

see anything wrong with that. It is quite fair. Mr. MacKinnon says that he does not believe in any Act which requires naturalisation. He believes that anybody should be able to walk into this country and stand for Parliament, or for road board elections, or be placed on the roll and be able to vote.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I did not say that.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: They were the words the hon. member used; I will bet on it. This Bill gives a concession; it is not placing a restriction on anybody. The intention of the Bill is to concede to these people something which they do not now enjoy. It has not been easy to get the unions to agree to this; in fact it has been quite a job. I believe that if this country is good enough for a person to live in, he should adopt it at the correct time.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: The restriction does not apply elsewhere in Australia.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: If they become naturalised they become eligible for old-age pensions and social service pensions. I have met men in the North-West who have been in this country for 30 or 40 years. Some of them ran away when the sailing ships were in the North-West in the early days. They are Scandinavians, and they have become so old that they cannot work. But because they have not taken the trouble to become naturalised they cannot get any social service benefits. So they have to go to the Old Men's Home, and the community keeps them. But a lot of them could keep themselves if they were able to receive the old-age pension, or the invalid pension.

I see nothing wrong with this Bill. It is a concession. As regards the language question, I think it is most important that they should be able to understand it and speak it. If a man was operating a hoist, or a winch, and he did not know what was being said to him, he might unwind when he was told to wind. I think it is most important for him to have a knowledge of the English language; and that other people, too, should be able to understand what he is talking about. In any case, I do not see how a man could pass a test for a certificate, or answer the necessary questions, if he did not have some knowledge of the language.

I hope the Bill will be passed as it is printed. I know that an attempt was made to amend it in another place; but the Government did not accept the proposal. If it is amended in this Chamber, I do not know whether the Government would be prepared to accept it; so I advise members to accept the measure as it stands.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 6.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 24th October, 1957.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

(a) *Control of Pre-Fabrication Shop, Midland Workshops.*

Mr. HALL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that the Commissioner of Railways has instructed the Chief Civil Engineer to hand over the pre-fabrication shop, including machines, to the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Midland Junction Workshops?

(2) If the answer is "Yes," will he investigate the economics of such a move as it is claimed that the overhead charges for such work carried out by the Chief Mechanical Engineer's branch are approximately 120 to 130 per cent. as against the overhead charges of the Chief Civil Engineer's branch of 25 to 30 per cent.?

(3) If the answer to No. (1) is "Yes," will he give an assurance that the 16 men employed in the Chief Civil Engineering section will be transferred to another branch of the department?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) The Minister for Railways is not aware of the instruction but will have inquiries made.

(2) and (3) Answered by No. (1).

(b) *Suburban Stations, Provision of Septic Sewerage.*

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

In view of assurances given by him several months ago that an early start would be made to provide Carlisle, Welshpool, Queen's Park and Cannington railway stations with septic sewerage, when is this work to commence?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

Material is being obtained for sewerage installation at Welshpool, Queen's Park and Cannington and work is in hand at present on new station lavatories at Welshpool and Queen's Park.

The Minister for Railways has no recollection of giving an assurance regarding Carlisle. However, there are insufficient loan funds available for deep sewerage at Carlisle in this year's allocation.

KILGARRIF V. MORRIS.

Court Actions.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) Did he read a Press report of court action by Kilgarrif against Morris in which serious allegations were made against several solicitors as well as against the accused?

(2) Have there been any earlier actions by the same complainant against the accused or relatives or business associates of the accused? If so, when?

(3) Have any of these actions resulted in committal for trial on criminal charges against any of those accused?

(4) If so, have all or any of the trials taken place?

(5) If not, do not the delays indicate a reasonable cause for complaint against someone?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes, at various times.

(3) Yes.

(4) No.

(5) No.

BASIC WAGE ADJUSTMENTS.

"Weighting Provision" for House Rentals, etc.

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) What "weighting provision" is used by the Government Statistician for considering house rentals, when an adjustment to the basic wage is being compiled?

(2) Are rentals on newly erected homes taken into consideration?

(3) If not, what year was decided upon whereby house rentals for homes built prior to that time, are considered?

(4) At the time of the last basic wage adjustment, what was the average house rental, considered by the statistician in—

(a) metropolitan area;

(b) Kalgoorlie area?

(5) What method is used by the statistician in arriving at the above figures?

(6) Can he advise if the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics has considered the introduction of another scale other than that of the "C" series index?

(7) If the answer is "Yes," can he say if it is considered by the Bureau of Statisticians to be a fairer means of declaring a basic wage for areas other than metropolitan?

The MINISTER replied:

The questions asked by the hon. member assume a relationship between the statistician's figures and the basic wage of a type which, strictly speaking, does not exist.

I would like to supplement that brief general answer by mentioning that although I did not have the opportunity myself of discussing the matter with the Government Statistician, the Secretary for Labour kindly did so on my behalf this morning and was assured that if the member for Kalgoorlie will make an appointment at any time suitable to him, the Government Statistician will be pleased to discuss all of the questions raised.

ESTIMATES.

Institutes and Grants to Chaplains.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

(1) To what institutions does item 4 of Division No. 25 of the Estimates refer ("Grants to Chaplains, etc., £1,250")?

(2) What is the allocation to each institution and to each denomination, and what is the arrangement and conditions under which the amount is paid?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

(1) Various State institutions, viz. hospitals (general and mental), aged people's homes and prisons.

(2) The grants are paid to cover cost of transport, etc., and are not allocated in respect of any particular institution. The grants to denominations are apportioned as follows:—

	£
Anglican Church	500
Roman Catholic Church	500
Presbyterian Church	125
Methodist Church	125

COLLIE COAL.

(a) Use by State Electricity Commission.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Replying to questions asked by me some weeks ago, he stated that the W.A.G.R. had imported 4,227 tons and the S.E.C. 14,085 tons of coal at an average price of £9 3s. per ton for the period from January to the end of September, 1957: Can he now advise why it is necessary for the S.E.C. to use such a large quantity of imported coal at a cost of £9 3s. per ton when Collie coal is available at about 53s. per ton?

(2) Will he have an investigation made to ascertain the reason why the S.E.C. cannot use 100 per cent. Collie coal in accordance with a policy of many years' standing?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied:

This question should have been addressed to the Minister for Works. The answers are as follows:—

(1) The imported coal is used only for making retort gas, and the process results in making available a quantity of much needed coke and high quality tar. Collie coal is used in making carburetted water gas. The State Electricity Commission uses the highest percentage of carburetted water gas that its system will permit and the highest percentage of carburetted water gas of any gas making authority in Australia.

(2) See answer to No. (1).

(b) Use of Char Briquettes by Railways.

Mr. MAY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Can he confirm reports that char briquettes made from Collie coal have been successfully tested by the W.A.G.R. and that during such tests, almost total absence of sparking was proved?

(2) If this report is correct, what action does the W.A.G.R. intend to take to use such briquettes on main lines during the summer months and so avoid the necessity of using imported coal?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) In the two locomotive trials conducted to date under working conditions, virtually no sparks were emitted.

(2) The briquettes used were produced by a pilot plant but the economics of full scale production would require to be known before any firm decision could be made.

GOVERNMENT CHEMICAL LABORATORIES.

Research into "Scaveola Spinescens."

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) What progress has been made in the investigation and research at the chemical laboratories into the properties of the native plant "Scaveola Spinescens"?

(2) Has any report been submitted, and is anything contained in such report, to indicate that the extract from this plant justifies an extension of the investigations and research work in the bio-chemistry field?

(3) What steps have been taken by the Medical Department to assist and co-operate in the research work of the chemical laboratories?

The MINISTER replied:

Extracts have been prepared in our laboratories and supplied to the Health Department which is carrying out an investigation into their uses.

TRAFFIC LIGHTS.

Cost of Installation.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Transport:

What is the present day overall cost of installing traffic lights at a road intersection?

The MINISTER replied:

The cost of traffic light installation varies considerably depending on the traffic requirements and physical features of each intersection. The simplest and cheapest installation will cost approximately

£2,400 at present day prices. Where expensive road construction works are required in order to provide capacity for heavy volumes of traffic the overall cost for even a comparatively simple intersection may be of the order of £10,000. This figure will be greatly exceeded in channelised light-controlled treatments for very high volumes of traffic. Each intersection has to be studied individually.

SEWERAGE.

Loan Allocations in Country Areas.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

What are the individual amounts allocated to each country area, from the total amount of £60,000 shown as an estimate of expenditure on sewerage in country areas, from the General Loan Fund for the financial year to the 30th June, 1958?

The MINISTER replied:

The individual allocations were as follows:—

	£
Collie	19,500
Geraldton	5,000
Northam	21,000
Minor extensions in towns as found necessary	2,500
	<u>£48,000</u>

(2) This area was acquired in local

	1954-55. acres.	1955-56. acres.
Nannup	2,634	4,098
Manjimup .....	.....	660
Collie .....	.....	.....
Harvey .....	.....	.....
Preston .....	.....	.....
Armada-le-Kelmscott .....	.....	.....
Beverley .....	.....	.....
Sundries .....	.....	.....
	<u>2,634</u>	<u>4,758</u>

Bunbury:—

Provision on Loan Estimates, subject to the authorisation of work at Bunbury	12,000
	<u>£60,000</u>

FORESTS DEPARTMENT.

Acreages Acquired and Rates Paid to Local Authorities.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) What is the total additional acreage acquired by the Forests Department during each of the last three financial years?

(2) What was the actual acreage acquired within each local authority's boundaries for the same period?

(3) Under what conditions was the land acquired and for what purpose?

(4) What was the total amount of rates, etc. paid to each local authority by the various owners for the year immediately prior to acquisition?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The total area purchased by the Forests Department during the last three financial years was 21,712 acres. That for each year is shown in figures given in answer to question No. (2).

authorities' boundaries as follows:—

	1954-55. acres.	1955-56. acres.	1956-57. acres.	Totals. acres.	
Nannup	2,634	4,098	2,348	9,080	
Manjimup .....	.....	660	1,307	1,967	
Collie .....	.....	.....	626	626	
Harvey .....	.....	.....	1,552	1,552	
Preston .....	.....	.....	315	315	
Armada-le-Kelmscott .....	.....	.....	2,644	2,644	} Timber lands exchanged for Timber.
Beverley .....	.....	.....	5,287	5,287	
Sundries .....	.....	.....	241	241	
	<u>2,634</u>	<u>4,758</u>	<u>14,320</u>	<u>21,712</u>	

(3) Land was acquired by purchase at agreed prices. The main purposes were—

(a) To obtain land suitable for pinus radiata plantations due to the shortage of this type of land within State forest.

(b) To consolidate State forest boundaries and access.

(c) To add to State forest areas of indigenous forest unsuitable for agricultural purposes.

(d) To permit reforestation of some areas within catchment boundaries.

(4) This information is not available.

BUNBURY HARBOUR.

Allocations from General Loan Fund.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Works:

What are the various projects and what funds have been allocated to each of such projects from the sum of £105,000 estimated to be expended from General Loan Funds for the year ending the 30th June, 1958, on general improvements to the Bunbury harbour?

The MINISTER replied:

The allocation of £105,000 was a general one to cover improvements to the harbour and was subject to review as might be

found necessary due to changing conditions or requirements at the harbour. The funds will cover—

- (a) Carry-over of financial commitments from the 30th June, 1957.
- (b) Completing works then in progress.
- (c) Improvements to jetty and/or breakwater, and developmental dredging.

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.

Reduction in Administrative Costs.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What are the Government's plans to reduce the administrative costs of the State Housing Commission in view of the reduced housing problem and the reduced building programme?

(2) Will reductions be achieved before the 30th June, 1958, although the 1957-58 estimates allow for an increase from £461,636, in 1956-57, to £485,000 in 1957-58?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The reorganisation now being effected has been designed to reduce administrative costs, now and in the future.

Administrative costs cover war service homes (which costs are recovered from the Commonwealth), Commonwealth-State agreement (including the loans to building societies), State Housing Act, McNess Housing Act.

Total capital expenditure for 1957-58 is expected to increase by £666,000 over 1956-57 (£7,855,000 to £8,446,000). It is expected that the commission will complete this year approximately 750 homes more than in 1956-57.

More purchase homes are being made available in lieu of rental homes and this involved much more individual work and individual titles and securities are required in each case. Sections such as accounts, maintenance and collections, are not affected by the reduced programme.

Revenue collections are expected to increase this year from £5,608,000 to over £6,000,000, of which approximately £4,000,000 represents instalments and rentals. Each year's programme adds new accounts and involves increased maintenance and collection activity.

Sections where work has been reduced have, in several instances, already been pruned. While reductions have been made in staff of architectural and construction organisation, these have been offset by the increased staff required to cope with the increased number of securities, which now exceed 30,000.

The rapidly expanding programme in past years involved a certain lag in finalising titles in new subdivisions, capital costs, etc. These are now being overtaken.

All costs are increasing, including salaries and wages, transport costs and travelling expenses, accounting machines and typewriters, etc. (New accounting machines to cope with the cumulative number of accounts are required.) All these administrative costs are recovered and there are no charges against the Treasury.

- (2) Unlikely, for reasons given above.



SERPENTINE DAM.

(a) Construction Work.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Are there any parts of the main Serpentine Dam construction work for which tenders will be called even though the overall project is being undertaken by the Public Works Department's labour organisation?

(2) If so, what will be the general nature of such work for which tenders will be called?

(3) (a) What is the Government's policy in respect of the earthworks for such project, and the use of the tender system?

(b) If the tender system is not to be used, how will it be determined whether departmental costs are higher or lower than the work could be done under contract?

The MINISTER replied:

It is the considered opinion of the Government that the economical and efficient way of constructing this work generally will be by departmental day labour.

(b) Plant Necessary for Construction.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Works:

(1) What additional plant will the Government need to purchase to undertake the main Serpentine Dam construction by Government day labour?

- (2) What will be the cost of such plant?

The MINISTER replied:

Consideration is being given to this. The plant needed will be decided upon from time to time as circumstances require, to suit the construction programme.

STATE SHIPPING SERVICE.

Reduction in Freights to Darwin.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister representing the Minister for the North-West:

(1) Is it proposed to reduce State Shipping Service freights to Darwin, in view of reductions from Eastern Australia to Darwin?

(2) If so, when will reductions apply, what will be the extent and on what cargoes?

(3) What effect will it have on State Shipping Service losses and what steps will be taken to offset the loss of revenue?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:

The State Shipping Service rates between Fremantle and Darwin are based on those charged by Commonwealth-owned ships between Brisbane and Darwin.

Recently the latter advised that Brisbane-Darwin rates are being reduced on all cargoes on the basis of 20s. per ton general cargo rate.

Similar reductions will take place on State Ships as from the 1st November, 1957, when the basic general cargo rate will be reduced from 249s. 6d. to 229s. 6d. per ton.

The reduction is offset by improved turn-round of shipping at Darwin, which is due to increased berthing accommodation, better stevedoring and the provision of better handling equipment for wharf labour.

PRESTON RIVER.

(a) *Potability of Water, etc., Donnybrook.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Has his department any information on the suitability of water from the Preston River at Donnybrook for human consumption?

(2) Is there any evidence in the hands of his department of septic tank effluent reaching the river?

(3) Will he arrange for an inspection and test of the Preston River at Donnybrook to determine—

(a) the existing position;

(b) the tendency to deterioration, or otherwise as to suitability of this water for human consumption?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No.

(3) (a) and (b) Inspection and testing have been carried out and testing is continuing. Any water supply from the Preston River would be chlorinated before being made available for domestic use.

(b) *Instruction to Departmental Officer.*

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

Further to my question regarding Preston River water will he instruct an officer of his department to examine this matter in collaboration with the health inspector of the local authority?

The MINISTER replied:

Consideration will be given to the hon. member's request.

UDIALLA.

Lands Department Intentions.

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Lands:

What plans have the Lands Department in mind regarding Udialla, which was formerly a native reserve?

The MINISTER replied:

Udialla lots were made available for selection under conditional purchase conditions on the 23rd October, 1957, subject to the condition that not more than two lots be acquired by any one person.

Only one application for two lots was received on the closing date and consideration will now be given to the withdrawal of the balance of the lots from selection under conditional purchase conditions in order that they be made available for leasing only.

NATIVE WELFARE DEPARTMENT.

Leaving Certificate for Patrol Officers.

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) Is it necessary to have a leaving certificate for the position of patrol officer with the Department of Native Welfare?

(2) If so, why is this considered necessary?

(3) If not, why are these positions advertised that the applicants must have leaving certificates?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Education qualifications at leaving certificate standard are desirable.

(2) It is the standard of education desired by the Public Service Commissioner for all classified positions in the Public Service. The avenue of promotion to the senior executive positions in the department is through the field division.

(3) The advertisements stated that leaving certificate standard is desirable, not that applicants must have leaving certificates.

FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

(a) *Enforcement of Restricted Hours for Petrol Sales.*

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Labour:

Do the comments yesterday of the Chief Secretary, when introducing the factories and shops legislation dealing with petrol selling hours, mean that restricted hours will be enforced whether the Bill currently before the Legislative Council is passed or not?

The MINISTER replied:

The definite answer is "Yes." I might explain briefly that the Act passed last year would have been proclaimed earlier

but for certain circumstances that arose and that were explained here when I introduced the amending Bill earlier this session. I made no apology for the statements made by the two Ministers concerned, but simply gave an explanation. The Chief Secretary made a statement conveying the same meaning as that made here and when the matter was brought under the notice of Cabinet, it rightly delayed the proclamation of the Act.

From memory, the Bill introduced earlier this session contained a few minor amendments, one of which was suggested by the R.A.C. and another was to the effect that where the Minister prescribed any hours of trading, they were to conform to a general standard. There was also reference to a penalty where the offence was of a continuing character. Those amendments passed this Chamber and I made the appropriate explanations then. If the amending legislation now before another place does not pass, the Act will be proclaimed as passed in 1956, but if the Bill is passed, it will form part of the Act and proclamation will be made as soon as practicable.

(b) Position Regarding Minister's Undertaking.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Labour:

Arising from the answer given to my previous question—"Yes"—does this not mean that the Government is withdrawing the undertaking given by the Minister and the Chief Secretary last session?

The MINISTER replied:

I am glad the hon. member has raised that question. I indicated when the amending Bill was introduced this year that the Act of last year would have been proclaimed if the point had not been raised in regard to the statements made by the two Ministers, in good faith, and we have no apologies at all to make—

Hon. L. Thorn: No one is asking you to apologise.

The SPEAKER: Order! This is question time.

The MINISTER: The House well knows the reasons why the Act was not proclaimed and I say without hesitation that the Government did the decent and the honest thing by the House and by the people concerned. We delayed the proclamation and brought an amending measure before this House, and the whole position was explained. That measure was dealt with by this House and the question of the statements made by the two Ministers was then thrashed out.

If the Government had not done the ethical thing it would, in the face of the statements by the two Ministers, have gone ahead with the proclamation. Instead,

the Government has taken the earliest opportunity to explain to the House why those statements were made and I repeat that it introduced a measure containing a few minor amendments in order to tighten up the Act. I have nothing to hide or hold back. I quoted from my speech and explained the reasons why I made the statement. Members can examine Hansard of last year and this year and they will see that what I said was correct.

I will make no further explanation but emphasise that the Government delayed proclamation of the Act because of the statements I have referred to and nothing could be more honest than the course the Government has followed in this matter.

END OF SESSION.

Position in View of Further Legislation.

Mr. ACKLAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the fact that this is the 17th week of the session and the Government has today given notice of some further Bills to be brought down, can he inform the House of the approximate date on which he thinks the House may rise?

The PREMIER replied:

I am very hopeful indeed that the House will go into recess at the end of the third week in November.

BREAD.

Prices, Delivered to Homes, etc.

Mr. EVANS (without notice) asked the Minister for Labour:

In towns where bread deliveries are being conducted, does the Wheat Products Prices Fixation Committee allow two prices for bread—

(a) delivered to homes by bakers and

(b) bread which is bought ex the bakehouse or at retail shops by customers?

If so, what is the difference between the two prices and in what towns do they operate?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) No.

(b) Answered by (a).

BILL—MIDLAND JUNCTION-WELSHPOOL RAILWAY.

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

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

MOTION—STATE FORESTS.*To Revoke Dedication.*

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [2.39]: I move—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 4, 7, 14, 22, 33, 37, 38, 49 and 51 laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Governor on the 23rd day of October, 1957, be carried out.

This is quite an important resolution, particularly to parties likely to be directly affected, as it is one of those which comes before the House regularly every year and which usually indicates that the session is drawing to a close.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The notice of motion says "1956."

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS: That is why I changed the date to 1957 when moving the motion. No doubt the member for Fremantle has made mistakes on occasions, and he will therefore appreciate that this was an oversight.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Haven't you?

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Very many, but in no way related to this motion! The papers have been laid upon the Table of the House in connection with these proposals, in addition to which I have a short description of each of the ten affected areas, together with plans showing the areas involved. Because of this, it is not my intention to go through each one of the parcels of land in turn. They range from approximately half an acre in one case to 350 acres in another. I think it is well known that the Forests Department is most jealous of its estates.

Mr. Hearman: That is a classic understatement.

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Indeed, Parliament some years earlier, when, shall I say, it was perhaps a little more responsible in the protection of forest estates, laid it down that before so much as a square foot of forests could be excised and used for another purpose, the consent of both Houses of the State Legislature should first be obtained.

These proposals are in accordance with that procedure. The motion is moved, and I have the description and the plans with me, which I will be pleased to make available to any member who is interested. When we consider the spectacle of 49 members running around to see whether their territories are in any way involved, perhaps if I indicate the localities we can confine the rush for these papers to the few members directly affected.

Mr. Bovell: I have already had a look at them. There are 350 acres affected in my area.

