make regulations for the purpose of controlling the charges made to employees. Certain abuses have sprung up in certain registry offices, which we have been unable to redress on account of having no control. Otherwise all the sections of the present Act are good, and have served their purpose very well. In Clause 15 it is provided that a list of charges be posted up in the registry office. Clause 16 provides a penalty for charging fees other than in accordance with scale. Clause 17 provides that a contract for fees other than those in the scale shall be void. So it will be seen that they cannot make contracts outside the Bill or the regulations. But the most important clause is Clause 27, and hon. members will see——

Hon. J. W. Hackett : Are these fees the same as before?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes; everything is the same, with the exception of these Clauses 15, 16, 17, and 27 which are new. The others are word for word identical with those in the existing Act with perhaps one small exception in Clause 3, giving a definition of a servant seeking employment. Clause 27 is, as I say, the most important, and really is the reason for the whole Bill. It provides that the Governor may make regulations for carrying into effect the provisions of this Bill, and for prescribing a scale of payment or remuneration chargeable by and payable to employment brokers by employers and servants, or either of them, in respect of the hiring of servants either generally or in respect to any particular class of engagement, or to the sex of the persons engaged or to be engaged. At the present time there is no provision made as to what a broker may charge an employee, and therefore the Governor-in-Council cannot regulate the charges. In consequence there have been cases in which extortion has been used by some of the brokers, while on the other hand others have acted very fairly. This clause also gives the Governor-in-Council further power to make regulations providing that part of the charge shall be borne by the employer. The last part of the clause provides that the regulations shall be published in the *Government Gazette* and laid on the table of the House. It is very necessary that we should have an addition to the present Act in the direction I have indicated.

Hon. W. Kingsmill : Do you think you will get it through both Houses this session?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes; there is nothing to get through. It might have been brought in by way of a small amending Bill simply giving the power to make regulations under the Act of 1897. However it was thought better to have one complete Act, instead of an Act and a small amending measure. It is a Bill I know something of because it comes under my department, and I know that this regulation is badly wanted. I trust the House will see fit to pass the Bill in its present form. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 5.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 1st December, 1908.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Premier : 1, By-laws of the Fremantle Local Board of Health. 2.

By-laws of the Municipality of Claremont.

QUESTION—POLICE CONSTABLES' SALARIES.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Premier: 1, Was a Royal Commission appointed by the James Government in 1902 for the purpose of effecting economies in Government departments? 2, Were recommendations made that all constables who had not been promoted from the ranks after 10 years' service should have their salaries increased? 3, Have the recommendations made by that Commission been given effect to? 4, Is the Premier aware that a motion was carried by the Boulder Municipal Council to the effect that goldfields constables were underpaid, and were in receipt of a wage of 2s. 4d. per day less than the council's labourers? 5, Will the Government consider the advisability of increasing the salaries of the lower ranks of the Police Force?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, No. 3, Answered by No. 2. 4, Yes; a resolution was carried by the Boulder Municipal Council in July last:—"That the Council is of opinion that the wages paid to police constables in this district should be not less than the rate paid to miners on the goldfields, inclusive of the goldfields allowance which the police now receive, and the Minister controlling the department be requested to give the matter his immediate attention." The Government does not consider that constables are underpaid in this district, as a first-class constable receives £3 16s. 8d. per week, and second-class constables £3 9s. 8d. per week, also uniform, and one month's leave of absence on full pay per annum. 5, A scheme is now under consideration.

QUESTION—POLICE BENEFIT FUND.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Premier: 1, Did the Premier promise the members of the Police Force representation on the Police Benefit Fund Board in August, 1907? 2, If so, has the promise been carried out? 3, If not, why? 4, Will the Premier take the necessary steps to have his promise given effect to at the earliest possible date? 5, Will the Premier allow the contributors to the fund to select their representative by ballot, and will he hand over the conduct of the election to Mr. Stenberg, the Chief Electoral Officer?

The PREMIER replied: 1, The promise was that the contributors to the fund should have an opportunity of electing a representative in lieu of the Commissioner of Police. 2, Yes. 3, Answered by No. 2. 4, Answered by No. 2. 5, A ballot has already been taken, the result being that by a large majority the contributors decided that the Commissioner of Police should continue as their representative; and the Government see no necessity for taking another ballot.

QUESTION—POLICE DEPARTMENT, REWARDS.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Premier: 1, Have the Police Department any set rules for paying rewards for meritorious conduct? 2, How long is it since the last rewards were paid?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Any member of the Police Force who has been commended during the year for conduct deserving of recognition receives a reward, which is recommended by the Commissioner of Police and approved by the Minister. 2, August, 1907. The rewards for the past year are now under consideration.

QUESTION—TIMBER COMPANY, MURCHISON.

Mr. HOLMAN (for Mr. Heitmann) asked the Premier: 1, Has any monetary assistance been granted to the Murchison Firewood Company, other than the amount representing the cost of rails sleepers, etc., as per agreement between the Government and the company? 2, The total amount of rent paid by company? 3, What is the date of last payment?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, £440 9s. 4d. 3, 27th November, 1908.

QUESTION—PUBLIC SERVICE, PROFESSIONAL DIVISION.

Mr. BOLTON asked the Premier: 1, Are all the members of the professional division of the Public Service who have been classified by the Public Service Commissioner in receipt of at least the minimum salary allotted to their positions? 2. If not, do the Government intend that they shall receive such minimum salary? 3, If so, when?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Not all. 2, Yes, eventually. 3. The officers of the professional division, also those in the clerical and general divisions, will be advanced to their minimum as the financial position of the State allows.

QUESTION—RAILWAY COAL SUPPLY, NEWCASTLE.

Mr. A. A. WILSON asked the Premier: 1, The amount of tonnage, and the price per ton paid by the Government for Newcastle coal at each (separately) of the following places, viz., Fremantle, Geraldton, Albany, and Bunbury from March 15th, 1908, to November 14th, 1908. 2, The average price paid for Newcastle coal from March 15th, 1908, to November 14th, 1908.

The PREMIER replied: 1, Fremantle, 20,363 tons 16cwts. 3qrs. at 18s. 11d. per ton; Geraldton, 2,719 tons 3cwt. 2qrs. at 18s. 11d. per ton; Albany, 2,192 tons 17cwts. 1qr. at 18s. 11d. per ton; Bunbury, nil. 2, Average price—18s. 11d. per ton.

QUESTION—STATE BATTERY, LENNONVILLE.

Mr. TROY asked the Minister for Mines: 1, Is the Minister aware that the oil engine for the Lennonville Public Battery has been lying at the Lennonville railway station for the past two weeks? 2, Will the Minister arrange for the battery being put in order at an early date in order that the prospectors may be enabled to crush their ore?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied: 1, Yes. It was decided to send the engine forward early, so that there would be no delay when the erecting engineer is available. 2, Yes.

BILL—EARLY CLOSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Legislative Council.

APPROPRIATION MESSAGES.

Messages from the Governor received and read recommending appropriations for the purpose of the following Bills:—

Bunbury Harbour Trust.

Vermin Boards.

AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT.

A correction.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the following additional report from the Auditor General:—

"In page 133, paragraph 40, of my annual report for 1907-8 I stated as follows:—'It will be noted from the Estimates that income tax on the salaries of the Agent-General and his staff is provided for and paid by the State, although officers resident in the State have to pay the Government income tax out of their own pockets.' I regret that when making this statement I was unaware of the provisions of section 16 (3) of the Land and Income Tax Assessment Act of 1907, which provides for the payment of such tax by officers of the Western Australian Government, whether resident in the State or not. I understand the State tax has been paid by the Agent General and his officers; therefore my report is incorrect, inasmuch as this has not been explained. The tax levied in England by the English Government is paid by the State. I should therefore be obliged if you would permit the accompanying *erratum* slip to be inserted in the Parliamentary copies. I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant, C. S. TOPPIN, Auditor General."

BILL—BUNBURY HARBOUR BOARD.

In Committee.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair, *the Premier* in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Remuneration of members:

Mr. JOHNSON: There was a marked difference between the fee appointed for members and that appointed for the chairman. There was nothing in the Bill to show that there were any special duties devolving on the chairman. As far as could be seen the chairman would be called upon to carry out merely the duties of ordinary members. There was no good reason why the chairman should receive double the fee of the ordinary members.

The PREMIER: Between the sittings of the board the chairman would on many occasions be called upon to advise and give instructions on matters which might arise and which need not necessarily be referred to a full board meeting. Therefore he would do considerably more work than the ordinary members and should receive the additional remuneration.

Mr. JACOBY: The Premier, when speaking to the second reading, made a statement to the effect that a member of the local Lumpers' Union would be appointed to the board. In making appointments to a board of this kind there should be only one consideration in the mind of the Government, and that was the fitness of the individual. An argument used in favour of the appointment of the board was that economies would be effected in working the port. In such circumstances the Government should not go to any particular body, as a matter of course, to find a member of the board, and they should be influenced by the one desire to choose the man most fitted for the position whether he was a member of any particular body or not. The port must be worked in a business-like way and this could not be done unless the proper men controlled it. There was no objection on his part to the appointment of a man from a labour union, so long as he was fitted to do effective work in connection with the management of the harbour, and assist in bringing about that economy the Government had promised.

Mr. Heitmann: What should be the qualifications of members?

Mr. Bolton: Money, coin.

The PREMIER: The Government desired to secure practical men who knew the requirements of the port. If the services of a representative of the lumpers who had been connected with the working of the port could be obtained, the Government would be quite justified in appointing him to the board. One member of the board should have a knowledge of maritime matters—a shipmaster or someone of that kind—while others might be commercial men, and one a man who had gained experience in connection with the actual working of the jetty.

Mr. ANGWIN: There was every reason to support the contention that a member of the Lumpers' Union should be appointed to the board, and he was very pleased to hear the remarks of the Premier on the subject. It was to be hoped that a similar appointment would now be made to the Fremantle Harbour Trust. There was no reason why the appointment of a lumper to the trust would be any detriment to the working of the Fremantle harbour.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not discuss the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

Mr. ANGWIN: The question under discussion was the Bunbury Harbour Board, and it was to that question he had spoken. Anyhow, he had no further reference to make at present to the Fremantle Harbour Trust. By having a representative of the workers in their ranks, boards such as that proposed to be established at Bunbury would be greatly improved, for they would have practical men understanding the working of the harbour. With such representatives on the boards, work would be done with greater economy.

Mr. JACOBY: There were many associations in the South-West, and if one were given the right to appoint a member to the board the others would doubtless want to have the same power. It would be quite satisfactory if the Government bore in mind, when appointing members,

that the one essential was a thorough knowledge of the working of the harbour.

Mr. JOHNSON: Notwithstanding the reply of the Premier, there was no reason why there should be such a marked difference betwen the payment of the chairman and members. The Premier had said the chairman would have to give decisions and discuss matters at times between meetings of the board, but to his mind it was undesirable that such power should be given to the chairman.

The Premier: Matters cropped up as to the berthing of vessels, etcetera, almost every day and it would be impossible call meetings of the board to deal with each and every one of them.

Mr. JOHNSON: If one man could do such a large amount of work between meetings of the board then it would be wise to reduce the number of the board because so many members would not be required. A slight difference between the salaries of the chairman and the members would not be objected to, but under the clause the difference was altogether too great.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the chairman had to be paid for having a chat with someone in the street, it had better be specified. All the Bill said was that the chairman was to be paid for meetings he attended.

The PREMIER: In connection with the Fremantle Harbour Trust the salary of the chairman was not to exceed £300 and of the members £150, therefore the same principle was recognised there as in the present Bill. A similar principle also applied in connection with Royal Commissions, where the chairman received higher fees than the members owing to the fact that he was really the mouthpiece of the Commission, had to give instructions to the secretary on matters as they cropped up, and generally took the position of executive head.

