

long time they necessarily took to gather material for their report.

Mr. Tonkin: Are you not going to say just one word complimentary to the Commission?

Mr. DONEY: The hon. member has brought an extra two minutes upon himself. I have already said some few kindly things, but I would like to do the Commissioners the further compliment of reading out something which at all events in part takes a little of the sting out of other of their remarks. On page 2 of their report we read—

Against the complaints received of delays occasioned by the faulty administration of the Bank, there is to be set off evidence from the type of Agricultural Bank settler who is making good, and who states that at all times he has had full attention paid to his requests by the Bank. Your Commissioners have again the evidence of the Primary Producers' Association. In answer to Question No. 3084 the president of that association says, "We have written to our branches, and have advertised in our paper for anyone who had grievances, to send them in, in connection with this inquiry of yours, and the result has been practically negligible."

I certainly am obliged to the Commissioners for having inserted that reference. They go on to say—

Your Commissioners hereunder have summarised the complaints which, during the course of various inspections, have been received from the settlers

Then they proceed to give a long list of complaints. It furnishes evidence of the one-sided attitude of the Commissioners towards the trustees of the Agricultural Bank.

Mr. Tonkin: Your remarks are rather one-sided too.

Mr. DONEY: The Commissioners have gone to the trouble of outlining the complaints, but they say not one single further word about the evidence of those settlers who have made good and had such complimentary things to say about the Bank.

On motion by Mr. Wansbrough, debate adjourned.

BILL—ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH PROPERTY ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 9.47 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 20th September, 1934.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Presentation.

The PRESIDENT: I desire to announce that this morning, accompanied by some members. I waited on His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and presented the Address-in-reply to His Excellency's Speech agreed to by the House. His Excellency has been pleased to make the following reply—

20th September, 1934.

The President and Honourable Members of the Legislative Council—I thank you for your expressions of loyalty to His Most Gracious Majesty the King and for your Address-in-reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament. (Sgd.) James Mitchell, Lieut.-Governor

BILL—SUPREME COURT CRIMINAL SITTINGS AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [4.35]: I wish to express my appreciation of the support accorded to the Bill. I should not have moved the adjournment of the debate last night had it not been that Mr. Mann voiced some doubt as to whether the figures I had used were correct. Those figures were taken from a statement supplied by the Under-Treasurer to enable me to reply to the debate on the Supply Bill, and it seemed to

me possible, though not by any means probable, that some error had been made in the figures. However, I got in touch with the Conservator of Forests this morning, and his statement agrees substantially with that supplied to me by the Under-Treasurer. In addition, to secure accuracy, I submitted to the Conservator details supplied to me by the Treasury officials. For the information of members I have received a statement from the Conservator of Forests in regard to the forestry work. It reads as follows:—

(1) I am at a loss to understand on what observations or information Mr. Mann's informant bases his opinion. Taken as a whole, the results of regeneration operations in cut-over jarrah forest have been very satisfactory indeed, and the resultant regrowth is developing rapidly. It is possible that a man without any silvicultural experience traversing treated compartments immediately after a treatment is completed may gather an entirely false impression, as the work involves a certain amount of ringbarking of useless trees, cutting of malformed regrowth, and burning, and it is not for a period of three to five years after treatment that a layman may be expected to form a correct impression of the results of the work. Similarly in cut-over karri forest, a good stocking of young karri has followed regeneration work, and, although the seedlings may take up to three years to show above the undergrowth, they then develop very rapidly and suppress the scrub. Artificial regeneration of mallet by spot sowing has resulted in a full stocking of young mallet which, despite the excessively poor soil conditions and a low rainfall, for the first ten years has shown rapid height growth which compares favourably with either jarrah or karri regeneration. I should be very pleased to arrange a tour of inspection for Mr. Mann or any other members who may desire to inspect any or all of the numerous centres where work is now in progress, and in this way enable them to form their own opinions concerning the results being obtained.

