladly put up the price of anything we sell to people beyond the State. The currants of Australia are at a disadvantage because we produce so few that we cannot get on to the London market with them.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Then organise your market.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister suggests we should allow the growers to make a living wage by rendering it possible for them to charge local consumers the price at which currants are imported. There is no socialism about that.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is more of a basic wage provision.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know why we cannot do better with our dried fruits. Our country is most suitable for the growing of the grape, yet we cannot get going with the industry.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The Bill will help.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Only so far as local people use the produce. It is a

very limited market and already overdone, else we should not have the Bill. All the States are faced with a similar trouble. In Victoria a market for currants is made, and our growers take advantage of that market. More power to them. I do not feel called upon to say that the Eastern States should be gently treated, since they do not treat us very gently. There is no alternative to the Bill, except the wiping out of the industry. Parliament is asking the people of the State to pay a higher price for their dried fruits than they would do if there were competition between growers. We cannot by pooling dried fruits or wheat, make our position overseas any better, although we can in respect of pearl shell and of jarrah. I do not like the cancellation of contracts; I do not know whether it is even necessary to do that. The Minister has not shown that it is necessary to do so.

Mr. THOMSON: The member for West Perth said that I was more concerned about the producer than the consumer, and he desired to draw my attention to the fact that there were consumers. I object to the innuendo that he cast. I am out to protect the producers; that is what I am here for.

Mr. Davy: You do not think I was offensive?

Mr. THOMSON: It sounded rather offensive, I will admit. The Leader of the Opposition said that we could not possibly increase the London price. But we can regulate the supply, and by co-operating with the other States we can at least get a slightly increased price, whereas as if we allow it to the individual to market his produce we shall not get anything like as good results. The Minister has definitely stated that the contracts with the growers are protected. The point is that the member for West Perth objects to the producers being able to get a decent price, or having the opportunity to regulate their own commodity. I might draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that in the profession he follows he is able to dictate the fees for his services.

Mr. Davy: Don't talk rubbish!

Mr. THOMSON: It is not rubbish.

Mr. Davy: You are talking rubbish.

Mr. THOMSON: The hon. member can accept or reject any work that may be offered him and, moreover, he may be in a position to charge more for professional advice than perhaps others charge. The growers, unfortunately, on account of the

position in which they are placed, are not able, by virtue of the fact that there is a surplus, to get what is a payable price.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This legislation has been introduced because of the existence of similar legislation in the Eastern States. Without this measure the Eastern States could swamp our market and destroy the producers here. If this Bill is not passed, it means that the boards created by similar legislation in the Eastern States can commandeer any quantity of the Western Australian product sent to the Eastern States and take it out of the hands of anyone who is endeavouring to sell it. Moreover, the Eastern States producers can invade our market to the detriment of our producers. The Bill would not have been introduced except that for some years there has been an agitation for its introduction and also because I have been seized with the necessity for protecting the interests of our own producers.

MR. STUBBS: One need only to go to Boan's store to find that table raisins are sold at 1s. 6d. a lb. and that around the corner in a Barrack-street store as much as 2s. a lb. is asked for them. At the same time we are told that growers cannot earn their salt by producing this commodity. There must be something radically wrong because what I am saying are facts that cannot be disputed. The same thing may be said in respect of sultanias. These cannot be bought for less than 9d. a lb. If the Bill will keep alive hundreds of men who have embarked in the industry in which Government capital to the extent of over £40,000 is involved, it will be a wise step. The Minister should see that action is taken to teach the men the proper way to grow the fruit and how to market it, and in that way get the best price.

MR. E. B. JOHNSTON: I would like the Minister to tell us what effect the cancellation of existing contracts will have. He said that it would have the effect of relieving the growers. I should have thought that as a certain amount of the product was already sold that would make the board's work so much lighter.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The clause is necessary in order to facilitate the work of the board. It will not cancel contracts if the contractor—

MR. DAVY: Has re-contracted.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so. He can supply the goods. I

have had no experience yet to say how far this provision will go, or how it will really affect the community. Owing to the activities of certain persons in the Eastern States in the direction of undermining the boards, the authorities in Victoria and South Australia were compelled to introduce an amendment of this description into their legislation.

MR. DAVY: After all, the operations of the clause will merely cover a short period. It is highly improbable that any contracts have been, or will be made beyond the crop for next year. Thus the clause is required only for the current season.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: After that, the position will be in the hands of the board.

MR. DAVY: I take it that even a professed socialist will not be in favour of wantonly cancelling contracts.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is not socialism.

MR. DAVY: Even the member for Guildford would not be in favour of cancelling contracts wantonly and in a haphazard manner. All that this means is that the contracts referred to may prevent the complete efficacy of the operations of the board during the next few months. After that there will be no necessity for such a provision. Why not be a little patient and avoid this breach of what is generally regarded as a sound principle of legislation, namely, that a contract, unless in a case of dire emergency, shall be honoured?

HON. W. D. JOHNSON: This is a vital period.

MR. DAVY: But the dried fruits industry has been in existence for many years.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But not at the stage it is to-day.

MR. DAVY: Why cannot we wait just a little longer and avoid a breach of a sound principle?

Clause, as previously amended, agreed to.

Clauses 28 to 30—agreed to.

Clause 31—Board subject to control of Minister:

MR. J. H. SMITH: If the board is to be appointed by means of a referendum of the dried fruitgrowers, will the Minister have power to veto the actions of the board? If that be so, it will raise a very grave question.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The clause means all that it sets forth. It gives the Minister full authority to veto any action of the board.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: That is a very wide power.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It would be a grave thing for the community if the board were to have a monopoly and there were no power of veto. The whole of this legislation depends upon this clause. From my standpoint, without this clause the Bill will not be passed. I have given the growers to understand that very definitely. This Bill grants a monopoly respecting the dried fruits industry. It amounts to compulsory unionism regarding the growers concerned. If it were not for the necessity of the times, this legislation would not be introduced. In my wildest dreams I would never have considered it. Hence the necessity for power of correction being vested in the Minister. It would be possible for the board to take action contrary to the best interests of the growers. Should there be no power to interfere with the board in the interests of the growers themselves? The board could hold commodities at a price not in the interests of the consumers. With this power in his hands, any Minister vested with the control of the board would take action immediately.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The powers proposed are very wide indeed to be placed in the hands of any Minister, irrespective of who he may be. The welfare of the industry is in the hands of the growers themselves. The growers will appoint the board, and yet the Minister is to be given power to veto the actions of the board! The Minister referred to compulsory unionism. What union would give any Minister the power to veto its decisions?