Mr. HOLMAN: In the event of the chairman not attending meetings, would he receive the fees? It appeared from the way the clause was worded that if he did not attend he would receive no fees. He was to be paid for actual attendances and not for work he might have to do outside. In the circumstances, therefore, it might be wise to amend the clause, as it was a self-evident fact that the chairman of a board such as that would have to do a great deal of work which would not be brought before the meetings.

The PREMIER: It was clear from the clause that if the chairman did not attend the meetings he would not be paid.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Maximum remuneration:

Mr. JOHNSON moved an amendment—

That the words "one hundred" in line 2 be struck out, and "seventy-five" inserted in lieu.

This amendment would be carrying out the principle referred to by the Premier as existing in connection with the appointment of a Royal Commission. He appreciated the fact that in view of the vast amount of benefit the board would be to the advancement of the South-West, as outlined by the member for Kanowna (Mr. Walker) in his speech, he should approach the question with some amount of diffidence. He could not understand why Parliament should hand over a valuable trading concern, an asset built up and a harbour running well, to a nominee board. Despite the arguments of the member for Kanowna as to the great work the board would do, in his opinion the establishment of the controlling board would not be to the best advantage and the general development of that portion of the State. The duties of the board would be very small and it would be unnecessary to hold many meetings. The sum of £100 was too much to stipulate for the chairman.

Mr. HOLMAN: The chairman of the board would have to do a considerable quantity of solid work and on that account he should be remunerated to a greater extent than the members of the board. Therefore he would oppose the amendment. Reference had been made to Royal Commissions, but since he had been in the House several Commissions had been appointed, which to his mind had not been of much use.

The Attorney General: You do not think they earn their salt.

Mr. HOLMAN: The result of their labours was not what was expected. The chairman of a harbour board was very different from the chairman of a Royal Commission, for the latter merely sat and worked with the other members of the Commission, while the chairman of the board would have to spend a great deal of time in doing practically executive work. He should therefore be treated decently and fairly. On the general question of the method of appointing the board, of course he did not altogether agree, as he was opposed to nominee boards of any description. It would not be wise to reduce the amount to be paid to the chairman. If the work were as important as had been said during the second reading debate, the sum of £100 was little enough for the chairman.

Mr. HAYWARD: In all cases such as the present one the chairman received extra pay and was entitled to it, for he was called upon at all times of the day and night to give opinions on certain matters which could not be referred to meetings of the board, as too much delay would be caused. His duties were far more onerous than those of the other members of the board, and he was clearly entitled to the amount proposed to be paid.

Mr. TAYLOR: The chairman was the one individual who would practically administer the Bill. Between the meetings certain things would crop up in connection with berthing and loading of vessels and it would be necessary for the chairman in conjunction with the secretary to give decisions in accordance with the regulations drawn up by the board.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the chairman was going to do all the executive work that the hon. member said he would do, he should receive a considerably higher salary. There would be a secretary and a harbour master and a berthing master and several other masters. How was this money going to be made up? Was the harbour master to be paid for every little interview that he had or so much per meeting? There was no provision as far as he was aware of for these little conversations he would hold with people in regard to the port. He supported the amendment.

The PREMIER: Irrespective of the number of meetings that the board would hold the chairman could not draw more than £100 per annum. If they had a hundred meetings he could not draw more.

Mr. Bolton: If they had say ten meetings how much would he draw?

The PREMIER: It would be two guineas or something like that.

Amendment negatived; clause put and passed.

Clause 13—agreed to.

Clause 14—Acting chairman:

Mr. JOHNSON: Would the acting chairman in the absence of the chairman receive double fees?

The PREMIER: Only in the event of legal absence for six months as was done at Fremantle.

Clause passed.

Clauses 15 to 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—Appointment of officers and servants:

Mr. JOHNSON: It appeared that the Governor on the nomination of the board could appoint a secretary, a berthing master who would be the harbour master, and other officers and servants. It had been said that the administration of this board would be a matter of about £600. Under this clause it was clear that the administration could not be carried out for anything like that amount. It would cost considerably more. When they took into consideration the position of this harbour and that it practically controlled only two industries, coal and timber, a very large staff should not be required, and he could not see why they could not appoint a secretary who would also be berthing master. They should be able to get an officer to fill these positions, and even then he would not be overworked. The member for Mt. Margaret would tell him he was advocating one man for two jobs, but his desire was to economise to the fullest extent. He did not want to overtax any man; his desire was to pay the full rate, and if they paid one salary to a man who would fill the two positions he had named, he thought they would be doing

what was the proper thing. The duties of berthing master at Bunbury would be very light compared with the duties of the berthing master at Fremantle. He moved an amendment—

That in line 2 of Clause 18 the word "a" be struck out and "who shall be" inserted in lieu.

The clause would then read, "The Governor on the nomination of the board may appoint a secretary who shall be berthing master."

The PREMIER: The hon. member did not want to give one man two jobs. He apparently wanted to give one man three jobs. The berthing master in this case would be the harbour master as well. The present harbour master down there would continue to act as berthing master in any case.

Mr. O'Loghlen: Without additional expense?

The PREMIER: Without additional expense.

Mr. HAYWARD: It was simply impossible for one man to fill the two positions. The harbour master was liable to be called out at all times and he could not attend to all the duties that the hon. member for Guildford would have him perform.

Mr. JOHNSON: The Premier should go further and tell the Committee something about the work that was being performed at Bunbury. If the harbour master was fully employed he was satisfied that the Committee would not be able to tack on to him the position of secretary, but he could not see why they wanted a harbour master at Bunbury who was doing nothing else.

The PREMIER: The hon. member's education as far as nautical matters were concerned had been neglected. A harbour master was continually shifting vessels from shallow depths to the deeper watered berths and when thus engaged he had to give up practically the whole of his time. Vessels did not go to one wharf and remain there until they were full; they had to be moved about to other berths and he assured the hon. member that the harbour master at Bunbury was kept going the whole time. There was no harbour master in the State who was busier than the present harbour master at Bunbury.

Mr. Johnson: What salary does he receive?

The PREMIER: The salary was £350, he thought.

Mr. Underwood: Have you any idea what the salary of the secretary will be?

The PREMIER: The matter had not been decided but he should say he would receive £250 or £300.

Amendment negatived: clause put and passed.

Clause 19—agreed to.

Clause 20—Property vested in board:

Mr. BATH: Would the whole of the harbour works upon which money from loan or revenue was expended be vested in the board or would a portion only be so vested and the remainder left to the control of State officers? That was the position at Fremantle. There had been expended at Fremantle a considerable sum of money from loan and yet only a portion of it was represented as the capital of assets handed over to them with the result that the public return showed certain revenue raised, sufficient to pay interest and sinking fund, whereas if the whole of the capital expenditure was debited to the harbour board the return would be different. In connection with Bunbury if there was to be a business-like return the whole of the works should be vested in the board.

The PREMIER: The property that would be vested in the board was set out in the schedule of the Bill and would include practically the whole of the wharf and jetty, and it was expected the board would return in addition to working expenses, interest, and sinking fund on the amount of the capital involved. In connection with Fremantle he was under the impression that the only work excluded was the deep sea jetty representing something like £70,000.

Mr. Bath: There is a difference of nearly £200,000.

The PREMIER: Practically the whole of the wharves, the mole, and the jetty would be vested in the board.

Mr. ANGWIN: Was it intended to charge to the harbour board such items

as the old, rusted buoys or works carried out many years ago that were now virtually useless? It was what was done at Fremantle and if it were to be the case at Bunbury the Premier would agree to the request of the Leader of the Opposition.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: At Fremantle there was an adjustment of capital account between the Public Works Department and the Fremantle Harbour Trust. Ever since Responsible Government there had been considerable expenditure at Fremantle, some of which was absolutely out of date, but it was expenditure for which the country had long ago been paid back. In the Fremantle case the works taken over by the trust were adjusted on a fair valuation.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was out of order. The Leader of the Opposition had used as an illustration the case of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, but a general discussion under this Bill on the condition of affairs as regarded the Fremantle Harbour Trust could not be allowed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A somewhat similar principle would be adopted in connection with these works at Bunbury. For that reason he was explaining the principle adopted at Fremantle. For instance, the old jetty at Fremantle was not used for shipping now and was not included among the works on which the Fremantle Harbour Trust were called upon to pay interest and sinking fund.

Mr. BATH: We did not by any adjustment between the Public Works Department and the Fremantle Harbour Trust get rid of the extra liability over and above what was vested in the trust. The Auditor General had commented on this.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow a general discussion on the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

Mr. BATH: Unless care was exercised in vesting in the harbour board all those works on which there was liability, two returns would be submitted to Parliament concerning the Bunbury harbour works. There would be the capital value of the restricted assets vested in the board on which the board set forth certain returns earned each year, and then in the Treasurer's returns presented with the Budget some of the works would be included in the total indebtedness upon which the State was paying interest and sinking fund. By handing over the lesser amount to the harbour board we certainly did not get rid of the liability on the whole of the works at Bunbury. No matter what misdeeds might have happened in construction, we had contracted a liability for these works, and we would never have a clear idea of our position in regard to them unless the harbour board were debited with the total capital expenditure on them. When we knew the total capital cost of the works, whatever result was obtained by the board, the people would know the true facts. Of course if the board were debited with the cost for the works handed over which they considered too great, that matter could always be set forth in the board's reports to Parliament; they could make their side of the case clear, but certainly there would be no clearness or accuracy in submitting two returns to Parliament, one from the Treasurer or from the Auditor General, and one from the harbour board. The object in querying this clause was to avoid a similar position to that which cropped up in connection with the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

The PREMIER: As far as depreciation was concerned there was no reason why the total cost of the breakwater (£178,000) should not be debited to the harbour board, but it was questionable whether the whole of the various sums spent on the jetty for the last 30 or 40 years should be debited to them; or whether it would not be more equitable to have a valuation made of the jetty as it now stood and debited to the board. He had not gone thoroughly into this matter, but he certainly thought every penny spent on the breakwater should be debited up, because the breakwater was just as valuable a construction to-day as it was when built. The same remark would not apply to the jetty.

Mr. TAYLOR: The board should profit by the difficulties encountered by the

Fremantle Harbour Trust in taking over their responsibilities. For years the Fremantle Harbour Trust had tried to reduce the capital cost of the harbour works they were administering, and no doubt the Public Works Department would be anxious to see that the Bunbury harbour board took over as much as possible of the work done at Bunbury for years past. They had the same object at Fremantle, and it was not a fair thing for the board to have to take over an over-capitalised concern, especially when a good deal of money spent in the early days at Bunbury had already returned to the State sufficient recompense for the outlay. It was unfair to load the board with a heavy capitalisation. The board, remembering the experience of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, should have their eyes skinned and should watch that the Public Works Department did not put too much on them. The board should not be overloaded. They should start on a fair basis.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The taxpayer should get a fair chance. The board should take over all they were entitled to take over, and there should be no shuffling, because the taxpayer generally had a good deal of dead money to manage already. The Bunbury harbour should be in a position to pay interest and sinking fund on the works there.

Mr. JOHNSON: The State was liable for the interest and sinking fund on the loan money spent at Bunbury, and if the harbour was not going to pay it, who was to pay it? Were we simply to transfer the burden from the harbour to the general taxpayer? If such a step were justified in this case, then it was justified in every case, and why should we tax the Goldfields Water Supply with the full capital cost of the work? We should rub off from the administration of the Goldfields Water Supply the amount of money squandered on the work, considerably more than was squandered at Bunbury. But we had not done so. The whole amount was charged up to the water supply, the result being that it could not pay sinking fund, and because of this the scheme was made a target for all critics. The member for Mount Margaret should be a little consistent: certainly the hon. member was distinctly in favour of this Bill, because he was interested in it when a Minister of the Crown; but he should not let that fact run away with his judgment. It was to be hoped the Public Works Department on this occasion would see that every legitimate capital expenditure on the Bunbury harbour works was taken over by the board, and the Government should see that interest and sinking fund on this expenditure were paid by the board.