(2) The following sentence taken from your brief resume of forestry work may need some elaboration for a correct understanding of the position:—

"The regeneration of our forests is now keeping pace with the timber cut."
This is literally correct to the extent that the area of State forest being treated annually for regeneration during the past few years has been in excess of the area cut over for sawmilling. That has been made possible by very considerable assistance from unemployment relief funds, but it should not be interpreted to mean that the forests are in a normal state, carrying a full stocking of trees of all age classes which will enable the total production of sawn and hewn timber to be maintained at its present level. Every effort is being made to ensure continuity of supplies of sawmilling logs, but the maintenance of hewing operations on the present scale is clearly impracticable,

and I have stressed this aspect in the introduction of my annual report, which is now in the hands of the printer. Owing to neglect of reforestation in pre-war years, there is a serious shortage of the older age classes, or, in other words, trees nearing maturity, but fire protection, thinning, and tending measures will have an appreciable effect in speeding up the rate of growth of the younger age classes and reducing the serious gap which threatens between the cutting over of the last of the virgin forest and the development of the young trees resulting from reforestation work. During the past five years 108,500 acres of jarrah have been cut over for sawmilling, while regeneration operations have been carried out over 188,200 acres.

The figures I used were 200,000 acres, but for six years—they were supplied to me by the Under-Treasurer—whereas the regeneration of five years has been 188,200 acres, so my figures were approximately correct. In regard to the use of unemployment relief funds for this work, the position has been, not only for this Government but for the previous Government, that there was a fair percentage of the unemployed men who, though deserving, were not able to do hard work, were not fit for it or were not used to it, and in some instances had not sufficient strength for such an occupation. Previously those men had been receiving sustenance without giving anything to the State in return. It was recognised that that was not much good, and that they should be engaged in some form of work, and this was considered to be perhaps the best work in which they could be occupied. This plan was embarked upon by the previous Government, and we enlarged upon it. The Premier takes a great deal of interest in reforestation, to which he gave a great filip on coming into office in 1924. Since then, any man not fit to engage in laborious undertakings such as road work or the regrading of railways, has been put on to forestry work. I do not think any member can reasonably object to that.

Hon. G. W. Miles: No, we congratulate you on that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Now this money will be necessary in order to meet the interest on the Loan Funds expended in reforestation work. This policy has been started and will be continued while the depression exists, and that may be expected to continue for some time longer.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is very good work, too.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, it is.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

**BILL—REDUCTION OF RENTS ACT
CONTINUANCE.**

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [4.45]: In the course of his speech, Mr. Seddon suggested the Government should use their influence to induce the Workers' Homes Board to erect homes on the goldfields. Mr. Moore interjected "where private enterprise could not succeed." I am strongly opposed to the Government doing anything of the kind. In a few years' time it would become necessary to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the operations of the Workers' Homes Board. The commission would report in much the same way that the commission on the Agricultural Bank reported, indicating that members of Parliament had been using their influence to have certain works carried out in their districts, works that were not economically sound. It may be that the Workers' Homes Act should be amended so that cheaper homes might be erected. In this morning's paper I read the report of a conference of local governing bodies in Kalgoorlie, from which it appears that 12 members of Parliament, representing the district, are to be asked to bring pressure upon the Workers' Homes Board to extend the scheme to the goldfields, and stressing the urgency of the request. Local governing bodies are going outside their province in urging members of Parliament to do this sort of thing.

Hon. J. Cornell: I understand there is a shortage of workers' homes at Marble Bar.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I do not advocate that the Government should make good that shortage. If people outback had some of the old pioneering spirit, they would not be asking the Government to put up homes for them.

Hon. A. Thomson: The workers are prepared to pay.

Hon. G. W. MILES: That may be so, but in certain cases it may well be that goats will shortly be running through the town owing to the departure of the inhabitants. If more people outback were prepared to live in tents and bough sheds instead of going to the Government for homes there would be better types than there are to-day. In many instances the workers' homes are altogether too elaborate. To the south of Victoria Park one can see many decent weatherboard cottages, which I imagine were built for a few hundred pounds. On the other hand, near the cemetery, one can see many elaborate buildings which have been erected as workers' homes.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Are they too good for the workers?