Mr. Chesson: If a union does not act properly, it can be deregistered.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Not at the will of the Minister, but by a decision of the court.

The CHAIRMAN: Order: I cannot allow a discussion on the cancellation or the registration of a union.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Surely we can trust the board to look after the interests of the industry.

Mr. Chesson: The consumers are entitled to some protection.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: So are the public entitled to protection against railway strikes, coal strikes, and shipping strikes.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I must reply to interjections!

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the clause, and hon. members not to interject.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I will vote against the clause, because it vests too much power in the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: For the information of the hon. member I will read him a letter.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: No letter will influence my opinion.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This letter is from the Dried Fruitgrowers' Association of Western Australia and reads—

At a meeting of my executive held on the 6th inst. it was unanimously resolved to tender to you a vote of thanks for your action in introducing the Dried Fruits Bill, which is greatly appreciated. I was also instructed to request you to have it passed before the session is closed. The Bill is entirely approved by my association and I am advising every member of both Houses by circular to this effect.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 33 to 35—agreed to.

Title agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Bill subject to a schedule of amendments.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS' ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendments.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Bill subject to a schedule of amendments.

BILL—JETTIES.

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

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [9.0]: Here again we are dealing with an industry that is in trouble, not because of the value of the land, but because the market is against the cattle grower and for no other reason. Hon. members will remember that 20 odd years ago the cattle growers of the Kimberleys sent to the Perth market 45,000 head of cattle per annum, and they were able to sell them at reasonably good prices. Last year they were able to sell 25,000 head of cattle to the Wyndham Meat Works at an average price, according to Mr. M. P. Durack, of £3 10s. to £4 per head. I understand that about 14,000 head of cattle were shipped from Derby and Broome to Perth. The market for those people has gone. Because they have to accept exceedingly low prices for stock, they are in trouble. This is one of the industries of the State that we should assist by all possible means. I agree with the Minister that we should be good landlords. We own the land that is rented to the people running stock in the Kimberleys. True, they have not made money out of the industry for some few years. They have not been able to market the stock that their holdings would justify them in expecting to market; they sell so few of the cattle that they rear. We should investigate the question of providing adequate assistance to enable this industry to live and get on its feet again. What we want is an improved breed of cattle, and that can be obtained only by securing a considerable number of better stock. The men who import the stock must have money. We own the meat works at Wyndham. I think we are losing roughly the interest on the outlay, something like £70,000 a year. Can we, by helping those pastoralists to improve and increase their herds, prepare for the full use of the Wyndham Meat Works? I think we can look forward to better prices for beef in a very few years' time, but it takes some years to influence the quality of cattle. Unlike sheep, cattle have to be held for several years before they are marketable. The bullocks sent to the Wyndham Meat Works are four to five years old, so there is considerable delay. When better breeding stock is sent to the sheep farmer,

he gets a return from it very quickly, in fact in 12 months' time. What can we do to help the cattle raisers in the far North? When their lands were appraised the position was very much better. To-day it is not a question of the value of the land; it is a question of the want of markets and reasonable prices for the stock, and a question of being able to pay the rents. If it takes 50 acres—as it does in some places—to feed a beast and the rent is 10s. per thousand acres, it means 6d. per annum for the rent of the land that feeds the beast. If it takes 100 acres per beast, the cost of the rent would be 1s. per annum for feeding the beast. That is not entirely the trouble. If the rent were reduced by one half, it would not overcome the difficulty, though of course it would help. Small raisers of cattle cannot pay. I believe that on one station a deposit of £25,000 was paid and that the station was returned and the deposit forfeited. We should look into this question with a view to improving materially the position of the grower, firstly by meeting him in the matter of rent, and secondly by encouraging him to improve his herd, so that by the time his cattle are ready for the market through our meat works at Wyndham, he will have stock of a better quality. We are interested because we own the works and are losing £70,000 a year on them. Naturally the marketing of beasts means the bringing into this State of a considerable sum of money, the circulation of that money, and the payment of taxation to the Government in an indirect fashion. We may accept the position that the cattle grower is having a very bad time and cannot market a great number of his cattle at all. For such as he does market in East Kimberley, he gets £3 10s. to £4 per head. If we agree that the cost of production has increased materially, as in every other industry, I think we can face this question realising what our duty is. I believe that in a very few years we shall not need nearly so much beef from the North-West for the metropolitan market. Far more cattle will be produced in the South-West than are produced at present.

Mr. Teesdale: It will be a long time yet.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, not so long. As a matter of fact one of the factors operating against beef to-day is the supply of lamb. Never at any time in the history of this State was so much lamb

used by the people. To-day we can get as much for a 30lb. lamb as for a 45lb. wether.

Mr. Teesdale: People would rather have the beef.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But they like good, fat Northam lamb, too.

Mr. Davy: Everything from Northam is fat.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes.

Mr. Withers: You do not suggest that all the people from Northam are lambs?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, all ready to be fleeced.

Mr. Chesson: And well shorn?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Always being fleeced, too. The market and not the land is the trouble of the Kimberley cattle growers. I do not know whether we can improve the market. I daresay that by the expenditure of money for the provision of freezers at places like Singapore and Colombo we might be able to sell more meat.

The Minister for Lands: If we could improve the quality of the stock, do not you think the marketing would improve?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If we had freezing facilities at Singapore and Colombo, as other countries have, we might be able to sell more beef there. If we could only improve the quality of the cattle by getting another 100lbs. on each beast sent to Wyndham, it would make a wonderful difference.

The Minister for Lands: The weight of our cattle used to be 200 lbs. to 300 lbs. more than it is now.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not so much as that.