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS: The first of these is adjoining the Collie town-site; the second is near Pickering Brook, and the next near Nanga Brook. The fourth of these is again near Pickering Brook, while the fifth adjoins the Karra-gullen townsite. The next one is south-east of Busselton; and this is a large area of 350 acres. There is also an area 12 miles east of Pemberton and a small piece of land close to Mullalyup. There is an area near Congelin, also affected, and another area—this time of several hundred acres—some three miles from Hartlea which, from my knowledge of the geography of the State, is somewhere on the Boyup Brook-Cranbrook-rd.

On motion by Mr. Wild, debate adjourned.

BILL—MARKETING OF POTATOES ACT AMENDMENT.*Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of two amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1.

Clause 3, page 4, line 31—Insert after the word "inspector" the following:—

wearing on the left arm a white arm band not less than four inches in width with the letters P.M.B. embossed in black thereon, the letters being not less than two inches in height.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This was foreshadowed here as a result of the remarks by the member for Stirling and other members to the effect that there should be a clear identification. I said then that in order to bring this about, steps would be taken to include a suitable amendment in another place. This is that amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 2.

Clause 3, page 6, line 5—Add after the word "container" the following proviso:—

Provided that the powers conferred on inspectors by this subsection shall continue in operation until the thirty-first day of December one thousand nine hundred and fifty-nine and no longer.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not like this amendment as much as the previous one. Its intention is to limit the application of the Act to the 31st December, 1959, and no longer. I expected such an amendment to be moved because I think the member for Blackwood or someone else said that they felt there should be some limitation placed on this activity under the Act. On the other hand I felt,

and still feel, that if it is necessary today to have legislation of a restrictive character, which, of course, this is, on behalf not only of the potato growers but the marketing board and the consumers generally, and if it is logical and reasonable to put it in the Act, it is also reasonable and fair to permit it to stay there, because after all the serious situation that has developed in regard to blackmarketing is not limited to a particular year or to two years.

It can occur at any time and what we need at the moment is a particular type of legislation which will endeavour to stamp out this pernicious practice. Having got that legislation, we should let it remain on the statute book for ever if it need be, because it could quite easily be discontinued in practice when its powers became no longer necessary. If this Act ceased to operate on the 31st December, 1959, Parliament would not be in session and we would not have an opportunity until July or August of the following year of doing anything about it.

Apart from this, the moment the power we are trying to include for two years is taken out of the Act, the same situation that has occurred and which has made the Bill necessary, will again be thrown open. After all the discussion we have had and after all the disturbances that have been caused on the marketing side of potatoes in recent times, an attempt is now being made to curtail the powers in this Act and leave the position at the mercy of unscrupulous people to take advantage of marketing conditions if they happen to be right at the time, which is a little bit too much to expect. However, notwithstanding I am informed by the manager of the Potato Marketing Board that in order to get the provisions of this Bill into the Act as quickly as possible with new potatoes coming on to the market, as a last resort he is prepared to accept this amendment. On his advice, I reluctantly do so and hope that in two years time members will not regret this action when the measure disappears from the statute book.

Mr HEARMAN: If the Minister studies this amendment, he will see that it is not so dreadful as he depicted. This does not apply to the whole of the provisions in the Bill. That is to say, all the provisions made in this Bill to deal with retailers and people who are selling potatoes illegally will stand. It is only this provision which will be limited—the one which authorises inspectors to stop vehicles on the road.

The Minister for Agriculture: Of course it is.

Mr. HEARMAN: This is only one aspect of the legislation, and although it is important it does not mean that in two years' time we will go back to where we started at the introduction of this legislation.

The Minister for Agriculture: If you have not powers of inspection, I do not see much use in the legislation.

Mr. HEARMAN: The particular sub-clause to be limited in its application applies only to powers of inspectors to pull vehicles up when they are in motion. It does not affect the provisions relating to retailers or restrict the inspectors in that respect. Policing of these matters should be left to the police, as we feel that law enforcement is a police function. I am not keen on the idea of having every statutory authority setting up its own police force within its own legislation. I am glad the Minister has agreed to this amendment and I would like to assure the committee that the effects will not be so far-reaching as the Minister depicted.

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

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

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 17th October.

MR. WILD (Dale) [2.56]: As the Minister said, these are minor amendments in the main which, with one exception, I agree to. I think this legislation has probably been prompted by the changed circumstances that have come about in the industry in the past 12 months, mainly due to the retrenchments following the new agreement entered into between the Government and the coalmining companies.

One can well imagine that men who have served for many years in the industry and who find themselves out of work—it is possible after a period of time; the period which has been laid down in this Bill is 12 months or such other period as determined by the tribunal—will not, unless something is done, participate in the pension fund into which they were paying prior to their retrenchment. Therefore, I have no doubt that this legislation has been brought down to protect these people.

The first provision to be amended is Section 2, and the object is to allow for people such as mine managers who have been brought to the State from the Eastern States or possibly overseas—the amendment makes it fairly wide, so it could be either—subject to certain conditions, to become eligible for pensions the same as the rest of the mine-workers in the field.

One can well imagine that there would be very few people under the statutory age of 35 years who could go into an industry such as this as a manager and

be youthful enough to come within the provisions of the existing Act. Therefore the amendment to Section 2 has been introduced to allow those people over the age of 35 years to become eligible for pensions, subject to certain conditions, these being in effect that they have to pay in their arrears within a period of three years, or a period determined by the tribunal, and then, providing they can pass a medical examination, they, too, can become eligible for a pension.

It is the next amendment, which affects Section 9, that I cannot agree with, because I think there is a principle at stake. In the past, the practice in this State has been—as it is in the other States—that when it comes to children, irrespective of the number in a family, there has always been a flat rate of 10s. By that I mean that the pensioner can have one child or 10 children and still receive 10s. The Minister in his introductory remarks indicated that this is, to some degree, wrapped up in Commonwealth social service benefits. I am afraid I cannot quite agree with that, as the amendment desires to completely take that away and make it a flat rate of £1 for each child.

There is a tremendous difference in respect of the number of children as a man who becomes pensionable is now allowed 10s. for these children. To alter it to £1, to strike a hypothetical case, would mean that he is going to receive for these children an addition of £5 10s. a week. I agree with the contention of the Minister that the cost of living is high.

The point I wish to make is this: I understand it has been standard practice in this State to follow as closely as possible what is going on in the Eastern States in regard to the coalmining industry, and they have not seen fit to do it over there. In New South Wales, the rate is still 15s. for the children, just as it is 10s. for the children in Western Australia.

Over the years—I repeat—it has been standard practice to endeavour to keep the conditions in Western Australia the same as in the Eastern States in regard to the coalmining industry. When there has been some change in conditions in the Eastern States, there has usually been an approach by the unions to the tribunal to have it included in the local arrangement and the Minister of the day, having received the recommendation of the tribunal, would introduce the necessary legislation to bring this State into line with what applies in New South Wales.

Mr. May: Very few children are concerned in this.

Mr. WILD: I appreciate that, but it is a matter of principle. Over the years we have followed New South Wales so why should we in this instance depart from that practice? From inquiries I have

made, I understand that at the moment there would be about 14 or 16 children involved, which is a reasonable number. But the principle is that we have been following N.S.W., so why should we depart from that principle? When the Bill is in Committee I intend to move that we get back into line with N.S.W., and then we will be following what has been the standard practice for some time.

Mr. May: Our reserves are much heavier than in the Eastern States.

Mr. WILD: Section 13 is the next one to be amended, and the provision in the Bill will validate the action that has been taking place in the past; by agreement, I understand. If someone is afflicted by tuberculosis, obviously there are certain limits within which one can receive outside income, and the amendment in the Bill will, in effect, mean the validating of the past practice. The pension fund will receive some benefit because the full payment will be made by the Commonwealth so that a lesser amount will be paid out of the pension fund at Collie. I have no quarrel with that provision.

Section 21 is also to be amended to allow of a decrease in the time in which a man may receive any reimbursement he may get from the pension fund when he leaves the industry. The period is to be reduced from two years to one year. Again, I have no quarrel with this provision because one can see that with the upheaval that there has been at Collie—at least in regard to a certain number of men in the past 12 months—this appears to be a fair period to have to wait. I think one year is sufficiently long. One can understand that in the years gone by the men were wanting to take out of the fund the 75 per cent. that they were permitted to take if they left the industry. At that time they sort of changed from mine to mine and started in all over again, but I do not think that practice operates to any extent now. I can imagine that if a man has a job in a mine at Collie, particularly where the seniority provisions apply, he would be somewhat reluctant to change to another mine.

It is proposed that two new sections shall be added, and they are to be known as Sections 21A and 21B. I have no quarrel with these provisions which really relate to the re-employment of a man who might have been stood down due to the latest trouble of which I have spoken. Such a man, as we know, is not at present eligible for benefits unless he is under the age of 35 when he joins the industry. There would be very few men who, if they were put out at the age of 34, would be eligible, because they could not have been in the industry the requisite period of 25 years. So these two amendments have been put in to allow of men going back to the industry even though they may be over the age of 35.

One point I would like the Minister to clear up for me is: Why in the case of a man who is retrenched, and who has served the necessary 25 years in the industry and so is eligible, has the age at which he becomes pensionable, even though he does not get the pension until he is 60, been fixed at 57? I have thought this over but I cannot see why it should be 57. Why did not the Government pick on the age of 56 or 58? I know there had to be a starting point somewhere, but take the case of a man compulsorily retrenched from the industry when he was 56 years 11 months and a fortnight old. He is a fortnight outside the pale and so cannot get it. He gets only the 75 per cent. back that he is entitled to under the Act.

Mr. May: It applies just the same if the age is 58.

Mr. WILD: That is so, but having established that 60 is the retiring age, why, all of a sudden, has it been made 57? The Minister may have a satisfactory reply, but in his speech he made no mention of it except to say that the Bill proposed that such a person on attaining the age of 57 years, but who, because of retrenchment, was not re-employed before attaining the compulsory age of 60, should receive his pension on attaining the latter age. The Minister did not give any reason as to how the age of 57 had been arrived at. I want to know why the Minister did not make it 56 or 58. All my sympathies are with the man, who is, one may say, in the autumn of his working life. It would be unfortunate for a man to be put out of work when he reached the age of 56 years and a few months; but why was the age of 57 chosen?

Mr. Bovell: Because of the year 1957, perhaps.

Mr. WILD: It seems to me it was a stab in the dark. With the exception of the provision in regard to the amounts to be paid to children of people who are eligible for a pension, I support the second reading.

MR. MAY (Collie) [3.7]: This is quite a small, and I thought, non-contentious Bill. I was going to claim priority in regard to the non-contentious part of it, over the Minister for Health and his small Bills. The measure contains amendments that have been rendered necessary through changed circumstances, as the member for Dale has already said. These amendments have been given every consideration by the union within the coalmining industry, the pensions tribunal and also the Government; and they have come to unanimous agreement on them.

The recent retrenchments in the industry—I am happy to say they were not as numerous as was anticipated at one stage—have placed some of the mine-workers in an awkward position, especially those who joined the industry after the age of

35 years. If a man joins the industry after that age he automatically pays into the pension fund but he does not enjoy the benefits of the pension upon reaching the age of 65 years although he receives back every penny that he paid in.

There is another aspect worrying the men, and this concerns those who were employed in the industry before reaching the age of 35 years; who paid into the fund for a number of years, and who subsequently were retrenched and who, later, became re-employed in the industry but were then over the age of 35 years. It seemed most unfair that a man could have been in the industry for 25 years before being retrenched, have paid his subscriptions to the fund for the whole of the time, then lose his job, later return to the industry after attaining the age of 35 years, and receive no pension benefits at all. So the Bill provides that in certain circumstances such classes of employees shall continue with their pension rights. I think the House should agree to that.

Provision is also made for employees who, after paying in for 25 years, are retrenched at the age of 57. This is the point that the member for Dale queried. This amendment will cover such employees, and they will receive the pension after reaching the age of 60 years. The age was fixed as late as possible in a man's working life—57 years—because after that age if he has worked in an industry like coalmining he is not as a rule fit to take up other employment. As a consequence, a man retrenched from the industry on reaching the age of 57 years would be thrown on the unemployment scrap heap.

In fairness to the men working in the industry, I want to say that if a man works underground for a number of years, it has a bad effect on his constitution because he is subject to all sorts of disabilities including the effects of the fumes that are associated with mining operations. I do not think there was any other real reason why the age was fixed at 57 years; it was to bring a man as near as possible to the retiring age after being retrenched.

The Minister will probably give the member for Dale the reason for the fixing of the age at 57 years, but I know it was felt that a man in the industry who was retrenched at that age was practically useless for any kind of work on the surface. As a consequence, it was decided by everyone concerned—and I hope the House will agree to this—that a man who had worked in the industry and was retrenched at 57 years, should be allowed to enjoy the pension.

Another amendment reduces the waiting period to two years before a man can receive a refund of his contributions. At one time, in the history of the pension scheme, a man had to wait 10 years. This was brought about by reason of the fact

that some men—some wise-heads—would leave the industry. In the early days they would receive their refunds, have a holiday or something like that, and eventually return to the industry. That practice had to be stopped, and, as a result, the period was raised from five years to 10 years, and it automatically stopped that sort of thing.

Now we find that men who are entitled to a refund of their contributions are being retrenched from the industry, and it would be most unfair to ask them to wait 10 years. As a consequence, this amendment will permit them to receive their refund of contributions within the period of two years. I think the member for Dale mentioned this point. There is an amendment to cover men who come under the Commonwealth Social Services Act and who are also in receipt of a tuberculosis allowance under a different Commonwealth Act.

By this amendment the total income of the pensioner will not be affected but the amendment will be the means of reducing the amount payable from the State Coal Mine Workers Pension Fund because instead of the full amount being paid by the fund it will be met by the Commonwealth Social Services Department, which is all to the good as far as this State is concerned. Mention was also made of the question of the mine managers, over the age of 35 years, coming into the industry and being refused pension rights. Most of these managers—there are not many—have come from the Eastern States; and one or two from England.

Most of the managers have been employed in the industry all their lives. They must have done so to be a manager at the age of 35 years. We contend that a man coming from the Eastern States, who has worked in the industry for the number of years necessary to qualify him over there, should be allowed to enjoy the pension rights in this State after taking up employment here. To qualify, a manager will have to pay arrears of mine-workers and owners' contributions to the date of the introduction of the restrictive clause, where a man joined the industry after the age of 35 years—namely from the 8th January, 1949, to the date of commencement of employment in this State.

So the fund will not lose anything by it. From the time of his coming here, or from the time of leaving the industry in the Eastern States, he will pay contributions back to the 8th January, 1949. The manager himself would be compelled to pay those back contributions together with the amount payable by the company for which he worked. There has been an effort to adopt a reciprocal agreement between the Eastern States and Western Australia in regard to this matter, but the Eastern States complain that there are very few

men who leave this State to take up employment in the Eastern States. As a matter of fact, it has been a one-way traffic from the Eastern States to here, and the Eastern States companies cannot see the funny side of it. As a matter of fact, no satisfactory agreement has yet been worked out.

The last amendment is one to which the member for Dale takes exception. I refer to the payment of £1 a week for each child under the age of 16 years. The amount payable in the Eastern States is 15s., whereas here the man receives only 10s. for the first child and no more. He can have 10 other children but that has no effect at all. The fund first started to operate on the 1st July, 1944, and over that 13 years, as all members know, the cost of living has increased enormously. I do not think we should make people—particularly the children—suffer because something is not actually in line with the Eastern States. Since the 1st July, 1944, when the fund began to operate and men were retired at 60 years of age, many of the children in this State must have lost a lot of money overall.

It is only fair, having regard for the increase in the basic wage over those 13 years, that any man who retires at 60 years of age, and who has children under the age of 16 years, should get £1 a week for them. Even that is little enough because by the time a man reached that age his children would be teenagers and, as a result, it would cost much more to keep them than when they were smaller. I hope the member for Dale will not persist in upsetting what I consider a most admirable Bill, because, in my opinion, any man who has reached the retiring age and has children under 16 years is at least entitled to £1 a week for each of them. When the Bill gets into Committee I have a small amendment, which is merely consequential; but apart from that I hope the Bill will be passed as printed. I hope it will receive the approval of all members.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. L. F. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn—in reply) [3.20]: I thank the members for Dale and Collie for their contributions to this debate. The member for Dale has agreed with most aspects of the Bill, with the exception of one clause about which he is not very happy because he feels that there is a principle at stake.

Mr. May: He is usually so humane, too!

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I think that could be said with perfect truth. Probably the little matter of principle, on which the hon. member has balked, is one that need not concern us very greatly, because I understand that before long New South Wales will be introducing legislation to bring their Act into line with what we are trying to do by this Bill. I thought it very unwise to deny our children the

amount of money which the other States will be granting in the very near future. As the member for Collie said, very few children will be involved because men retiring at 60 do not usually have children under the age of 16 years.

The member for Dale said that 14 to 16 children would be affected. I doubt whether even that number would be involved at present; certainly the number of children would rarely exceed that figure, and there have been many occasions when the number has been considerably lower than that. I would like to point out, too, that the extra sum involved would be trifling. It certainly would not mean increasing the contributions in any way. The contributions now paid into the fund have resulted in the amassing of a very big reserve so that when the matter was discussed with me, and it was pointed out how few children would be involved, I had no hesitation in agreeing with it. So I hope the member for Dale will not persist with his attitude because, as I said, the amount involved is very trifling and would not mean very much to the fund.

The other matter on which he wanted some clarification was in the matter of the retiring age of 57 years instead of 60 years. Men who will be reaching the age of 57 will have been working in the industry and will have been paying contributions for a period in excess of 25 years. The hon. member suggested that it could be some other age, say, 56. Of course, some line of demarcation has to be adopted, and it was thought after mature consideration, that the age of 57 would meet the majority of cases.

Mr. May: It is within three years, too.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, it is within three years of the retiring age of 60 years; and at that period in a man's life it is very difficult for him to obtain re-employment. I think the Act provides that the man could be re-employed at the end of 12 months, and if that were the case the 57 provision would not apply. If he worked for another 12 months or so, he would be 59, and would be almost at the age of 60, which is the normal retiring age. I think the member for Dale is splitting straws if he insists on the age being 60 before a pension is payable. I think he will realise that it is very difficult for a man to obtain other employment at that age. As a result, it is thought advisable to allow for the age of 57. There are no other matters I wish to comment on and I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 9 amended:

Mr. WILD: I move an amendment—

That the words "an amount of ten" in line 26, page 3, be struck out with a view to inserting other words.

It may be that I am tenderhearted; I think I am usually. But I think there is such a principle at stake that this amendment should be agreed to. I know that not many children are involved and, as the Minister said, the fund is in a healthy state. But I think he built up an argument against himself because he said that he was hoping to get reciprocity with the Eastern States. In order to get reciprocity we must have uniform conditions.

He said he hoped that New South Wales would introduce legislation to make the sum £1 payable for their children in the future. I think I can say, on behalf of the Opposition, that if that amendment is agreed to in New South Wales, we will be happy to agree to it in Western Australia. But if we make our amount £1, there is a possibility that New South Wales will make theirs 25s., and so it will go on. We must have uniform conditions to obtain reciprocity. In the main, this industry has been Commonwealth controlled. During the war the Commonwealth took control of the coal mines of Australia and we had uniform conditions. When their regulations went overboard, the State took over.

As the Minister said during the second reading debate, it is to be hoped that reciprocal arrangements can be made so that people can move from West to East, and vice versa, in this industry as and when they think fit. But to do that, particularly when pension funds are involved, conditions must be comparable. It is not the amount of money that is involved that worries me, because I agree that a man of 57 or 60 would have very few children under the age of 16. But a principle is at stake. It is not a very sound argument to decide on the payment of £1 for each child when the existing provision is 10s. for all children. An increase to £1 for all children would be reasonable. I know the Minister will say that it is extremely unlikely for an old miner to have ten young dependent children, but it is possible for that to occur. The principle involved is the desire to bring about uniformity in conditions with New South Wales. If the legislation in that State were amended to make the payment £1 per child, I would be the first to agree with an amendment in like manner to the legislation in this State.

Mr. MAY: It appears that this move by the member for Dale is an effort to ease his conscience. I know that it is against the grain to argue against children getting sufficient maintenance, so he has used the argument of uniformity with New South Wales to reduce that payment.

I would point out that there is no uniformity in the payment made by miners into this fund in this State as against the payment made by miners in New South Wales. The miner here pays far more.

The healthy position of the fund in this State completely refutes the argument advanced by the member for Dale. Because very few children will be affected by the amendment contained in this clause, because the miners here contribute more than do those in the Eastern States, and because at present the miners here receive 5s. less in benefits than the amount received in New South Wales, I consider that the children of the miners are entitled to a greater payment than is provided in the Act. I therefore oppose the amendment of the member for Dale.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: It is rather strange that the member for Dale quoted New South Wales as being the guiding light in respect of this pension. It was only a few nights ago that the Leader of the Opposition was very keen to depart from the lead set by some of the other States, and particular mention was made of New South Wales. Apparently the member for Dale cannot align his ideas with those of the Leader of the Opposition. A number of conditions apply in New South Wales which do not apply in this State. On a few occasions, when it suits both States, attempts are made at uniformity. I would point out that the price of coal at the pit mouth varies between New South Wales and Western Australia; there is a slight variation in the cost of living; and certainly there is a variation in contributions to the fund.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Can you give us the respective figures?

THE MINISTER FOR MINES: I have not the figures at the moment. I know the contribution in this State is higher. The final point is that for a number of years the children of miners in this State have been deprived of 5s. allowed under the fund, so the granting of the extra payment contemplated in the Bill will not make a great difference to them over a period.

Mr. WILD: There seems to be some confusion in the amendment I moved.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member is successful with his amendment, it will not make sense because the clause seeks to amend Section 9 of the Act which sets down a payment of 10s. a week. The Minister proposes to delete the 10s. and to increase the amount to £1 per child.

