

The PREMIER: The only pious thing I know of in the Committee is the hon. member who made that interjection.

Mr. Willecock: And that was a silly remark, too.

The PREMIER: Perhaps so.

Mr. McCALLUM: The law places the obligation upon the Government to provide certain expenditure and I presume that will be provided irrespective of what vote may be set against the item.

The Premier: Yes, whatever the amount may be.

Mr. McCALLUM: I cannot understand why the Vote is so substantially reduced under this heading, unless it be that the Government will not be carrying on so much work, which means there will not be so much employment and therefore a correspondingly decreased risk. I want to know that the decreased Vote does not indicate the Government's intention to reduce the benefits payable to the workers under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act.

The Premier: No, it has nothing to do with that. The hon. member knows that certain payments have to be made.

Mr. McCALLUM: That is so, but we can take it that the item does not indicate the intention of the Government to reduce the benefits payable to the workers. The railways have to be run; the harvest has to be garnered; public utilities have to be carried on. There will be a substantial number of men employed.

The Premier: This item does not cover the railway employees, but only those in smaller activities. The railways item would be bigger than this in itself.

Mr. McCALLUM: At any rate, it is not the intention of the Government to reduce the benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act.

The Premier: The item does not refer to that.

Item, Unemployment, Wheat Belt Investigation, £119:

Mr. SLEEMAN: Does the item indicate that unemployment was so bad in the wheat belt that it was necessary for the Government to send someone up to deal with it?

The PREMIER: The amount was spent in travelling to induce farmers to make use

of loans authorised by the Agricultural Bank but not availed of promptly.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Group Settlement, £2,539; State Accident Insurance Office, £3,700; Agricultural Bank, Industries Assistance Board, Soldiers' Land Settlement, £5; Agriculture, £64,698; College of Agriculture, £10,342—agreed to.*

Progress reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT—ROYAL SHOW.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. Sir James Mitchell—Northam) [9.50]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Thursday, 9th October, at 4.30 p.m.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 9.51 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 9th October, 1930.*

|   | PAGE |
|---|------|
| Leave of absence                                      | 918  |
| Bills: State Trading Concerns Act Amendment, 3R.      | 918  |
| Inspection of Scaffolding Act Amendment, 2R.,<br>Com. | 919  |
| Traffic Act Amendment, 1R.                            | 924  |
| Local Courts Act Amendment, 1R.                       | 924  |
| Vermin Act Amendment, 2R.                             | 924  |

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

#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. H. Stewart, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to Hon. W. T. Glasheen (South-East) on the ground of urgent private business.

#### BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time, and transmitted to the Assembly.

## BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

**HON. E. H. HARRIS** (North-East) [4.37]: I have carefully perused the measure, and I find that much of what is embodied in it was submitted to us in a previous session, when the amending Bill was abandoned, chiefly I think because the Government introducing it could not have all their own way. I say that, since much of what was in that measure was agreed to. However, a clause dealing with ability to speak the English language caused a good deal of controversy. If I remember rightly, it was simply because of an amendment in that clause that the Bill was abandoned.

Hon. A. Lovekin: And on the question of the height of scaffolding.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If hon. members will refer to the definition of "scaffolding" they will see that any ladder exceeding 25 feet in length, used or intended to be used by workmen or for the support or protection of men employed on the works, is to be deemed scaffolding. If a building of several storeys were to be constructed and the ladders used were only 24 feet in length, and landed on staging, whereupon another ladder 24 feet in length would be used, then under this interpretation the whole definition might be avoided. In many of the buildings erected the ladders do not run along continuously. That is a matter on which the Minister might get an opinion from the draftsman, to ascertain whether the position would be as I suggest.

Hon. J. Nicholson: How does that agree with the provision as to eight feet?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The original Bill was to cover everything under eight feet. Under that measure, anyone who stood on a soap box would come within the scope of the Bill. That was objected to. It is not so under this Bill. Special attention is drawn to ladders in it. Another point is that this measure will apply only to buildings of two storeys. Recently I happened to count the number of storeys in the Perth General Post Office, and it seems to me that at the front there are seven storeys and at the back eight. What is the line of demarcation as to storeys in a building? How many storeys are there in Parliament House? In this Chamber we are supposed

to be on the ground floor, and there is another storey above us from the front of the building. Coming round to the back, however, where the caretaker's quarters are, one finds three storeys. Who can say whether, under the Bill, this is a two-storey or a three-storey building?