The Minister for Lands: Yes, a lot of them used to go 800 lbs.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I would remind the Minister that, though the cattle might have weighed that much, that was not the freezing weight. If we could get another 100 lbs. on to each beast, it would mean a vastly better price for the growers. We want to help in that direction. We should treat cattle growing as one of the State's great industries and help it, as we have just been discussing the question of helping the fruitgrower and as we have frequently discussed helping the gold producer. Cattle raising is one of our industries that is in trouble and we happen to be the landlords.

The Minister for Lands: We have sent a number of bulls to the North.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have been doing that for some years, but we want

to breed them in the North and probably that could be done at the Moola Bulla station. We certainly ought to help by supplying not a few, but thousands of breeding stock. To do this requires a good deal of money. The Minister knows that such stock must be obtained from Queensland, and it must inoculated so as to render it immune to tick; otherwise it had better not be sent to the North. For the man without much capital, it is a pretty expensive job to secure stud cattle. I do not wish to delay the passage of the Bill. I am sorry that this is likely to be the last occasion, for some time at any rate, when I shall have an opportunity to deal with a Bill introduced by my old friend the Minister for Lands. For many years we have sat on one side of the House or the other, and one or the other of us has been bringing down Bills all the time.

The Minister for Lands: We have both been on the same side.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Perhaps we have not helped each other as much as we might have done. Sometimes I have helped him out of the kindness of my heart when I should have opposed him strenuously, and probably he has thought that he has done the same to me. At any rate, if we have not helped each other a bit, we have not allowed anyone else to criticise us. We have been together opposed to the whole House if it became necessary. I am sorry that I shall not have another opportunity this session to discuss a Bill brought down by him.

Mr. Teesdale: He may pop in another yet.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Probably I shall not have another such opportunity for several years. The Minister is a much improved man since he entered the House 21 years ago. He is very much wiser, too. I shall miss my daily argument with the Minister. I hope that since this may be the last occasion for many years when we shall have an opportunity to deal with a Bill, he will listen to a suggestion that I shall make. He proposes under the Bill to reduce the rent if at the time the rent was fixed, the appraisers would, but for the minimum of 10s. per thousand acres in the Kimberleys, have made the rent lower. Those appraisers are no longer in the service. The Surveyor General, Mr. McLean and Mr. Lefroy are the present appraisers, but the Kimberley land was appraised in the time of Mr. King, Mr. Canning and Mr. McLean. It depends

entirely upon what the appraisers had in their minds when they made the appraisal years ago. Unless they put something on paper at the time, that will not be known. In any event, it is quite possible under the wording of the clause that they will be able to reduce the rent of the land appraised at 10s. If they have already fixed the price at 11s. or 12s., I do not see how they can reasonably say that, but for the 10s. minimum, they would have made it lower. The natural reply would be, "Why did not you make it 10s. instead of 11s. or 12s.? All the cattle people in the Kimberleys are in the same trouble. They have the same market difficulty. Although the growers who have been in the Kimberleys for many years and have bigger stations are in a better position than are the smaller men, all are experiencing the same trouble. I suggest that the Minister should agree to a proviso that I intend to move in Committee as follows:—

Provided that the Minister may rebate the rent on any pastoral lease used as a cattle station for a period not exceeding five years from the 1st January, 1927.

That would give the Minister power to rebate the whole of the rent. The Minister should take into consideration the circumstances that have led to the request for a reduction of rent being made to the Government and remember that the suggested reduction will help only a little. It will not put the industry on its feet, as we must do, if we are going to get back our money from the Wyndham Meat Works, and if we are going to get in trade from the industry what the industry is capable of giving us. We know that our meat is not first class, and that it must go Home in a frozen condition. That is a disadvantage to our growers. The Argentine growers can send their cattle Home chilled. It fetches a better price, and is much nearer the London market. The cattle are a little better than ours, but not so much better than ours from what I could see of the meat at Smithfield; but our meat is frozen and looks black, as against the fresh looking red meat from the Argentine. We have to compete with that meat. At the moment the world is fairly well supplied with beef, but I do not think that will last very long. We should consider giving this industry the best possible chance under the Bill. The Minister naturally wants the industry based on a sound footing. Some of the people have been in the Kimberleys for many years, and some

went there comparatively recently. We have in the State 1,000,000 head of cattle, but we are not able to slaughter much more than 70,000 a year. In Victoria, where there are only half a million more cattle than there are here, they are able to slaughter nearly half a million a year, which is seven times as many as we can slaughter. It can readily be seen what the returns for the Victorian cattlemen are, as compared with the returns for the Western Australian cattlemen. In Committee we can discuss the clause and my suggested amendment. My view is that the clause will apply only to a reduction of rents on leases that are appraised at 10s. per thousand minimum.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: That is all they ask for.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That could not be in the mind of the Minister. The appraisers would reduce the rent because of the bad times, and not because of the bad land, for it is not bad land.

The Minister for Lands: That is the position. Some of the land is not worth so much as other land.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The markets are the trouble. If the 10s. becomes 5s., surely the 11s. cannot be left without consideration. I hope we shall deal with the Bill along those lines, and that the Minister will agree to the amendment. The amendment will give him power to abate the rate altogether where the land is used only for cattle.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mt. Margaret) [9.20]: I gather from the Minister that the Bill is to enable the findings of the appraisers to be put into effect, if they appraise the land at less than 10s. At present the Minister could not give them that right. If that be so, we have charged too much for the land in the first instance. When the 1917 Act was passed it included the central division, where the 10s. rent came into question. I was successful in removing that obstacle, and the people on the eastern goldfields got their land at 5s. instead of 10s. Since then we have amended the Act, giving power to the appraisers to re-appraise the land. In some instances they have appraised the land at a higher rent, and in others suggested a lower rent, but they had no power to reduce. We were given to understand when we reduced the rent in the Central Province that it was reason-

able to charge 10s. That was the charge for good land, and the committee were induced to reduce the rent to 5s. Last November a deputation led by Mr. M. P. Durack, waited on the Minister. Mr. Durack was a member of this House for some years, and had never put up the proposal that the rents were too high in the Kimberleys. Let us know exactly why we are amending the legislation. Has there been a drought in the country, or is it due to the low price of cattle? Is it because the cattle raisers have not gone in for better-bred herds? Do not let us pass legislation to decry the value of our country. What will people say when they see this Bill being passed? We boast of our land in Western Australia, and have asked people to come to us from overseas.