Mr. WILD: When one looks at paragraphs (b) and (c) of this clause which must be deleted if para (a) is amended, the only thing that I can do is to register my disagreement with the whole clause, and to endeavour to effect an amendment in another place.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. member can withdraw the amendment and move further down for the deletion of £1.

Mr. WILD: If I am successful in having the amount of 15s. inserted in lieu of the 10s. I will have to move for the deletion of paragraphs (b), (c) and (d) because they will be null and void. I shall therefore oppose the whole clause. I realise that not many children are involved in this amendment, but the principle is to retain uniformity with the Eastern States. The member for Collie stated that there was a difference in the contributions in the two States, but I do not know if that is a fact. If the Eastern States were to adjust the rate of pension, and if there is to be reciprocity, the same rate will apply in this State.

We know that reciprocity is practised in other directions. For instance, the B.M.A. will not permit a medical practitioner to practise in this State unless he has passed the examinations to show that he is up to our standard, but in the case of countries with the same standard as ours and where there is a reciprocal arrangement, the doctors will be permitted to practice here. If New South Wales wants reciprocity with Western Australia in coalmining matters, the amounts contributed and the amounts paid out under the fund will have to be the same. I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	....	24
Noes	....	....	....	....	18

Majority for 6

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brady	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Evans	Mr. Norton
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Graham	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Toms
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. W. Manning
Mr. Bovell	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Corneli	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Court	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Crommellin	Mr. Owen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. I. Manning

(Teller.)

Paars.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Hall	Mr. Brand
Mr. Potter	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Perkins

Clause thus passed.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.5 p.m.

Clauses 5 and 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Sections 21A and 21B added:

Mr. MAY: I move an amendment—

That after the word “commencement” in line 39, page 6, the word “either” be inserted.

This is to correct an oversight in the Bill. When the Act was brought into force on the 1st July, 1944, the Federated Clerks Union was not included. After the Act had been proclaimed, the omission was noted and that union was brought under the Act three weeks later, on the 21st July. That fact was overlooked when this measure was printed and the amendment is therefore necessary.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MAY: I move an amendment—

That after the word “July” in line 30, page 6, the words “or the twenty-first day of July” be inserted.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

- 1, Betting Control Act Continuance.
With an amendment.
- 2, Church of England School Lands Act Amendment.
- 3, Public Service.
With amendments.

BILL—OPTOMETRISTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Council and, on motion by Mr. Lapham, read a first time.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

New Clause.

Page 3—Insert after Clause 4 a new clause to stand as Clause 5 as follows:—

5. Section twenty-six of the principal Act is amended by inserting after the word “order” in line four the words “to eradicate the plant or.”

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This amendment is designed to facilitate the eradication of a weed that has become a problem in certain irrigation areas. The amendment would entail a considerable amount of work in the preparation of new regulations under Section 26 of the Act which at present only

permits the burning of plants when scraped together into heaps, and does not permit the kind of activity proposed. I think the amendment would prove of value although the destruction of this plant and similar noxious weeds is permitted under Section 17 by a different method, as that section enables the suspension of the prohibited burning time for specific purposes.

This power has been used in the past to deal with problems such as those presented by this type of plant. In such suspensions the actual land involved is scheduled and the conditions to apply to the burning are set out in the suspension notices. That is the practice today. But because of the pernicious nature of this plant the weed control committees in several of the irrigated areas desire in the coming summer to carry out a programme of burning in order to eradicate pinnesetum.

It will probably be necessary for the time being to use the power under Section 17 to enable this season's programme to be carried out, because Section 26 does not give this power. It will, of course, be impossible to draw up new regulations under Section 26 in time to make them effective for the coming season. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

BILL—ACTS AMENDMENT (SUPER-ANNUATION AND PENSIONS).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th October.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [4.18]: This Bill proposes to amend three superannuation Acts relating to Government employees. The 1938 Act covers the greatest number, irrespective of whether they are salaried or wages employees and is a contributory scheme. The 1871 Act deals with a non-contributory scheme which provided pensions at a certain low rate to Government employees in salaried positions, who were permanently employed in a fixed position prior to 1904.

The 1948 Act was introduced by the McLarty-Watts Government to provide pensions for Government employees who considered they should have been covered by the 1871 Act and who, in the main, were generally wages employees. I want to compliment this Government, as I do the McLarty-Watts Government, for making some endeavour to increase the pensions of Government employees. We know that in times of rising prices it is necessary for people who are retired to have their pensions increased so that they may continue at a standard of living to which they have been accustomed.

The 1938 Act will, under this Bill, be amended to introduce a Second Schedule scale as regards the number of units of pension for which a contributor may or can subscribe. Under the 1938 Act there is a scale which has applied up till now and under this Bill that scale will be known as scale "A." A new scale to be known as scale "B" is included in this measure. The present unit of scale "A" is 12s. 6d. and this Bill increases it to 15s. In addition, the existing supplementation of £1 per week will be continued.

Scale "A" applies to Government employees who have made contributions to the fund prior to the 31st December, 1957. The proposed new scale will apply to those who first commenced to make contributions to the fund after the 31st December, 1957. Contributors under scale "B" will receive a pension unit value of 17s. 6d. per unit but they will not receive any supplementation payment. The net result will be, however, that those coming under each scale will receive, as far as I can ascertain, approximately the same benefit.

I understand also that scale "B" operates uniformly through the Commonwealth Government Superannuation Fund. The 1871 Act will be amended and the proposal submitted by the Government, in my opinion, is most disappointing to those concerned. To a very limited extent the amendment will relate pensions to the costs of living. The formula set out in the Bill, known as the Nicholas formula, is, in my opinion, so involved that even a Philadelphia lawyer would find it difficult to decipher. Not being a Philadelphia lawyer, I have made every endeavour to decipher it and therefore I will outline my conclusions with some reservations.

Whilst it provides some additional benefit to the earlier members of the scheme—and that is only to a very minor degree—it filches from some members benefits that they now receive. In my opinion, this is a most undesirable feature and will cause a downward readjustment in living conditions for those concerned. In this formula, as outlined on page 12 of the Bill, item (a) is set down to represent, I take it, the basic wage at £12. I must say I cannot understand why there is a fixed figure of £12 for the basic wage when the existing basic wage is £13 12s. 9d.

It would appear to me that it is the Government's policy that basic wage increments should continue, but now the Government appears to be departing from its usual policy in this instance and it has fixed the basic wage in regard to the 1871 pensions at £12. In connection with item (c), there is in the Nicholas formula a deduction of £182, and this will apply to pensioners—if I have the correct import of this item—who retired in later years on a larger pension than did those previously. It would appear to me that this

portion of the formula will filch from a number of pensioners under the 1871 Act, certain amounts of money.

As I said earlier, this will have a downward effect on the living standard of those concerned. In times of rising prices such as we have experienced in postwar years it is most difficult to readjust one's mode of living due to a decreased income and I am very sorry that the Government considers it necessary to take from some of the 1871 pensioners a certain amount of the pension which they are today enjoying. I would suggest that the Treasurer give further consideration to first of all amending item (a) in the formula and to making the amount at least £13 12s. 9d. which is the existing basic wage. That would have the effect of giving those pensioners the benefit of the existing rate of the basic wage.

I suggest that item (c) of the formula should be deleted altogether. If I correctly interpret the Nicholas formula as set out on page 12 of the Bill, such deletion would mean that there would be no reduction in pension for any of the existing pensioners. The 1871 pensioners are a vanishing race. From the date of the Act and the subsequent additions to it—such as the 1948 Act—it indicates that pensioners under this scheme are leaving this world because of old age; and I do not think it would be a great drain on the Treasury. Accordingly, I implore the Treasurer to give consideration and effect to the suggestions I have made.

Instead of the basic wage being fixed at £12 as it is in item (a)—and here I cannot see why the Treasurer has arrived at a figure of £12—I suggest that the amount be raised to £13 12s. 9d., which is the existing basic wage, and this amount should be inserted in lieu of the £12. In my opinion, item (c) of the formula is robbing some of the existing pensioners under the 1871 Act of a portion of their pension and this will no doubt cause an altered condition of living for them.

If a pensioner who was receiving a fixed pension finds his pension, as from the 1st January, 1958, reduced by £1 per week, £1 10s. or £2 per week it must, of course, have an adverse effect on his living conditions. If the Treasurer is not willing to agree to these proposals, he might give consideration to a modified amount. However, I do earnestly ask him to agree to the suggestions I have made.

It is the opinion of some of the 1871 pensioners that perhaps the Treasurer could agree to, say, a two-thirds amount of the basic wage fluctuation for those who served for a period of 40 years or more and a proportionate fraction for those Government employees who served for a lesser period. For example, the proportion for a pensioner who served 35 years would be 35/60ths. This would, I understand, necessitate the deletion of item B of the formula and an appropriate insertion in

lieu thereof. I want to make it quite clear that I feel the first suggestion I have made in regard to the amendment of item "A" and item "C" should be given favourable consideration in the interests of these 1871 pensioners.

I would like to take this opportunity of paying a tribute to those pensioners who worked for the Government in the interests of the State of Western Australia at a time when there was not a 40-hour week, and when living conditions—especially in country areas—were hard and difficult as compared with those today. School teachers and other persons employed by the Government in those days rendered sterling service in going out to the far corners of this vast State of Western Australia to carry on the duties which were theirs.

The Treasurer: A lot of other people did that, but they do not get superannuation.

Mr. BOVELL: I can appreciate that, but these people worked directly for the Government, and I say without hesitation it is the Government's responsibility—not only responsibility but obligation—to see that they are adequately provided for in the evening of their lives. There was no pension scheme in those days as there is today and therefore I think we should see that they are adequately provided for and see that their standard of living is in no way lowered. It should be the endeavour of the Government and of Parliament of this State to make sure that men and women who have served the Government and the State by direct employment under Government jurisdiction should have every consideration.

The 1948 Act provides for a maximum of four units and this group of pensioners would still be able to receive the full social benefits from the Commonwealth. I understand from the Bill that the £1 supplementation will continue under the proposed legislation. There was legitimate agitation from these erstwhile employees of the Government who were not provided for prior to 1948 and it was then—as I said at the outset—that the McLarty-Watts Government introduced legislation to enable them to participate in the pension scheme.

The Bill also deals with the position of widows and children of pensioners. This matter refers only to pensioners under the 1938 Act. I think I am correct in interpreting the Bill that the position of widows and children applies only to those coming under the 1938 Act, but I would like the Treasurer to confirm or otherwise my interpretation of the Bill in this regard. It does not provide for the widows, and I presume that pensioners under the 1871 Act would not have children under the age of 16 years.

I understand that when the 1938 Act was passed, the pensioners under the 1871 Act were given an opportunity to provide superannuation for their widows and they

had to pay, I understand, a certain sum in order that their widows could benefit on their decease. I feel that the position of widows of the 1871 pensioners is worthy of consideration by the Government and whilst I do not wish to outline a scheme in that direction at the moment, I hope that at some time the position of widows of these 1871 pensioners who are in need of financial assistance, will be considered by the Government in order to relieve their plight.

It is not possible for me, as a private member, to move amendments on the lines I have indicated as being desirable, because it would affect the Treasury. Standing Orders, would preclude my moving such amendments. When these Acts were being dealt with in 1951, the Treasurer was then a member of the Opposition, and he said this—

I know it is not possible for me as a private member to move to have included in the measure provision for automatic adjustment in relation to the cost of living.

Of course, I am today, as I was then, in a similar position. I took that quotation from Hansard of 1951, Vol. 1, page 614, and it indicates that the Treasurer was sympathetic to the claims of these pensioners under the 1871 Act. Therefore, I would urge him to give consideration to the suggestions I have made.

Any effort we can make, and which the State can afford, to provide an adequate pension for those who, in the early beginnings of the State's progress and expansion, were prepared to serve for 40 years and over, should have every consideration. I say in conclusion, and repeat, that I congratulate the Government for doing something in the interests of these pensioners, but I especially urge that the basic wage, as indicated in the formula, should be the existing basic wage and not the figure which is represented there.

Furthermore, the position in regard to the taking away of some amount of present pensions, which are now enjoyed by a number of these 1871 pensioners, is wrong in principle. Indeed, it will be necessary for them to readjust their lives on a downward scale at a time of life when they need more money than ever, possibly to meet medical expenses which, for old people, are considerable if they suffer ill-health. Old people, unfortunately do, and they should not have their pensions adversely affected at such a time of their life. I support the second reading and hope the Treasurer will give consideration to the improvements to which I have referred.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [4.43]: I have listened very carefully to the remarks of the member for Vasse and I appreciate

generally the approach which he has made to the Bill. It is inevitable, I suppose, that a measure of this kind, once it is introduced, will receive attention from some members on the basis that what is being offered should be improved. In other words, that the Government should give more than it proposes to give in the Bill as introduced.

I would point out that the Government could very well leave this legislation as it stands. However, it appointed Mr. Nicholas as a Royal Commissioner to investigate this legislation. He took a considerable amount of evidence from associations which were interested and from individuals, and he made several recommendations to the Government. The main recommendation is contained in what is now known as the Nicholas formula and that recommendation is included in the Bill. The Government did not work out this £12 a week basic wage. That was worked out by Mr. Nicholas and was, indeed, his recommendation to the Government. Presumably if he had taken the figure of £14 or £15, or some other figure, he would have so worked out the balance of the formula as to arrive at the same result as that given by the formula which is based on the figure of £12.

The Bill contains matters which the Government is in a financial position to recommend at this stage. If next year or the year after the Government is in a position, financially, to do better, then the Government would in certain directions improve on what is proposed in the Bill.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Does not this Bill reduce some of the existing pensions?

The TREASURER: I am coming to that because the member for Vasse referred to the point. The beneficiaries under the 1871 Act are beneficiaries on a completely non-contributory basis which causes them to be different, to a considerable degree, from those who come under the 1938 Act which, of course, provides for a contributory basis. The Government has already improved the position of the 1871 pensioners by way of supplementation.

The payment of supplementation amounts has, to some degree, met the increased cost of living. We cannot fairly take the 1871 pensioners as being all on the same level. If any member were to do that, he would mislead himself into all sorts of difficult situations because the 1871 pensioners retire on a pension which represents a percentage of the salary they were receiving at the retirement date and, I think, during the two years immediately preceding retirement.

Clearly, those who retired before 1939 would have retired on quite small pensions compared with the pensions of those who retired in 1949 or 1955 or 1957. Therefore the application of this formula has

been worked out to take this vital fact into consideration. If any member leaves that vital factor out of consideration in his approach to the Bill, he will get altogether wrong answers.

This formula, although it is complicated and looks baffling on the surface, is a scientific one. The application of it to the 1871 pensioners will, in relation to the principle contained in the formula, work out with absolute equity irrespective of the date on which the pensioner retired and irrespective of the salary he was receiving at the time. The formula is scientific in its application, and therefore it is reasonable and fair. The minority who will have their existing pensions reduced to some extent is made up of Government employees who have retired in recent years and who, therefore, receive considerable benefits in regard to their total right of pension because at the date of retirement they were receiving high salaries, or salaries considerably higher than they would have been receiving had they retired prior to 1939 or even 1949.

In addition to the fact that these pensioners went out on high pensions—because of late retirement—they have received the full benefit of the supplementation legislation. In other words, they have received in the pension which they have drawn from the date on which they retired, the benefit of a pension based upon a salary where the salary had been increased considerably because of the increase in the cost of living between the years 1939 and the actual date upon which they retired. So they were getting complete pension justice on that basis, if not something in excess of complete pension justice.

They were also getting the full benefit of the supplementation payment which was a payment approved by Parliament to benefit those pensioners who, because of the fact that they retired before the cost of living started to rise, and before it went up any extent, were, without the supplementation, not receiving any benefit or additional payment to assist them to meet to some extent the increase in the cost of living. So I would emphasise that the great majority of those 1,871 pensioners will get increased payments under this legislation. Some will get less, but those who will do so will still be receiving an adequate and just pension in accordance with the principles contained in the Nicholas formula. We cannot have it both ways, surely!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Some will lose a pretty substantial amount.

The TREASURER: No; no pensioner will lose a substantial amount.

Mr. Bovell: It may be substantial to them—30s. a week.

The TREASURER: If we are going to get right down to brass tacks in connection with what is substantial and what is not substantial by way of pension for those

people in this State and in Australia who have to depend on pensions of one kind and another, then, of course, we open up an extraordinarily wide field for discussion and one into which I should think we would not at this stage be wise to enter.

As I was saying before the interjection, the Government has set out to apply this formula to the 1871 pensioners in an endeavour to establish a reasonable measure of what might be called pension justice. This formula has been expertly worked out and the application of it will mean increased pensions to a considerable number of pensioners and, because of its scientific application, a reduction to others. It is not, because of this, fair to expect that the Government would say, "Oh, well, we want this formula to be on a heads they win and tails the Government loses, basis." We cannot have it both ways. What Parliament should aim at in this matter is to do the fair, the right and the just thing in accordance with set principles and not in accordance, perhaps, with some feeling or thought that we might have as being the desirable thing.

As I said when introducing the Bill, the associations concerned asked that as a No. 1 priority these pensions be tied rigidly to the cost-of-living adjustments to the basic wage. The Government was not able to see its way clear to agree to that; nor did Mr. Nicholas recommend it. The second request of the associations concerned was that there should be some fairly adequate approach to the problem of trying to bring into relation, at least to some extent, with the cost of living increases, the pension increases which the Government might see its way clear to grant as a result of the investigations carried out by Mr. Nicholas.

I should say that where a person who is now on an 1871 pension has a reduction in his pension by the application of this formula, he would, if the need was there, be able to receive from the Commonwealth social service a higher payment than he receives today.

Mr. Bovell: But not all pensioners receive social services. They might have saved a little.

The TREASURER: If there happens to be one instance, or half-a-dozen instances, of 1871 pensioners who are sufficiently well placed financially as not to be able to qualify for even a small percentage of Commonwealth social service, then clearly their need is not very great; and certainly not as great as the need of those who qualify under this proposed formula for an increase in pension.

Mr. Bovell: It is a downward trend in their standard of living.

The TREASURER: It does not necessarily do that at all. I emphasise again that where an 1871 pensioner experiences a reduction of pension under this formula he would be able, if the degree of need

was great enough, to receive a larger payment under the Commonwealth social service system than he receives today. So he would be no worse off at all, but would be on the same basis in regard to pension income as he was before. The only difference would be that he would be receiving something less from the State Treasury and something more from the Commonwealth Treasury.

Western Australia as a State is not, I think, in a position to be able to carry pension burdens of this description when, quite fairly and reasonably, the Commonwealth Government should bear a share of the pension, or, alternatively, bear a bigger share than it does today. I have already said, and I emphasise it again, that this measure represents the biggest advance the Government is able to make at this stage by way of making additional money available from the State Treasury for payment to pensioners who are qualified under the existing legislation, or who become qualified under it in the future.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Short title and citation:

Mr. BOVELL: This clause deals with the Nicholas formula, and I would like to emphasise the need for some amendment to it. I understand that Mr. Nicholas, who is a superannuated man, was assisted by the Assistant Under Treasurer and Mr. Skewes, both Government officers. As the Treasurer has indicated that some further consideration may be given to the matter either next year or the year after, some 1871 pensioners feel that an independent tribunal should be created with a judge as chairman and two other competent commissioners.

The Treasurer has not convinced me that it is desirable to reduce pensions, and despite the fact that he has referred to the benefits that may be received under the Commonwealth social service legislation, I think some of these pensioners may not qualify and may therefore lose up to £2 a week, or maybe more. The Treasurer also said that these 1871 pensioners had not contributed to a fund. There was no fund in those days; but I have no doubt that if a pension scheme had been in existence they would have been only too pleased to support it. Possibly it was due to the efforts of these 1871 people that a proper pension scheme for Government employees was eventually introduced in 1938.

I am sorry that the Treasurer is hard and fast in regard to this matter because I think there is a principle involved. In

his speech in 1951 he indicated that he was in favour of some scheme whereby the 1871 pensioners could be tied to the basic wage.

The Treasurer: It could react to their disadvantage within the next year or two.

Mr. BOVELL: Yes, but if the basic wage were reduced their cost of living would be reduced also. I do not ask for a double headed penny. I know that the indications are that economic stability has been reached, and the Commonwealth basic wage figure for Western Australia is static. I have not yet seen the State figure, but presumably it will follow the Commonwealth line. The basic wage to-day is £13 13s. 9d. but despite that, under the formula the figure is £12.

I can only make this final appeal to the Treasurer that he consider the creation of a new commission along the lines I have suggested. I am sorry that he will not agree to altering items (a) and (c). I think all people in Government employment who are entitled to receive benefits under the 1871 Act have now retired, and I understand there are approximately 300 members under the Act and the 1958 Act who are receiving benefits. Because of their age they are like the Red Indians, a vanishing race.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I can appreciate the Treasurers' remarks concerning the need to give some greater attention to these people who began to draw their pensions under the 1871 Act prior to any rise in living costs, such as has occurred over the last 15 or 16 years. I appreciate also that those who retired under the 1871 Act a few years prior to that time might not have been drawing a salary of more than £400 a year, and therefore they would not be eligible to receive a pension much greater than £200, had something not been done for them. Obviously a pension of that size, although strictly in accordance with the Act, would have been a mere pittance.

On the other hand, I can see the Treasurer's point that those who retired in comparatively recent times, because of the plussed up salaries might have been receiving £2,000 a year at the time of their retirement, and in all probability would be receiving a pension of £1,000 and would be in a much better position to face up to the present-day conditions. It is necessary to give greater consideration to those on the lower rungs of the ladder. As I understand the situation, those on the higher rungs of the ladder received the supplementation, when that legislation was passed some time ago, and now they are going to lose it. That is the only place where I think there is any objection to what the Treasurer said.