Hon. G. W. MILES: They are all right if the workers can afford them. Everyone wishes to get up in the air. It is time we came back to earth.

Hon. A. Thomson: It may be that the local authorities will not allow cheaper homes to be erected there.

Hon. G. W. MILES: I hope the Government will not be influenced by these 12 goldfields members, and extend the operations of the Workers' Homes Act to that part of the State.

On motion by **Hon. E. H. Gray**, debate adjourned.

**BILL—ADMINISTRATION ACT (ESTATE AND SUCCESSION DUTIES)
AMENDMENT.**

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (**Hon J. M. Drew**—Central) [4.50] in moving the second reading said: It has been increasingly evident, during recent years, that many methods of evading payment of probate duty have been, and are being, successfully exploited, with the consequent loss to State revenue of large sums of money. The purpose of this Bill is to amend the Administration Act in order to circumvent these practices. There is no doubt that our present Act does give a great deal of scope for evading this form of taxation with the result that it has become an accepted idea that only foolish persons pay such dues. This State receives lower re-

turns from death duties than any other State in the Commonwealth, and, although the Government is averse to increasing taxation, it is considered that this is an avenue which can be reasonably and justifiably exploited. Not only the lawyers, but the general public as well, have become familiar with the loopholes existing in the present Act, with the result that only about half the people subject to the taxes are paying their dues and the other half are evading them. This Bill deals with assessment provisions only, and does not touch the rate of tax. The present Act will continue until the Bill becomes an Act and is proclaimed, and in the meantime a further measure will be introduced to deal with the rates of tax. As all members no doubt know, death duties are collected in all States and the Commonwealth. The Act imposing such duties in this State is the Administration Act, 1903.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: There is a Royal Commission sitting on this matter, from the Federal standpoint, is there not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That has nothing to do with us.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is dealing with taxation, and the incidence of taxation.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We want to bring our Act into line with the rest of the Commonwealth. It is very much out of date now. If the Commonwealth are taking action to improve this legislation, it may be necessary for this State to take such steps as may be deemed essential to fall into line. This Act was modelled on the lines of the Victorian and South Australian Acts of that period, but both of those States have since found it necessary to repeal their Acts and to replace them with others more applicable to present day conditions. The time has now come when it is necessary to modernise our Act, and for this purpose this Bill has been prepared. In this measure it is proposed to repeal Part VI. which makes deceased persons' estates liable to pay death duties, and to re-enact a new Part VI. to take its place. The relative Acts in the Eastern States already embody the provisions made in this Bill.

The following figures taken from the Commonwealth Year Book, page 413, and the Commonwealth Bulletin No. 135, page 57, show how badly the returns for this

State compare with those of the other States:—

Duty collected for six years ended
30th June, 1933.

	£
Western Australia	466,878
Tasmania	522,869
South Australia	1,930,044
Queensland	2,978,006
Victoria	6,640,898
New South Wales	9,662,053

On a per capita basis this represents—

	Popu- lation.	Per head, per annum.
		s. d.
Western Australia	435,130	3 7
Tasmania	227,092	7 8
South Australia	578,046	11 1
Queensland	949,286	10 6
Victoria	1,824,578	12 1
New South Wales	2,613,776	12 4

The intention of the Act of 1903 was to impose duty on—

(a) All property which passed on the death of a person to his Executor or Administrator was made liable to a duty called Probate Duty.

(b) "Deeds of Gift" which had been made in the lifetime of a person who subsequently died within six months of making the gift, are dutiable.

(c) Settlements being the disposition of property by settlements containing trusts or dispositions to take effect after the death of the settlor or some other person.