The Premier: Not our pastoral lands

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We have said that our pastoral lands are second to none in the country, but we are passing a Bill to reduce rents that have been in existence for years.

The Premier: If it is going to encourage people from overseas, let us increase the rent.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Why is the Bill being brought down?

The Premier: You ought to know if you know the position in the North-West.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The only reason given is that the appraisers have no power to reduce rents. The Bill is the outcome of a deputation of only about a fortnight ago.

The Premier: It has been going on for the last 12 months. There is a large file on the subject.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It only became prominent about a fortnight ago.

Mr. Coverley: I led a deputation about two years ago.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Only a fortnight ago did we hear from the leading journals in the State on the subject, and now this Bill is being brought down. I have no desire to oppose the measure, but I want a legitimate reason for its introduction.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 30 of Act No. 19 of 1917:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Would it be correct to insert an amendment in the place where the rent is fixed at the minimum?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is nothing in the Bill dealing with rents at any rate. It only means that the appraisers have the right to fix the minimum as well as the maximum.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It does not do that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It does. The Act prohibits them from going below a certain rate, because the minimum is distinctly stated in the Act.

Hon. G. Taylor: At 10s.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In the Kimberleys, but 5s. in another part. The amount is fixed in the Act, and below that they cannot go. Some of these values would have been fixed below the minimum had the appraisers been given power to do so. No doubt the deputation finalised the Bill, but the subject has been under consideration for two years. Many of those who were away back from the coast have complained about the rents, but did not make their appeals against the appraisements within the specified time. We, therefore, had no power to do anything. Out of the 248 holdings in the Kimberley division, 224 are at the minimum rate. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that it would look very strange if the appraisers valued some person's land at 11s. and afterwards said it was not worth that much.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That could not be altered under the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It can be done if the appraisers so desire. The subclause gives them power to alter the rent. A leaseholder has to apply within a certain time after the appraisal is made. The subclause allows the right of appeal to continue upon application for re-appraisal. I had a paragraph specially inserted that the board may appraise and recommend a reduction in the annual rental.

Hon. G. Taylor: Can appraisements be made at less than that provided in the Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Under the 1917 Act, when the leases were extended to 1948, stocking conditions were inserted. The old Act provided that rents should be reduced to one-half if the stocking conditions were complied with, but that

was struck out, and in 1917 the stocking conditions were included. The proviso in Section 30 stated: "Provided that such rents shall not be less than the rent prescribed by the principal Act for pastoral leases in the several divisions of the State." That is the paragraph I propose to delete.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The position was better for the pastoralists then.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know that it was. I do not think the reduction of the rent will remedy the position entirely. Probably some of the holders have areas that are too large. It has been asked that we should give the appraisers the right to fix the minimum as well as the maximum. That is what the Bill provides.

Mr. Thomson: It is only just.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We are giving everything that is asked for. The matter ought to be entirely in the hands of the appraisers, without the Minister coming in. Under the clause the appraisers can, if they like, recommend the Minister to charge 1s. per 1,000 acres.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We know that because of bad times, due to the low price of cattle, rents are a trouble to these pastoralists. Reduction of rents will be some relief to them. Under the clause the appraisers have to say that but for the minimum they would, when appraising the land, have recommended a lower rent.

The Minister for Lands: The chairman of the board has definitely stated that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the clause says "if at the time of the appraisalment." That is years ago.

The Minister for Lands: There have been several appraisements of pastoral holdings since I have been in office.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But there were hundreds years ago. Let us do justice by the amendment. There is no need for the restriction. The Minister ought to have the right to say, "These people are in trouble owing to this cause or that cause, and so the Government must reconsider the rents." I shall not oppose the clause. I doubt whether it gives the power needed by the Minister. The Bill applies to the whole State, and not only to the Kimberleys, though I suppose what moved the Minister was the low price of cattle.

The Premier: Why should not the board of appraisers be trusted with the minimum?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not object to their being trusted, but the Bill

applies to the whole State. When appraised these rents were supposed to be very low. The Act is to stand for all time, and five years hence cattle may be three times the price they are to-day. The Premier is mostly thinking of the Kimberleys. I know that some of the pastoralists there cannot pay rents.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: There may be a large file dealing with this matter, but nobody except the Minister has seen that file. It may contain ample justification for all that the Bill proposes.

The Premier: Everyone who has followed meat prices knows that the pastoral holdings have not been paying for years.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We have been repeatedly told here that the pastoralists in the Kimberleys and elsewhere do not pay high rents. Is the present position due to the pastoralists themselves, by reason of not using their lands to the utmost, or is it the result of circumstances over which the pastoralists have no control?

The Premier: The meat growers all over Australia are up against it. Do not you know that?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I know that, but I do not want the House to declare by the Bill that the rent has to be reduced because the land is not worth it. I want it made clear that present conditions are such as prevent the pastoralists from meeting their rent obligations. This matter has become public property only in the past two weeks, though we are told that the representations to the Government extend over two years. Let us have the facts. I agree that the appraisers are perfectly honest and quite capable of appraising the rents. However, the amount of an appraisal depends largely on the time of the year during which it was made. In the rainy season a holding might be appraised high, and during a drought it might not be considered worth a shilling.

Mr. Lamond: The appraisers do not appraise the rent on one year, but over a period of several years.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The appraisers cannot do that. If they appraise a holding after a heavy downpour of rain, never having seen the holding before, they will err.

The Premier: What kind of men do you think the appraisers would be if they appraised on one year? Do they not know rain-falls and seasons?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: They appraised the lands on the Eastern Goldfields after a heavy rainfall.

The Premier: Do you say they were carried away by the season?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: They know more about land than the Premier knows.