The PREMIER: On the breakwater £90,000 was spent from revenue out of the total of £178,000 spent on the work. Notwithstanding this fact, interest and sinking fund should be returnable on the full amount. At the same time where work had become obsolete, or had been constructed 30 years ago and no trace could be found of it now, it should not be debited up. That did not seem fair, especially in view of the fact that much of the work had been returning a considerable surplus over working expenses and interest and sinking fund. There was £16,000 returned from work that would probably cost not more than £3,000.

Mr. BATH: By Subclause 3 we allowed the board to acquire property. This was practically expenditure on new works, and was really taking out of the hands of Parliament the investment of funds that should be appropriated. Such a precedent should not be established. If such a clause appeared in the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act it was wrong, and the bad example should not be followed. He moved an amendment—

That in Subclause 3, line 1, the words "the board may acquire, or" be struck out.

The PREMIER: If the amendment were carried it would mean that the board would be unable to acquire many properties which they would need. For instance, they might desire to own springs, which were now owned by the shippers, and surely the board had the right to purchase and hire out springs for the benefit of vessels frequenting the port. Such property would be a source of great bene-

fit to the board. Also they might wish to purchase a boat or two for harbour purposes; but if the amendment were carried their hands would be tied to such an extent that these purchases would be impossible.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The springs, boats, etcetera, referred to by the Premier could be obtained by the board after permission had been granted by the Government. There should be some control over the doings of the board.

Mr. BATH: The report of the Auditor General was filled with accounts of irregularities through officers of various departments apparently acting entirely without control from the Ministers who were responsible to this House. In almost every instance referred to in the report the result had been disastrous to the finances of the State. There had been no control by members, who were responsible to the taxpayers, and it was a departure we should not countenance. If we desired to maintain control and carry out the provisions of the Audit Act, provided for the guidance of members as well as of Ministers, we should not permit either officers or nominee boards such as the one in question to act without the control either of Ministers or of the House.

Mr. JOHNSON: The amendment would not prevent the board from acquiring property, but would simply insist that Ministers should control their doings.

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

Ayes	.. .. ..	20
Noes	.. .. ..	20
A tie	.. ..	0

Ayes.

Mr. Angwin	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Bath	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Bolton	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Collier	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Walker
Mr. Horan	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Troy
	(Teller).

Noes.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Davies	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. Price
Mr. Keenan	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
	(Teller).

The Chairman gave his casting vote with the Noes.

Amendment thus negatived; clause put and passed.

Clauses 21, 22—agreed to.

Clause 23—Harbour extensions:

Mr. ANGWIN moved an amendment—

That the words "and may be undertaken by the Minister for Works on the recommendation and under the advice of the board" be struck out.

The Public Works Act gave authority to the Minister to carry out certain works under the authority of Parliament, but the present clause gave him power to construct work on the recommendation of the board without any Parliamentary sanction whatever. The Fremantle Harbour Trust were limited to a certain amount of expenditure, and the powers of the Bunbury board should be curtailed in connection with expenditure on the extension of harbour works.

The PREMIER: In any work of harbour extension undertaken by the board, Parliament would, of course, have to provide the money and would therefore have to authorise it. In connection with the cost of having repairs made, and matters of that kind, the board must be allowed a certain latitude, but so far as new work was concerned it necessarily followed that such would have to be included in the Estimates.

Mr. Walker: That power to do minor work would still exist if the proposed words were omitted.

The PREMIER: The clause was taken bolus bolus from the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, but really it was doubtful whether the words proposed to be struck out were necessary. Consequently he would not oppose the amendment.

Amendment put and passed; clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 24 to 77—agreed to.
Schedule, Title—agreed to.
Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—VERMIN BOARDS.

In Committee.

Mr. Daglish in the Chair, *the Honorary Minister* (Hon. J. Mitchell) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1, 2, 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Officers:

Mr. BUTCHER: The clause referred to the appointment of inspectors; would it interfere or hamper the appointment of inspectors by local boards?

The HONORARY MINISTER: The clause referred solely to the appointment of officers by the Government. Boards would have power to appoint their own officers.

Clause passed.

Clause 5—Application of funds:

Mr. JOHNSON: The Committee should endeavour, in connection with the control and maintenance of stock routes, to place them under the control of the boards. He did not know whether this would conflict with the title of the Bill, but it was due to the State that the boards should maintain the stock routes. These routes had been construced by the State and there were no rates contributed, and it was the ratepayers who had to maintain them. If there was a road in a good district, for the use of that road one would have to pay rates; everyone within a given radius was taxed. But with regard to a stock route which was used exclusively by pastoralists, nothing at all was contributed. He would like the Government to say whether the maintenance of these roads should also be vested in the board.

Mr. BUTCHER: While agreeing with the hon. member, as far as the stock routes being placed under the control of some board was concerned, he did not think it would be altogether fair to give that control over to these boards. He understood that there was to be introduced shortly an amendment to the Roads Act, and he would have pleasure in assisting the hon. member to try and get the suggestion carried out in that measure. Separate roads boards through which these various routes passed should be made responsible for the maintenance of them.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It had to be realised that these boards were not yet formed, and it would be rather difficult to place a small mileage of road under the control of the boards to be formed under this Bill. The suggestion of the hon. member, he thought, was impracticable, and he hoped it would not be pressed.

Mr. JOHNSON: Realising the difficulty of carrying out the suggestion that he had made, and in view of the promise given by the member for Gascoyne that he would assist to secure the inclusion of the amendment in the Roads Act Amendment Bill, he would not press his suggestion.

Clause passed.

Clause 6—Vermin districts:

Mr. HUDSON: Would the Minister in charge of the Bill give an assurance that it was not intended at present to constitute all roads districts vermin districts, or give the Committee some idea what his intention was in regard to carrying this clause into effect?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was not intended to declare all roads districts vermin districts. It was proposed to declare districts where some good could be worked. There were some districts which it would be futile to bring under this clause. At present it was proposed to declare only those districts that needed protection from rabbits and dogs.

Clause passed.

Clauses 7 to 10—agreed to.

Clause 11—Qualification of members:

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If the provisions for rating according to the area of land held were to be retained, it would be necessary to alter this clause. It would not matter whether a man had a sheep or a cow on his land, he would have to pay rates, and if he had to pay rates he should be qualified to be elected a member of the board. If the Committee did not alter this clause it would be

necessary to alter Clause 47, but he would prefer to allow Clause 47 to stand.

Mr. JOHNSON: The wording of this clause was not satisfactory. He did not see why stock should be a qualification for voting. If a man were the owner of land he should have the right to sit as a member on a board. As the member for Pilbara had pointed out, if he was the owner of land he would be taxed, and if he was to be taxed he should be qualified to sit on the board. He moved an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of Clause 11, the words "on which not less than 30 head of cattle or 300 sheep are ordinarily depastured" be struck out.

That would simply take away the stock qualification.

Mr. BUTCHER: The amendment would not work any great hardship upon owners. There might be found a rabbit district in which certain holders had no cattle at all.

Mr. GORDON: The amendment would defeat the object of the Bill; because an owner of land having no cattle might easily be holding for speculative purposes only. The man who had sheep to kill was the man who should pay.

Mr. HUDSON: The hon. member did not seem to grasp the effect of the amendment. It was suggested to strike out the qualification of holding stock. It had been pointed out that a man might be rated under the Bill although he had no stock at all. He was in favour of the amendment if only it could be carried out. He was afraid, however, that it would make the qualification too wide.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It seemed likely that no man who desired a seat on the board would be holding less than 300 sheep or 30 head of cattle. Certainly there ought to be some qualification of the kind.

Mr. BUTCHER: There were a great many holders of land in different parts of the State who, notwithstanding that their holdings comprised more than 100 acres, had not 300 sheep or 30 head of cattle; in fact it would be rather a large stocking for some districts. He knew many who certainly ought to have representation on the board but who nevertheless had not 300 sheep or 30 head of cattle. Viewed from the standpoint of a small farmer down the Great Southern, it was a large amount of stock. It was unlikely that the amendment would work hardship on anybody. It was an amendment the Honorary Minister ought to agree to.

Mr. TROY: The Bill would apply to the whole of the State and the people in the agricultural areas would have to be represented on the boards just as much as those in the pastoral areas. Yet in an agricultural area a farmer might elect to grow wheat or fruit, and run no stock at all. Under the clause as it stood such a man would have no qualification for a seat on the board, although there was every possibility of his land being infested. Again, he would have to pay the taxes although not allowed to sit on the board. It seemed incredible that such a man would be prevented from taking his seat on the board.

Mr. HUDSON: If the amendment were carried it might be found advisable to insert after the word "district" the words, "and rateable under this Act."

The Honorary Minister: That follows.

Mr. HUDSON: It did not follow, for the interpretation of "holding" under the Bill was simply a collection of lands. It might be advisable to make the clause agree with Clause 12. He could not see why this should not be done.

Mr. JOHNSON: The member for Dundas was probably correct. It would be necessary to put in the provision the hon. member had suggested. With permission he (Mr. Johnson) would move that the words he had objected to should be struck out for the purpose of inserting other words.

Mr. MALE: It seemed that to be consistent, the words, "one hundred acres" would have to be inserted. It was almost necessary that the amendment should be passed. As the clause stood a man might be an owner of 300 sheep and 30 head of cattle and still not hold the 100 acres stipulated in another part of the Bill.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The amendment moved by the member for Guildford would be acceptable if he added the words, "If such land is

rateable under this Act." That would meet the case.

Mr. JOHNSON altered his amendment to read—

That all the words after "district" in line 2 down to "shall" in line 3 be struck out, and the words "if such land is rateable under this Act" be inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Number of votes:

Mr. JOHNSON took exception to the plural voting provided in this clause. He believed in the principle of the single vote. He could not see how any effective arguments could be advanced to the end that because a man had a large holding he should be given a number of votes. For the purpose of testing the feeling of the Committee he moved—

That all the words after "have" in line 2 be struck out, and that the words "one vote" be inserted in lieu.

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

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member should not press this amendment. This was a special arrangement for a special purpose, and the people paid for the special purpose. Surely a man who paid £1,000 had a better right to representation than the man paying 4s. This was no new principle; we had plural voting in municipal elections. It was a good principle that the man who paid the piper should call the tune sometimes. Here a man contributed according to his holding, and expected to get services according to his contribution. In Queensland the provision was one vote for up to 2,000 acres; two votes for over 2,000 acres up to 5,000, and three votes for over 5,000 acres; or, one vote for 500 head of sheep up to 10,000; two votes for over 10,000 head of sheep up to 25,000, and three votes for over 25,000 head of sheep.

Mr. Collier: The sheep vote.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Very often they were as capable of exercising the vote as some people. In Victoria the limit was three votes, according to the number of sheep. In New South Wales there were two votes up to 5,000 head of sheep or 500 head of stock, and three votes for over 5,000 head of sheep or 500 head of stock. This seemed a fair provision. It was not new.

Mr. Collier: No one would accuse the hon. member of proposing anything new.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The contributions by the small holder and the large holder were entirely different and the services to be rendered were entirely different. Each man was to contribute according to his holding and according to the value of the services to be received, and should be entitled to representation accordingly.

Mr. TROY supported the amendment. If an individual paid more because he was a large holder he would receive a larger share of the services to be given.

The Honorary Minister: Therefore, he has a greater interest.