I take it that when Parliament granted the supplementation, it was with a full knowledge of the circumstances; it was not done on the blind. I do not think it is right

that we should deny them that supplementation. By all means give relief to those who are on a mere pittance; but I cannot appreciate a scheme, and I cannot favour one, which appears to deduct from a few a certain amount which they have hitherto been lawfully entitled to receive and which, had this legislation not come before us, they would still be receiving. That is the weakness I see in it, and I would like the Treasurer to consider that aspect.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am sorry that under this Bill certain people now receiving pensions will suffer some reduction. As they would be very few in number I find it somewhat hard to understand the Government's attitude. When speaking, the Treasurer said that these pensioners did not make any contribution to a superannuation fund, as public servants do today. That is correct. But we have to remember that under the terms of contract, under the 1871 Act, civil servants were guaranteed that, if they worked for the Government as civil servants, they would get a pension by right of a certain age. So a right to a pension was established under the terms of contract, as civil servants.

We all realise how much the cost of living has been increasing over a considerable number of years. When a person receives a certain pension he budgets accordingly. He might undertake certain obligations, buy a home commensurate with his income, and incur other expenditure. It will come as a shock to him to realise that his income will be reduced compulsorily. I hope even at this stage the Treasurer will give favourable consideration to my remarks. Very few pensioners will be affected if their pensions are retained at the existing rate, and any saving to the Government brought about by the application of the formula will be very minute. On the other hand, the hardship to some of these pensioners could be considerable. I would ask the Treasurer to continue the present pension rates.

Mr. COURT: Briefly, I wish to comment on this clause in view of the representations that have been made by one or two persons who are directly affected. I have no intention of becoming involved in the overall problem because we would get into the whole field of pensions in this State and the Commonwealth, and that is an entirely different issue.

The particular cases to which I desire to address a few words concern people who will be paid less than they are now receiving. If we accept the proposition put forward by the Government as being fair and equitable so far as the finances of the State will reasonably allow the Government to go, we still have to give thought to these special cases. It is not unusual for a Bill to create anomalies of this nature, and this is one of those cases.

I have an instance of a very respected gentleman in this community who, in spite of his age, takes a very active part in public affairs, and performs honorary and very desirable work of a high standard. He is very conscientious, very alert and capable. His pension is to be reduced by £59 16s.

The Treasurer: From what amount?

Mr. COURT: I have not the exact figure. His pension is over £1,000. The fact remains that at some point of time the Government committed itself to pay this person a certain sum. There are some pensioners who will be reduced to a greater extent. The greatest reduction that has been advised is nearly £200 a year. The Treasurer may argue that a person receiving a very substantial pension should be prepared to accept the maximum under the Bill. We should bear in mind the fact that at some point of time the Government committed the State to pay the existing rate of pension. A reduction will almost amount to a breach of contract because a pensioner under this legislation was entitled to expect that his pension would not fall below a certain amount.

The member for Murray has instanced the background of employment of these people. It is well known that many of them gave long and valuable service to this State at a time when the emoluments and conditions of office were not a patch on what they are today. In that regard it should be accepted that they made a contribution in an indirect way—it could also be expressed as a very direct way—towards the pensions they are receiving.

For that reason, as a Parliament, we should accept the commitment that has been agreed on so that these pensions are not reduced but perhaps retained at their present level until such time as any benefits which may accrue in the future overtook the benefits they have received in the past. To withdraw something that they have been receiving would come to them as a shock, especially if they had committed themselves to a way of living based on the pensions they were receiving. For that reason, I hope the Government can see its way clear to treat these as special cases. I cannot guess the number of people involved in the proposed reduction, but I do not anticipate that a great number would come under that category.

The TREASURER: I would point out that the agitation over the years since the cost of living began to increase has been along the lines of relating the pensions, if not completely, at least to some degree, to the cost of living. Parliament did that for a time by way of supplementation payments. Now the Government comes forward with a Bill which contains an expertly devised formula, the formula having been worked out by an ex-auditor general in the person of Mr. Nicholas.

The formula contains a principle, and that principle is being applied by the Government to all those people who come under the 1871 Act. Nobody has disagreed with the principle except in some detail; in other words, we are all agreed that the principle is reasonable and fair, and reasonably well based. Yet when it is proposed in the Bill to apply the formula equally to all the 1871 pensioners, suggestions are put forward for the formula to be applied only to those who would benefit from it, and to those who would receive increases under it. That is not a very systematic way of applying a principle. Once a principle is breached to suit, say, Bill Jones, one might as well give the principle away and go back to what prevailed before.

The member for Nedlands quoted a case in which a pensioner is to be reduced by £59 a year under this formula. Obviously a person who will be reduced by that amount is in receipt of a very high pension, amounting to at least £1,000 a year. He has probably received the benefit of the supplementation payments, when in absolute fact he was probably not entitled in point of merit to receive them.

It seems to me that we should not pick out these special cases and say that because a person is receiving £1,000 or £1,200 a year, and who is now getting more than the benefit of cost-of-living adjustments, the formula shall not be applied to him. I think we had better stick to the principle of this formula and apply it all around, because the formula and the principle are based upon merit and fair dealing. If we depart from the formula and principle, we would be favouring special cases.

Mr. Court: How many people will suffer a reduction?

The TREASURER: I do not think the number has been assessed accurately, but it is known that those who have retired from Government service in recent years, and who on retirement were in receipt of high salaries and therefore would have received the benefit of cost-of-living increases in the pensions they are drawing, would be the only ones to have a reduction in the present rate of pension when the formula is applied.

Mr. Court: You will agree that it is a most unfortunate set of circumstances that they have to be reduced?

The TREASURER: That might be. The formula contains a principle, and the principle will be fair and reasonable in its application. Where it might apply to a person in receipt of a small pension, then what he suffers by way of reduction under this formula will be compensated by the payment to be made up by the Commonwealth Social Service Department, so in these cases there will not be as great a hardship as in the cases to which the member for Nedlands referred. If some pensioner in receipt of £1,000 or £1,200 a

year were to be reduced by £59, and cannot have that amount made up to him by the Social Service Department, I still think that he is in quite a good position.

Mr. Bovell: Will not this formula bring about a maximum pension of £1,000?

The TREASURER: It will not. This formula will apply only to those receiving pensions up to £1,000 a year. Where they are receiving above that pension, then the formula will not apply.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS.

Progress Motion—Point of Order.

Mr. Cornell: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, with reference to the Votes and Proceedings of this House for yesterday's sitting, the following appears on page 413:—

Clause 24:

Mr. Cornell moved, That progress be reported, and leave asked to sit again.

Question—put and passed.

Mr. Speaker resumed the Chair.

Mr. Moir reported, That the Committee had considered the Bill, made progress, and asked leave to sit again.

Ordered—That leave be given to sit again at the next sitting of the House.

The motion that I moved was: "That progress be reported." The question that leave be asked to sit again was not included in the motion which I submitted and which was accepted by the House without a dissentient voice.

In his report after that motion had been put, the Chairman, also in most specific terms, reported that the Bill had been considered by the Committee and progress had been made. You, in turn, Sir, submitted the motion to the House that that report be adopted, and that was also carried without a dissentient voice. Therefore the statement in the Votes and Proceedings that leave was given by the House to sit again is not in accordance with the actual proceedings last night and I submit that the Votes and Proceedings in respect of that particular Bill should be duly corrected.

The Speaker: In connection with this matter, members know that from time to time, when moving the relevant motion, they do not complete it. That is to say, they do not move, "That you do now report progress and ask leave to sit again." As a matter of fact, almost invariably, a member puts it—"I move that you do now report progress."

The Chairman then puts that motion to the Committee, and subsequently reports the Committee's resolution. The

member who has raised the point of order has frequently moved—he did it a few nights ago, I think—a simple motion that the Chairman report progress, and has not completed the motion in accordance with the requirements of the Standing Orders, under which the form of the motion is, "That you do now report progress and ask leave to sit again."

If anyone is culpable in this matter, it is possibly I, because I put the wrong motion to the House. Instead of my putting the motion that leave be given to sit again, I put it to the House that the report of the Committee be adopted. In doing so, I was wrong. I should have said, "That leave be given to sit again." Then members would have had an opportunity of either endorsing that motion or rejecting it. The Clerk has explained why the extra words, to which exception has been taken, appear in the report of the proceedings of the House. These are his comments—

It has been brought to my notice that incorrect procedure was adopted by the House last evening when progress was reported on the Hire-Purchase Agreements Bill.

Firstly, Mr. Cornell moved, "That progress be reported." Under the Standing Orders, the motion should be, "That the chairman do report progress and ask leave to sit again." It is not in order, therefore, to move only half that motion.

Secondly, the Chairman reported, "That the Committee had made progress." Under the Standing Orders the report should be, "That the Committee has made progress and asks leave to sit again." Once again it is not in order to make half of the correct report.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker put the question, "That the report be adopted." No report can be adopted on a Bill until the completion of the Bill in Committee either with or without amendment. The question should be, "That leave be given to sit again."

It is not for the Clerk to determine whether these three errors were intentional or otherwise. It is certainly not the function of the Clerk to assist members to evade the Standing Orders. As during the course of a session, a number of formal motions, such as the above, are not moved or stated correctly, it frequently becomes the duty of the Clerk to inscribe in his Journals the correct wording of such motions. This course was followed last evening, and the Votes and Proceedings show the correct procedure that should have been followed.

Had Mr. Speaker put the question, "That leave be given to sit again," the House could have negatived that question, and as leave to sit again would have thus been refused the Bill would have been defeated. At no stage did the House last evening reach a decision to defeat the Bill, which therefore remains on the notice paper, and must come up again, in its proper turn, at the next sitting of the House devoted to private members' business. A Bill can only be defeated by a deliberate decision of the House, not by an evasion of the Standing Orders.

Standing Order No. 382 deals with this matter. It says—

When all matters referred to a Committee have been considered, the Chairman shall be directed to report the same to the House; and when all such matters have not been considered, the Chairman shall report progress and ask leave to sit again.

Members believe that because of the adoption of the motion reported by the Chairman that progress be reported, that meant the end of the Bill. I would say that it certainly did not, because there was no definite decision that the Bill had been defeated at any stage. The Chairman only reported progress, and therefore the Bill must continue on the notice paper which is in the hands of the Leader of the House, and it will come up for consideration on private members' day. Members can do what they like with the Bill at the next or some subsequent sitting. They could move the Chairman out of the Chair; or could, if they wished, reject the motion that leave be given to the Committee to sit again.

From experience, I know that frequently members have moved the simple motion that the Chairman report progress, and it has therefore been the practice of the Clerk to put the motion in its proper form in the Votes and Proceedings. He consulted me and I said, "You should proceed along those lines."

It may be of interest to members to hear what "May" has to say on this matter. On page 585 of the 15th edition, appears the following:—

It is the practice for members who desire to close the sitting of a committee to move that the "chairman do report progress and ask leave to sit again" in order to put an end to the proceedings of the committee on that day, this motion in committee being analogous to that frequently made in the House for adjourning the debate. A motion may also be moved, "that the chairman do now leave the Chair," but this motion, if carried, supersedes the order of the day for the committee

and converts it into a dropped order, as in this case, when the Speaker resumes the Chair, no report whatever is made from the committee. The same result is obtained if, when the Chairman reports progress in the matter referred to the committee he refrains, upon a direction given by the member who had obtained the appointment of the committee, from asking leave to sit again.

So if the member who moved the motion which led to the House resolving itself into a Committee had also moved a motion to report progress, that would have been the end of the Bill. But the member for Mt. Marshall, in addressing the Chairman in Committee moved, "That you do now report progress." In turn the Chairman moved out of the Chair and reported to me. In my capacity as Speaker I should have put the question in the form, "That leave be given to sit again," and then the House would have made a decision one way or the other on that.

However, I put it in the form that the report be adopted, and the report was that progress had been made. It is contended that that was irregular and that the Standing Order should have been followed. However, even though the report was adopted, the consideration of the Bill is still in the hands of the House until it decides whether it shall be accepted or rejected. I therefore rule that the matter is in order.

BILL—BILLS OF SALE ACT AMENDMENT AND REVISION.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [5.43] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is a matter of clarification more than anything else. The proposals to amend the Bills of Sale Act have been given very careful and full consideration by a number of people. In March last year, the Solicitor General pointed out that the Act was almost out of print and, in his opinion, was not in a suitable form for reprinting under the Amendments Incorporation Act, 1938.

Up to the end of 1925, the principal Act had been the subject of seven amending Acts and, as so amended, was reprinted in the appendix to the 1925 sessional volume of statutes. However, owing to the fact that many amendments had not been expressed either as amendments to sections of the principal Act or as new sections inserted there, the 1925 reprint shows numerous amending sections in the form of footnotes.

As the Interpretation Act provides that neither the marginal notes nor the footnotes of any Act shall be deemed to be part thereof, the footnotes to the 1925

reprint strictly form no part of the reprinted Act. It is therefore necessary to have amending legislation to adjust these matters.

Since amending legislation has become necessary, the Law Society was invited to consider whether any substantive amendments were needed as a further step towards uniformity in the commercial laws of Australia. The object of the amendments submitted is to modernise and clarify an Act which has been notorious for its obscurity and unnecessary technicality.

In forwarding suggestions, the special committee of the Law Society which looked into the matter commented—

It is generally admitted in the legal profession that the Bills of Sale Act is so full of pitfalls for the unwary that many transactions registered under it, and which are quite bona fide, are likely to be invalidated owing to the non-observance of some archaic and obscure but rigid technicality, which serves no useful purpose and is merely a hindrance to modern commercial dealings. Furthermore, the method of amending the Act in the past has created ambiguities, which make for uncertainty as regards the validity of documents registered under the Act.

One glaring example of this is in regard to the effect of the 1906 amendment on the registration of debentures and whether, since 1906, debentures shall not only be registered as debentures but also a second time as bills of sale by way of security. All these things tend to result in unnecessary delays and added expense and in the public interest some measure of reform is very necessary.

In the opinion of the committee, the amendments submitted are the minimum required to achieve that object and are not considered to be contentious. They make no substantial change in the law relating to bills of sale, but they will facilitate dealings and give greater protection to parties and certainly to transactions registerable under the Act. In addition, the searching for registered documents will be simplified by the provision of separate indexes for hire-purchase agreements, debentures and other bills of sale respectively.

Doubts previously surrounding the requirements for registration of securities over chattels given by companies will be resolved by the provision of a single registration system for company securities. Further, the strict requirements as to the form of a bill of sale will no longer be fatal to the validity of a bill if the court is satisfied that the defect is not of such a nature as to be liable to mislead or deceive. I appreciate the helpful suggestions made by the committee of the Law Society and the co-operation of the departmental officers.

I shall now proceed to explain some of the provisions in the Bill. The administration of the Act is not properly a Supreme Court function and, in fact, since January of this year, it has been transferred to the Deputy Registrar of Companies. On the ground of efficient supervision and economy, the bills of sale office has been integrated with the companies office and both the Deputy Registrar of Companies and his senior assistant have been appointed registrars for the purposes of the Bills of Sale Act. This requires the deletion of the reference to the Registrar of the Supreme Court in the definition of "Registrar" in the principal Act. There is a new definition of "debenture." This will help to dispose of the doubt whether a debenture should also be registered as a bill of sale by way of security, and is necessary to enable a separate index thereof to be kept in the registry.

In 1940 it was held by the Supreme Court that there was no need to give notice of intention to register a debenture and since that decision the majority of debentures have been registered without notice of intention. Nothing has since happened to suggest that the decision of 1940 has caused difficulty or hardship, although some doubt still remains as to the correctness of the decision. In England and in other States, with the possible exception of Victoria, no notice of intention is required in the case of debentures by a corporation. The definition in the Bill is in accordance with what is generally understood to constitute a debenture.

The term "hire-purchase agreement" has been defined, but only for the purpose of providing a separate index for this class of document in the bills of sale office. The great majority of documents registered are hire-purchase agreements. The provision of separate indexes for debentures, hire-purchase agreements and other bills of sale will facilitate searching and will reduce the risk of loss resulting from a missed encumbrance. Another amendment concerns the periods within which a bill of sale shall be presented for registration. Where the bill of sale is executed at a place not more than 30 miles distant from the City of Perth, a period of seven days from the day of execution is provided. In practice this limitation has proved too short, so the time is being extended to ten days.

Another provision is intended to preserve the validity of a bill of sale which otherwise would be defective owing to some omissions or misdescription if the omission or misdescription were, in the opinion of the court, not of such a nature as to be liable to mislead or deceive. It has been found that the principal Act does not go far enough in this direction and does not cover all conditions under which a bill of sale, otherwise bona fide, is liable

to be declared void, owing to the non-observance of some technicality as regards its form. The intention of the Act is that all bills of sale should require renewal, every three years, to preserve their validity. It states that the three-year period runs from the date of registration, but does not limit the time for renewal within that period.

Theoretically it is now possible to effect the first renewal the day after the original registration, thus making the bill of sale valid for six years. The amendment is framed to preserve the spirit of the Act and will require renewals to be confined to the sixty-day period expiring on every third anniversary of the day of registration. On occasions the registrar is asked to enter satisfaction in respect of a registered hire-purchase agreement or other bailment or lease. In its present form the section provides only for the satisfaction of a bill of sale by way of security and should be modified to permit entry of satisfaction in the case of chattels the subject of other documents. The Bill provides accordingly, but requires that the memorandum of satisfaction shall be signed by each of the parties to the document.

Section 35 of the principal Act avoids duplicate bills of sale, except those given to cure some material error in the prior Bill. Commonly bona fide mistakes are made by parties in executing or attesting bills and at present the re-execution of the document is of doubtful validity. The amendment will allow the replacement of the bill in such circumstances. The section which relates to the registration of debentures is amended to provide a similar method to that in force in most of the other States and in England, namely, by filing the original debenture or a copy with the registrar, accompanied by an affidavit verifying execution and, in the case of a copy, also verifying the copy.

The proposals in the Bill are not contentious in any way but are in the nature of desirable law reform. The Bill has been thoroughly investigated and it seeks only to correct certain aspects of the Act and make it more understandable. The measure has been investigated by those who use the Act most and they assure me that it will make the Act more acceptable and convenient by removing ambiguities, and that it will lead to a better understanding of the statute.

Mr. Court: I think they are chasing a state of Utopia.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Possibly, but the Bill will bring us closer to it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND AGENTS.

In Committee.

Debate resumed from the 8th October. Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 4 had been agreed to.

Clause 5—Interpretation:

Mr. COURT: I move an amendment—

That after the word "delegates" in line 4, page 4, the words "under the power conferred on it by this Act" be inserted.

The problem is that this provision implies that the committee has unlimited power of delegation and I think it should be qualified so that there is reference to the power of delegation specifically given in the Act. That will remove any misunderstanding.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not know whether the amendment is necessary but I can see no harm in it. The delegate is included on the advisory committee and will have no more power than the advisory committee. It is only a case of a substitute in the case of illness. It could not delegate an extra member. However, I do not object to the amendment.

Mr. COURT: I do not suggest that the committee could add to its number on the powers of delegation. As the Minister knows, its functions have been greatly extended and it has been given more power and responsibility than before. I want to be sure that the committee cannot delegate any of the powers other than those which we specifically include in the Bill as we proceed.

The Minister for Works: How can it? You cannot delegate power you do not possess yourself.

Mr. COURT: The Minister is making the point I want to guard against. The committee is given power to delegate certain responsibility and that is understandable. If the Bill is silent in other matters and this definition is left as it is, there could be argument that the committee could delegate powers other than those specifically mentioned.

The Minister for Works: Are not the powers specifically mentioned under the Bill the powers of the committee? They are mentioned and defined in the Bill. Do you agree that the powers of the committee, and no further powers, can be delegated?

Mr. COURT: I want it so that it can only delegate powers that we specifically say it can delegate.

The Minister for Justice: I have no objection to the amendment.

Mr. COURT: As long as we are clear on the point I am making.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. COURT: I would like to draw the Minister's attention to the definition of "land salesman." Could he indicate how far he wishes this definition to extend? Some of the people in the offices of land agents are old and trusted servants who attend the counter and receive moneys but who during the course of their duties answer questions and have a fairly sound knowledge as the result of their experience. In many cases there are lady office assistants who have been with firms for 20 years and have accumulated great knowledge of the firms' workings. It would be difficult to exclude anyone on the staff because even the office boy could induce a person to negotiate.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I should like members to read the definition of "land salesman." The wording is very clear, and neither the office boy nor the typist will be regarded as the agent or salesman. The term refers to a person inducing the sale or purchase of land, and he should have a definite status.

Mr. PERKINS: If the points raised so far are valid I can see complications arising. Many firms which conduct only land sales activities on a small scale as a separate branch, will be compelled to register. For instance, all the stock firms in this State have separate land sales departments. In most cases that department is a very minor part of the main business of the firm. A special staff is employed on the land sales section, but sometimes for the sake of convenience the officers employed in other departments of the firm may be used in a minor capacity to complete a sale of land. They may not be the persons who normally induce persons to buy properties. We all know that sometimes negotiations are taking place on the sale of a property and a hitch occurs, then other officers are called on to complete the sale. If a vast number of the officers in such a firm as I have referred to are required to be registered, a clumsy situation could develop.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have some notes from Mr. Ruse, of the Crown Law Department. He says that "land salesman" is defined in Clause 5 and—

It is intended that only employees of land agents concerned with the actual bringing about of a sale should be registered as land salesmen, that is employees who act as land salesmen and endeavour to contact members of the public who may be interested in buying property of the agent's clients. It is not intended that typists and accountants employed in those occupations by the land agents should be registered as land salesmen. The definition set out very clearly the persons considered as salesmen.

Registration costs only £1 in the case of a salesman.

Mr. Court: Except they have to give a bond.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is not very much.

Progress reported.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1957-58.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the previous day; Mr. Moir in the Chair.