The Premier: I should be sorry not to know more than you know about it. You speak of land because you rode over it 30 years ago.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier would be lost on horseback.

The Premier: Yes. Only great men like you know their way about.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I know the Premier's capacity.

The Premier: And I know your capacity.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Premier would be lost on horseback because that is not his business. In my opinion the Minister for Lands has not given sufficient reason for a reduction of rents. I do not want our lands decried or depreciated.

Mr. TEESDALE: While supporting Clause 2 I take exception to the remark of the Minister for Lands that the reduction of rent would not be of any particular benefit.

The Minister for Lands: Not of great benefit.

Mr. TEESDALE: I think the Minister is wrong there, and also in stating that big acreages are the cause of the trouble.

The Minister for Lands: In some cases.

Mr. TEESDALE: Had it not been for being able to shift mobs of cattle across big extents of country, some of the pastoralists would have been in a very bad way. I say this because I was up there at the time. Big acreages must obtain where seasons are somewhat doubtful. This has been illustrated in our North within the last two years. The advocates of small pastoral areas, had their views prevailed, would have landed a lot of small people in a very bad position. I would like the Government to make a name for themselves by abating the pastoral rents for, say, three years.

The Minister for Lands: Any Minister can make a name for himself by giving away revenue.

Mr. TEESDALE: It is well known that the meat industry has been in a bad state for the last seven years. It would be a fine thing if the Government said to those people, "We recognise the markets are against you, and your stock is against you, and we will give you a chance to get on your feet by improving your bulls." Not that I blame the Government for the

lack of improvement, because the Government have placed first-class bulls at the disposal of the growers, none of whom seemed to take an interest in the offer. It is only lately that I have heard of satisfactory sales of bulls from Moola Bulla station. The growers will require to improve their cattle and breed "baby beef" before they can compete with the Argentine products. The Government would do well to rebate the rents for the time being, until the conditions improve. I do not blame the Government, or any Government, for the inferior class of cattle, because that is the fault of the growers themselves.

The Premier: They realise that their stock is inferior, but many of them are not in a financial position to improve the breed.

Mr. TEESDALE: The Premier is quite right in that. The growers have been carrying on in happy-go-lucky style, content to send their cattle in to the Wyndham Meat Works, yet growling all the time about the price. Why do they not improve their bulls and so command a better price for their product? Probably the prices paid at the Wyndham Meat Works are all that the cattle are worth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The position of the cattle industry to-day is not ascribable to any one cause. The world over, the market for beef is depressed. That is one reason. Another is that there has been a series of droughts up North. Still another is that the growers have not kept their breed of stock up to the standard.

Mr. Teesdale: Did they ever have it there to start with?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At some stations in the early days the breed was quite satisfactory. This year the exportable beef at the Wyndham Meat Works will be very little above 3 per cent. of the stock killed. So we can realise the very poor class of cattle being sent to those works. That is one reason for the depressed state of the industry. I do not think the remission of rents would remedy the position.

Mr. Teesdale: It would help.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and the Bill is a step in that direction. As I travelled through the North I met with many complaints of inequalities in appraisements. One holder would point out that so-and-so's holding was much more favourably situated than his, notwithstanding which so-and-so was rated only the same as the complainer. Invariably the complainer

asked, "Why should I have to pay as much as he pays?" On going into the position I found that the appraiser said the one man's holding was worth 10s., and the other man's was not worth so much, but under the law he could not be rated at less than 10s.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They did not say that at the time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, that is on the file, in the report of the appraisers. The Act will not permit of their rating any man below 10s. All the Bill does is to give them power to fix the minimum, as at present they are empowered to fix the maximum. It will mean a great deal of help to the holders of the land, but it will not in itself place the industry in a thriving condition.

Mr. Teesdale: The growers will have to do a bit themselves.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, unless they improve their stock, all the assistance the Government can render will be of very little value. The Government have imported well-bred bulls and let them out to the growers at a reasonable figure.

Mr. Teesdale: The growers have had first-class treatment.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At a meeting held at the Fitzroy Crossing I learnt that the pastoralists did not know anything about those bulls being available, did not even know that the Moola Bulla station had blood bulls.

Mr. Teesdale: That is a positive fact.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I told them the manager of the station had a number of those bulls on hand but could not get any sale for them.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They have been there for five years.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, but it takes time for news to get across such enormous distances as obtain up there. I thought everybody knew the bulls had been sent up, but I found the people there did not know of it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course they knew.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One would have thought so, but I was assured they did not know.

Mr. Teesdale: Some of them are not interested in the locally-bred bulls, although they are just as good as the imported animals.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And they have the further advantage of being acclimatised.

Mr. Teesdale: I understand that 30 have been sold from Moola Bulla.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well that is a start. In the East Kimberleys I found a poorer class of stock than in the west. The Bill will afford some assistance to the industry. Some of the pastoralists pay up to £300 and £500 per annum in rent. That, of course, cannot mean the difference between success and failure. It is not a question of depreciating the value of the land, for if a man crosses the border into the Northern Territory he can get his land at 3s. 6d. on a 40 years' lease; and if he crosses into Queensland he can get it at from 6s. to 7s. Our rents have been the highest.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: They do not get it at 3s. 6d. per thousand, but by the square mile.

The Premier: It works out at from 3s. 6d. to 4s. in the Northern Territory.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So it cannot be said the Bill will depreciate the value of the land. However, we cannot let the matter rest there and say this is going to put the industry on a sound footing, for something more will have to be done.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I should like the Minister to take power to rebate the rent wherever it would enable the owner to improve his herd. Of course, the Minister would have to make conditions, one of which would be that the herds should be improved. I do not know why the bulls at Moola Bulla have not been sold. We require to encourage the growers to improve their cattle, for we want their beef at the Wyndham Meat Works. But how can the pastoralists maintain the quality of their stock when they cannot get reasonable prices?

The Minister for Lands: I think the Bill has gone far enough; it is certainly all that was asked for.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not think it goes far enough. We want the industry built up. The people who attended the deputation were not all the people from the North-West.