In considering the provisions of this Bill, it must be remembered that a person may by a deed of gift or a settlement, practically achieve the same result as he can with a will. In fact if some provision is not made to deal with this aspect, a will will become unnecessary, for a person could so arrange his affairs as to have no unsettled property left when he died. I can quote numerous instances to prove that the intentions of the present Act can be, and are being, evaded. The refinements of present day conveyancing are responsible for the position that the Act does not now cover a large number of cases that it was originally intended should be charged death duty. Numerous ways have been adopted whereby, on the death of a person, either no duty is paid, or, if any is paid, the amount is considerably less than it should be. Undoubtedly the Act, as it now stands, invites the adoption of what are simple methods of evasion of payment, with the result that many deceased persons' estates, of considerable magnitude, are not paying any duty. I will mention some of the most common

ways in which duty is being evaded. The most popular appears to be the "joint tenancy." Under a joint tenancy the property is held by two or more persons, the law regarding them as one for the purposes of ownership. Therefore on the death of one of the tenants, his interest automatically passes to the survivor, or survivors, and no death duty whatsoever is paid to the State. A joint tenancy may apply to real estate, leaseholds, bank deposits, including fixed and current accounts, shares in companies, and life assurance policies. As these assets represent the bulk of the property held by most persons, hon. members will readily perceive the large amount of duty which is lost to the State. I do not know of any other country in the British Empire which allows this method of evading death duties.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Jersey, in the Isle of Man.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In connection with this phase of the Act, I will refer to some actual cases that have occurred in this State. A man died leaving assets worth approximately £20,000, held in joint account with his wife and another person. The whole estate belonged to the man originally, but, owing to the joint tenancy, the State did not receive any probate duty. In another instance a man held jointly with his wife and family, approximately 90,000 shares in a well known Perth business, the value of the shares being £90,000. In this case, immediately after the death of the man, his widow and family split up the estate so that each received his or her share and the State did not get any probate duty. Another person had fixed deposits in a bank and placed them in a joint tenancy, and on his death no probate duty was paid. These illustrations will convey clearly to members the necessity for tightening up that particular section of the Act.

Another way is by deed of gift. Although it was intended by the original Act to make all gifts within six months of death liable to duty, many persons are evading the payment of duty, especially so in cases where they know they have not long to live. Many gifts of personal property, such as bank accounts, cash, debentures, furniture, goods, livestock, etc., are made by simply handing over possession of the property, and as these gifts are not

made by document, they escape duty, even if made within a few days of death.

For instance, in one actual case, a man gave to his relatives, just shortly before his death, shares in his business to the value of approximately £27,000. As this gift was not made by deed the State was unable to collect any death duty, and so lost a sum amounting to £2,690. In another case, a man, just before his death, made gifts by cash payments, amounting to £2,800, and as no deed was executed, no duty was paid thereon. In another case £3,386 was given by a man to his wife within a period of six months before his death, and in another case, a man gave the whole of his business to his wife, but as no deed was executed, and there was ample evidence of the gifts, no duty was paid.

Another way of evading duty that is now being resorted to more frequently is the transfer of leasehold and real estate for a consideration by way of an annuity. As annuity payments are held to be a "consideration," therefore any property transferred for an annuity is not deemed to be a gift. For instance, to evade duty, a parent can transfer all his valuable estate, perhaps running into many thousands of pounds, to his children, on the condition that they pay him a certain stated annuity for the rest of his life. He may live for only a few months, the property passes to the children absolutely, and the State does not collect any death duty. If the property had passed to the children by will on the death of the parent, the State would have collected many hundreds of pounds in duty. Another method that has been made use of is for aged parents, having considerable estate, to legally transfer it all to their children. The children, in consideration of such transfer, execute another document relinquishing all their right to the profits and income during the life time of their parents. The parent has legally transferred his estate; actually he retains possession, but on his death has no property, as it has been transferred and, under the present Act, in such a case no duty can be collected. In one case, a man during his lifetime transferred to his children all his right, title, and interest in property worth £35,000, but by a separate document he retained control over the property

and received all the rents and profits therefrom during his lifetime, and on his death, the State lost about £2,000 duty owing to the fact that the law held that the property passed out of the possession of the deceased when the transfer was executed. In another case a man gave over £10,000 to his children, but retained the use of the money and assets in his business. On the death of this person the executors claimed these gifts as liabilities against the estate, and the State was forced to allow the claim, and so lost £1,000 in duty.