Mr. TROY: The larger consideration received should be all to which the large holder was entitled. What he paid for he got, and the matter should rest at that. We should have one holder, one vote, if we wished to follow out a democratic principle. To adopt the lines suggested by the Minister we might say that the member for North Perth, representing 10,000 people, should have as many times the say in this House that the member for Sussex had. But in this House we did not follow that principle, and what was good enough in that respect for the Assembly was good enough for the boards under this Bill.

Mr. JOHNSON: How did the Minister arrive at the limit of 10,000 acres? It often happened that an area of 1,000 acres was of more value than an area of 10,000; or again, an area of 10,000 acres, for which only one vote was allowed, might be more valuable than an area of 100,000 acres of poor country for which two votes were allowed. The principle adopted in the Bill was unsound, distinctly unfair and undemocratic. Because a thing was done in the Eastern States it did not follow that it was right. We did not know the local conditions in the Eastern States. Besides, the measures in the Eastern States were passed years ago.

Mr. Butcher: They are still working under them.

Mr. JOHNSON: There were new conditions here, and we lived in a more enlightened age than when the Eastern measures referred to by the Minister were passed. We should improve with the times. It was only just that everybody should have an equal say. As the member for Mount Magnet said, if a man paid more he received more, and that should be a sufficient compensating advantage. It was not fair to double the advantage by giving increased voting power.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member was arguing in favour of the clause by saying that the man who contributed most was entitled to receive most. It must not be forgotton that under this Bill acreage was taxed. As for representation in the House, there might be something in the argument advanced for representation according to numbers if every voter paid a poll tax.

Mr. BUTCHER: The principle of manhood suffrage as applied to Parliamentary representation could not be extended to apply to the establishment of boards in certain districts for a particular purpose, boards which levied taxes for themselves for the purpose of meeting out protection for a certain purpose. A man who held 10,000 acres might contribute £10, and, therefore, a man who held one million acres would have to contribute £1,000. Surely one would not deny the latter the right to see that he had a fair proportion of representation on the board. The retention of the clause would not lead to hardship. In the districts where large areas existed, there were no small holders, while in the districts where the small man lived, there were no large holders. There was no danger therefore, of a man holding a large area having an undue influence over the expenditure contributed by the small holder, and *vice versa*. There were no men holding 100,000 acres or over in the agricultural districts, for the big holders were all in the Northern, Kimberley, and wayback areas.

Mr. NANSON: It did not necessarily follow that the more a man contributed to the board, the more consideration he would receive, any more than that the less a man contributed, the less he would receive. The amount of consideration would depend entirely upon the personnel and the policy of the board, and that must depend upon the voting power of the individual lease-owners in the district. Although not much in favour of plural voting, still, in a case like the present, the proportionate voting set out in the clause was fair provided the three subsequent paragraphs of the clause, which provided for a holder having as many as nine votes, were deleted. He would support the retention of the clause, provided that the final paragraphs to which he had referred were struck out.

The HONORARY MINISTER: If the amendment were withdrawn he would be willing to fall in with the suggestion of the member for Greenough (Mr. Nanson), that the final three paragraphs of the clause should be struck out. The fact that the suggestion was supported by the pastoralist who sat at the hon. member's right, was another inducement for him to accept that suggestion.

Mr. TROY: Surely if it were reasonable to delete nine votes it was equally reasonable to delete two, leaving one vote to each leaseholder. It was to be hoped the member for Guildford would refuse to withdraw his amendment. Plural voting was unnecessary to the measure and should not be allowed. The Minister had argued that when a man paid more rates than his neighbour, he should receive extra consideration by means of voting power. The large owner would get more consideration in any event owing to the extent of the area he held. As the member for Greenough had pointed out, the benefits conferred upon individuals would depend largely upon the personnel of the board. The duty of the boards was to exterminate vermin and consequently that work must be done irrespective of the ownership of the property on which the vermin existed. There was provision in the Bill by which the Minister could interfere if he found the board were not carrying out their duties properly. Therefore, with-

out doubt, the boards would all do their duty and see that vermin was exterminated wherever it was found. No matter where the vermin existed, it was to the benefit of all that it should be exterminated. With all the precautions in the measure there was no need for plural voting. The only argument brought forward by the Minister in support of the clause as it stood was, that the provision existed in Queensland and elsewhere.

The Honorary Minister: And it works well too.

Mr. TROY: There was no reason why the single vote system should not work much better.

Mr. MALE: The man who was the most greatly concerned, owing to the fact that he held the largest area and contributed the most money to the funds of the boards, should have the biggest say in the control of the board. It was only right that the system of voting provided in the Bill should be adopted.

Mr. TAYLOR: The statement made by the member for Gascoyne (Mr. Butcher) proved conclusively that there was no necessity for plural voting. As was pointed out, the State was so constituted that the boards to be appointed under the Bill in the North and North-West would consist solely of representatives of large leaseholders. Therefore, there would be no advantage in their case in retaining the clause. It was also pointed out that in the South-West, or the agricultural areas, the boards would be composed of representatives of small holders, so in their case also there would be no advantage in having the plural vote. There would be an advantage if in one area a man who had a large tract of country and contributed largely to the funds was largely overvoted in the board by the representatives of men who had only small areas, and contributed but small amounts to the funds. In such a case it might not be right that the same voting power, as affecting the personnel of the board, should exist: and there would be reason for the big man trying to secure more voting power according to the amount he contributed. As the State was constituted, however, with the large holders at one end of it, and the small holders at the other, there would not be much difference whether the clause were retained or not. He did not hold with plural voting in any form. The clause provided for the construction of machinery to perform certain functions, almost like a partnership. It would get on just as smoothly by the removal of plural voting. In the North-West he was certain they thought just the same so far as the destruction of vermin was concerned. Why should one man because he had a few more acres than another have greater voting power? It would be easier to regulate the section by having one vote, and one vote only. The boards that would be appointed in the various districts would have identical interests. It would be different if we had in our cattle-raising areas small agricultural landholders, but these people did not exist there. If the Minister accepted the amendment it would tend to the smoother working of the Bill, and it would make it one of the most democratic in the Commonwealth. It was about up to members to take up that aspect of the question. There was no necessity because the Bill in Queensland had worked smoothly that we should have similar provisions in regard to voting. It was found that where there was plural voting there were always more conservatives, and every effort should be made to remove that objectionable feature from our legislation. On that ground he ventured to suggest that if the Minister accepted the amendment and it was found it would not work, he could submit the matter to the next Parliament, and members would listen to his argument. Then it would not be theory, it would be hard practice, and he would be able to justify to members the existence of the clause as it appeared before the Committee at the present time.

Mr. BUTCHER: The member for Mount Margaret should trust the Minister and let him give this system a trial. If it was found that it did not work satisfactorily the Minister, he was sure, would make a solemn pledge to alter it later on. He would not quarrel with the member for Mt. Margaret on the principle, but if

he thought that by extending that particular principle of this Bill it would be a workable one he would be with the hon. member. He was not however prepared to give it a trial because he knew it would not work satisfactorily.

Member: Why?

Mr. BUTCHER: There would be large landholders in a certain part of the State and small landholders perhaps adjacent. There would be a certain point where these different interests would merge and that happened to exist in the Greenough district. The man with 100,000 acres in that particular district might have close to him eight or nine men with smaller holdings, and these men could outvote the single larger holder in the formation of the board, and yet the larger holder would have to contribute a large sum of money and he would have no control. It might suit these smaller holders to exclude from the protection of this rabbit-proof fence a certain portion of the larger holder's ground and all his opposition would be futile. He would be contributing a large sum of money, the smaller holders would outvote him, and he would not get the protection that he should receive. He hoped the hon member would not press the amendment.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The amendment would receive his support because he did not think it would make much difference. In the pastoral areas of Mt. Magnet, Pilbara, Gascoyne, Kimberley, and others there were practically no holdings under 10,000 acres.

Mr. Nanson: In the Greenough country there are plenty of them.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: For all practical purposes there were no holdings in the districts he had mentioned under 100,000 acres; therefore everyone would have three votes. A holding of 100,000 acres was very small.

Mr. Butcher: They are therefore on an equal basis.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Exactly; and that was why the proposed amendment should not make any difference. In his opinion there would be practically nobody in the southern areas who would have three votes except the leaseholders, and the effect would be practically nil. It would be as well to have one vote as to have the clause as it appeared in the Bill.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	21
Majority *against* ..	2

AYES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Male
Mr. Carson	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Monger
Mr. Davies	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Osborn
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Price
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Gordon
Mr. Layman	(*Teller*).

NOES.

Mr. Bolton	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Collier	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Gill	Mr. Swan
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Holman	Mr. Walker
Mr. Horan	Mr. Ware
Mr. Hudson	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Troy
Mr. McDowall	(*Teller*).

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. NANSON moved an amendment—

That all the words after "votes" in line 18 be struck out.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment could not be taken. It should have been moved as an amendment on the amendment that had been before the Chair. On a division the Committee had decided that these words should stand part of the clause, therefore there could be no excision made. All that could now be done was to add to the clause.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: It was to be hoped that the Minister would recommit the clause. As it stood it was likely to be very unjust.

Mr. NANSON: The Honorary Minister would surely agree to recommit the clause.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There would be no objection to a recommittal if it were desired.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 14 to 18—agreed to.

Clause 19—Inspectors, *ex officio* members of the boards:

Mr. HUDSON: There would be opposition offered to this clause. It was here provided that the inspectors appointed by the Government should have a seat upon the board, which was an elective board. He failed to see why an inspector should have a seat upon or a voice in the management of the affairs of such a board.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was a reasonable provision. It was to be found in the Queensland Act, which was a good one. Experience could only be taken from the years that had passed, and it would be wise to follow the lines laid down in the Queensland Act, which had been tried and proved. By a reference to Clause 33 it would be seen that the Government had some power, which they would certainly exercise if the provisions of the Act were not carried out. Apart from that, the Government were to provide loans for the purchase of wire netting and that being so it was desirable that they should have some representation on the boards. It was a provision made in the interests of the country, because the work of each board would contribute something to the protection of the rest of the State. The Government were contributors in some degree to the expenditure carried out by these boards and so the Government ought to be represented. It was desirable that the Government should know that the money was being rightly expended, and that the fences were being erected in the right place. There was no better way of safeguarding the public expenditure than by appointing inspectors to sit on the board.

Mr. TROY: If the arguments used by the Honorary Minister were logical it would be equally logical to say that the Government should have representation on the roads boards, municipal councils, and the hundred and one bodies throughout the State to whom assistance was granted. The money proposed to be loaned out under this Bill would have to be paid back, and it was not reasonable to allow any Government officer to have a seat on a board that was elected by the people who were being taxed to carry out the work of the board. There was no reason why a Government officer should have the power of controlling the expenditure of such money. The Minister seemed to think that because this was in the Queensland Act it should of necessity appear in this one.

Mr. Scaddan: Is it in the Japanese Act?

Mr. TROY: It was a fortunate thing that there was no such Act in the Georgian age, for had there been the Minister might have picked upon it as the basis for this Act. He would refuse to agree to any clause which was supported only by the contention that it was based upon a principle obtaining in some other State. He felt sure the member for Gascoyne would not agree to the proposition that the inspector should be allowed to sit upon the board and exercise the privileges of a member of that board. He thought the provision, which would not be fair and equitable, should not be agreed to.

Mr. NANSON: It seemed that the Government would have very wide powers in regard to these boards, and the inspector, it was only to be supposed, would always be willing to offer his advice to a board. It would be introducing an altogether new principle to allow a Government officer to sit and vote as a member of the board. Unless some strong reason were put forward he thought that they should not agree to it. It was scarcely sufficient to say that it was in operation in Queensland. As for watching the expenditure of these boards the Government would have ample opportunities of checking anything in the way of extravagance.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The necessity for appointing an inspector as a member of the board was that each district would be discharging a duty which, unless it were in accord with the general policy of other districts, would be almost valueless. There would be a number of districts and to be of any value the general policy would have to be uniform.