The Premier: The president and the secretary of the Pastoralists' Association were there. They surely know the needs of their own people.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to the clause: "Provided that the Minister may rebate rent on any pastoral land used as a cattle station for a period not exceeding five years from the 1st January, 1927."

This will enable the Minister to do what I suggest he should do to make the conditions such as he desires to have them. It will have the effect of putting the industry on a better footing.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot accept the amendment. I have given all that has been asked for. It seems to be the general practice that when a person makes a request and a Bill is brought in to grant a certain amount of relief, somebody wants to go further every time. It is a wrong attitude to adopt. The proviso is not necessary, because if a person is in difficulties the Minister has power to postpone the payment of rent. To put a proviso as that suggested in the Bill is not fair, even to the Minister. The next thing will be that the Minister will be accused of favouritism to certain persons, if he does not treat all alike.

Mr. Teesdale: It is for the whole of the North.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The whole of the State.

Mr. Teesdale: Then how can you be accused in the way you suggest?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If I were friendly with the hon. member and he came to me with a friend of his and I granted his request, it would be said that I favoured the member for Roebourne. Any Minister can make himself a hero if he gives away State funds.

Mr. Teesdale: It is only for a couple of years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is unfair to suggest such a proviso especially as it has not been asked for by the pastoralists themselves. They want only what I have provided for in the Bill and so far as I am concerned the Bill will not go any further.

Mr. Teesdale: You are speaking generally for the North-West.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am speaking for the whole State. The question is that the appraisers shall have the right to fix the minimum in the same way as they have the power to fix the maximum. They will then be able to recommend any rent they think proper.

Mr. Teesdale: It is really an appraisalment of the whole of the North-West.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Most of the information is in the office at the present time. I cannot accept the amendment.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The amendment of the Leader of the Opposition deals only with cattle stations, and from the arguments advanced by the Government side, it is only cattle raisers that have made the request because they have been up against it. If it is desired to give relief to those people it would be better to relieve them altogether of rent for two or three years on the understanding that they would do their share by improving the stock.

The Minister for Lands: You cannot put in that condition.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I know, but we can discuss the matter without losing our temper.

The Minister for Lands: I am not in a temper.

The Premier: And we will get it through without your paddock arguments.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Now the Premier is being offensive. The whole trend of the argument was in respect of cattle country, and the Leader of the Opposition wants to relieve cattle raisers in a straightforward way. If the cattle raisers of this State are being affected, let us do something for them that would benefit them.

Mr. TEESDALE: I hope the Minister will recognise that I was speaking entirely in connection with the cattle industry which I have tried to show once or twice is in a very bad state.

[Mr. Panton took the Chair.]

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister said he would help the industry by re-appraising the land. I want to give the Minister power in special cases to rebate the rent altogether.

The Minister for Lands: The Bill will give the appraisers power to fix a fair rent, maximum and minimum, which at the present time does not exist.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We have as much right as the Minister to suggest amendments.

The Premier: You are trying to go one better: you never thought of anything for the cattle growers while you were on this

side of the House. Now you are trying to go one better.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Nothing of the kind, and I would be ashamed to say that.

The Premier: It is a fact all the same.

The CHAIRMAN: Members must discuss the amendment.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have a perfect right to go one better if I want to do so.

The Premier: It is unworthy of you to try to do it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Premier should not say that. What he is saying is that we are trying to buy votes in the Kimberley district.

The Premier: That is all you are trying to do.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That statement is unworthy of the Premier.

The Premier: It is true.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know the Premier does not mean that.

The Premier: It is what you are trying to do. There is no sincerity in the amendment at all.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, there is. Most certainly I say there is.

The Premier: I say there is not.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Surely I know best.

The Premier: It is only pretence.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Premier should not say that. Of course, I cannot prevent him from doing so.

The Premier: It is true at any rate.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, it is not.

The Premier: It is.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is no use going on saying it is, it is not. All I ask is that the Minister shall have power to do this if he deems it wise. We have as much right to oppose the proposals of the Government as we think fit, and we should not be insulted because we do so.

Hon. G. Taylor: Some people cannot be anything but offensive.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We should not be spoken to as we have been by the Premier and the Minister for Lands. We have every right to suggest improvements in the interests of the industry. The Minister for Lands says that for two years these people have been asking for a reduction. That is a long time. The Minister's proposal was in respect of the whole State,

but the amendment merely deals with the cattle runs in the Kimberleys. I hope the Minister will agree to the amendment.

Mr. ANGELO: While I have every sympathy with the object sought to be attained by the Leader of the Opposition I consider the amendment will defeat the policy that governs the parent Act, which was that rents should be fixed by a board of appraisers and not by any Minister who might hold office for the time being.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The amendment has nothing to do with rent, but merely the rebating of rents fixed by the board of appraisers.

Mr. ANGELO: The board take into consideration the circumstances obtaining at the time of fixing the rents, and would take into account the fact that there is a very small market for fat cattle at present.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But that will not last for 15 years.

Mr. ANGELO: This will enable the board to re-open the question.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: No, it will not.

Mr. ANGELO: All the necessary information regarding the holdings is to be found in the books of the department and if the clause be agreed to, it will give the board an opportunity to reconsider the leases in view of the altered market conditions. I think the amendment will upset the policy we adopted when we decided that rents should be fixed by a board of appraisers.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course it will not.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for Gascoyne cannot justify his statement that the amendment will violate the principles governing the parent Act. We merely desire to give the Minister power to rebate.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: This makes one disgusted with politics!

Mr. Angelo: The Act gives power to grant rebates now.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Not at all. The amendment will give the board power to deal with the cattle raisers who are hard up against it, but it will not interfere with the policy of the parent Act.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	27
				—
Majority against	..	..	..	15
				—

AYES.