Vote—Lands and Surveys, £736,856 (partly considered):

MR. MARSHALL (Wembley Beaches) [7.32]: There is only one small item I desire to refer to, and it is in relation to the Government Gardens that come within the control of the Minister. I understand that for a good many years at the Government Gardens they have been able to establish glass houses to propagate quite a number of different types of plants, particularly native plants, and I understand they have been of great assistance to the officers of the Government Chemical Laboratories. However, it has come to my notice that there is a proposal to pull down these glass houses and move them. As a consequence, of course, this work cannot be carried on. I feel it is most important that we should retain, as far as possible, any facilities which are in existence to enable the propagation of native flora to be carried on, particularly in regard to some types which I have in mind and about which I shall speak later on the Estimates.

I am concerned about the position, because Mr. Green, who was in charge there, has indicated that it is more or less the intention to pull these glass houses down, with the result that no further work will be done to propagate various types of plants that could be most usefully utilised in the investigations and research work that I am much interested in. I would draw the Minister's attention to this matter so that if it is at all possible he can see that these glass houses are retained in order that this work may be carried on in conjunction with the personnel of the chemical laboratories.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [7.35]: I would like to say something on these important Estimates which, of course, mean so much to the State. I think all members can visualise what a bad season would mean, not only in this State but throughout Australia. A bad season would have the effect of considerably tightening up finance and making it difficult for the Government in many directions.

Unfortunately, seasonal conditions throughout Australia have been bad, and Western Australia seems to have fared

much better than any other State in Australia. We know that drought conditions prevail in some of the Eastern States and are having a very adverse effect on the economy of Australia generally. In reading the latest edition of the "Sydney Morning Herald," I came across an article giving particulars of what the drop will be in Australia, so far as primary production is concerned. The forecast in this article is that the export income will drop by £100,000,000. That is a tremendous sum of money and, as I said before, could have a very adverse effect on the financial position of the Commonwealth and the States.

If seasonal conditions which now prevail in the East continue, the drop could be much greater. It said—and I quote from this article in the "Herald" again—that the Australian wool crop will be down by 5 per cent., but from previous figures which I have read, that estimate is a conservative one. Wool prices are down from 6 to 7 per cent. on last season, when our wool export was valued at £485,000,000. The wheat and flour export cheque was £82,900,000.

Then we have the effect of the British bank rate, and no one seems to be able to tell just what effect this will have on export prices generally. It has been said that the Japanese—and they are our second best customer so far as wool buying is concerned—might be restricted in their buying following recent difficulties in the Japanese trade balance. Therefore, the wool cheque could easily be down to £306,000,000, which is £40,000,000 lower than last year. Last season 100,000,000 bushels of wheat were exported and it was thought that this year the figure will not exceed 40,000,000 bushels. This will mean a further £50,000,000 drop in the cheque for our wheat export.

With these two items alone, it is estimated that there will be a drop of £100,000,000 and, of course, the dairying industry is also adversely affected as are other primary industries. So it is quite clear that because of these unfortunate circumstances, the indications are that for the financial year we are now in, all Governments are going to face a difficult time regarding finance. This has already been indicated to some extent by the fact that governmental and semi-governmental loans such as those of our State Electricity Commission, that are put on the market, are suffering largely. This is due substantially to the fall in the sale of our primary exports. I do not want to strike a too pessimistic note, but we have to face facts, and all Governments must take these facts into consideration and frame their future loan and revenue programmes according to the economic conditions of the country.

Once again I want to express my appreciation of the valuable work which the agricultural scientists are doing in Western

Australia. It would be extremely difficult to measure, in terms of money, what their services mean to the State. I sometimes wonder how we would be able to farm at all if it were not for the enthusiasm and the great work that they do. I know this from practical experience because as members are aware, I am interested not only in farming but in the pastoral industry too. I have a knowledge of the enormous losses that are incurred by farmers and pastoralists in all parts of the State because of the ravages of diseases and the tremendous costs that are involved.

We, in Australia, have in the past few years increased our national wealth by hundreds of millions of pounds because of the extermination of the rabbit. There is no doubt that should the rabbit return in numbers comparable to those that existed previously, they will have an adverse effect on primary production; and to such an extent as to mean a substantial increase in all living costs. Myxomatosis which has done such a remarkable job in exterminating the rabbit is said by our expert advisers to be losing some of its force and that the rabbits are developing immunity to it.

Every possible effort is, I understand, being made by the C.S.I.R.O. to get a more virulent virus which will continue to exterminate this pest. But previous experience of a number of viruses that have been used to combat certain diseases, has shown that as time goes on they lose their force and the particular pest, whatever it may be, develops an immunity and comes again. We have to be on the alert in regard to this particular pest which, I have said, has meant hundreds of millions of pounds not only to Western Australia but to the Commonwealth.

We have it from the experts that the new poison 10-80 can be effectively used. I hope it can, because I feel that no effort should be spared by the powers that be to fight the rabbit menace as vigorously as possible. Here I pay tribute to the officers of the Agriculture Protection Board for the good work they are doing. They have plenty of enthusiasm, and are working hard. They keep telling the primary producers of this danger and try to get them to act. They, very certainly, are playing their part. Carelessness on the part of farmers, or a don't-care attitude, can easily mean that we will be faced with this problem again.

The Minister has every reason to feel pleased—and I would say proud, too—with the efforts of the officers of the Agricultural Department. At one time action was taken to prosecute those farmers who would not do the job in regard to rabbit extermination. I do not think that proved to be very successful. Farmers can be prosecuted and fined, but this does not have the desired effect. The action of the Agricultural Department in sending

around a team of men with a ripper and 10-80 is much more effective. I personally favour the idea that where a property is infested with rabbits, the Agricultural Department should either come in with the ripper or with 10-80, if the farmer is not doing his job, and charge the farmer with the cost of the work. This is a fair thing, not only to the country generally, but to the large number of farmers who are doing their part and facing up to their responsibilities in regard to this menace which could again become really great.

Mr. Nalder: You are advocating the same thing with regard to rabbits that should be advocated for cape tulip.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes, I agree with the member for Katanning. I do not think any land owner should allow his property to be infested with a noxious weed and thereby infest the rest of the district with it, simply because of pure negligence. This can be of great disadvantage to the rest of the farmers in the area concerned.

It seems to me that the primary producers will always be faced with the problem of exterminating vermin or dealing with some pest. From time to time new pests arise. We suddenly find that something is happening amongst our stock with serious consequences. For instance, a pest which has recently attacked stock—particularly young stock—is lice in cattle and this could effect great losses on the cattle industry. The only thing that the farmers and the stock breeders can do is to establish their own sprays so that they can combat the menace as soon as they find it on a property. When lice attack young stock, many die and those that recover receive a serious setback so that it takes them a long time to regain reasonable condition.

There are many of these diseases, and we have to face them, but our agricultural experts or scientists seem to find the remedy for them so that we can help ourselves if we will only take their advice and vigorously carry out their instructions. Foot rot caused heavy losses of sheep in this State and great credit is due to officers of the Department of Agriculture for the vigorous action they took in that regard. When travelling in closely settled areas of other countries of the world, I have seen sheep by the hundred down on their knees feeding, unable to stand because of foot rot. That disease was prevalent in this State years ago but officers of the Department of Agriculture, by advice and demonstrations to farmers, have gone a long way towards exterminating the disease.

I was interested to hear the Minister refer to the fact that seven new areas are to be thrown open for pastoral selection in the northern Kimberleys. I think that is a good move, particularly in view of the shortage of beef in Australia and the high prices that people must pay to obtain it. However, the Kimberleys are far distant

from the metropolitan area and few members of this House have any practical knowledge of affairs in that part of the State. No doubt the member for Kimberley could give some very practical views on problems relating to stock in those vast areas where the seven new cattle stations are to be established.

Those operating the new stations will be faced with great difficulties, although I will not say their problems will not be overcome. I speak as one who has visited the Kimberleys only for a week or so but I believe I can refer to some of the difficulties in that area as some of my relatives were pioneers of the Kimberleys in the early days. I had a brother there for many years, in country known to the member for Kimberley and I have a son managing a cattle station there at present.

Over the years I have received many letters from that part of the State and have heard many discussions on the problems of stock breeding in those areas. The greatest menace to cattle in the Kimberleys at present is tick fever and only this year I have seen ship loads of cattle arriving from the Kimberleys in such a condition that they had to be killed immediately. If 50 per cent. of them had not been slaughtered immediately they landed, half of one shipment of 450 cattle would never have been marketed. It is a matter of luck whether the shipper of cattle from the Kimberleys can land them here for sale or whether a large number are thrown overboard or condemned before sale. That inflicts heavy losses on stock breeders in the North.

There is also the difficulty in regard to markets. It is easy for us in the southern part of Western Australia to market our cattle as we please. We can either send them to the metropolitan markets at Midland Junction or sell them elsewhere, perhaps privately, and if we are not satisfied with the price offering, we do not take it.

The stock breeder in the North, with a restricted market, is, however, in a different position because his cattle when landed here are not allowed out for agistment and must be slaughtered immediately, no matter what price they bring, and the number of buyers available for such stock is limited. There is not the great number of butchers interested in that stock such as operates at the Midland market. I point that out to let members know some of the difficulties that these people face.

The scientists are doing everything possible to combat tick fever and in Queensland, and New South Wales I believe they have succeeded to a great extent, but that is not the case in the Kimberleys. As these vast new areas are to be opened up in that part of the State, with the possibility of irrigation areas also, in the

future, I think large sums should be spent on pasture development, and the Government should do whatever it can to develop further markets.

I am glad the Minister recently visited those northern areas and conversed with stock owners on the spot as it must have given him a much more practical appreciation of the difficulties confronting them. The number of cattle that can be brought south is severely limited by the space on the cattle boats and each station can only ship its quota. The position of those stock owners is vastly different from that of graziers here who can sell all the stock they produce on a ready market.

Markets exist for our beef in the Philippines and the adjacent islands and they should be exploited as otherwise there is a danger that the cattle industry in the Kimberleys will contract. Much of that country, without the cattle industry, would be useless unless minerals or oil were discovered there. When we add the very heavy cost of transporting cattle from the North to the losses sustained en route, we see that the total cost to the stock owner is very heavy. I believe road trains might be one answer to the problem as they would get the cattle to port quicker. There have been serious losses of cattle from clean country coming down the stock route through tick infected country. Becoming infected many of the cattle have died before being put on the boat or during shipment to Robb's Jetty, and I think road transport might obviate such losses.

I believe Air Beef contemplates establishing works at Derby. I know nothing about it yet except expressions of opinion, but I believe the intention is to do the slaughtering at Derby and put the chilled beef into packages of 1lb. or 2lb. weight and send it to the metropolitan market so that stores and butchers' shops can sell it over the counter to the housewife ready to use. That may be a solution. At the same time I want to pay tribute to the work that the Broome Meat Works have done for the West Kimberleys, because without those meatworks there would have been a tremendous wastage of cattle in that area. Those who were responsible for the establishment of these works during wartime took a big risk in putting their capital into the venture. Nevertheless, they fulfilled a much-needed want, and the undertaking was a great help to the pastoralists.

We hear it said from time to time that these works were put in the wrong place. I think the member for Kimberley will agree that that is so. But they were placed at Broome because of wartime conditions; it was unsafe for ships to travel any further north than Broome. Derby is the obvious place for a meatworks because it is closer to the cattle-raising country; there are much better stock routes; and the

cattle would arrive in better condition and, of course, that would be in the interests of the growers.

I said when I started that I have interests in that area; but I do not want it to be thought that I am speaking from a personal point of view. That is not so. As far as I am concerned, I have been much more fortunate than many others who are interested in stock-raising in the Kimberleys.

The Minister for Lands: You are talking a lot of commonsense.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am glad that the Minister agrees with me. I am trying to put forward a practical point of view. I know that the area presents many problems and it is not easy for any Government to tackle them.

Mr. Rhatigan: Properties in the Kimberleys are still very costly.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I think that may be due to the fact that very considerable improvements are being made in pasture development. I was talking to a pastoralist from that area not long ago, and he told me that he was spending a very large sum of money, running into thousands of pounds a year, in order to bring about better pasture development. The discovery of buffel grass, which I compare to subterranean clover in the southern areas, is making a great deal of difference, as the member for Kimberley well knows, to considerable areas in that part of the State.

Mr. Rhatigan: That is so.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The problem is: How can we further propagate buffel and birdwood grasses throughout those areas? Are the whole of the Kimberleys, east and west, suitable for these very valuable grasses, or are they suitable only to heavy country? I have not had practical experience of them so I cannot say. But I have been told by men who have lived there, some of them all their lives and others for many years, that buffel grass will spread on heavy country but it will not spread so readily on lighter country.

Mr. Norton: It spreads well on spinifex sand.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The hon. member would have some knowledge of it because I think it grows in the Gascoyne area. Then there is birdwood grass and kapok. All these grasses need to be planted in those areas as a trial, and every effort should be made to introduce new grasses.

Mr. Rhatigan: Kapok is proving a success up there now.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I believe so; I am told that it is particularly good as sheep fodder. But these grasses are chance grasses, as the hon. member will agree. I have been told that kapok was brought into this country many years ago and has spread only lately. It was brought by the camel drivers in the early days. How

buffel grass was brought here I do not know. But I think that is a chance grass as well, in the same way as subterranean clover was a chance grass in the southern areas of this State. Scientists have given a good deal of attention to the development of subterranean clover, albino clover and other clovers suitable to certain areas, with the result that in the southern areas they are most valuable grasses.

The work that is being done at places such as Woodstock and Abydos should be carried on. I know that work is also being done at the Ord River. I am always pleased when I hear that a Minister has visited the Kimberleys and has had a look at the Ord River to see what is taking place there. It is to be hoped that one day the Ord River will be harnessed, and that it will irrigate many thousands of acres. When one looks at that land, one can realise that it is undoubtedly very rich country, comparable, I would say, to the Darling Downs in New South Wales—some of the most highly productive land in the whole of Australia.

Mr. Norton: It would be almost a small Snowy River.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes. I was also greatly interested when I visited the research station there and saw what was going on, and the possibilities of that area. These possibilities apply not only to the Ord River district in the East Kimberleys, but they apply also to areas around the other great rivers in the Kimberleys. I say to the Minister that we should be most vigorous in our attempts to promote the growth of new grasses in that area. On the Ord River, where these experiments are being carried out, we should also give considerable attention to grasses which will live and thrive under natural conditions, because there are millions of acres which will never be irrigated but which could be turned into good pastoral land if only we could find grasses suitable for them. I feel that this matter is one of great importance to the Kimberleys, and every effort should be made to make the country more reproductive to increase the carrying capacity.

I now want to have something to say about a few other items that seriously affect those engaged in primary production. I feel that there is a need for us to concentrate on the quality of stock. Over the years I will admit that farmers generally have considerably improved the quality of their stock. In order that we might improve our dairy stock in days gone by, Governments have provided a subsidy for dairy farmers to enable them to get good-class bulls which, of course, would improve their dairy herds. Today we have made further progress and have gone in for artificial insemination. Just how far this is succeeding I do not know, but no doubt the Minister knows just what is happening and just what result artificial insemination is having in increasing

the quality of dairy herds throughout this State. I am told that artificial insemination is being carried out with success in all parts of the world where scientific dairying is undertaken.

Today we find that dairy bulls are comparatively cheap; the reverse is, however, the case with stud stock which are purchased for beef breeding purposes. They are very much dearer. When we think of the keen competition overseas, particularly in Britain, for high quality meat, it is absolutely essential for us to breed the highest quality stock possible. Some time next year, the Minister will, I think, be in London and I hope that he will pay an early visit to Smithfield Market. He will find that the buyers of beef in Britain will be most interested to discuss with him the meat problem. As he knows, the Argentine is our greatest competitor, and a very keen competitor at that.

Furthermore, the British people themselves are producing much larger quantities of meat, and I think that will continue. We are inclined to look upon Britain as a very small and thickly-populated island. Some of us think that she has not much scope for increasing her primary production. That, of course, is quite wrong. In Britain they still have increased production and the stock breeders have been encouraged by the Governments to help them bring about this increased production, and to a certain extent they are being subsidised to enable this to be done.

The Minister will be told when he gets to London that we suffer on the British market, particularly with regard to beef, because of the fact that our beef is not the quality that it should be. I hope that producers generally will be fully alive to this fact and realise that it is best to buy good stud stock. The buying of inferior stud stock must act to their detriment in the years ahead.

Mr. Nalder: Is not the deterioration of the Australian beef marketed in London caused by freezing?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am told that is so. The Argentine beef is chilled, and of course, is more palatable to the consumer than is frozen beef. The beef marketed by the Argentine is younger than that marketed by us in Australia, and particularly is that so in the class of beef that is exported. They are much older cattle, and as members know, today the trend is towards what is known as baby or young beef. Under present conditions, particularly in the north of Australia, it is not possible to market that young beef as it is in the lower regions, and that acts to the detriment of our export market.

Mr. Rhatigan: The trouble in the past in the northern portion of Australia is that they have gone in for quantity rather than quality.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The hon. member may be right there but, on the other hand, they have had to face all the difficulties to which I have already referred when taking high priced stud cattle into those areas, because they are attacked by tick and heavy losses have been incurred.

Mr. Rhatigan: Only in those cases fringing the desert.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: It seems to me there are large areas affected by tick and it is a costly business to take a bull from these parts and then lose him due to tick infection. I think that the sensible thing would be to breed the stock up there so that they would develop an immunity, and the pastoralists would know when they bought a stud bull, that they would have a reasonable chance of keeping him free from tick infection and so on.

Mr. Perkins: The scrub bulls are rather tougher than the others.

Mr. Norton: Don't the scrub bulls take toll of the pedigreed bulls?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: That could be so; it does not take much to cause two bulls to start fighting. There is another matter to which I wish to refer and this has already been touched on by the member for Narrogin. It deals with the spread of noxious weeds. Because of carelessness these noxious weeds have spread and have taken possession of large areas of land, and in some cases have made them quite useless. Today, however, we have the benefit of sprays and the use of hormones which can effectively control these weeds. While I have already made reference to the necessity for dealing effectively with vermin we must also be on the alert to deal immediately with noxious weeds.

The particular noxious weed about which the member for Narrogin is so concerned is the one that is causing farmers in my district a great deal of worry. When coming along certain roads it is quite usual to see fields upon fields of cape tulip. This weed is spreading for many miles. It seems to germinate easily; and when it spreads to districts where stock are not used to it, it causes heavy losses. Where it has been growing for years and has taken possession of certain areas I believe the stock in those areas develop an immunity to it, or they leave it alone. But we know from practical experience that when new stock go on to land which is covered with cape tulip, losses are immediately suffered. It is a weed that we should deal with vigorously.

I think I have said all I wanted to, but before I conclude I wish to express my appreciation and the appreciation of the large number of farmers that I represent of the excellent work done by the officers

of the Department of Agriculture. We appreciate their enthusiasm and the practical assistance they are giving farmers from one end of Western Australia to the other.

MR. WILD (Dale) [8.19]: I, too, wish to express my appreciation of the great work that is being done by one particular section of the Department of Agriculture of which I have some knowledge; I refer, of course, to the poultry section. Recently the officer in charge Mr. Morris, was sent to America with two other colleagues—one from South Australia and the other from Canberra. On their return they furnished to their respective Governments a report on an investigation of the commercial poultry industry of the United States of America in 1956. That is one of the finest reports on poultry farming that have been published in Australia, if not the best. It has brought to light quite a number of factors which, to those who are interested in the poultry industry, seem to indicate that big changes are taking place. These gentlemen who returned from their tour abroad compared a portion of America, namely California, which has a similar climate, with Western Australia. They were able to make a very good comparison. What they were able to find out abroad, together with the trends we have seen in this State in the last two or three years, clearly shows that big changes in this industry are about to take place.

Since the return of the poultry adviser, Mr. Morris, the research station at Herdsmans Lake has been pushed ahead with good effect. This year, there will be instituted what is known as random testing. It would be quite fair for me to say that today in Western Australia the standard of the day-old stock has not been of the highest. Any egg that was fertile was hatched by the hatchery and pushed on to the industry as a capable producing strain. The result was that of the quantity of day-old chicks received from the hatchery, after they are stocked on the farm and passed through the baby stage, instead of finding the stock as black-cross birds, as ordered, one would find among them red-crosses and birds with no cross-strain at all. At best many of the chicks can be described as first-class mongrel bred stock.

The system adopted in parts of America and which will be instituted in this State will eventually raise the standard of the stock considerably. It is quite a simple system. It is a voluntary test on the part of the hatchery. Each hatchery would be required to permit an officer of the Agricultural Department to select at random a certain number of day-old chicks from any hatch, the hatcheryman not being informed when the officer will arrive. After they are selected, the chicks are sent to the station at Herdsmans Lake where they

are housed and reared. Over a period of time their habits and the percentage of survivals are observed. The birds will be weighed at given periods. Finally, when they reach the laying stage, the quantity as well as quality of eggs will be measured. So for the first time next year—that will be the first time in the Commonwealth—this State will have a system of random selection, similar to the system used for selecting hotels in England.

I cannot help making that comparison because in the A.A. Journal of England, which is equivalent to the R.A.C. journal in Australia, is listed the grades of the various hotels. If one desired to stay at a hotel in Edinburgh or Scarborough, one would inspect the list of hotels in those towns. The top-grade hotels are shown as three-star hotels, those in the second grade are shown as two-star hotels, those in the lower grade are shown as one-star hotels, while alongside them are their tariffs. One can select a hotel to suit one's pocket.

The same principle will be applied under the random testing scheme. Whilst the hatcheries in this State will not be classified in exactly the same manner, the Agricultural Department will include the top 20 hatcheries in one group. It will not recommend any one of those 20 as being the best. Then below those will be others on a lower grade. It will be up to the individual purchaser of day-old stock to select the hatchery of his choosing in the first category, if he wants good stock.