Mr. Walker: They can get the inspector's advice without making him a member of the board.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Unity could only be obtained by having on each board at least one member who would be endeavouring to work in accordance with

the general policy. Clause 62 provided that the Minister from time to time should furnish moneys by way of loan for the purpose of carrying out the objects of the Bill. This, however, after all had little bearing upon the appointment of inspectors as members of the various boards. What was of great importance was the desirability that the expenditure of the money should be in pursuance of a common idea. The protection against vermin was a problem which affected local interests; but the method of dealing with it could never be carried out on local lines. It would have to be dealt with on broad lines, on lines prevailing throughout the State. That was a consideration that must appeal to all hon. members who addressed themselves to the matter with open minds. If that determination was to be given consideration to, then it was essential to have on each of the boards one member who would represent that continuous idea.

Mr. WALKER: A vermin board was to be guided by the Bill and the Bill laid down the policy. We should not appoint boards to be bossed by officials of the Government. The members of boards were supposed to have a knowledge of local requirements, so that there was no need for the Government representatives. Otherwise, why go to the trouble of having elections? Where was there a precedent in our legislation for a Government representative sitting on a similar board? One could well understand that these boards should be advised by the inspectors, but the latter should give the boards the full benefit of their knowledge and experience without having votes. We should not give these inspectors the power to prevent expenditure. What would be the value of the boards if by means of Government officials we could check their actions? On the whole, this seemed a crude experiment, and was not recommended by the fact that it came from Queensland.

The Honorary Minister: It also comes from New South Wales.

Mr. WALKER: But who started it?

The Honorary Minister: Queensland.

Mr. WALKER: Could we not do something without copying? It should be sufficient for the inspectors to give advice without making them participate in the voting of the boards. There was power in the Bill by which the Minister could dismiss a board for acting wrongly, but the position would be that the Government, through their official, participated in the wrongdoing, and dismissed a board for doing something they participated in.

Mr. JACOBY: In this legislation we were experimenting, and, in the circumstances, we would show some degree of wisdom by following, to some extent, the precedent set us by the Eastern States. At first this seemed an undesirable principle to introduce, but there were cases one could imagine where the advice of the trained rabbit exterminator might be of value to a board, and though that advice might be made available to the board without the inspector being a member of the board, yet one failed to see any valid objection to the principle contained in the clause. The Government would be financially interested in the way a board's work was done, and as no principle of any value was involved in this question, Parliament, through the Minister, should have some voice in the expenditure of money advanced to the board, so that we would be well advised in giving the inspectors some voice in the expenditure of that money. It must be borne in mind also that in viewing a matter like this, we might not be able to see at once why a step was taken by another State, apparently in the same circumstances as ourselves. Therefore, we should rely on the experience gained by the other State, and adopt the same principle until we found that it did not work well.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: We should not pass legislation because similar legislation was passed by another State, unless it be good. It was an extraordinary argument that because the Government loaned money to these boards the Government should have representation on them. It might as well be claimed that the London bondholders should have representation in our Parliament. The Attorney General should not claim, in his desire for uniformity, that one vote of an inspector on a board was going to carry any weight.

On the other hand, the position of the inspector would be considerably weakened. The inspector should be a supervisor and auditor, but as a member of the board he could not supervise and audit his own work. The inspector should not be made responsible for the decisions of the board, and should be absolutely independent.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was perfectly easy to say a thing was bad and would not work; anyone could say that. He maintained the clause was good. In the early stages an inspector would be helpful to a board, and should have some right to make himself heard at a board meeting. If an inspector attended a board meeting merely as an official he could only answer questions put to him. That was not sufficient. The inspector should be able to make himself heard. We must have the work in the outlying districts done well so as to protect the inner districts, and the inspectors would sit on these outlying boards to encourage the members of those boards to take the steps necessary for the protection of the whole country. Seeing that the Government would provide money, better arguments than those already advanced in opposition to the clause must be put forward; otherwise the clause should be allowed to stand.

Mr. TROY: The inspector of a board would have power without responsibility. He provided nothing to the funds of the board, but could vote on the expenditure of money. The Attorney General had referred to uniformity, but such could not be introduced into the question, considering the distance between the boards and the fact that all sorts of vermin would be dealt with. It had been said that the Government would not have enough power unless the inspector were on the board, but reference to Clause 33 would show that the Government could suspend the powers and functions of a board for a certain time or abolish the board altogether in the event of certain neglect or default.

The Attorney General: How would the Government know what was going on unless they had a representative on the board?

Mr. TROY: How did the Government know if there were misappropriations in connection with any roads boards?

The Honorary Minister: The auditors go round.

Mr. TROY: The Government had every possible power under the Bill, and the establishment of a precedent providing for an inspector having a seat on the board would be most dangerous.

Mr. O'Loghlen: They might just as well put the Bunbury harbour master on the Bunbury Harbour Board.

The HONORARY MINISTER: A parallel could not be drawn between the vermin boards and roads boards. If a vermin board neglected their duties the effect would be most disastrous, not only to that particular district, but also to the whole of the State. The board were given great powers, and it was essential that the work should be carried out properly.

Mr. HUDSON: It was the duty of the inspectors to inspect the districts and not to sit on the boards. They should see that the boards carried out the duties prescribed in the Bill. It was no compliment to the intelligence of members of the board that the inspector should sit with them and tell them what to do. The members of the board were elected by those particularly interested, and inspectors should not have a say in the proceedings. If the inspector found that things were going wrong, it was his duty to report directly to the Minister.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 20, 21 agreed to.

Clause 22—Appointment of clerk:

Mr. JACOBY: It might occur that, for the purposes of economy, one of the members of the board would act as clerk, not only temporarily but for all time. It would be unnecessarily increasing the administrative cost if it were insisted upon that there should be a clerk to each board. Was the clerk to be paid?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was expected that in each case the secretary of the roads board in the vermin board district would do the secretarial work of both. There would be a considerable amount of important business, such

as the keeping of rate books, collecting rates, etc., to be done; and it would be impossible for a board to get on without a secretary. If the roads board secretary became also secretary of the vermin board, his salary in the latter capacity would not be great.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 23, 24 agreed to.

Clause 25—Fourteen days' notice of meeting:

Mr. TAYLOR: In the outlying districts fourteen days' notice would be insufficient.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The requirements of the large districts would be considered if by-laws were necessary. They would be made to suit the particular requirements of the districts.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 26 to 37 agreed to.

Clause 38—Control of board over fences:

Mr. HUDSON: What were the intentions of the Government with regard to the existing rabbit proof fences? Would they be handed over straight away to the boards?

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was not intended to hand over at present any part of the rabbit proof fences now constructed, for the Government would maintain the fences as at present. It would be useless to hand over any portion of the two thousand miles of fencing in the near future. It might be advisable later on to hand over portions of the fencing, and it was for that reason the clause was inserted. There was no harm in having the power, as it might be needed at any moment.

Mr. TAYLOR: If the Government handed over any portion of the fences now constructed, would the board have to pay any sinking fund, etcetera, on the portion handed over?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Yes, if the board used the fences they would be responsible, and would have to pay.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 39 to 42 agreed to.

Clause 43—Consequences of failure to comply with requirements of notice:

Mr. HUDSON: The clause was liable to be too drastic. It would probably inflict great hardship if applied to districts where the rabbits were now numerous, and where no provision had been made by the Government to cope with them. Would the Minister consent to a proposal to have certain portions of the State outside the rabbit-proof fence excised from the Bill?

The HONORARY MINISTER: No; the Bill must apply to the whole of the State.

Clause passed.

Clauses 45, 46—agreed to.

Clause 47—Funds of boards, rates:

Mr. JOHNSON: The question of rating appeared to be distinctly unfair. It was proposed to levy a rate of 2s. for every hundred acres, irespective of values. He did not want to go into it deeply himself. He thought the clause should appeal to the pastoralists. They must see that rating on such a principle was most unfair to the men who held inferior land. They were penalised because for inferior land they paid the same rental, and in addition they had to pay the same rates as the man who held the superior land. He raised the point to see what argument the Minister had to advance in favour of that principle of rating.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It would cost just as much to deal with vermin on 1,000 acres of poor land as it would on 1,000 acres of better land. The country was going to be divided into districts, and it had to be remembered too that the cost of collection would be very small. But the great thing to remember was that it would be just as difficult to eradicate vermin from poor land as it would be to eradicate it from the richer land.

Mr. TAYLOR: It would be found that there were any amount of holdings that were practically a sand plain or very inferior land and they would be taxed equally with the good land. The man on the poor land would be least able to pay.

Mr. Johnson: He will forfeit it and the State will have to pay.

Mr. TAYLOR: In those areas that were already classified there should be no difficulty in taxing according to the classification. He did not think it would require any great ingenuity to arrive at a scheme which would be satisfactory to

the smaller holders in the settled districts. Why not tax on that classification? First-class land could pay the high tax, second-class land could pay a lower tax and the third-class land a lower tax still. The extent of the inferior land was invariably 70 or 80 per cent. of the total taken up. In many cases where people held 1,000 acres it was often found that they had only 100 acres of good land. The tax should be arranged as justly as possible. He did not judge the justice of the tax by the size of it; he judged it so that it would bear fairly on each person. The Minister when re-committing the Bill should deal with this clause and try and arrive at some mode of taxation according to the classification of the areas.

Mr. TROY: The method proposed might be the simplest way of raising revenue, but it was certainly not the fairest. They were told by the Minister in charge that the roads board areas would be the areas chosen by the boards appointed under the Bill. If that were so the method of taxation would be very unfair. For instance, the land held in the Gascoyne roads board area was about 100 per cent. more valuable than in the Mount Margaret or the North Coolgardie roads board districts, yet the taxation would be similar. The Minister should not forget that the people in the latter districts, which were outside the rabbit-proof fence, would be taxed to the maximum, and in their areas the rabbits were increasing in numbers. They would be taxed to the maximum to prevent the rabbits from going into the country represented by the member for Gascoyne.

Mr. Butcher: Do not alarm yourself; they are there now.

Mr. TROY: There was a lot of country outside the fence which was not nearly so good as that which was nearer the coast, and the pastoralists on the outside would have to pay a greater taxation because those parts were more thickly infested with the vermin.

Mr. Jacoby: What system would you suggest?

Mr. TROY: The system that he would like to see adopted was that suggested by the member for Mount Margaret, rating on the classification. Many areas were classified under the Land Act of 1906, and that classification could be adopted in connection with this Bill. His desire was to assist the man in the back country because he was going to bear all the burden.

Mr. NANSON: The Pastoralists' Association favoured the system of rating proposed in the Bill. If that was the case, members should not trouble very much.

Mr. BUTCHER: A few days ago he took advantage of the opportunity and summoned a meeting of the pastoralists to discuss the measure now before the Committee. It was a representative meeting of the pastoralists and they went carefully through the Bill, and to the clause in question they raised no objection. He thought the Committee should allow it to pass.

Mr. Troy: We must protect them from themselves.

Mr. BUTCHER: The hon. member was afraid that those settlers who happened to be outside the fence would have to bear the greatest burden, but he should not forget that the vermin were on the coast as well, and in large numbers, and they were already in the Gascoyne district. He should not forget further that the early settlers who invested in that district many years ago did not have a rosy time of it. The vermin that they had to contend against in the early days were the wild dogs and eaglehawks, and then they had the native difficulty as well and they had to tackle all these single-handed and bear the expense out of their own pockets. Now there were a few settlers outside that area on whose behalf it was declared that they should not do something to protect themselves.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: The pastoralists who were represented at the meeting the hon. member spoke of were what might be termed "inside pastoralists." While the inside pastoralists had been represented at that meeting the outside men were not.