Mr. Barnard	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Davy	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Maley	Mr. Teesdale
Sir James Mitchell	Mr. C. P. Wansbrough
Mr. North	Mr. Richardson

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Lamond
Mr. Angwin	Mr. Lindsay
Mr. Brown	Mr. Lutey
Mr. Chesson	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Collier	Mr. Millington
Mr. Corboy	Mr. Munsie
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Cunningham	Mr. Troy
Mr. Heron	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Miss Holman	Mr. Willcock
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Withers
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. Willson
Mr. Lambert	

(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.	NO.
Mr. J. M. Smith	Mr. Hughes

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 2nd December.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [10.28]: I support the second reading of the Bill. The districts concerned will be grateful that at last this measure has been introduced. I am glad to hear that Bunbury is anxious for the passing of this legislation. The experience that we have had in Cottesloe and Claremont with the installation of septic tanks will be of great benefit to towns that cannot afford a sewerage system. In introducing the Bill, the Minister said that there was one principle involved, namely, that of borrowing money for the installation of septic tanks. I held the opinion four years ago that the existing law enabled local governing authorities to instal tanks. Whether that be so or not, it is pleasing to know that we are making sure of the position by amending the Health Act to enable the work to be carried out. Mr. Stawell, K.C., advised the Cottesloe Council

three years ago that the Health Act provided for work of this description. The main thing is that Parliament has advocated the introduction of the septic tank system and that the Health Department, the Public Works Department and the local governing authorities favour that step being taken. The mere adding of a few sections to an Act already containing 300 sections is neither here nor there. I am prepared to shut my eyes to the fact that there are those who agree with the opinion of King's Counsel and to accept the amendment of the Act to enable the work to be carried out. If we can extend the sewerage of the metropolitan area and country towns as well without going to the expense of installing a deep drainage system, we shall have accomplished a great work. I am glad the Minister has seized the psychological moment to introduce a Bill that needs such delicate and tactful handling. I may say that people in my district nearly two years ago gave up all hope of getting anything of this kind, for the reason that the local bodies, other than Cottesloe and Peppermint Grove, were very chary of the scheme and evinced no interest in it at all. There was a feeling that the septic tanks were dangerous and all the usual objections were raised. The Minister, on a happy occasion, visited the Swanbourne sanitary site and had around him the representatives of three or four local bodies quarrelling like Kilkenny cats over the question of removing the site. The Minister caught them on the hop, as it were, and the suggestion was suddenly put to them that if they would not cease quarrelling about the sanitary site, it would be better to abolish it altogether and adopt a measure of this sort. Then it was that the recalcitrant bodies, who had hitherto been opposed to septic tanks, saw that it would be better to abolish the sanitary site and adopt this system. It is worth recording what an extraordinary attitude all the departments have adopted in the past towards the septic tanks. In the first place we had the Public Works Department consistently opposed to these tanks for householders, although hotels and big buildings had been using them for years. Then again, we had the extraordinary position that the Works Department had a septic tank in connection with their main metropolitan sewerage scheme. After all, Burswood and the proposed Subiaco works are nothing more or less than enormous septic tanks. There seems to be some virtue in a septic tank,

according to the Works Department, if the sewage has been driven through miles of pipes, whereas if it is delivered direct to a tank in the backyard, there is some objection to it. Objections were also raised by the Health Department. Whereas the Licensing Bench were compelling hotel after hotel to instal septic tanks, the Health Department were hostile to a small house next door to an hotel putting one in. The position was not only intolerable but ridiculous. It is obvious that if a septic tank is useless and dangerous in a small house, it is more so in a big building when 200 or 300 people are using it every day. Expert knowledge is supposed to hold that the septic tank is far more difficult to operate on a big scale than it is as an individual unit for an ordinary house. I am glad the member for Forrest (Miss Holman) is not present while I am dealing with this matter. The ordinary house installation is used only two or three times per day, whereas the big Perth scheme, or the Subiaco scheme, is in use for the whole 24 years. It is known to those in the business that septic tanks work with much more difficulty when operated throughout the 24 hours than if they are disturbed only two or three times in 24 hours and have time to recuperate and deal with the sewage. It is advisable also to acquaint members very shortly with the reason why the Health Act, if it does not actually provide for the installation of septic tanks, so nearly does that it seems a pity to waste the time of Parliament by bringing in an amending Bill at all. Section 115 of the Act provides—

The local authority may, and when the Commissioner so requires shall, make by-laws with respect to any of the following matters:—(1) The provision, construction, situation, inspection, maintenance, and control of sewers and drains, and apparatus for the bacteriolytic treatment of sewage, and house fittings and appliances connected therewith.

That is the law to-day. Again, Section 96 of the Act contains this provision—

The local authority may, in lieu of, or in addition to a sanitary rate, provide for the proper removal and disposal of nightsoil, urine, or refuse, whether within the district or not, by making an annual charge per pan or other receptacle, payable by equal monthly or other instalments in advance, for the removal thereof, in respect of every house or place from whence the receptacles for nightsoil, urine, or refuse have to be removed.

Those latter words have a live meaning. Section 81 provides—

(1) No person shall erect or rebuild any house without providing for such house sanitary conveniences constructed in accordance with the by-laws of the local authority.

Subclause 2 mentions the penalty if any person causes a house to be erected or rebuilt in contravention of that provision.

Subclause 3 reads—

If any house in the district appears to the local authority not to have such sanitary conveniences constructed as hereinbefore prescribed, the local authority shall, by written notice, require the owner or occupier of the house within a time therein specified to provide the same.

Subclause 4 provides a penalty if that is not done. That all turns on the definition in the Act of a sanitary convenience, which is to be found in Section 3. I ask members if this is not sufficient. Sanitary convenience includes, amongst other things, urinals, water-closets, earth-closets, privies, apparatus for the bacteriolytic treatment of sewage, ashpits, ash-tubs, or other receptacles for the deposit of ashes, faecal matter, or refuse, and all similar conveniences. If that does not describe the septic tank, I do not know what does. That and other provisions in the Act obviously did provide the power necessary to authorise the installation of septic tanks. There is also a section that empowers the local authority to borrow for all purposes under the Act, one of the purposes being the provision of sanitary conveniences. Therefore, in my opinion and in the opinion of a King's Counsel, the local authority could have done the work which the Minister is giving them power to do under this Bill. Since the Bill is considered necessary, however, and since Parliament directs it, let the measure go through by all means. The mere addition of eight clauses to the existing Act will be neither here nor there. I consider the Bill is redundant, and I think when members come to consider it in Committee, they will realise that the draftsman was at a loss to know how to improve on the provisions of the existing Act, because all that is required was already provided there. Mention of the long term "apparatus for the bacteriolytic treatment of sewage" is already in the Act, but in the Bill it is dealt with under the definition and given a meaning. Regarding the benefits to any district that adopts this system, apart from the health aspect, and the abolition of flies in great quantities and

the disgusting attributes of the present system, far less cost will be incurred by the people than if the deep drainage system were adopted. We can have these tanks installed for £27 per house, which amount will include the fittings stipulated by the Engineer-in-Chief.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: They estimate that the cost for a family of five will be not more than £30.