The big changes that are taking place in this industry consist of two in the main; one is the changeover from the hen flock to the pullet flock, which has been going on to a great extent in the past few years; the other is the spread of the period of production. Today, as in years gone by, the period when most eggs are produced is between July and December. In the light of experience gained by the department, and as a result of information being handed on to farmers, the egg producers are gradually changing over from hen flocks to pullet flocks, and furthermore purchasing their day-old replacements earlier. They hope by so doing to achieve greater production between January and July, when eggs are very costly, and so even out the production over the whole year.

Last year I had a little quarrel in this House with the Minister in connection with the Egg Board. I asked him to make some changes. I have not in any way changed my views. I think the Minister should have another look at my proposal. I say quite freely that there is not much hope for the egg industry in this State if we carry on with the same type of board that we have today. I am not criticising the personnel of the board. As it is constituted the board does not give

the industry much chance. In an industry such as this, it is absolutely essential to have an egg board which is controlled to a large degree by a top business executive and a man of great vision. When one looks at the composition of the board, as constituted under the Act, it is almost impossible to get the type of man that is required. When one looks among the egg producers in this State, names come to mind that have been a great influence on the industry. I can think of one man who is well known to the Deputy Premier. He is Mr. Alf Hampton.

I do not suppose there is any other man in this State with more experience of the poultry and egg industry than Mr. Hampton. He has not the time to devote to the Egg Board. He is much too busy for that. The same applies to any other successful man in other callings. Under the present system, the egg producers are called upon to elect a representative to the egg board. Here is a case when Mr. Hampton offered his services three years ago, but he was easily beaten at the poll.

I suggest the present method of election is out of focus. When one considers the number of egg producers who are eligible to be enrolled and compare the number with those who vote for the election of the egg board representatives, one will realise that the industry is not given a chance. I know that the critic will say of this that the producers are given the opportunity to be placed on the roll, in the same manner as the Legislative Council roll is made up. The egg producers do not seem to get on the roll even though they are the ones who are eligible to vote. In answer to a question the Minister told me that there are 2,058 producers who send eggs to the board and who are classified as commercial egg producers. Many of those persons can vote if they want to.

Mr. Nalder: That number would include many farmers in the agricultural areas.

Mr. WILD: Yes. Any person who has more than 20 hens must send his egg production to the board. Of the 2,058 egg producers, as at yesterday there were only 529 enrolled. At the Egg Board election held a couple of months ago, only 324 producers exercised their right to vote. So we find we have 324 out of 2,058 people who have been sufficiently interested in the composition of the board. Is it any wonder we only get our just dues? We cannot get the people on the roll because apparently they are not interested.

The Minister for Lands: You must get what the majority want or they would vote to alter it.

Mr. WILD: The Minister is probably right, and it is a difficult argument to refute. We get just what we deserve. However, I know many big men who will not

have a bar of it; they will not vote and are giving it away because they think it is useless and hopeless. I know that is a defeatist attitude and is not getting us anywhere, but it is what is happening.

Mr. Nalder: Many of these producers are only producing as a sideline.

Mr. WILD: Exactly. The member for Katanning mentioned the small country people who, perforce of the Act, have to send their eggs to the city; and in the light of recent changes in the industry—due largely, I think, to our losing export markets through England paying a big subsidy and producing all the eggs that she wants—we have found, in this State, that there is a large surplus to get rid of. Up to a fortnight ago a commercial producer in this State had to pay 1s. 4d. to the board, including 5d. administration and 11d. pool charge.

According to figures given yesterday by the Minister, of the total eggs that were produced in the State during the past 12 months there were 5,696,000 dozen in the metropolitan area and 1,511,000 dozen came from the country. I do not know just how the difference between city and country is defined—whether it is 20, 25 or 40 miles from the city—but they do split up metropolitan and country. Members can see that in round figures very nearly one-quarter of the total eggs in this State come from the country.

My colleague, the Leader of the Opposition, said the other day that one of his constituents around Three Springs or Carnamah way showed him what he got from the board for sending down 15 dozen eggs. They were nearly all second quality, which they must be because they are a long time travelling. These people have to pay 1s. 4d. to the board, and they finish up with 6d. per dozen. That is what they get for their effort. They have to send their eggs to the board because the Act says so. These are not my figures. They are published by the board, and I have chosen them for the purpose of my argument in regard to what one might say are the two hottest months of the year. It is the time of the year in which the farming community has the greatest difficulty.

If a man lives on a farm at Mullewa, Morawa or any other district away from Perth, he goes into town once or twice a week at the most and his eggs, which were gathered over the few previous days, are put into cases, and carted into the siding; and the first time a train goes to Perth down they come with the result that in March of this year of all the eggs that came from the country only 2.37 per cent. were export quality. Country eggs amounted to 2.37 per cent., but the eggs produced in the metropolitan area were 42.21 per cent. export quality.

Getting back to the position in the country, their second quality eggs were 52.42 per cent. of the total, so that

50 per cent of the eggs coming from the country are second quality. Perforce of circumstances they cannot help it. There is nothing they can do about it. That was for the month of March. In the month of April, which is a little bit better in the country from a heat point of view, 3.2 per cent. of the eggs were first-grade as against 43 per cent. in the city, and their percentage of second quality eggs in the country dropped to 46.58 per cent.; still close to 50 per cent. of all eggs they send. As the Minister knows, in the last month, there has been an alteration in the grading.

However, for the purpose of my argument, it would be preferable if I keep to prices prior to this change, because the new grading is difficult to understand. It was always known as standard and medium, but now it goes by the name of 16's and 14's. I will confine my argument to what was being paid for these eggs at the time these returns were published for second quality eggs. At this time when 50 per cent. of the country eggs were being down graded to second quality, in the metropolitan area they were getting 4s. 5d. for export quality and 4s. 3d. for ordinary standard.

Mr. Nalder: Net price.

Mr. WILD: No. Gross to the producer. The price for second quality was 3s. 3d. which means they were getting 3s. 3d. for 50 per cent of the eggs sent from the country, less 1s. 4d. Therefore, they finished up getting 1s. 11d. per dozen for the bulk of their best quality eggs. The position is absolutely hopeless for the country producer; because the Act says—as with potatoes—that his eggs are the property of the board, and 50 per cent of the total production of eggs from the country in Western Australia are second grade when they reach the city. The board does not know what to do with these eggs, so they are put into pulp.

The man in the country is getting 1s. 11d. a dozen in round figures; and whilst I am not going to say what the cost of production is—it is like wheat, which some say is 10s., and some say is 14s.—I think I would be quite fair in saying that, depending on the type of equipment, capital invested, etc., it is somewhere between 2s. 6d. and 3s. per dozen. He also has to pay freight.

These eggs are forced to the city and have to go into pulp. What is not sold locally, is sold overseas at a price which always hovers around 2s. per dozen. We are paying this enormous stabilisation today to take up the slack for all the surplus eggs coming on to the market and I am going to suggest to the Minister—

The Minister for Lands: That is not quite right. At the present time the high rate is to recover tremendous losses in trading.

Mr. WILD: Will not the Minister agree with me that if we did not have all these eggs coming down, which is only part of the whole problem—

The Minister for Lands: You are partly right.

Mr. WILD: It is part of the whole problem. If we did not force the country man to bring his eggs down here, in order to pay an average price to the producer over the year, we would not have to be paying such terrific stabilisation as we do today. The man in the country should not be forced to send his eggs under this Act. I am sure of that. These people do not want to send their eggs to Perth but they are forced to.

If we could go back to the old days when the farmer used to take his eggs to the local storekeeper and exchange them for goods, the industry would be better off than it is because the eggs that come down here are no good to the producer in the country or to the producer here. It is largely because of these eggs that we have to pay the present high stabilisation that we have to meet.

During the year the board, in its wisdom, put down a vast quantity of eggs to be released from cold storage when the short season was on. This was a bad gamble although I do not completely blame the board for it because the result was something which it could not quite foresee, but those in the industry lost somewhere in the order of £30,000 through the board being forced to put the surplus eggs, when the flush came along, into pulp. Again, that is a contributory factor, together with the one I mentioned before, that has brought about the high stabilisation that we are paying.

The preponderance of eggs in the metropolitan area are laid between July and Christmas. One fatal mistake the board has made—it is a policy it has followed over the years—is that it has penalised both the consumers and the producers. It is penalising the producers because the producers have been egged on by the department—I agree with this policy—to be principally pullet farmers and produce in the short period of the year. But instead of allowing the eggs to follow the market, I venture the opinion that in the months of May and June, and the early part of July, due to the scarcity of eggs, the public would be willing to pay—in fact, they would be forced to pay if they wanted eggs—anything up to 1s. a dozen more than we have been receiving. But, on the other hand, in the plentiful season now prevailing, the public are still forced to pay 4s. 9d. a dozen for eggs while the producer is finishing up, even in the metropolitan area, with something in the order of 2s. 9d. or 2s. 9½d. a dozen.

The board would be doing two good things if it were to allow the public to have cheap eggs. It would break down

the cost of living and would in no way harm the producer but do him a good turn because it would not be trying to bolster the price of eggs, which is no good to us. Today we are getting 4s. 3d. less 1s. 3d. so that we get 3s. nett for not top quality eggs. Yet the public today is still paying 4s. 9d. a dozen.

Instead of the board requiring 1s. 3d. for stabilisation—I know that we will still have to pay something—why not give the public their eggs at 3s. 9d. or 3s. 10d. per dozen or even 4s.? The board uses the argument that people do not eat any more eggs when they are cheaper, but I cannot subscribe to that. The average housewife says, "Eggs are too dear. We will have a bought cake." So we get that antagonism to the higher price for eggs. I therefore suggest that in short season, which is from January to July, the board should allow eggs to rise to their normal level by virtue of supply and demand; but on the other hand, between July and Christmas, there should be little or no stabilisation and the consumer should reap the advantage of being able to purchase cheaper eggs.

I can assure the Minister that if it were not for the staff that has to be kept to maintain a reasonable-sized farm, the best thing that any producer of birds, who employs labour, could do would be on the 1st August to kill every bird he has and come back again into production in November. This is so because the man who depends completely on this industry—the man who may have 1,500 to 2,000 birds—gets into debt to no end with his produce merchants during those months; but he is forced into it because this is his industry and he has to carry on knowing full well that he will not get out of debt until March or April of the following year when prices go up. So it goes on, and there is little or no hope for him. Therefore I suggest to the Minister that before he takes his trip to England, where he will be able to see the egg industry there at first hand, he gives further consideration to looking at the composition of the board.

The Minister for Lands: I will be able to look at the English market, which we have lost; and that is the main trouble today in the poultry industry in this State.

Mr. WILD: I recognise that and it is something we have to face. Whilst England is prepared to pay nearly £40,000,000 a year to subsidise her own producers, it looks as though we will not get that market back. This again comes back to the report which was produced in Australia by Mr. Morris and his two colleagues following their visit to America. He said that big changes were taking place in the industry there; that it was changing from the small man to the big man for the reason that the little man could not possibly survive.

Mr. Rodoreda: Is the board doing a good job?

Mr. WILD: Quite frankly, I do not agree with a number of the things it does. The members of the board are not exactly what one would call men of long vision. They have not had the experience. A board handling anything up to £2,000,000 a year in turnover needs someone with a good business head, and we have not one man there who we can say has made a great success of his business life. In these circumstances, it is difficult for a fellow to be on a board like that and think big as is necessary in an industry such as this.

For the benefit of the member for Pillbara, I might mention two things that the board has recently done which I do not think any sane man would even have contemplated. One was in connection with an endeavour to improve the quality of the eggs. With this I entirely agree as it is something we must do. But the Minister knows that about six or eight weeks ago all producers received from the board a circular to this effect:—

To stimulate the production and marketing of a higher proportion of truly top quality eggs, the board early in September, 1952, introduced the payment of a premium on all eggs received at its grading floors which on grading proved to be of export quality.

The circular goes on to mention export quality and so on, and then the board decides to bring about a change—

Their chief characteristic distinguishing the export quality egg from the first quality egg, is the depth of the air cell. Today, however, increasing competition on overseas markets and a growing awareness of the importance of quality on the part of local consumers, has compelled the board to recognise that yolk colour must also be regarded as a vital factor in determining quality.

It has therefore been decided that on and after September 30th, 1957, the payment of an export premium will be discontinued, and replaced by a quality bonus of 2d. per dozen.

It continues—

Payment of this quality bonus will be restricted to export quality eggs which are accepted as possessing good yolk colour, and a careful and continuous check will be made by the board staff to determine the consignments to which the bonus will apply.

Mr. Nalder: Can the good yolk colour be determined by an exterior inspection of the egg?

Mr. WILD: No, that is the point. As the result of that advice from the board, all those producers who wanted to secure

the extra 2d. put down extra green feed—I put down an extra five acres—in order to improve the quality of the eggs. Nothing has happened, however, and ruinous in the industry suggests something has gone wrong and the board has discovered that the Act will not allow them to specify that an egg must have a particular type of yolk. The scheme has therefore had to be dropped. Everyone will agree that an egg should have a good yolk colour, but a great many men have been put to extra expense in providing green pasture in the hope of securing the extra 2d.—

The Minister for Works: Did not the producers' representative bring this situation about?

Mr. WILD: Yes, he pointed out that they could not do it.

The Minister for Works: He was opposed to the scheme and took that method of blocking it.

Mr. WILD: Yes, but he must have been right as they have not gone on with it. Apparently, he brought the matter before the association and representations must have been made to the Minister or the board and the scheme has been dropped.

The Minister for Lands: It is a good idea.

Mr. WILD: It is excellent.

The Minister for Lands: They have just struck a snag for the time being.

Mr. WILD: That is the sort of question these men should examine before going into print and causing the industry so much extra expense. The only way to tell the colour of the yolk would be to break a couple of eggs from every case and I have proved that no matter how much green feed is given to the birds there is a small percentage of them that will not touch it, with the result that the yolks of their eggs are not of good colour and if one were unlucky the egg produced by such a hen could be the one broken and the whole lot would be condemned—

The Minister for Lands: You would be very unlucky.

Mr. WILD: Yes, but it could happen. Only the day before yesterday, at breakfast, I discovered an egg with a very pale yolk, and officers of the department have told me that a certain small percentage of hens will not eat green feed and their eggs have yolks of a pale colour. I agree with the new grading system but it is strange that no producer has yet received from the board an indication of what the new prices are to be. I had to ring up the general manager to ask what to charge for the new grading. Such things indicate that the members of the board are not on the ball and if we are to have stability in the industry something must be done.

The industry produces about £2,000,000 per annum for the State and there are thousands of men engaged in it, not only in

producing but in the processing of meat and the production of poultry food as well as the disposal and marketing of eggs. The industry is entitled to some stability which does not at present exist. I appeal to the Minister to have another look at the board and I am certain the only way to secure stability is to have a body more like the milk board with a well-paid, top-grade man in charge, together with a representative of the producers and one of the consumers. As long as we continue with the present constitution of the board there will be chaos in the industry as there is no successful poultryman who can give his time to be a member of the board. I quoted the case of Mr. Hampton, who told me he could not spare the time to be a member of the board, and I do not know where we could get a suitable man. I trust the Minister will do as I have suggested.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [8.58]: The activities of the Department of Agriculture have expanded tremendously in usefulness in recent years due, largely, to the decentralisation of its officers throughout the country. That has brought the department into the heart of the districts where it is required and the officers conducting the branches have devoted themselves to their work in a way that has been very helpful. Their personal comfort and time do not seem to enter into it and they attend meetings, pasture improvement groups and so on, regardless of those considerations. I feel that approach to their duties has contributed greatly to the success of the department's work.

Another useful aspect is the film units, but I believe many more of the films used should be produced in Western Australia rather than in the Eastern States. No doubt many Eastern States activities and experiments are very useful but much experiment and successful work is done in this State and I think should have priority as being more applicable to local conditions, if filmed, than Eastern States' films would be. The taking of such films would encourage those who have accomplished worth-while things in this State.

The establishment of branch offices of the department and district advisers does not mean that in view of their ability to convey instructions and information to farmers, we should neglect agricultural education, and I believe the Department of Agriculture is suffering in this respect at the hands of the Education Department. As I have mentioned in this House, the number of students at the Narrogin School of Agriculture, where they are trained in agricultural work, has been reduced by 30, even though this is an expanding State and one dependent on agriculture. I think we need more agricultural education, and we must have students who have

the capacity to absorb the instructions given by agricultural advisers, and the ability to put their knowledge into practice.

If the Education Department regards agricultural education on such a low priority, I think the best that can be done with the agricultural wing at the Narrogin High School is to transfer the practical work back to the Department of Agriculture. Something has to be done and to me it seems atrocious that agricultural education should be reduced at a time when it should be increased. What reason can there be for it? So I hope the Minister will be able to make some inquiries in regard to the suggestion I have just made, because the matter is an important one.

I would also like to mention the cramping of agricultural expansion in this State by the attitude of the Forests Department. I have a couple of letters here, and one concerns about 8,000 acres of land adjacent to Boddington. The timber on this land has been cut over and at present the land is serving no useful purpose, even though it is suitable for agriculture and is surrounded by farming properties. The board contends that it should be thrown open for selection forthwith. There are many inquiries for land in the area, and unless large pieces of land, at present held by the Crown, are released and thrown open for selection, the district will remain retarded.

For my part, I would be the last to say that we should destroy our forest resources because, on the one hand, I have the Boddington mill which depends upon forestry for its extraction process, and I have the Narrogin timber mill on the other hand making timber available for sawyards throughout the State. So I realise the need for timber. But, at the same time, if the land has been cut over, and is not being used, why should it not be thrown open? Some reserves have not been cut over; but, they will never be used because they are not of much value. Some of the land, but very little of it, has been released in recent years.

I would suggest that the reason for it is, as was indicated in reply to questions I asked in this Chamber a little while ago, the person responsible for decisions as to whether land shall be forestry or agricultural land. The reply I received was that, so far as State forests were concerned, Parliament was the responsible authority; and today we dealt with a motion concerning partial revocations of State forests. They were only very small areas; but in regard to reserves the Conservator of Forests, in the case of timber reserves and of timber on private property, has the right to say whether they shall be forest or agricultural lands. There does not appear to be any appeal from his decision.

Mr. Cornell: Don't you find the Lands Department equally difficult as regards flora and fauna reserves?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: No; I think the Forests Department is by far the worst because it has vast areas of land, spread all over the place, and not all in State forests. The department is hanging on to them and I cannot find any practical reason for it. Surely it is restricting agricultural expansion! I think that there should be some liaison between the Agricultural Department and the Forests Department in this regard. I suggest to the Minister that the two authorities should decide whether the land should be used for forests or agriculture. At the moment it appears as though the old saying of possession being nine-tenths of the law is the case as regards the Forests Department.

Mr. Owen: It is ten-tenths.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Very nearly.

The Premier: Could you tell us what percentage of alienated land has been developed?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I think something should be done in that regard too, but it is not an easy matter. I have already mentioned that point in this Chamber. There is a lack of development in alienated land because of the high cost involved. I think at the present time it would cost at least £10,000 to develop 1,000 acres of it.

Mr. Owen: More than that.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: That is a lot of money for anyone to have in his pocket. Nobody can get the finance to develop our agricultural lands. That is what is holding it up in many cases.

Mr. Cornell: But the forest reserves cost an equal amount to develop.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Yes, but the two matters go side by side. There is no reason why we should withhold reserves because alienated land is not being developed. If reserves are allocated to applicants, the department contends that they have to be developed, and a transfer of title is not effected until it is developed. I think that some action should be taken to see that decisions regarding forestry lands should not be left only in the hands of the Conservator of Forests.

The Minister for Lands: That is not so, of course. It is decided by a recommendation of the utilisation committee which is representative of a number of departments. They decide on the best use of the land. That is how it is determined.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: Which means that the answer I got in this Chamber last week was wrong. I asked the question particularly so that I could make sure of my grounds; but I hope the Minister's answer indicates that there is a conference between the departments on these reserves. But it does not appear as though that is the case. I believe it is an important factor, and although I do not advocate that our forests should be unnecessarily depleted, I advocate the use of lands which are no longer useful for forestry purposes,

or which have never been used and are never likely to be used for such purposes. I think these matters are of great importance in the development of agriculture in this State.

MR. I. W. MANNING (Harvey) [9.6]: When the Minister introduced the Agricultural Estimates he invited us to make some comments on them and I am sure he would be most disappointed if I did not do so. I was disappointed that the Minister did not touch more on the subject of dairying, or that he did not mention the subject of milk. At the present time the annual consumption of milk in Western Australia is about 15,000,000 gallons for which the consumers in Western Australia pay approximately £5,000,000. That clearly indicates that the wholemilk industry is a major one in this State.

One of the important points is that the industry is depending upon the local market and the whole of the £5,000,000 circulates in our local community. The policy of the Milk Board has been largely directed towards an improvement in quality, the production of milk under hygienic conditions; and the production of milk from healthy cows only. I believe the board has met with considerable success in carrying out that policy. The t.b. testing scheme has been extensively used and most of the wholemilk dairy herds have been tested two or three times.

On the retailing side a great deal has been done as regards pasteurisation and bottling, and modern methods of delivery to consumers. The minimum standard of milk set by the regulations is 3.2 butterfat and 8.5 per cent. of solids other than fat, making a minimum standard of total solids of 11.7 per cent. The bulk of the milk coming from the country into the metropolitan treatment plants is tested regularly by the Milk Board. These tests have shown that the milk quality ranges from 3.5 per cent. to 3.6 per cent. butterfat, and from 8.6 per cent. to 8.7 per cent. solids-not-fat. So there is no doubt that the consumers of Western Australia are getting good quality milk. As the supply of good wholesome milk is the primary function of the Milk Board, it could be fairly said that in that regard the policy of the board has been successful.

It is in the production of milk where the major problems of the industry are to be found. The problems and difficulties facing many dairymen today are to supply milk to the standard laid down in the regulations. A great deal of research has been undertaken in the past, and a great deal of valuable information has been passed on to farmers as to how to make the cows produce more milk and more butter, and the breeding and feeding principles to achieve this are well known. There is an abundance of qualified advice on this point available to anyone who seeks it.