Mr. Butcher: Name some of them.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Jack McKay, Mathews, and others. Many of them outback in his district had not been represented.

Mr. Butcher: Your district was represented.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: Parts of it had been represented but not the remote areas. The hon. member had asserted that the earlier settlers had overcome great difficulties. As a matter of fact it had not been these earlier settlers who had overcome them; it was those who had gone out behind the earlier settlers and so driven the vermin back. It was the duty of those who held the best land to take their share in destroying these vermin which must come on to their runs if those outback did not keep them down. The clause was most inequitable and unjust. The Honorary Minister had stated that the land in the various boards districts would be practically of equal value. That was not the case. In the Nullagine district were lands charged for at the rate of 15s. per thousand acres, while other lands in the same district were charged for at only 2s. 6d. or 5s. per thousand acres. The lands paying the lower rent were certainly not so valuable as those paying the higher amounts. All the holders should be compelled to contribute. Under the proposed system of rating, the people with poor land would have to pay considerably more than those with better land. It was unjust to tax a man for any useless land in his holding. What was wanted was a rating on the value of the land; and to obtain that value classification would be necessary. This the Honorary Minister had said would be costly; at the same time classification was necessary for other purposes besides those of the Bill under consideration. It was clear that the holders of the good land near the coast should pay considerably more rent than was being paid to-day.

The Honorary Minister: You cannot make them pay it.

Mr. UNDERWOOD: If there were in power a Government prepared to do their duty it could be done. The Government were spending some £10,000 or £12,000 a year trying to bring people to the State. If this money were spent in classifying the land it would be better than spending it in lectures by Wallace Nelson, C. H. Rason, and others. No notice could be taken of the cry of expense while the Government were spending thousands of pounds in advertising the country. It was to be borne in mind that unoccupied Government land would prove a breeding ground for the vermin unless the Government took costly steps to prevent it. It would be the duty of the Government to eradicate the vermin on the unoccupied land as well as seeing to it that the vermin was destroyed on the land already occupied. It was to be borne in mind, too, that if the poorer land were rated too high it would be thrown in and so would become further breeding ground for vermin. It was to be hoped that the Minister would recommit the clause and in the meantime endeavour to draft an amendment which would work more equitably than the clause as it stood was likely to do.

Mr. TROY: Would the Minister tell them why it was proposed to exempt from the payment of rates, holdings of less than 100 acres.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It would be well to give the small man a chance. Moreover the tax on such buildings would not be worth collecting. There was no intention on his part of recommitting the clause. The tax was properly placed against the acre. It would cost just as much to fence in 100,000 acres of poor land as of good land. So too with the supervising of the destruction of vermin the cost would be equally great against the poor acre as against the acre of richer land. Further than that, the acre of poor land would not be more heavily taxed under the scheme laid down in the Bill than it would be under that advocated by hon. members on the opposite side of the House. If they were to attempt to classify the land the Bill would be for long deferred. It was questionable too if the Treasurer would consent to an expenditure of £10,000 or £12,000 for this classification. Members should clearly understand that the service was against the acre. This in itself was a sufficiently good reason why the tax also should be against the acre. The service provided by a vermin board would be a totally different thing from that provided by a roads board, which was enjoyed to a far greater extent by the

owner of good land with comparatively large yields than by the owner of indifferent land with light yields. It was a perfectly reasonable scheme of taxation and if the Treasurer had introduced such a scheme with a moderate tax against the acre he would not have done any injustice under the Land Tax Bill, and would have got his money in very much more easily. No harm would have been done. It would have been a simple matter and would have worked much more smoothly than the tax suggested by hon. members opposite. It was a perfectly fair tax and there was no intention on his part of recommitting the clause.

Mr. TAYLOR: Notwithstanding that the Honorary Minister had admitted that the tax imposed under the Land Tax Bill was anything but equitable and fair——

The Honorary Minister: I did not say that. I say it is complicated, that is all.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Honorary Minister had pointed out that the land tax worked harshly, and that the scheme laid down in the Bill under consideration would not work harshly. However, there could be no fairer way of taxing land than on classification.

The Honorary Minister: It is a special service against the acre.

Mr. TAYLOR: There was a large number of holders who had only a very small portion of good land, and for such men only a tax based on classification could be held to be fair. It would be of some value to the Committee if the president of the Pastoralists' Association who, presumably, had presided at the recent meeting of pastoralists called to consider the Bill, and who was in the Chamber, would give the net results of the deliberations of that meeting in respect to the Bill.

Mr. Scaddan: You only hear that at the Premier's office.

Mr. TAYLOR: The information could come from no better source than from the president of this financial and influential body of pastoralists. In our central areas the people with 1,000-acre holdings held perhaps 300 acres or 400 acres of good land, but were compelled to take up the other acreage to give them sufficient scope. This other land might be useless to them, and it was unfair that they should be taxed on inferior land as high as a man holding the same area of all good land. There could be no fairer taxation devised than taxing according to the classification. In the classified districts the boards could tax on the classification and there would be no injustice; because the man with good land could naturally pay more than the man with poor land.

Mr. S. F. MOORE: The clause had been fully discussed by the Pastoralists' Association, and was passed without any foreign matter being introduced into it. The whole of the Bill had been carefully read through, and there were only three clauses the Minister was asked to amend. These amendments the Minister had agreed to bring forward. The discussion to-night was only a waste of time. The pastoralists were quite satisfied with the Bill as it stood.

Mr. JOHNSON: From the remarks of the members for Irwin and Gascoyne, it appeared that only one section of those likely to be affected by the Bill had given any consideration to the measure. Probably the pastoralists had agreed to it, but we had to give consideration to the people mentioned by the member for Mount Margaret. The Bill would not only affect the pastoral areas, it would affect the agricultural areas. It was difficult to fix a proper rate, but the pastoralist had this advantage, that if he were rated on inferior land he could throw it up, whereas the man holding conditional purchase land was liable for the whole area taken up. He moved an amendment—

> *That after "holding" in line 6 the words "held under lease from the Crown, and on lands classified under the Land Act they shall pay a rate not exceeding 2s. on first-class land, and then graduated according to classification" be inserted.*

The HONORARY MINISTER: The amendment, if passed, would complicate the measure, and would work no good. The pastoralists under the Bill were called upon to pay just as much as the agriculturists in the South. It was a tax every

man holding land could pay. The service to the acre was no special service to one acre more than another. It was the simplest form of taxation, and was easy and not costly to collect.

Mr. TROY: The amendment provided no consideration for the leaseholder doing the bulk of the pioneering work.

The Honorary Minister: The leaseholders in your district are doing well now.

Mr. TROY: Those we should consider were pastoralists taking up land in the centre of the State much inferior to the land previously leased. The rate should be fixed upon the rentals charged by the Government. Under the Land Act the State was divided into six divisions, the South-West, Kimberley, North-West, Central, Eucla, and Eastern divisions, and in each division the rent differed. The Government acknowledged by the different rents that some of the land was inferior to other land. There was a considerable area of inferior land in the remote districts, and as on much of it there was already a large amount of vermin, consideration should be shown to the people holding this land. The amendment would not meet the case. The Bill might be recommitted so that the Minister could bring down a more equitable provision.

Mr. NANSON: The amendment of the member for Guildford sought to impose a maximum rate of 2s. per 100 acres on first-class land held under conditional purchase, and on second and third-class land held under conditional purchase it was sought to impose a rate that would be less pro rata to the prices charged by the Crown. There were not many agricultural districts in which it would be necessary to form vermin boards, but there were some, including his own constituency, in which there were pastoral and agricultural areas lying almost side by side. The proposal was a fair one and did not seem to offer any complication or difficulty which would result in making the Bill less workable. If it were shown that it would be impossible to work the Bill under the principle suggested, he would vote against the amendment, but if the relief suggested by the mover of the amendment could be made possible it should be granted.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It would be most difficult, and in fact almost impossible, to work the Bill under the suggestion made by the mover of the amendment. The clause as it stood could be worked very easily and well. The service was to the acre and it was reasonable and right that the acre should pay, seeing that the service to all was equal.

Mr. NANSON: There was no difficulty in the matter of classification, as the land was already classified. The Government had sold it on terms as conditional purchases, and there would be no need therefore for a new classification. It would simply be a case of fixing the rate pro rata.

Mr. BUTCHER: If the mover of the amendment could prove that it would cost one penny less to put a mile of fencing on inferior land than on good land, to exterminate rabbits on bad land better than on good land, or that rabbits would find it more difficult to live on bad than on good land, then he would support the amendment; but the fact remained that it cost just as much to fence poor as good land and therefore there was no reason why the inferior land should pay less than the good.

Mr. JACOBY: It must be remembered that the Bill was to some extent an emergency and experimental measure. After some experience of its working it would be possible to make necessary improvements. As to the clause in question he was not at all satisfied that by fixing a per acre rate the ideal system had been adopted; but he would have to be pretty sure that the system was not a good one before he would consent to altering it to something else. A great improvement in the mode of rating would have to be shown him before he would consent to an alteration. It was not likely that the Legislature would be able to go into the matter this session as fully as was necessary. What should be done now was to endeavour to get a simple system and then perhaps later on, when there was more time, a better one could be adopted.

Mr. HUDSON: The Bill required remodelling. Members repeatedly stated

that it was merely a piece of experimental legislation, but it was the duty of the House to deal properly with all measures brought forward. Outside, and even inside, of the rabbit-proof fence men had gone to the trouble of putting dog and rabbit-proof netting round their holdings. He knew of one case outside the fence where miles of country had been fenced in at the owner's expense, but under this Bill that owner would have to pay the tax of up to 2s. per 100 acres and thus provide for people who had done nothing to help themselves. There was one holding where the owner of 3,000 acres had put a proper netting fence around the whole of it. If a vermin district were formed there that man would, under the Bill, have to pay a rate, just the same as those who had done nothing. That would be inequitable. The Bill should either be recommitted or thrown up with the object of framing something more suitable to the State. In arguing that it was advisable to have the Government inspector sitting on the vermin board the Minister had largely quoted the experience of Queensland, but in this particular division of the Bill dealing with the rating, the Queensland mode, which taxed on sheep or cattle held, was dropped altogether and a new system initiated. To his idea the system of taxing on the acre was inequitable.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was difficult to draft an amendment to cover the position, and it would be better for the Minister to recommit the clause and then see whether an amendment could be drafted to protect everyone. The members of the Pastoralists' Association must admit there would be no hardship to them if the clause were passed as in the Bill.

Mr. Hudson: Who are these people?

Mr. JOHNSON: They represented the large areas of the North and the North-West. There would be no difficulty in classification under the system he proposed for already, in the agricultural areas, all the land held under conditional purchase was classified. While we paid most attention to the North-West and North, still we must realise that the measure would be in operation in other portions of the State in time to come, and that then there would be loud complaints against this method of rating. If the Minister promised to recommit the clause he would withdraw the amendment.

The HONORARY MINISTER: There was no reason why the clause should be recommitted. A considerable time had been spent in discussing it and no suggestion had been made that would improve in the slightest degree the clause as it stood in the Bill. The Bill as drafted was a better one than any existing in the other States.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was impossible for members to draft forthwith an amendment covering so important a matter as the system of rating under the Bill, and it was to be deplored that the Minister was so determined to go through with the Committee stage that evening. The clause was a most important one and should be recommitted. If that were done there would be no trouble about getting the remainder of the Bill through. With a little time for consideration an amendment would probably be drafted which would suit the people in the more closely settled areas as well as those in the North and North-West. The pastoralists were all very anxious to get the measure through so that the vermin should be removed from their areas. In helping them care should be taken not to injure anyone else.