Mr. NORTH: When we consider that under the deep drainage system the usual charge is £50 to £60 per house, quite apart from the loan expenditure required to put down the deep drains, members will realise the enormous saving that will be made by adopting the septic tank system in a community scattered as are the people of Cottesloe, Claremont or Bunbury. Above all, we have to remember that one of these septic tanks is considered to have a life of at least 20 years, but probably more. I know of septic tanks at Peppermint Grove that have been in use for 24 years, have not been interfered with at all, and are still operating satisfactorily. We at Claremont will have the advantage of dealing with very sandy soil, which is ideal for the use of these tanks.

Mr. Thomson: That is a most important thing.

Mr. NORTH: I think it helps a great deal. It is sad to think that for all these years the matter has not been dealt with because of the wrong attitude adopted by the departments. This measure, however, will give power to instal the system. I regret the attitude of the various departments and their vacillation, together with their action on the one hand in compelling people to instal septic tanks in hotels and big buildings and denying them to private householders. If it is good for 300 or 400 houses in the metropolitan area to be connected with these tanks, it must be good for the whole lot. In Adelaide this system has been largely in operation in several of the suburbs for years. In Western Australia, where such an enormous amount of loan expenditure is required, and where there is so much work required, such as building roads and other things, it is essential to save all the concrete, cement and other material that we can and use it for the construction of roads, in addition to saving the money that otherwise would be required for deep sewers. Less money will be required to instal the septic tanks than

will do the job and their presence will hardly be known. I regret having to deal with this subject after the House has been engaged in considering such subjects as dried fruit and meat; it is rather a comedown to get on to an old night-cart. If we can exterminate rabbits, however, we can try to exterminate those undesirable sanitary conveniences also. Although this question is not mentioned in ordinary society—

The Premier: Your audience is disappearing from the gallery.

Mr. NORTH: Evidently my remarks are having a good effect.

Mr. Richardson: You have driven the people away.

Mr. NORTH: The adoption of the septic tank system will mean retaining big sums of money in the pockets of the people. It is extraordinary how the cost of these little installations has dropped since the bargaining began. Until three or four years ago the cost of installing one of these tanks in an ordinary house was £60 or £70. That was almost prohibitive to the ordinary householder. The moment that collective bargaining began and the Cottesloe council introduced from Adelaide a firm who started operations in the district, which they did two years ago, it was shown to be possible to instal these tanks by private enterprise for £27.

Mr. Thomson: Complete?

Mr. NORTH: Yes, everything complete. From that time there has been a desire to make the septic tanks available to everyone. Since there has been a lot of talk to-night about socialism, I should like to clear myself on that point. I do not support the Minister in that respect.

Mr. Thomson: We all stand for socialism.

Mr. NORTH: Night carts also represent socialism.

Hon. S. W. Munsie: I am not putting it forward as a socialistic measure.

Mr. NORTH: No, it is only a matter of finance, for the health of the district and in order to save money for the people. I feel sure that the local bodies in my district, except Cottesloe Beach, will undertake the installation of this scheme very soon. I note that the Cottesloe Beach board, though they have not applied for the system, when a big contract for motor works was let, permitted what is known as the Kaustine system. I should like the

Minister, in Committee, to consider whether power should not be given to include with the septic tank the Kaustine or Kemico system, if a locality is not suitable for septic tanks. That would be a good idea as Cottesloe Beach has authorised this system for large motor works. Of course I am having a tilt at the night carts. I want to see them abolished because they are merely a relic of the dark ages. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill and trust that in Committee we shall be able to deal with the matter of septic tanks also. There is a request from Claremont that the Minister should consider the question of having men known as drainers registered, just as plumbers are registered, to do this work, so that we shall have a properly constituted body of men for the work.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [10.44]: I congratulate the member for Claremont (Mr. North) on the efforts he has consistently put forth in behalf of the health of the people of his district, and of course for other districts as well, and I express appreciation of the decision of the Minister to introduce this measure. The pan system is an anachronism. Deep drainage in many cases is impossible. In other countries very much progress in this matter has been made. I had the opportunity in 1914 of visiting a number of towns in Norway. In respect to health matters there was far greater progress made in these comparatively sparsely populated centres than is the case in many Australian towns. The adoption of the principle embodied in the Bill will give power that will lead to the prevention of disease. Typhoid and enteric, if not entirely eliminated, will be materially reduced. The bacteriolytic treatment of sewerage is of first importance. I have much pleasure, as a past Minister for Health, in supporting the Bill.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purpose of the Bill.

All Stages.

In accordance with resolutions adopted in Committees of Supply and Ways and

Means, leave obtained to introduce the Appropriation Bill, which was read a first time.

Second Reading.

On motion by the Premier and Treasurer, Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Third Reading.

THE PREMIER AND TREASURER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder) [10.50]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [10.51]: We were given an assurance by the Premier that the House would have an opportunity of discussing the Federal proposals concerning the North-West. I should like an assurance from him that before the session closes members will be afforded this opportunity. We know of the decision of Cabinet, and that probably nothing we may say will have any effect.

THE PREMIER (Hon. P. Collier—Boulder—in reply) [10.52]: When I give an assurance, it is always carried out. I do not know that it is fair to ask me to give another assurance. I told the House an opportunity would be afforded to discuss this question. If the hon. member is not prepared to take my word, and wants another assurance to-night, he may have it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.