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Would it not be taken from the ground level?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: There is a ground level here at the front, and also a ground level at the back. The Minister who introduced the measure in another place stated that he did not want to debar a man from building his own home. If the land is on a bit of a slope, it may be very convenient for the owner to construct the building somewhat on the lines of Parliament House. I draw attention to the matter in order that, if we are to legislate on the subject, we may know exactly where the starting point of the first storey of the building is. Having noticed Parliament House and the General Post Office from that aspect, I was struck by the point; and I therefore direct the Minister's attention to it. The only other clause to which I desire to draw attention is No. 7, which provides for the insertion in the principal Act of the following section:—

No person shall be employed or engaged on or in connection with any scaffolding or gear extending beyond one storey in height, unless such person has a sufficient knowledge of the English language to enable him to speak such language intelligibly.

The Minister who introduced the measure in another place, I understand, emphasised the point that there were in this State Southern Europeans keen on building limestone houses for themselves; that is to say, houses of one storey. If on the lines I have indicated a building might be deemed to be of two storeys, then under this measure a Southern European would not be allowed to erect his own dwelling. With regard to speaking English intelligibly, there was a long controversy on the Bill introduced by Mr. Kitson. I moved an amendment to provide on the lines of the Mines Regulation Act as to a person being able to read and write English. An amendment was carried here as the result of acrimonious debate, and that amendment was not acceptable to the then Government. I shall not object to the inclusion of the provision here suggested. My object in previ-

ously resisting a provision of the kind was that under the Mines Regulation Act of 1906 there was a similar provision inserted at the instance of the representatives in another place of the goldfields, who claimed to be the watchdogs of legislation on behalf of the workers. I shall not quote from "Hansard" what was urged by them. It was proved conclusively that in a practical test the provision was not worth the paper it was printed on. It was because of that I took up my attitude on a former occasion. I contend that this is not worth the paper it is printed on. Still, it will be claimed we have done something to protect the worker from his fellow worker unable to speak English.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Who is to prove whether or not he can understand it?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Minister may be able to tell us that. The provision in the Bill is quite valueless. In the gold-mining industry exception has been taken to the number of Southern Europeans working in the industry. However, the application of this test was not what the industrial organisations considered it should be, and they were keen on having a representative to examine the foreigner. But in practice it has been found that if a man is armed with a union ticket, invariably he can pass any language test.

Hon. G. Fraser: You think the ticket is equivalent to an ability to speak all languages?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Well, if the Southern European has bought his union ticket, he can speak any language, at all events sufficiently well to get any employment; but if he is foolish enough to look for employment without having such ticket, it is immediately discovered that he cannot speak the language.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: The moral is to have a ticket.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I think so, and I think that is the objection to this provision in the Bill before us. As I say, the Mines Regulation Act has a similar provision, which relates also to any person employed in any mine as manager, under-manager, overseer, shift-boss, etc. It is there provided that unless he is able to speak the English language readily and intelligibly, and to read it whether printed or written, he shall not be employed. When it was

sought to amend the Mines Regulation Act here last session, I suggested that we should have something that would be effective; and now on this occasion I suggest that, if we are going to make this Bill effective in point of the men employed being able to speak English intelligibly, some additional matter will have to be put into the clause. I have drawn attention to this, and now those members who were so keen on this class of legislation when previously it was submitted to us will have an opportunity to frame some further amendments to the Bill, for, as printed, it is not worth twopence.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Do you propose some method of examination?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The method adopted in the mining industry is to call the man before an inspector, who examines him in the presence of the shift-boss. In this instance I suppose he would be examined in the presence of the owner of the building. But there is no provision for that in the Bill. This amendment was put in by some private members in another place after much debate. It was not in the original draft, and a number of members appeared to be quite satisfied that it was all right. Possibly members here may take the same view on this occasion. However, I should like the Minister, when replying to the debate, to clear up the position regarding the two points I have raised.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Hon. H. Stewart in the Chair; the Ministry for Country Water Supplies in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 2:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: It was in reference to this clause that Mr. Harris just now drew attention to the amendment regarding ladders. In paragraph (d), sub-paragraph (3), the reference is to ladders exceeding 25 feet in length. Such ladders are to come within the definition of scaffolding. Then the word "ladder" appears also in the definition of "gear." And the definition of "scaffolding" is to include any structure exceeding 8ft. from the horizontal base. Ex-

actly what a "structure" is, has yet to be made clear in the Bill. There is no definition of it in the original Act, nor in the amending Act of 1926, nor in the Bill before us. So we are left to the ordinary understanding of what a structure is. It is rather incongruous to find that while a structure is to be a scaffold if it be 8ft. above the horizontal base, a ladder does not come into the same category. I am at a loss to understand why a ladder has been included here.