The law in all other States has made such gifts, by deed or otherwise, liable to duty, and it is proposed to do likewise in this Bill. It will be noticed that under the old Act it was provided that liability for payment of duty applied where the gift was made less than six months before death took place, but this Bill makes the period two years. In the other States the provision is:—Queensland two years; South Australia one year; Tasmania three years; New South Wales three years; Victoria one year; Commonwealth one year. This particular evasion of duty is not permitted in the other States, and the Bill provides that this class of transaction shall be liable to duty, as the benefits do not accrue to the children until after the parent's death.

Another loophole for evasion is provided by way of "settlements." The term in the original Act only covers trusts or dispositions to take effect on the death of the settlor or some other person, but there are many types of transactions which fail to come under this description and consequently are not dutiable.

For instance, it is possible for a person to enter into a contract with an assurance company, under which, if he pays certain premiums, on his death an annuity shall be paid to some other specified person, for a named period of time. It is obvious that such a transaction should be subject to duty on the death of the settler who paid all the premiums. At present our Act permits of these transactions without the imposition of duty, and so the State is being robbed.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Those people are conforming to the law.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Another practice that has caused considerable loss to the State is due to the system of assessing

the value of estates for probate purposes according to the locality of the assets. This, however, is not an avenue in which evasion has been taking place, but is due to the generally accepted rule that death duties shall not be imposed on assets which are not situated within the State at the time of death. The provision in this Bill deals more particularly with shares in companies, and the reason for the alteration is that a considerable amount of Western Australian capital is invested in foreign companies operating in the State. As members are no doubt aware, many companies, operating here, have their registered offices outside this State and are therefore known as "foreign" companies, even if they are registered in one of the other States of the Commonwealth. A notable example is the case of the Swan Brewery. In this case the share register is kept in Melbourne, but the bulk of its assets exist and the profits are made here. In the event of the death of a shareholder in this company, the value of the shares held by him cannot be taken into consideration for the purposes of probate duty in this State: they are foreign assets and pay duty in the State in which the company is registered.

Hon. L. Craig: Duty will have to be paid here if the Bill is passed.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We must look after our own interests before we concern ourselves about the interests of others. I need only quote one specific case in regard to this company to illustrate to hon. members the loss that such a system entails to the State. A certain resident of this State made a large sum of money in mining pursuits and invested a considerable amount of it in shares in the Swan Brewery. On his death, Victoria collected the duty on the value of those shares and we lost approximately £10,000. Yet the assets of the company were in this State—the profits were made here—the owner was a West Australian and the capital invested was earned here. Other similar cases have occurred, and it is only reasonable to provide that, when the assets or portion of them exist here and profits are made in this State, duty should be collected to the extent that the shares of the person who has died are represented by assets in Western Australia. Queensland and New South Wales have for many years had legislation to protect their interests in such circumstances. The intention of the new section is not to levy duty on the full value of any shares held, but only on the proportion

of the value of the shares represented by actual assets in this State. For instance, in the event of a deceased person having held shares valued at 25s. each at the date of death in a company whose Western Australian assets, excluding liabilities, amounted to £2,000 and whose assets outside the State were worth £3,000, the value of the shares in Western Australia would be two-fifths of 25s. each, and on that proportion duty would be charged. The reason for excluding liabilities is to arrive at the true value of the shares.

Hon. J. Nicholson: How can you arrive at the true value if you exclude the liabilities?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Although in some instances a certain amount of difficulty might be experienced in assessing the value of shares, in other instances the valuation would be a comparatively simple matter.

Hon. L. Craig: Surely you will take the market price!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Consideration would have to be given to the full assets possessed by a company and then to the proportion properly taxable for State purposes.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Will not you have to take into consideration the liabilities also?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, I mentioned that.