But the same does not apply to solids-not-fat. Accordingly, today we find the major problem of the wholemilk producer is the difficulty of producing milk of the 8.5 per cent. solids-not-fat standard. As I said before, there is no qualified advice available whatever to assist these people in this direction. There are 639 wholemilk producers in Western Australia. In policing the milk regulations, the Milk Board inspectors carry out periodic tests of the milk; and during the first six months of this year, samples were taken from milk supplied by 537 producers.

Of those 537 producers, over 200 were found to have sold milk below the 8.5 per cent. solids-not-fat standard. Of course, in doing so, all of the 200 producers were liable to prosecution. In these cases where there is no question of adulteration, there is still no defence. So today we find the Milk Board dragging dairymen into court and prosecuting them for something over which they have no control; for something of which no one knows the cause, and for which no one knows the cure.

The Milk Board inspectors who go from farm to farm inspecting dairies for cleanliness, and testing milk for quality, are instructed by the Milk Board to advise farmers who are having this trouble of low solids-not-fat on how to correct this difficulty. But the advice given by the inspectors is unqualified; it is valueless and costly. As an illustration I would mention a particular case of a well-known dairyman at Harvey who has, to my knowledge, been producing milk for many years.

This man possessed the best stud Friesian herd; it has been one of the top herds under the local herd recording unit for many years. Two years ago this herd was found to be producing milk below the solids-not-fat standard. Under the direction of the Milk Board's inspectors, this man culled half his valuable Friesians and replaced them with Jerseys. Field trials were carried out, and all the fancy fodders the inspectors could think of were fed to the herd; pastures were ploughed in and renewed; milking hours were altered, and everything which might have had an influence on the quality of the milk was tried.

A detailed costing sheet has shown that the advice given by these milk inspectors over a period of two years cost this farmer over £2,000, and today the milk solids of this herd are lower than they were before he set out to follow the advice of those Milk Board inspectors. I use this man's case as an example because he has kept comprehensive records to show just what has been done; but many of the farmers are being advised in the same way.

Inspectors go on to a property. They know from the tests already taken that the farmer is having difficulty in maintaining his solids-not-fat standard, and they ask him what fodder he is feeding

to his herd. He might reply, "I am feeding them dairy meal"; and he is told, "You should change to whale meal, or to cocoanut meal," or to something else which perhaps it takes a lot of trouble to persuade the cows to eat—fodders which are costly, and which have no value at all in bringing up the standard of milk.

This problem was further highlighted at Harvey a fortnight ago when another of the well-known local dairymen was fined for selling milk which showed an 8.37 per cent. solids-not-fat content instead of the required 8.5 per cent. This man was the only one who was fined of the 200 who were found to be selling milk below the standard. The Milk Board has taken proceedings against this man, and it has made up its mind that he did not try hard enough to overcome the trouble. He knew from the experience of his neighbours—one of whom was the man I have already mentioned and whose experience greatly influenced this man—that a lot of effort could be put in without achieving very much.

He did, however, make some considerable effort. He milked a herd of 70 cows. He sold 20 of these and replaced them with 40 others, making it a herd of 90, in an endeavour to build up the solids-not-fat content of the milk to bring it up to the required standard. He also carried out extensive field trials and appealed to the Department of Agriculture for advice. His appeal was completely ignored, however; and as the case came forward he was prosecuted, and he had no defence whatever. The fact that the milk that he was producing was not of the required standard was sufficient to subject him to prosecution, and he had no defence at all.

Over a period of time I have repeatedly mentioned this problem of low solids-not-fat content when speaking in this House. I brought this particular man's case to the notice of the Minister; and even though the man is being prosecuted for something which is not only a problem in this State but a major problem to all dairymen throughout the world; and even though the board could achieve nothing by prosecuting the man, the Minister and his department have made no effort to assist these people in their difficulty.

The Minister has watched his department prosecute for something he must know the farmers have no knowledge of; something for which no one knows the cause and for which no one can suggest a cure. I am most concerned that the Minister did not make mention of the subject of milk when he introduced his Estimates, and that he did not make provision in the Estimates for adequate research into this problem. There are extensive facilities for research at the Wokalup centre. There is a whole-milk producing dairy herd with a very elaborate set-up.

Even at this late stage, I hope that the Minister will direct the Agricultural Department to take immediate steps to carry out research into the problem of low solids-not-fat content in dairy herds. So far as we have established, the trouble is a very complex one. The individual trials carried out by the various dairymen have proved that the fault does not lie in breed or in the feed; it could lie in any direction.

Another point which causes me concern is the artificial breeding centre at Wokalup and the influence that artificial breeding will have on future dairy herds. It could happen that one or more bulls used in that centre for artificial insemination would come from a line of stock producing milk of low solids-not-fat content. The influence from these bulls could be so far-reaching that in two or three years' time the dairy herds in this State will not measure up to the standards that have been laid down.

Mr. Mann: Are they not tested in regard to strain first of all?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: No. I sought to ascertain by a question directed to the Minister if that point had been taken into consideration when the bulls were purchased. The Minister gave a very lengthy answer which indicated that the bulls used at the Wokalup artificial insemination centre had splendid records as milk and butterfat producers, but there was no record whatever to show that those animals came from good producers of milk high in solids-not-fat content. Their effect on the dairying industry could be very far-reaching indeed. It is necessary that before any further time elapses, research be carried out.

The Milk Board has suggested to the dairymen that they cull their Friesian herds and that they buy in Jerseys, but the dairymen have built up their herds at very considerable expense. A good dairy cow costs between £50 and £60. The herds have been t.b. tested on two or three occasions, and the remaining herds have survived the tests. The cows which are the biggest culprits so far as low production of solids-not-fat content is concerned are the biggest milk producers in the herds. In that respect the problem is complex. It is understandable that dairymen are reluctant to cull cows which have proved to be healthy, to be t.b.-free and to be heavy producers.

At the Wokalup research centre extensive research is being conducted in a wide variety of trials. I would like to commend the officers of the department associated with pasture experiments, in regard to both irrigation and dry farm pasture; fertiliser experiments at various rates of fertilisers; and research into the use of minerals in fertilisers; in the determination of value of the minerals; and in the various methods of fodder conservation. It

was felt by the farmers who attended the field day that the guidance received was well qualified advice.

This can be given only after research has been carried out by trial-and-error methods, to prove what is best for the various types of soil; what fertilisers are needed; and what crops grow best. So, in the field of research, there are many other problems which can be investigated at the centre. There are very many veterinary problems which concern dairymen and on which research should be conducted.

Before concluding, I want to emphasise that where the Milk Board launches prosecutions against dairymen, the Minister and the Agricultural Department are morally obliged to carry out research work to overcome the problems. If dairy farmers are prosecuted, someone should be able to advise them how to correct the problems. If not, nothing is achieved by prosecution.

The Minister for Lands: Do you say that the person you referred to in Harvey applied for advice from the Agricultural Department and it was refused?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I said that.

The Minister for Lands: I do not believe you.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: He wrote in seeking advice, but received no reply. I saw the letter which he wrote to the department.

The Minister for Lands: There is no obligation to give the advice, because the Milk Board controls the situation. But I have never known the department to refuse advice when a request has been made, so I do not believe you.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I do not want to argue with the Minister on this matter. He can find out for himself.

The Minister for Lands: I shall find out and I shall prove you wrong.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I wish the Minister would find out; he might prove me to be right. His comments raise another interesting point relating to the activities of the Milk Board. The dairymen regard the board and its inspectors as policemen. They inspect the dairies for cleanliness and for the purpose of testing the quality of the milk. The advice they give to the dairy farmers is not acceptable because it is not expert advice. It is haphazard advice given by people not qualified in these matters. The persons who are expected to give advice to dairymen concerning their problems are officers of the Agricultural Department, and not the Milk Board inspectors. Officers of the department are the ones to advise dairymen on stock husbandry, pasture management, or anything else to improve the quality of the milk. That is the job of the Agricultural Department.

The Minister for Lands: So it is, when it is asked to give advice. It has to take that course because these matters do not come under its control.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Can the Minister tell me whether advice has been given by the Agricultural Department to dairymen on the subject of low solids-not-fat content?

The Minister for Lands: I can tell you scores of cases where a dairyman will apply to the department for someone to go out and examine his pasture or stock. I have never known of one case which has been refused.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Can the Minister tell the Committee what causes the trouble in solids-not-fat?

The Minister for Lands: Of course I can't; neither can you.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: Neither can the officers of the Department of Agriculture.

The Minister for Lands: They are trying to find out.

Mr. Mann: They do not know now; there is no solution to the problem.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I asked a question of the Minister as to what research had been done and in answering the question he said that some research work had been carried out in Western Australia and it was reported in the Journal of Agriculture some years ago. I checked up on this report and it said that the experiments had been carried out with 10 cows which at some later date were found to be diseased and it was also found that if the animal gave a satisfactory butterfat test—that is 3.2 per cent. butterfat—it would also produce milk of the required solids-not-fat standard.

That is an interesting point because one of the big problems of the dairyman is the fact that while there is a high butterfat content in the milk, there is a low solids-not-fat content, which completely contradicts the advice given by the Minister in answer to the question I asked. The officers of the department believe that if the cows are of a satisfactory butterfat standard, they are also of a satisfactory solids-not-fat standard. I believe that that is where many of the dairymen have got into difficulties. They have bought cows of a satisfactory butterfat standard but they have been low in solids-not-fat standard. That emphasises the need, so far as I am concerned, for some very extensive research work into this problem.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [9.34]: I wish to say a few words, but before doing so I would like to pay a tribute to the field officers of the Department of Agriculture, particularly those operating

from Carnarvon, as they are the men whose work I am able to observe. I would particularly like to mention, first of all, the regional officer, Mr. Suijddorp, who works the whole North-West from Carnarvon. I believe he is only home approximately one-sixth of his time. From this you will see, Mr. Chairman, that as far as the department is concerned he is very unselfish and his work should be fully recognised in every way possible. It is not a very nice existence for his family when they only see him approximately for one-sixth of the year while the rest of the year he is probably as far away as the Kimberley research station.

So far as the Carnarvon research station is concerned we have Mr. Lawson and Mr. Rees, who are agricultural advisers and between them they help and advise on all types of agriculture, pastoral renovations and development. Over the last two or 2½ years they have made great strides in the reclamation of wind-eroded land in claypan areas, particularly where, owing to heavy traffic of sheep and other stock, the land is practically despaired of so far as natural vegetation is concerned.

By advising pastoralists of certain methods of treating these claypans they have induced a number of stations to purchase their own tractors and start on reclamation, which is proving highly successful. Without planting any seeds whatsoever the natural herbage has started to grow on areas, many acres in extent, where formerly there was not even a blade of grass at the best of times. Great assistance has been given to the planters on the Gascoyne river in their experiments, particularly in regard to vegetables; in proving types; the right type of treatment and so on.

These men are not on duty for just 40 hours a week. It does not matter whether it is 6 o'clock in the morning or 8 o'clock at night, Saturday or Sunday. If a planter is in distress or wants information, they are only too pleased and willing to go and assist in solving that man's problems. In some recognition of the work they are doing, they should be given adequate facilities to carry out their work. One of the facilities which is sadly lacking, so far as the Gascoyne research station is concerned, is office accommodation. There is one very small room there in which four men have to work and keep their records. There is no room, with the other equipment, such as filing cabinets and so on, for more than one person to sit and do office work.

It means that they have to take various files to their homes, as well as books, in order to make up reports, which are part of their daily work. It may so happen that one of these officers has, the night before, been making up records and somebody goes to the office and wants to know something of what is going on.

One of the other officers meets him to find out exactly what he wants. He goes to the file and finds that the information he requires is not there and he has to set to work and think, "Who would have that? At which house am I likely to find it?" Were the office accommodation sufficient such work could be done at the office in the middle of the research station, the files would be complete and the job made easier.

The department has criticised my requests for certain laboratory equipment to assist these men who are carrying out various experiments to develop industry at Carnarvon. It would not take very much in the way of laboratory equipment to give them very great assistance. What they have been given is very crude and sparse and I think, if we asked just what their requirements were, the department would find them very reasonable and would be able to encourage them to carry out the experiments far better and give them just that little bit extra in compensation for the work they are doing.

As I said in my Address-in-reply speech, I think there is a very considerable saving to be made in the department when one looks at one particular section. That is the manager of the North-West section. He is stationed in Perth and has to cover the districts from Carnarvon to Wyndham. He has to travel that area by plane and just how many times in a year I am not able to say. If he has to go to the Kimberley research station for a couple of days and then return to Perth, the air fares cost the Government £77 4s. If he goes to Carnarvon the air fare is £13 16s. each way.

If this officer were stationed where he should be—in the middle of the area he controls—and I consider it should be at Port Hedland because that is the logical place in connection with transport both north and south—the air fares would be much less. The cost by air from Port Hedland to Carnarvon would not be as much as from Perth to Carnarvon. The fare is only £12 8s.; and from Port Hedland to Wyndham, instead of being £38 12s. it would be £20 8s. one way. To Derby it is only a matter of £10 10s. against the present fare of £30 12s.

Even if air fares had to be paid, the department would make a considerable saving; but the point is that one of the officers at the research station at Carnarvon, Mr. Suijdendorp, is moving throughout the area from Carnarvon to Wyndham all the time, and the manager for the North-West Department could easily travel with him by road.

At other times the officer from the Kimberley research station comes down as far as Port Hedland, and the manager could travel at least one way with him

to the Kimberley research station and see not only what was going on there but the work carried out by the other officers in the district on station properties. I request the Minister to look into this matter and see whether a saving can be made.

There is another point I wish to bring to the Minister's notice, and this has to do with the managers of the research stations in the North-West. These people do an excellent job; and like the agricultural advisers, or regional advisers, they are on tap to the agriculture producer at any time of the day or night. They do not mind giving any information that they can. They are in isolated jobs, although the man at Carnarvon is not as isolated as the others; yet their salaries, not including the district allowance, is approximately £90 less than is paid to the men in the south. There are three of these research station managers in the North-West, and it is only reasonable that they should be brought into line with the managers at, say, Merredin, Salmon Gums and Wongan Hills.

Another matter I have taken up with the department is one which the department does not seem to be particularly in favour of. I have put this proposition to the Minister on several occasions, too—that is, that the branding of containers of agriculture produce—here I refer mostly to perishable produce such as beans, tomatoes and so on—purchased by repackers for resale in markets other than those in the metropolitan area, should be put into effect.

The repackers in Perth are in constant contact with the merchants in Adelaide. In the early morning they get telegrams or telephone messages from Adelaide requesting them to purchase a consignment of beans on behalf of a merchant there. The beans, which are put on the market here from a grower in Carnarvon, bear his name and address and the address of the merchant to whom they were forwarded; but I am informed by persons in Perth that the repackers at Perth market who purchase these beans just brand them with the Adelaide merchant's name and forward them direct to Adelaide. In some cases I understand that the name is not even branded on the bag; but a small label indicating to whom they are being sent, is attached. To all intents and purposes those beans are marketed by the person whose name is on the bag—the grower.

To my way of thinking—others at the markets here who have studied the matter think the same—there is nothing to stop the merchant in Adelaide—not deliberately, but it could happen—getting two consignments from one person muddled. The same grower could forward beans by air from Carnarvon to Adelaide and they would perhaps be fresher and of superior

quality; and staler ones could be sent from a reseller in Perth to be marketed in Adelaide. The fresher ones could be sold in the name of the merchant who sent them from the Perth market, and the staler ones in the name of the Carnarvon grower.

Likewise, I think that any produce put on the metropolitan market floors should bear the name of the person placing it on those floors for sale. Beans and other produce are purchased by what are known as repackers at those markets. They purchase on a low market, and two days later the market rises. They see it rising, and they quickly slip the produce they bought at the previous market on to the floor without any distinguishing mark whatsoever.

It has happened this year that one grower received returns for beans which he had not put into the particular market. He actually received a return for beans that were sold at the market on the Monday morning, and a return for the same beans again on the Wednesday's market because the repacker who purchased them on the Monday shot them on the floor, without any distinguishing mark, on the Wednesday.

This could happen in reverse. Therefore I contend that a person who markets any produce whatsoever at the metropolitan markets should put his brand on the produce. Once beans, for instance, have been purchased at the markets, under the hammer, they become the property of some person other than the grower.

Mr. Court: Are you suggesting that in this case the man was paid twice?

Mr. NORTON: He got two lots of returns for the one lot of beans. If it could happen one way it could happen the other.

Mr. Court: I do not see how it could happen in reverse. I cannot see how he could get no account sales.

Mr. NORTON: Yes. This particular person could have another lot of beans on the market on Wednesday, and the auctioneer could take the whole lot as being from the merchant who bought on the Monday's market.

Mr. Perkins: He would not be paid at all then.

Mr. NORTON: That is so. It is possible to get a terrible mix-up if the produce is not branded properly.

Mr. Court: If he got no account sales, he would raise a query with the merchant.

Mr. NORTON: It would have to be decided which beans were involved.

The Minister for Lands: It could lead to a lot of confusion.

Mr. NORTON: It is very little to ask, and there is no reason why the person making the profit should not put his own

brand on the produce. At present there are approximately 2,847,000 acres of registered flora and fauna reserves in this State; and, in addition, there are places such as Bernier and Dorre Islands which contain about another 100,000 acres also reserved for fauna but not gazetted. Many of those reserves are in the heart of the agricultural country where nobody ever sees them, and they become nothing but a harbour for the vermin which breeds and thrives there. There is no reason why those areas should not be used for grazing purposes and the fauna kept under control. It has been proved throughout the State that grazing does not kill the fauna.

Bernier and Dorre Islands are about 30 miles off the coast of Carnarvon, and they have been applied for on numerous occasions for grazing leases. Many years ago one of those islands was used for a leper station and had stock on it as well as a number of people. Neither the stocking nor the occupation in any way affected the fauna there; yet on each occasion when a grazing lease has been applied for in regard to those areas the matter has been submitted to the fauna committee, which has said, "No."

Apparently there is some little marsupial there which they say would become extinct if the country were used for grazing; but that is only guesswork, as the previous occupation did not have that result. Conditions in the contract of lease could provide that the fauna should not be destroyed and in any case I understand these marsupials live on salt water and seaweed and thrive on it.

Owing to the frequent applications for these islands as grazing leases, I understand the fauna committee has applied to the Lands Department to have them declared class "A" reserves vested in that committee; and I believe that is being done. No one will go to those places to see the flora and fauna and the country could well be made use of under whatever restrictions the department thought necessary to preserve the fauna.

The Minister for Lands: How far off shore are these islands?

Mr. NORTON: About 30 miles. Before the committee can turn down any application or have a reserve declared, the question should be submitted to the Minister for Lands and the Minister controlling flora and fauna, who should examine the question and decide whether the country should be made an class "A" reserve. If members examine Votes and Proceedings No. 14, they will see the astonishing array—from the north of the State to the south—of areas of land which could well be used for agricultural purposes but which are reserved unnecessarily.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [9.55]: I wish first to deal with the subject raised by the member for Gascoyne: the question of

flora and fauna reserves. As the Minister knows, this is a subject that I have raised with him a number of times in the last year or two. There is a large flora and fauna reserve east of Pingrup mainly, I understand, for the preservation of mallee fowl.

It is on the southern extremity of the area thrown open for settlement south-west of the demonstration farm at Newdegate, and vigorous protests have been raised by the local authority, the Nyabing-Pingrup Road Board, against the reservation of such a large area for flora and fauna right in the middle of what looks like becoming a very good farming area. I realise the problem faced by the member for Gascoyne, in that the Lands Department is difficult to approach on this question.

It was suggested to me—and I put it to the Minister—that perhaps this large reserve could be transferred from the present area, which could become a valuable farming district, as it is adjacent to country where a number of farms are being developed satisfactorily at present, to a situation closer to the south coast. I have been told that it is necessary to have certain small trees—mort trees—in the reserve as they are suitable for the mallee hens to climb in order to get out of the way of the foxes.

I do not know whether that is true, but the experience of many of us in agricultural areas is that the number of mallee fowls has been increasing in recent times where there are no trees of this nature for them to climb. I think it is another instance of native fauna adapting itself to changed conditions, and perhaps those responsible for the preservation of flora and fauna are worrying unduly in this regard. In any case, I commend to the Minister a careful examination of the siting of this reserve east of Pingrup.

Now I wish to deal with a subject I have raised on many occasions in this Chamber: the operations of the agency section of the Rural and Industries Bank. Members must be getting sick of hearing me discuss this question, but I cannot impress too strongly on them the present lack of help from an institution which in days gone by was largely responsible for the assistance to settlers which made possible the rapid development of our wheat and sheep areas.

Mr. Ackland: They did a wonderful job years ago.

Mr. PERKINS: I agree with that interjection. Unfortunately, in this period, when we are developing land far less rich than the original Crown lands that were made available for settlement, no similar assistance is available to the present generation of new farmers who are prepared to go out and develop the land. I well remember several years ago bringing a deputation of

these new settlers to see the Premier, to impress upon him the need for a substantial allocation of loan funds by him as Treasurer to the agency section of the R. & I. Bank. As we all know, the present Premier finds any weak points in a proposition put to him; and on this particular occasion I can remember him asking one of the members of the deputation if he thought that the £4,000 which these two brothers had available to develop new country east of Hyden was sufficient to develop virgin land for wheat and sheep production.

The reply of the man who was asked was, I thought, very much to the point. The Press were present, and obviously an unsatisfactory reply could have seriously affected their case. After hesitating for a minute or two the man replied, "I know that £4,000 is not sufficient. But if I had the £10,000 or £12,000 that perhaps is necessary to develop a virgin block in the wheat and sheep areas in these times, do you think I would be suffering all the hardships of developing land on the fringe of the wheat belt, when I could buy a nicely-developed farm close to Northam for that amount of money?" Is not that the answer?