Mr. Butcher: No injury can be done to the holders of agricultural areas, as the pests do not exist there.

Mr. TAYLOR: There were numbers of places in the settled areas where wild dogs played havoc with the sheep. The owners there would be taxed. The Premier would be able to say that the Lands Department had classified a very large portion of the State, at all events in the conditional purchase areas, and where that classification existed it would not be difficult to fix the tax acording to the suggestion made in the amendment. It appeared that some members held briefs to represent the interests of the great pastoralists. The Minister would recognise there had been no opposition to the measure and the desire was that it should be put on the statute book in as workable a form as possible. The Minister would be meet-

ing the wishes of the Committee if he would recommit the clause so that members might feel certain that in passing the Bill they would do all in their power to protect all settlers, the new beginners as well as the old settlers.

Mr. MALE: The Minister should not be so ill advised as to recommit the clause. There had been a lot of fuss made about the small settler, but after all a thousand acres would only be taxed to the extent of £1 per annum, and that would be more than made up by the saving of a couple of lambs or one or two sheep, and small settlers in any of these districts would be only too glad to get their land protected at such a small expense. The pastoralists had agreed to the Bill, and after all they were the people who were mostly interested. They were prepared to tax themselves from £100 to £1,000 per annum without making a fuss. Any delay in the passage of the Bill would be most ill advised. Even those who would have to pay £1 per annum would find it was money well spent, and would not grudge it for one moment.

Mr. JOHNSON: The member for Greenough had prepared a much better amendment than that which he (Mr. Johnson) desired to move. He therefore asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Mr. NANSON moved an amendment—

That in line 6 of Clause 47 after the word "holding" the following words be added:—"held under lease from the Crown and on lands classified under the Land Act shall pay a rate not exceeding 2s. per one hundred acres on first-class land; 1s. 4d. per one hundred acres on second-class land; and 8d. per one hundred acres on third-class land."

Mr. HAYWARD: There were many thousands of acres that had not been classified at all, such as the large estates which had been acquired many years ago. He referred to the Peel estate, and the estate held by the Australind Company, and grants to settlers that were made 30 or 40 years ago. The amendment would necessitate those lands being classified at the expense of the Government. There would be no other way of doing it.

Mr. Walker: Classify all these as first class.

Hon. F. H. PIESSE: It would be a great mistake to interfere with the clause. He would leave the whole matter of rating to the district boards just as in the case of roads boards. Under the Roads Board Act there was the right to tax up to a certain amount. Here there was a clause which provided that "for the purpose of creating a fund for carrying out the provisions of this Act, the board of each district shall in every year, make and levy a vermin rate on every holding within the district: provided that such rate shall not in any year exceed 2s. for every 100 acres of a holding: provided also that no rate shall be made or levied on any holding of less than 100 acres." That could easily be left in the hands of the board which would be appointed by the people. They would be the only people who would be competent to judge as to the value of the land, and as to how it should be rated. With regard to the remarks of the member for Mount Margaret that the people in the agricultural districts were worrying about this measure, he would inform the hon. member that they had never heard of the Vermin Bill. The Bill had been looked into by men who were particularly interested in the Northern pastoral areas, and when the time came to deal with this question from the standpoint of the small agriculturist, then it would be found that they would be on the alert. It would be necessary to see that men were elected on the board who were able under the provisions of the Bill to do all that was necessary to provide for the assessment. It was not a question of first, second, or third-class land. Until the country was better classified than at the present time we would only make confusion worse confounded.

Mr. NANSON: One could not see why the Honorary Minister offered opposition to the amendment. It introduced no new machinery; no element of complication. The land referred to was only land classified under the Land Act. The

clause as amended simply laid down that the first-class land should pay a maximum of 2s. per hundred acres, the second-class 4s., and the third-class land 8d. He could see no reason why the Minister should offer any objection to the amendment. If the amendment imposed some elaborate system of classification, or made it necessary to classify those large estates referred to by the member for Wellington, it would be another matter; but in the terms of the amendment large estates would not be affected at all.

The PREMIER: As far as conditional purchase holdings were concerned, nearly all would be within the rabbit-proof fences, and it was not likely any board would be constituted there in the near future. At the same time he would point out that the most any one individual could hold of first-class land was 2,000 acres, and if it were taxed to the utmost, that tax would be only £2 per annum.

Mr. Scaddan: You are not reckoning on the wife and children.

The PREMIER: It was provided that a man could take up 2,000 acres of first-class land or 5,000 acres of non-cultivable or grazing land. If he took up non-cultivable land as against conditional purchase, the most he would have to pay would be £5. Very few, however, had availed themselves of this. As far as the classification was concerned, it would be impossible to classify pastoral areas. As a rule pastoral areas comprised a much larger area of poor land than in the case of a small selection. A person taking up a small selection would generally take a little while in making that selection, and as far as possible having only a limited area to select, he would select the best country. In pastoral areas sand plains were often taken up. The clause could not inflict any very great hardship.

Mr. TROY: Outside the rabbit-proof fence the land was inferior and the vermin most numerous, yet the settlers out there would be taxed up to the maximum, while the pastoralists towards the coast would be protected by the measures taken by these outside men.

Amendment put and negatived; clause put and passed.

Clauses 48 to 57—agreed to.

Clause 58—Continuing to act as member when disqualified:

Mr. SCADDAN: Hon. members had had experience of penalties under other Acts that had vitally concerned a far greater number of people than this Bill would do. For such offences as leaving open a gate, or sitting when disqualified, penalties were provided in this Bill in sums of £20, £50, and £100, whereas in the Mines Regulation Act, which concerned the welfare of 18,000 men and their wives and families, the penalities provided amounted to £50 in the case of a mine owner or manager, and only £10 for any other person. So, for a man killed, the penalty was £10, while in the glorious piece of legislation under consideration the penalty for leaving a gate open was £50.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must discuss the clause.

Mr. SCADDAN: The members for Gascoyne, for Irwin, and for Wellington, and even the Honorary Minister, had sat in that Chamber for the last four or five hours discussing the Bill, and they would continue to sit and discuss these penalties; yet those members, when the Mines Regulation Bill was before the Committee—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must discuss the clause and not the actions of hon. members in regard to any other matter which might have been before the Committee.

Mr. SCADDAN: Surely one was within his rights in expressing an opinion as to whether the penalties provided in a Bill were in due proportion as compared with the penalties in another measure.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member was confusing the issue. He would not be allowed to reflect on hon. members in regard to other matters which might have been before the Committee.

Mr. SCADDAN: Surely one would be allowed to point out a discrepancy between the penalties in the Bill before the Committee and those provided in another measure. Again, was one not at liberty to compare the attitude of members towards this Bill with their attitude towards other measures which had been before the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must discuss the clause.

Mr. SCADDAN: It was his desire to take the opportunity of entering his protest against the provision of heavy penalties, such as those contained in the Bill before the Committee, for trivial offences, while under other measures £10 was considered sufficient to protect the lives and limbs of workers. Surely he was entitled to do that.

The HONORARY MINISTER: The hon. member had not taken exception to the penalties in the Bill at all; he had only taken the opportunity of discussing other penalties in another measure.

Mr. WALKER: The member for Ivanhoe had said that the penalties provided were altogether out of proportion to the offences named. In doing this he had drawn attention to the operation of fines and penalties in other directions, where greater apparent sanity had been shown in equalising the penalty to the offence.

The Honorary Minister: The member said the fines in the Mines Regulation Act were inadequate.

Mr. WALKER: Probably the hon. member for Ivanhoe had thought that if the penalty in the Bill before the Committee was a just one, the other to which he had referred ought to be £500 or £1,000.

The Attorney General: Would not a very large fine defeat its own object?

Mr. WALKER: That might be so in some instances; however, the hon. member had not been objecting to the fine in the Bill so much as drawing attention to the discrepancy between it and others in other cases. The hon. member's contention had been that there was evidently a rush towards protecting property at any cost. While it was necessary to protect property, surely there should be shown more leniency towards the offender against property than towards the offender against the protection of life. That had been the argument of the hon. member, and to many it would seem perfectly just.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 59—agreed to.

Clause 60 — Leaving open gates, etcetera:

Mr. SCADDAN protested against this exorbitant penalty (£100 maximum) for a comparatively slight offence. He moved an amendment—

That "one hundred" be struck out and "fifty" inserted in lieu.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It was no small thing for a man to wilfully leave open a gate. It was not to be expected that the court would inflict the full fine of £100, but when people went to enormous expense to erect fences all the value of the work done might be destroyed in one night if a gate were left open. The penalty was the same under the Rabbit Act.

Mr. SCADDAN: The words used in the clause were "wilfully or negligently," but since a comparison was instituted with another Act, comparison might be drawn between the penalty imposed in this case and the penalties imposed under the Mines Regulation Act. A little time ago the Attorney General, instructed by the Crown, had proceeded against the manager of the Boulder Deep Levels for not complying with the instructions of the inspector of mines, by which non-compliance a man had been killed.

The Attorney General: I was instructed to prosecute by the Labour Government.

Mr. SCADDAN: The greatest mistake they had ever made. The warden's decision had been that the man had met his death by the wilful neglect of the management, and the owner of the mine had been fined £20 and the manager £10.

The Attorney General: It was the maximum, whatever it was.

Mr. SCADDAN: There was a penalty of £20 where a man lost his life, but it was to be a penalty of £100 where someone might lose a square yard of grass. That was apparently the relative importance of the two offences, but no property was of the same value as a man's life; and this penalty in comparison was altogether too heavy. If it was a just penalty, then the Minister for Mines should amend the Mines Regulation Act to make the penalties fit the offences.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: In the case referred to, the Minister for Mines of the day had instituted a prosecution under the Mines Regulation Act, and sub-

sequently proceedings had been laid under the Criminal Code, but were dismissed on the technical ground that the defendant had already been convicted and punished for the offence. Had the prosecution not been first taken, in accordance with the instructions issued, under the Mines Regulation Act, the second prosecution would, presumably, have been successful.

Mr. Holman: Were you advising in that case?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Certainly not. In reference to this clause, the Rabbit Act for a similar offence provided imprisonment not exceeding six months, or a penalty not exceeding £100, or both imprisonment and penalty: so the proposal in the Bill was less drastic.

Mr. Walker: Are the words "wilfully and negligently" in the Rabbit Act?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No. Even if a man left a gate open by mere accident he was liable under that Act. We should have a penalty that would not be inoperative, but at the same time would be sufficiently a deterrent. The court was not bound to inflict the full penalty. The magistrate would probably fit the penalty according to the circumstances of the man proceeded against.

Mr. BATH: While it was true that under the Justices Act the penalty could be less than the maximum, the result always depended upon who constituted the bench. As land owners were usually the justices in those districts and sat on the bench, very nearly the maximum penalty was generally imposed when the offence was one which concerned them. In New South Wales and Queensland in the old days it was a regular complaint that squatters were the justices and when offences dealing with sheep, horses or cattle came before them the penalties were often very harsh. It was a direct invitation to such gentlemen to inflict penalties altogether out of proportion to the offence.

The Premier: To leave a gate open is the most heinous offence that can be committed under the Bill.

Mr. Walker: They would think it the most heinous offence of any kind.

The Premier: After we have spent £300,000 in keeping the rabbits out it would be a very serious offence to let them in.

Mr. BATH: A maximum penalty of £10 would meet the case.