Hon. G. W. Miles: You said excluding the liabilities.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Clause 49 excludes liabilities. How then could you arrive at the true value?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The liabilities will be excluded.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Then how could you arrive at the correct value?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: On that point I may be able to supply information at a later stage.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It would be interesting to get it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Another popular method by which the amount of duty payable may be considerably reduced, is by the formation of private companies. It is a common occurrence for three or four people who are conducting a business in partnership to form it into a limited company. In order to keep the business strictly to the original vendors, or as nearly as possible in the families of the original vendors, restrictions are placed on the transfer of the shares, and, in many instances, provision is

made that no transfers are to take place unless the original shareholders are first given an opportunity to buy the shares proposed to be transferred. Owing to this restriction such shares cannot be listed on the Stock Exchange. It is then found that, on the death of one of the shareholders, his executors set up the contention that, owing to the restriction on transfer, the value of the shares is decreased, and concessions have had to be made on account of the difficulty of proving that the shares had not lost in value on account of the restriction. Actually, in a good many cases, it is the value of the shares which leads the shareholders to place the restriction on them. In one particular instance, the trustees of a deceased shareholder in a pastoral company on which a restriction was placed to keep the shares in the family, returned the shares at approximately one-quarter of their asset value and the State lost about £2,000 in duty.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: As a rule the officials will not accept that value for probate. They accept the value as disclosed by the balance sheet.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They had to accept the value that would be realised for the shares if offered on the Stock Exchange.

Hon. L. Craig: That would be the value.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But the value of the shares to the people holding them would be quite different.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The person you instanced was very lucky. The officials take it on the asset value.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In that instance the beneficiary got off and the State lost £2,000 in duty.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Maybe the market was low at the time.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: New South Wales has legislation to deal with the matter, and we are following that State with regard to the provisions in this Bill. In late years such companies have become very numerous and popular on account of the benefit secured through being so registered, and provision is now made in the Bill to define the method to be adopted in ascertaining the value of a deceased person's holding in such companies. Certain other improvements of a minor nature are embodied in the Bill with the object of bringing our Act up to date and to make for smooth and efficient working. Provision is made for appeals and procedure in connection with appeals, inter-

est on duty, valuation of partnership interests, valuation of shares in public companies, payment of duty on life assurance policies, where there is a deficiency in an estate, and the valuation of interests of tenants in common. Machinery is provided whereby a check can be kept upon payments made by life assurance companies, deposits made with safe deposit companies, etc. Provision is also made for increased facilities for inspecting records, books and other documents for the purpose of valuing or inspecting an estate, and also for inspecting taxation returns, if necessary. The amendments proposed ensure that the death duties payable on the death of any person will be more equitable than heretofore, avoiding the position of some estates paying duty honestly while others take steps to evade payment. It is also considered that the amendments will bring the Act up to date and in line with the Acts of the other States and the Commonwealth. The Bill is a technical one requiring close study and is really one for the Committee stage.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I think it is a matter for inquiry by select committee.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If a select committee be appointed, I hope that progress will not be delayed. There cannot be any objection to the principle of the Bill and the Government require the revenue.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are you proposing any increase in the rate of probate?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think there will be any increase, but a taxing Bill will be introduced separately. This is an assessment Bill. The measure is not a party one, but it is urgently necessary from a Government standpoint, as continual evasions of the present Act are occurring and the Treasury is losing revenue to which it is rightly entitled. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. Nicholson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.26 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 20th September, 1934.

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

QUESTION—MOSQUITO PEST.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Minister for Health: 1, In view of the mosquito scourge, the effect of which last year was so bad as to render life much more difficult, what steps, if any, does he propose to take to improve the position? 2, Is there any evidence of the presence of the malaria-carrier type of mosquito in the southern portion of Western Australia? 3, Does he propose to make any effort to control or, if possible, to eradicate this pest?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied: 1, The Department of Public Health recently called a conference of local health authorities in the metropolitan area with a view to combined action being taken to attack the mosquito problem during the coming summer. This conference appointed a sub-committee which is considering ways and means and which is to report back within a few days. 2, There is little evidence of the presence of the malaria-carrying mosquito in the southern portion of Western Australia, but it is known to exist here in very small numbers. 3, Every effort will be made to assist those whose responsibility it is to control mosquito eradication, namely, the local health authorities.

QUESTION—NORTH-WEST FEVER OUTBREAK.

Mr. COVERLEY asked the Minister for Health: In view of the serious outbreak of fever in the Kimberley district this year, has the department taken any precautionary measures against a repetition after the ensuing wet season?