If we are to have further agricultural development in Western Australia we must realise that considerable hardships are likely to be suffered by those developing that new country; and I can assure members that there is a generation of young farmers developing land selected from the Crown in recent times who are not afraid to face those hardships. What I am trying to impress upon the Government tonight is the need for making their task a little easier, and also doing something to help speed up the rate of development.

As members know, most of our wheat and sheep areas are having a very difficult year; and, as is to be expected, the outer fringes of the wheatbelt are probably having the hardest time. In addition it is only natural that the least developed properties are likely to be the hardest hit in a dry season. That is exactly what is happening this year; and I very much fear that unless these properties can be developed more than they are being developed now, to enable them to carry stock, there is a great danger that after this harvest we will find properties into which men have poured a considerable amount of their savings, and on which a great deal of development has been done, abandoned because the men concerned will not be able to find the wherewithal to carry them for another year.

I think that all members will appreciate that that would be a tremendous loss not only to the individual farmers concerned, but also to the State as a whole. It is particularly distressing for the individual involved. Not only has he lost his savings,

but he has also largely wasted some of the most valuable years of his life on something that has not succeeded. So I wish to impress upon the Minister for Agriculture, who is directly in control of the agency section of the R. & I. Bank, and also the Treasurer who must make the actual allocation of loan funds to the agency section of the bank, and also upon Cabinet as a whole, the urgent need for the adoption of a policy which I have tried to set out this evening.

There is one other matter that I would like to raise, and I refer to the difficulties which the dry seasons will cause in the water supplies in these areas. Possibly this is a subject directly concerning the Minister for Water Supplies, but I wish to make passing reference to it now because when discussing the agricultural Estimates, it seems appropriate to mention factors which are limiting agricultural development in Western Australia.

In recent years the Water Supply Department has done very valuable work in improving the supplies in many of those areas. As the Minister for Water Supplies will be able to tell the Minister for Agriculture, I have impressed upon him in recent times the need for making a further survey of that south-eastern area—I refer particularly to the area eastward and southward of Narrogin—and the practicability and desirability of extending the Wellington Dam reticulation into those areas.

I can assure the Minister for Agriculture, the Treasurer, and also the Minister for Water Supplies that they will find a strong demand for an improvement of the water supply position in that area in order to make it safer for agriculture, as well as improving the amenities in those towns. I do not wish to deal with the subject in any further detail, because it really impinges upon another department; but I am hoping that either the Minister in charge of the department, or some other Minister, will make an announcement on that subject in the near future; if not, he will be receiving a deputation in order to press the case.

There are a great many subjects embraced in the portfolio of Minister for Lands and Agriculture. I believe it is one of the most important portfolios in a Cabinet governing a State such as Western Australia. From time to time we have discussions in this Chamber regarding the possibilities of further and more rapid development of our latent resources. We have seen a lot more interest in it in recent times, not only from people in the other States, but also from people overseas. There is a tremendous interest in the new land being made available for settlement along the south coast.

I made some comment on that particular matter a year or two ago when the development of Esperance was being debated

very vigorously. I said then that I believed there were tremendous possibilities right along the south coast of Western Australia, but I also warned that we would have teething troubles. I believe that statement is being proved correct at the moment.

Unfortunately I think that the Esperance area in particular is suffering from being boomed by the Press; and then, of course, when something goes wrong it becomes news for the Press again that things are not working out as was expected. Those of us who know what the pattern of development in our farming lands has been—not only in Western Australia, but in the other States—know that we will have these problems to face.

The booming of an area is just as much to be regretted as the decrying of it when something does not work out as expected. It could have very severe repercussions on the State because adverse publicity reaches just as far as, if not further than, any publicity that might have boomed it in an earlier period. I am sure it would reach further, because there are a great many people who seem to be prepared to believe the worse news rather than the better. At this stage, I would like to say that I think those new areas developing will eventually become very important agricultural producers in the years to come, even though it may take a little longer than some people predicted a year or two ago.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [10.13]: When introducing the Estimates for the Lands Department, the Department of Agriculture, and the other departments under his control, the Minister touched on the need for scientists in the departments, and the difficulties that have been experienced in getting men scientifically trained in scientific agriculture. I think we have always realised this fact and I have brought it to the notice of the House myself on many occasions previously.

I have before me a little pamphlet put out by H. Messel, Professor and head of the School of Physics, University of Sydney. The pamphlet is entitled, "The Scientific Engineering and Technological Manpower Problem in Australia." No doubt all other members have a copy of this publication. I think it is well worth reading some extracts from it; in fact, had we the opportunity of staying here until after midnight I would like to read the lot, because I think it is well worth consideration not only by our Department of Agriculture, but also by those interested in the usefulness of every phase of scientific training. The first extract I wish to read is as follows:—

In Australia to-day, we must accept one basic and fundamental fact; we are living in a rapidly changing technological age; the continued raising

of the general standard of living of our peoples, the development of our primary and secondary industries—in fact, Australia's very survival depends upon our being able to use and make up via a superior and advanced technology what we lack in population. We are faced not only with the problem of maintenance and raising of our standard of living, but, in addition, with the problem of development of a nation in an advanced technological age.

From these inescapable facts it follows that not only must we develop our science and technology to a degree equivalent to that of other leading nations, but we must develop it to an even higher degree than theirs. This in turn means that on a per capita basis we must turn out and use high quality scientists and technologists in numbers far higher than those of nations such as England, America and other leading nations. This is the key to Australia's future development, this is the key to the maintenance of a high standard of living—in fact the key to our future existence as a free nation.

The present state of affairs in Australia in the above regard is tragic. At this crucial stage in our development, when we should be forging ahead, when our need for trained men in science and technology is greater than that of any other leading country, you would think the whole problem of scientific and technological manpower would be receiving the attention of every government, of every party, of every university—of every person to whom Australia is dear. You would think that there would be a general awareness of the tremendous problems with which we are faced in this regard and that an enormous effort was being made to solve them. Unfortunately this is not so. It is true that there is general agreement that we are faced with great problems in regard to scientists and technologists, however it is equally and tragically true that little more than lip service is being paid towards the solution of these problems!

He then refers to the international situation and the effect that scientific training has had on it. The pamphlet continues—

From an international point of view it is now definitely known that Russia is turning out more scientists and technologists than the remainder of major powers in the free world put together. It is also known that these men are trained and have attained a standard equal to and in some cases—especially engineering—even higher than ours. In 1954, Russia turned out

72,000 scientists and technologists—the major powers of the free world turned out about 71,000. Is it surprising in view of this that Russia is leading the free world in many and an increasing number of technological fields such as aircraft and missiles, etc.?

It is only a short while ago that we had the opportunity of seeing the Sputnik, as it went round and round; and I think that must have brought home to many of us the lead that Russia has taken in that particular field. I hasten to say that I am not a follower of that country's ideas; but undoubtedly it has concentrated that scientific and technical knowledge in its investigations. Not only is it applying itself—as are other countries, such as America and Great Britain—to the matter of relating this knowledge to defence in the event of war, but much of the information gained and particularly some of the by-products brought about by the splitting of the atom, are proving most useful in the control of diseases and in agricultural production.

Mr. Lawrence: What has this satellite to do with it?

Mr. OWEN: I only mentioned that to show how Russia has gained advantage over leading countries like America and Great Britain by having launched this satellite into outer space. To come back to the bulletin to which I referred and to show that it is the hope of reward that sweetens labour, I will quote a further extract which says—

The rewards in Russia are already exceedingly high; for instance, the heads of the leading scientific and technological institutes are getting salaries in the range of £15,000 per annum, plus many other services. The scientists and engineers form the bulk of the aristocracy in that country. In America the salaries are now likewise attaining the level they should.

If one compares the salaries of the unskilled workers with those of the average good scientists in Australia, America, England and Russia, one finds the following startling facts—facts which should make every Australian sit up and think and act! The ratios of salaries are 1:2 (Australia), 1:5 (America), 1:7 (England) and 1:25 (Russia). All the talking in the world won't lead us anywhere when we grasp the significance of these figures. They are the crux of the whole deplorable situation in Australia discussed above.

In the older countries the value of the scientist is appreciated to a greater extent, and he is rewarded accordingly. Although

great strides have been made in our own departments, and the scientific branches are receiving salaries more commensurate with their work, they are low in comparison with the salaries paid in other States and in other parts of the world.

It appears that recently conditions have been better in this State because I understand that at least one officer has been induced to leave the C.S.I.R.O. and join the Agricultural Department in this State. I hope that the migration will continue and the scientific personnel can be increased so that more investigations can be carried on in that department.

Mr. Oldfield drew attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. OWEN: There are three matters mentioned in the Agricultural Vote, all of which deal with the control and eradication of pests. The first is the codling moth. Members have heard me speaking on previous occasions about the very good efforts put forward by the department and the Fruitgrowers' Association in an endeavour to eradicate the latest outbreak in the Bridgetown district. It seems that once again the department will be successful and this dread disease of apples and pears will be controlled. The result shows what can be achieved with a concerted effort if made before the disease gets out of hand.

Over the years the codling moth has been treated with such severe preventive methods that some 16 outbreaks have been eradicated. Furthermore, the modern insecticides that have been produced in other parts of the world have come to our assistance and made the task of eradication much simpler. I mentioned what had been done earlier, before the disease had established itself over a wide area.

The next pest referred to is the Argentine ant, and mention is made of the steps taken to eradicate it. At present the Argentine ant is a household pest, but it can become a very severe agricultural pest also. The Argentine ant has been found in Western Australia for the past 20 years. It has established itself not only in the metropolitan area, but also in several country districts. At one time the attempt to control this pest was given up as hopeless; but once again, due to the recent discoveries of insecticides, it was shown that chemical agents gave excellent results in controlling the spread of the ant when the insecticides are sprayed on the ground surrounding the nests.

The Government organised a scheme to control the pest, and I am pleased that what was to be a five-year control plan appears to be ahead of schedule. There is every possibility that this most obnoxious pest will be eradicated from this

State within the next year or so. I use this as the second example of what can be done by a concerted effort. In this instance the pest was more difficult to eradicate than the codling moth, because the possibility of control had previously been given up as hopeless, and the pest had spread over a wide area.

The other pest I wish to refer to is the fruit-fly. Unfortunately it has been in this State for over 60 years. Because it was not tackled in a concerted way in the early days, it has spread to the greater part of the fruit-growing districts. It had been given up as hopeless to eradicate, although every move was taken to control it.

Mr. Bovell: Fruit-fly was eradicated in South Australia.

Mr. OWEN: Yes; but there have been further outbreaks since. In that State it had not assumed anything of the proportion it assumed in Western Australia. In fact, fruit-fly has been eradicated on many occasions at Bridgetown, Mt. Barker, and Donnybrook where it makes seasonal advances. Over the years the Western Australian fruit growers and the commercial and backyard orchardists have voluntarily agreed to the imposition of a tax for the purpose of controlling fruit-fly. Undoubtedly much good work has been done. I want to point out to the Minister that the methods used over the past years were insufficient.

We seem to have been deceived in years when the pest was not in evidence in great proportions. We thought it had been controlled. Then we got a year like the last stone-fruit season—in the earlier months of this year—when, through very favourable conditions, that pest really got out of hand. It was the worst season in that respect for the last 20 years. Although the methods we have used have, in some cases, been fairly effective, they are an absolute failure in a season that is favourable to the fruit-fly. I want to emphasise to the Minister the need for more research work in the control of fruit-fly so that we can not only control it, but I think we could adopt the same methods as were applied in dealing with the Argentine ant; that is, trying to attack it district by district and section by section, to gradually push the fruit-fly from the infected areas until we have only the metropolitan area left.

By a concerted effort over a few years, it might be possible to eradicate even the fruit-fly. In that regard, I would draw the attention of the Minister to what has been done in America where, at the present time, they are still fighting the Mediterranean fruit-fly in Florida in an endeavour to stamp out the recent outbreak there as they did in that State, I think, in the late twenties—some 30 years ago.

I have here a pamphlet which is published in the United States by the Department of Agriculture in regard to Mediterranean fruit-fly. We, too, have a pamphlet which, I think, on the surface, is just as good for telling people what to do. However, they have better facilities than we have for research and it appears they have developed a bait which is very much more effective than the one we have used in Western Australia for the past 20 years.

Mr. Lawrence: Where did you say that bait was used?

Mr. OWEN: This bait is used in America. I do not know what the possibilities are of getting it to Australia or whether there is any likelihood of an organisation preparing it under licence in Australia, but I was hoping that the Department of Agriculture might be able to get some, even if only for a small trial during the coming season to see if it is as effective here as apparently it is in America.

Mr. Bovell: Would Luratox be the best bait here?

Mr. OWEN: It would be one of the baits recommended by the department and possibly one containing sodium fluosilicate is as effective as any we have in Australia. I would point out that the Mediterranean fruit-fly is the only fruit-fly we have in Western Australia, or at least it is the only fruit-fly of economic importance. In Queensland they have the Queensland fruit-fly which I think is possibly a little worse to deal with than the Mediterranean fly, and in New South Wales they have both types. The Queensland fruit-fly is more vigorous and breeds more quickly than the Mediterranean fly. I have heard that the bait mentioned in this pamphlet and which is so effective against the Mediterranean fly in America has proved fairly effective in the Eastern States. This is how the pamphlet says to make the bait to which I have referred:—

To make spray enough for one acre, 1 pound of protein hydrolysate or 1 quart of sauce base and 2 to 3 pounds of malathion 25-per cent. wettable powder are mixed with 1 gallon or more of water.

This bait is so attractive to the fruit-fly that I understand it will travel over half a mile to get it.

Mr. Lawrence: Can you tell me if this bait can be imported into the State?

Mr. OWEN: I am hoping the department will import it. I got a quote from the agent of this company which prepares the bait in America and also received some information which the department probably has already. The cost, including primage and other duties, would make it fairly expensive. It is called Staley's insecticidal bait No. 2 and would cost in the

region of £9 4s. 7d. per 100 lb. weight, including tax and import duty, and would be rather more expensive than the baits we are now using. If it is as effective as is claimed in America, it would be well worth trying here and, if possible, getting the chemical companies in Australia to endeavour to make it under licence. I feel that if we did that, fruit-fly control would be getting into another era and there would be every possibility of not only controlling it in commercial orchards but of eradicating it completely in this State.

I know many of the fruit growers, although they have paid their orchard registration fee willingly and undoubtedly would go on paying it, are a little disappointed and almost frustrated because efforts last year seemed to be in vain. Even in those districts where community baiting was undertaken, the results were most disappointing indeed. I hope the Minister and his departmental officers will make every endeavour to get some more effective fruit-fly bait than that which we have been using for so many years.

One could go on for hours speaking of the possibilities of what could be done with better scientific methods in primary production. The member for Murray spoke about the difficulties in the Kimberleys and mentioned tick causing tick fever there. In that regard undoubtedly a lot could be done to overcome problems such as that. In fact, a lot has been done in other parts of the world by breeding animals which are suitable for tick-infested countries and warmer climates. I refer to the Santa Gertrudis cattle which have been evolved in America and which have been imported into this State, particularly the northern State and the northern parts of the Eastern States. I feel our department could possibly set a lead in importing Santa Gertrudis to help establish that breed in the Kimberleys. I feel sure it would do much to advance the cattle industry in our far North.

Mr. Rhatigan: Did you tell the member for Murray that?

Mr. OWEN: Unfortunately he is not here, but I am sure he would agree with me that something like Santa Gertrudis would revolutionise our tick-infested areas in the North-West.

The Minister mentioned, when speaking to his Estimates, something of the technical development in establishing new pastures in the war service land settlement areas and he stated it had been shown by experiments that it paid to fallow new land for one season, then plough it again at the time of the early rains the following season, and plant it. I believe that the results have been good as compared with the old method of just ploughing and sowing in the first year. I have also had that experience and I have wondered

whether the result was because the new land, just turned over, with all the roots of the native species still there, did not settle down properly and so did not allow the clover or the rye grass seed to get established. I still think that might be the fact.

I have been told that our department is on another track, and that it is possible that the treatment, by fallowing for one year, does get rid of many of the roots of the native species which harbour an organism that is inhibiting the action of the nodule-forming bacteria which is usually put on legume seeds before they are sown. If this is a fact, it shows that our department is well on the ball and getting somewhere in this respect. I join with others who have mentioned their appreciation of what our departmental officers are doing. Again I say to the Minister not to let the department rest on its laurels but to see that more and more scientists are made available to it because there is ample scope for them in this State.

The member for Narrogin touched on a matter which is dear to my heart—unfortunately the Minister for Forests is not here—and that is the need to have better co-ordination between the Lands Department and the Forests Department in the matter of releasing land which is not suitable for forests although it might be on the outskirts of forest areas. I must say, however, that I am grateful to the Minister for Forests for informing me, when introducing a Bill tonight, that 8½ acres, I think it is, have, in my district, been released from State forests for the purposes of agriculture.

Around the area where the land is being released, there are not large areas involved—I doubt whether there would be more than 200 acres altogether—which adjoin alienated land. As I pointed out to the member for Blackwood by interjection, there are places there surrounded on four sides by cleared and developed agricultural properties; and these places, which are small, are still retained for forest purposes. They have all the amenities and services necessary to make them into good agricultural holdings; but for some reason the Forests Department will not release them, although there is not 10s. worth of timber on the whole lot. I would like to see a little more co-operation between these two departments so that we could get the land, which is not suitable for forests, made available for the production of fruit and vegetables. The area I refer to is in the major soft-fruit producing district in the State; and it produces large quantities of citrus, and is becoming a large factor in the production of apples.

Another matter I wish to refer to is one I dealt with in the early part of the session in regard to a reserve, also at Pickering Brook, which was tagged as a reserve for

timber. On previous occasions when applications were made to have it thrown open for agriculture, they were refused on the ground that it was reserved for timber. A few months ago the Lands Department decided that it should be used as a gravel reserve. Over the past few months quite a big file has been built up in the department because of my efforts to have that decision changed. I am disappointed that the Minister has not seen fit to support me in this direction.

Only last week I received a letter from the Under Secretary for Lands pointing out that there were large quantities of gravel suitable for roadmaking on that reserve. I had pointed out to him that there were also large quantities of gravel on other land nearby, some which will never be made available for agriculture because it is on a water-catchment area. Within two miles of it, so Mr. McGuire of the Main Roads Department informed me two or three years ago, the Main Roads Department had a reserve of 400 acres.

In fact, the department worked that deposit and took from it thousands of yards of gravel to build the eastern approaches to the Causeway and many thousands of yards for the Welshpool-rd. Apparently, although it was satisfactory for the roads that were made then it was decided to abandon this deposit and take up this other land which is suitable for agriculture. The Under Secretary for Lands, in the second paragraph of his letter to me states—

I then arranged for an inspection of the area by this department's senior surveyor, who reports that only approximately 50 per cent. of the area adjacent to the road and on the lower contours could be regarded as suitable for utilisation for orcharding. The remainder consists of steep slopes which would be far too rough for orchard culture. In view of the foregoing it is regretted that your request that portion of the reserve be alienated cannot be approved.

I am disappointed indeed. I thought the Minister might exert his influence to make this land available for agriculture, particularly as it is adjacent to a bitumen road, water supplies, and electric power. What more do we want to make an ideal farm?

The only other matter I wish to touch on—although it is not mentioned in the Estimates, I imagine it comes under the control of the Minister for Lands—is this: There has been some talk of establishing botanical gardens in the State. It has been suggested many times that a portion of King's Park could be used for it; and I think it might be an ideal site, too.

But I point out that the soils and climate of Perth are not ideal for the growth of many trees, shrubs and plants which would be needed in a botanical garden. I direct the attention of the Committee and

the Minister to the fact that in the hills, and possibly in close proximity to Mundaring Weir, there is excellent soil and the topography of the country is suitable to make—I would say—ideal botanical gardens. In addition, the climate is right, and it is not far from the metropolitan area. In my opinion, this could be a wonderful attraction to tourists, and would be of inestimable value to the State.

Mr. Lawrence: It would be a long way from the city.

Mr. OWEN: That is so. But so much of our soil is not suitable for the growing of a number of plants, and particularly those which require a more temperate climate. Although we grow some very fine roses in the metropolitan area, most of them are grown on heavier soils brought down from the foothills. From my experience of fruit growing, I know many varieties which do well in the hills, but which cannot be successfully grown in the metropolitan area; and that applies also to many other plants. I therefore suggest to the Minister that if any steps are to be taken to establish botanical gardens in this State, before the matter is finalised he should examine some of the Crown land in close proximity to Mundaring Weir, which I think would be ideally suited to the purpose.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.

Legislative Council

Tuesday, 29th October, 1957.

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

QUESTIONS.

UNIFORM GENERAL BUILDING BY-LAWS.

Consideration of Disallowance Motions.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

Will he give an undertaking that Items 15 and 16 on the notice paper dealing with disallowance of uniform general building by-laws made under the Municipal Corporations Act will be discussed in Parliament and finalised before the completion of the session which, I understand, it is anticipated will be about the end of November?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

I could answer that by saying "yes", but I would like to mention that these items were left at the bottom of the notice paper because a committee appointed last June or July has been considering this matter—indeed it is meeting tonight—and it is hoped that it will finalise consideration of all points raised not only in Parliament but by local authorities outside Parliament. When the finding of that committee is known, an opportunity will be given to members to discuss the items referred to:

Hon. J. McI. THOMSON (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

Would he inform the House whether the answer he has given to Mr. Griffith in connection with this matter will also apply to Item No. 18 on the notice paper dealing with disallowance of similar regulations made under the Road Districts Act?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

They will all be treated in the same favourable manner.

KALGOORLIE CENTRAL SCHOOL.

Conversion of Manual Training Room.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Is it intended to convert the manual training room at the Kalgoorlie Central School into class rooms?

(2) If so, when is it expected that a start will be made on the necessary alterations?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Estimates are being prepared and it is hoped that the work will be completed by February, 1958.