The Minister for Country Water Supplies: A ladder of 8ft. would not be included.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not see how we can call a ladder of any length a scaffold. It is certainly not a scaffold as we understand it. If we pass this, it may prove to be legally difficult for a man to use a ladder in his own house. Also in paragraph (d) there appear to be at least two typographical errors, and sub-paragraph (3) is not broken out as I think it should be. A new sub-paragraph should start with the word "used" in line 2 of sub-paragraph (3). In my view the words following "used" are intended to be applied to each of the preceding sub-paragraphs.

The CHAIRMAN: All that is in the hands of the Committee.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Very well. I move an amendment—

That sub-paragraph (3) of paragraph (d), reading as follows, be struck out:—"Any ladder exceeding 25 feet in length used or intended to be used by workmen or for the support or protection of workmen employed on works."

Hon. G. FRASER: Paragraph (e), it will be seen, is a definition of "workman." It says that "workman" means any person not being the owner of scaffolding or gear. Mr. Nicholson is trying to cover a person using a ladder. The paragraph I have quoted will get over the difficulty. It states definitely "not being the owner of scaffolding or gear."

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Minister is at a disadvantage in that the debate closed abruptly. He should now report progress and have the points that have been raised looked into. I cannot follow Mr. Nicholson's amendment. In the parent Act, definition of "gear" is given as including any ladder, plank, rope, and many other things. The Bill before us strikes out "ladder or plank" and then it gives a definition of

"scaffolding." This includes, as hon. members will see, "any ladder exceeding 25ft. in length." Ladders were amongst "gear" before, and now "ladders and planks" have been taken out of the definition of "gear" and there is a new definition of "scaffolding." This includes ladders 25ft. in length. If a ladder should be 24ft. long, it would not be scaffolding, and then another 24ft. ladder could be used with it, and so the provisions of the Act could be evaded. It would be better to hasten slowly and it might be advisable for the Minister to give consideration to these points.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I do not see anything in the clause to cause us any worry.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Can you assure us that it is all right?

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The hon. member suggested that a 24ft. ladder could be used, and another stage erected with a second 24ft. ladder, and those ladders would not be scaffolding within the meaning of the Act. In Clause 2 it is made clear that those ladders would be classed as scaffolding.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, so long as they exceed 25ft.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: No; a ladder of any size. The clause deletes "ladder and plank" from the existing definition of "gear," and inserts "ladder or plank forming part of or used in connection with scaffolding." Therefore the size or length of the ladder does not matter. Putting a common-sense construction on the Bill, one will realise that with a 25ft. ladder, even if used by itself, there is a certain amount of risk. It should be in proper order and condition. I take it that sub-paragraph (3) has been inserted to make sure that where ladders are 25ft. or over are used without other scaffolding, they come within the definition of the Bill. Quite right, too. I have seen ladders 25 and 40ft. in length. They are very awkward to handle, and sometimes there is difficulty in raising them. There is no necessity to amend the clause in the way suggested by Mr. Nicholson.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I cannot understand Mr. Nicholson's objection to sub-paragraph (3).

Hon. J. Nicholson: A ladder should not be classified as scaffolding.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The present Act sets out "any ladder, plank, etc." It proposed

now to insert the words in a more satisfactory way, and this is really the object in view.

The CHAIRMAN: I draw attention to the fact that Mr. Nicholson proposes to make an amendment some distance down in this clause, and if I accept that amendment it will affect any amendment that may be moved in the earlier part of it. I suggest that amendments be made in their proper sequence.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: If you, Mr. Chairman, think it desirable, I shall withdraw my amendment for the time being, and submit it later on.

The CHAIRMAN: I have merely drawn the attention of the Committee to the position. Just now the question before the House is Mr. Nicholson's amendment to strike out the words "any ladder exceeding 25ft. in length."

Hon. J. M. MACFARLANE: I support the amendment. I gather from Mr. Kitson's remarks that ladders of 25ft. are to be ladders of the moveable kind used by workmen on the outside of buildings, in the place of those that may be fixed. If a person desires to use a ladder outside a building, it will be necessary to send for an inspector to have it examined before workers commence. Then delay and vexation will follow.