Mr. HOLMAN: The ordinary swagsman who left the gate open would be fined more heavily than the man who drove a four-in-hand or a motor car. The poorer the man the more severe the penalty. Again, seeing that the land owners would be on the board the inspector would be afraid to take action against them lest he should be dismissed. Would the Attorney General say what would be the alternative in imprisonment if a man failed to pay a fine of £50, £60, or £100?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: If the justices fined a man and he refused to pay they would order distress, and if the amount realised from the distress did not equal the amount of the penalty they could order imprisonment. Section 167 of the Justices Act gave the scale.

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

Ayes	.. .. ..	16
Noes	.. .. ..	22
Majority against	..	6

AYES.

Mr. Bath	Mr. McDowall
Mr. Collier	Mr. O'Loghlen
Mr. Gill	Mr. Scaddan
Mr. Heitmann	Mr. Swan
Mr. Horan	Mr. Walker
Mr. Hudson	Mr. Ware
Mr. Jacoby	Mr. A. A. Wilson
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Troy
	(Teller).

NOES.

Mr. Butcher	Mr. Mitchell
Mr. Cowcher	Mr. Monger
Mr. Davies	Mr. N. J. Moore
Mr. Draper	Mr. S. F. Moore
Mr. Gordon	Mr. Nanson
Mr. Gourley	Mr. Piesse
Mr. Gregory	Mr. Price
Mr. Hardwick	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Hayward	Mr. Underwood
Mr. Keenan	Mr. F. Wilson
Mr. Male	Mr. Layman
	(Teller).

Amendment thus negatived; clause put and passed.

Clause 61—Obstruction of authorised persons:

Mr. SCADDAN moved an amendment—

That in line 5, the words "and not less than £10 be struck out."

A protest should be entered against this method of inflicting penalties in the different Acts. Under the Mines Regulation Act there was a penalty for obstructing an inspector of mines in the course of his duty, the protection of men's lives, and the penalty was £10. In the present case the maximum penalty was £50 and the minimum £10. He was moving the amendment as a protest against the manner of inflicting the penalties under Acts of Parliament, where property was considered to be of more value than the lives of men employed in the various industries.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The amendment would not be opposed.

Amendment passed; clause as amended agreed to.

Clauses 62 to 67—agreed to.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—METROPOLITAN SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE (Temporary).

Second reading.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. Price) in moving the second reading said: In 1904 a Bill was introduced to Parliament to deal with the question of metropolitan water supply and sewerage. During the discussion on that Bill an undertaking was given by the Minister in charge that it should not be proclaimed until the House had a further opportunity of considering some of the provisions of the measure. It was brought down at the latter end of the session, and especially in connection with the question of water supply, the measure contained a good many provisions which were considered to be of a highly contentious nature. That promise has from time to time been renewed by different Governments, and but for its existence, the Government would have proclaimed that Act instead of bringing in this temporary measure. At this juncture we find ourselves placed in the position that we have so far advanced our sewerage works in the metropolitan area that it has become necessary that we should seek further powers to deal with the question of house connection, regulations, and also the striking of rates, and for that reason we determined that as the session has started so near towards the end of the year, rather than bring down a comprehensive amendment to the Act, we would introduce a temporary measure to deal with storm water drainage and sewerage. This measure will be operative only until the last day in the year 1909, and it is the intention of the Government to bring in next session a comprehensive measure which will deal with the question of water supply as well as that of sewerage. I would like to point out in connection with this short Bill which I have brought down, that although it contains some 74 clauses, 56 of them are taken as a whole from the 1904 Act. There are one or two alterations which I will endeavour to explain to the House. In the first place we have made provision in this measure for the proclamation of three districts—the Perth Sewerage District, Fremantle Sewerage District, and Claremont Sewerage District; and we have provided in this Bill that the capital expenditure in each of those districts shall be the basis upon which the rate is struck in each district, so that under this measure it will be clearly possible to have a differential rate, but as that will be guided absolutely by the capital expenditure in each district, I do not think any one will cavil at the proposition. It will be interesting during the 12 months to watch how this proviso works. Because I think if the water supply be dealt with in the same manner in the larger amendment which we propose to bring down during next session of Parliament it will do away with many of the objections which were urged in the House against the proclamation of the 1904 measure. It was asserted at that time that it would not be fair to ask those districts outside Perth to share in what was then said to be the undoubted over-capitalisation of the Perth scheme. If we find this differen-

tial rating work out satisfactorily in so far as sewerage matters are concerned I think we shall have in it a very fair guide for adopting the principle right throughout the metropolitan area. The areas dealt with in this Bill comprise eleven municipalities and six roads boards, and my endeavour has been to deal absolutely equitably with all districts. There are one or two other important items to which I want to draw attention. In the 1904 measure the rating was provided to be either upon the capital unimproved value, or upon the annual rental value. Hon. members will recognise that with eleven municipalities in these districts all rating upon the annual rental value, it would have been impossible in respect to a temporary measure such as this to take to oneself the alternative of rating on the unimproved capital value. Therefore in this measure the unimproved capital value has been dropped, and we propose for the next twelve months to rate only on the annual rental values.

Mr. Draper: Supposing it is vacant land?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The municipalities fix the rental value for the block and so the difficulty is got over. Now in the 1904 measure a board is provided for—a nominee board of three individuals. While I believe that this scheme should be ultimately administered by a board I object to a nominee board, and I should desire to see it to some extent representative of these districts. However, it will be urged against this Bill that it perpetuates the control of the Minister for Works for rather more than another twelve months. Against that I can only say that on the 1st January, 1906, instructions were given to the Government to carry out construction, and the work was put in hand by the Government. Whether one be in favour of construction by a board or by the Government, we must agree that once we have started with Government construction it is desirable that we should continue. It is not desirable that during the process of carrying out a scheme such as this, we should swop horses in crossing a stream. My own idea is that when the new Bill comes in which will make provision for the appointment of the board, and as soon as the reticulation is done in any considerable area in any one of these districts, a board should be formed and that area handed over to the board to manage. However that is going rather into the future. This measure undoubtedly provides for carrying on construction, for framing regulations and for the striking of a rate by the Minister for Works. There is another alteration I have made as from the old Act. The old Act provided that everyone who came within 220 yards of any of the sewers should be rated. It seemed to me that that was a distance altogether unreasonable. A man might have property situated 220 yards from one of these sewers and yet not possibly be able to avail himself of deep drainage. For that reason I have altered the clause so that the Minister may bring in under the rating any whom he deems to be served by the sewer.

Mr. Bath: Within what period after rating do you anticipate you will give them the advantage of connecting with the sewers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We do not propose to rate anybody under this Bill either for storm-water drainage or for sewerage whose property is not capable of being connected with the sewers; who does not benefit by the scheme.

Mr. Bath: But within what time?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Before June 30th there will be a fairly considerable section in Perth connected.

Mr. Scaddan: Will you levy rates on those not connected but within range of the sewers?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We will call upon an individual to connect, and we will give him a fair time in which to connect. He will not be rated until connected, or rather, until he is invited to connect: until that time he will be free from the operation of the rating clauses. I will endeavour briefly to outline a general description of the works up to date. The Claisebrook outfall includes the city of Perth, and parts of Subiaco, Leederville and North Perth. The sewage will be collected from

this area by mains in positions which are indicated by their names:—the Claisebrook sewer, which is constructed; the St. George's Terrace sewer, which has yet to be constructed; the Mount Eliza sewer, which is partly constructed; the Parry Street sewer constructed; the Hyde Park sewer, under construction; and the Mount Lawley sewer, which has yet to be constructed. These in turn will be served by tributary reticulation in the streets and rights-of-way. The sewerage, with the exception of that from a small area on the Perth foreshore, which will be pumped, will gravitate to the tanks at Claisebrook.

Mr. Scaddan: Are they still there?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These tanks are in such condition that they could be used to-morrow, and used effectively, if the sewerage were taken there. It is not the tanks the objection has been taken to; it is the filter beds on the other side of the river, and these filter beds to-day could be operated if they were supplied with the effluent from the tanks.

Mr. Scaddan: What about the machinery?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The sprinklers for distributing the effluent have yet to be put on. There will be no difficulty about that. However, I am not going to take the hon. member's advice on engineering.

Mr. Scaddan: You were fearful on a previous occasion when you got those plans out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Insofar as the Fremantle works are concerned, the sewage from Fremantle will be collected by a main sewer, which practically circles the gaol hill. The treatment works will be out near the smelters. The sewer follows the course of Mandurah road, and then runs under the hill near the hospital to East Fremantle. There are some low-lying portions of Fremantle from which pumping will have to be done; but, generally speaking, the great bulk of the town sewerage will gravitate towards the treatment works.

Mr. Scaddan: In what condition are they?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The tanks are perfectly tight, but there has been some difficulty in connection with the outlet pipe underneath the tanks, which no doubt will ultimately be surmounted. I do not know why members expect that every engineering work the Government undertake will be absolutely free from trouble or difficulty. Only the other night the mayor of Perth and Mr. Hobbs, an architect who has seen a good deal of this work, expressed satisfaction at the excellent way in which the work had been carried out. I have heard the member for Boulder outside this House making statements of a complimentary nature in connection with these works, but when he comes here and talks to the public it is another tale.

Mr. Collier: I have said so until recently.

Mr. Scaddan: He has been to Fremantle since.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As far as the regulations in this Bill are concerned they will enable us to specify and prescribe the class of house connection which must be employed in connection with the fittings. We shall also be able to deal with plumbers, and we can make our own by-laws subject to the powers given to us by the Act to meet any situation that may arise. It is absolutely necessary that this Bill should be gone on with, and I trust members will recognise that it is an endeavour to enable the Government to recoup itself and to receive revenue for a very big expenditure undertaken during the past year or two, and that it is owing to definite and specific promises given not only by this but by other Governments that no action could be taken in the way of proclaiming the 1904 Act until Parliament has had an opportunity of considering it. In view of the fact that so much of this measure is really a copy of the Act of 1904, and in view of the late hour, I feel I may be excused if I go no farther to-night and deal with it more fully in Committee.

Mr. Walker: Why not proclaim the other Act?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: As I have just said, promises were given that the Act of 1904 would not be proclaimed

until Parliament had an opportunity of considering it. There are provisions in the Act to which exception has been taken. The Act needs amending, but in the meantime we want power to deal with sewerage and drainage.

Mr. Scaddan: In view of past events, do you consider you have a man in the department capable of taking charge of this work?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member knows very well that if I did not think our officers were capable of carrying on the construction I should have reported it to the Government long ago.

Mr. Scaddan: But do you not propose to get an officer here from the Eastern States?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have plenty on the staff capable of carrying on this work to a satisfactory conclusion, and we have no intention of going to the East or anywhere else for further assistance. I submit the Bill to the House, and in Committee I shall be prepared to deal with any of the clauses hon. members may see fit to call attention to. This is a temporary measure pure and simple, and I trust members will recognise that it is only operative until the 31st December, 1909.

On motion by *Mr. Walker*, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 11.16 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1908.

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

PAPERS PRESENTED.

By the Colonial Secretary: 1. Report of the Surveyor General for the year ended 30th June, 1908. 2. Plan of the proposed Dock at Fremantle (referred to in Sir Whately Eliot's Report laid on the Table 23rd July, 1908. 3. Report of the Zoological Gardens and Acclimatisation Committee.

QUESTION—RAILWAYS. SECTIONAL RETURNS.

Hon. J. W. KIRWAN asked the Colonial Secretary,—Have the Government any objection to the system existing in most other countries of making sectional returns of receipts and expenditure on the various sections of the Government railways being again followed here? If not, will they recommend the Railway Commissioner to provide such returns in his annual report?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied: If sectional returns can be compiled with accuracy and without undue expense, the Commissioner of Railways will be recommended to give the matter consideration.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Introduced by *the Colonial Secretary*, and read a first time.

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVES (SUBIACO) REDEDICATION.

In Committee.

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