Hon. J. M. DREW: If Mr. Nicholson's amendment is carried, it will mean that ladders, even of 10 feet, will be declared scaffolding. The paragraph Mr. Nicholson proposes to strike out relates to ladders exceeding 25 feet in length. In paragraph (a) it is set out that Section 2 of the principal Act is amended by deleting the words "ladder, plank" in the definition of "gear," and inserting in lieu thereof "ladder or plank forming part of or used in connection with scaffolding." That means that if the limitation is struck out as Mr. Nicholson proposes, any ladder, no matter how short, will be regarded as scaffolding.

Hon. Sir WILLIAM LATHLAIN: After hearing Mr. Kitson's definition, I am inclined to think that he is correct, because whilst the words "ladder" and "plank" are deleted from one portion of the Act, they are re-inserted in another. Thus all ladders will come under that part of the Bill. I agree that if a ladder exceeding 25 feet in length has to be used, it should be subjected to an examination at any time, but Mr.

Macfarlane's point is that it might be necessary for a painter to make an application. I do not think that would come into the question at all.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: As there seems to be some doubt in the minds of hon. members, I suggest that the consideration of the clause be postponed until after we have dealt with Clause 7.

Hon. A. LOVEKIN: Before we pass away from the clause, I would like to say that I think the construction Mr. Drew has placed upon it is the correct one.

Clause postponed.

Clauses 3 to 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Persons employed on scaffolding or using gear to have knowledge of the English language:

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: Mr. Harris was justified in drawing attention to this particular clause during the course of the second reading debate. I agree with him that it cannot possibly be effective and will merely lead to misunderstandings that are not desirable. If we agreed to the clause, and an accident happened, the first question that would be asked would be with reference to the class of test provided. If we are to pass such a clause, it follows that we must provide some test for the determination of an individual's ability to speak the English language. No such provision is made in the Bill. Who is to make the test? Is the foreman of the job to determine whether the man to be employed can speak the language properly, or is it the inspector who will have to determine that question of fact? Will the man to be employed have to produce a certificate from a schoolmaster or someone else to be appointed to determine whether he can speak the language properly? Many people might find it hard to pass a test in the English language. The clause does not indicate the degree of knowledge that must be possessed.

Hon. E. H. Gray: A Scotchman might find it hard to pass the test.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: I do not know, but even the hon. member might find it hard to pass an examination that could be submitted to him.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: It would not be a question of a test in English, such as the hon. member suggests.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: The clause is positively absurd. It will create the greatest possible difficulty.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I should think the clause would cause a good deal of litigation.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is quite possible. If this provision is to apply to builders' labourers, then it should apply to men in other avocations as well. If we pass the clause, we will brand ourselves as unworthy to occupy our positions in Parliament. I shall vote against the clause because it should not be in the Bill. It will lead to endless confusion.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I was hopeful that Mr. Nicholson would give us the benefit of his legal knowledge on the question, for instance, of whether or not Parliament House is a two-storey or a three-storey building.

Hon. J. Nicholson. The question did not arise.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: We are dealing with the last clause, and the point should be discussed now.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is six of one and half a dozen of the other.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The position could be made difficult if the inspector of scaffolding endeavoured to apply to legislation.

Hon. A. Lovekin: In any case, the Bill will create more employment.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I am not concerned about making more work for lawyers, despite what we hear about them in the course of debates in another place. I would like to hear the Minister's view on the point I raise. At Mt. Lawley and along Mount's Bay Road there are houses that appear to be one-storey in the front and two or three storeys at the back, or vice versa. How will the legislation affect that position?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: There can be little doubt regarding the buildings referred to by Mr. Harris. They would be regarded as of more than one storey, and the Act would apply. I cannot follow Mr. Nicholson's argument when he spoke disparagingly regarding Parliamentarians and said we would be holding ourselves up to ridicule if we passed the clause.

Hon. J. Nicholson: In its present form.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: But a clause of this description has been on the Statute Book for years.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Where?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: In other Acts more stringent examinations have been provided for, and I do not know that hon. members would be too keen on having such provisions included in the Bill. No one is desirous of increasing the difficulties confronting builders and others in these days.

Hon. V. Hamersley: But this is a new clause.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Yes.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Then it has not applied before.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: I am not referring to this particular clause, but to similar provisions in other Acts of Parliament.

Hon. G. W. Miles: What is another Act that contains such a provision?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: It is in the Mining Act. Should a foreigner not be able to understand the English language or, in the event of trouble, cannot make his fellow workers understand, what will be the position?

Hon. J. Nicholson. Who is going to prove whether he has an intelligible knowledge of the English language? It is so absurd.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: The onus would rest upon the foreman on behalf of the contractor.

Hon. J. Nicholson: How could he tell?

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: If he could not tell when engaging the man, who could? Foreigners who are building homes for themselves should not be interfered with.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Can you answer Mr. Harris's question whether this Chamber is a one, two or three-storied building.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: Any of the places indicated by Mr. Harris would come under the Act as being of more than one storey.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: The clause deals with scaffolding irrespective of the number of storeys.

Hon. E. H. Harris: The Act is not applicable to a one-storied building.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: This is a question of an employee engaged on scaffolding extending beyond one storey in height being able to speak the English language intelligibly.

Hon. E. H. Harris: A ladder is scaffolding.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: And this clause would not apply to it. There is only one storey to a ladder, unless the hon. member counts each rung a storey. The clause is essential to ensure the safety of workers. If the question arises whether a man can speak English intelligibly, it can be decided by the contractor or foreman engaging him. Many workers have a language to which we are not accustomed, but I understand it is English, though if any member were called upon to say whether he could speak it intelligibly, he would be inclined to say that he could not.

Hon. J. M. DREW: I fail to see how the confusion feared by Mr. Nicholson can arise. It would be the duty of the inspector to prosecute for breaches of this provision, and the inspector must be able to satisfy the magistrate that the person objected to had not a sufficient knowledge of English to speak it intelligibly. When I was Leader of the House, I was furnished by one of the inspectors with specific information of foreigners who had proved a menace to British workmen. I endeavoured to get a somewhat similar amendment made, but failed.

Hon. E. H. Harris: This is exactly the same.

Hon. J. M. DREW: Then I can support it.

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: It would be a mistake to specify any scaffolding or gear extending "beyond one storey in height" because the Act refers to scaffolding exceeding eight feet in height. There is uncertainty as to what constitutes a storey. I should say a storey would be from floor to ceiling. This Chamber is of one storey, though it is probably 25 feet in height.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: How many storeys of scaffolding would be necessary for this building?

Hon. J. T. FRANKLIN: Each tier of scaffolding runs 4ft. or 4ft. 6in., and about six tiers would be required. The clause should apply to scaffolding in excess of eight feet.

Hon. W. H. KITSON: I am impressed with Mr. Franklin's explanation. I move an amendment—

That the words "extending beyond one storey in height" be struck out.

Then the clause would apply to workers on scaffolding 8 feet or more in height.

The MINISTER FOR COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES: There is a good deal in what Mr. Franklin says. In the circumstances, we might report progress and in the meantime I will have this clause re-drafted.

Progress reported.

#### BILLS (2)—RECEIVED FROM THE ASSEMBLY.

- 1, Traffic Act Amendment.
- 2, Local Courts Act Amendment.

Read a first time.

#### BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 7th October.

HON. H. J. YELLAND (East) [5.49]: Those of us who have been associated with the operations of the Vermin Act recognise the necessity for this amending Bill. I hope the department will take some notice of the payments that are being made for many of the vermin. I believe quite a number of payments have been made ostensibly for the wedge-tailed eagle, but the birds in question have been far removed from that species. Better advice should be given to those who are making the payments. At a time when we are calling out for economies, it is wise that we should not spend money for nothing. Many of the smaller eagles that are destroyed in order that these bonuses may be obtained, are very valuable. They do no damage, and from the point of view of balancing nature they are worthy of protection. Many of these harmless and good birds have been destroyed, and paid for as if they belonged to the wedge-tailed eagle type. A little closer supervision might be exercised in the matter, not only from the economic point of view but from the point of view of the birds themselves. The Bill is a satisfactory one. I note that the Advisory Board is to be permitted, with the approval of the Minister, to appoint trappers where necessary. It has been a difficult problem in many places to destroy dingoes. Trappers who are well up to their

work can do far more good than can be done on the bonus system. I desire to draw special attention to Clause 7, which deals with what is known as a regulation fence. It is noticeable in various portions of the wheat belt that dingoes, which have been prevalent, have practically been destroyed by the advance of civilisation. Wherever there has been any clearing, they have fallen back to their natural cover. It is, however, a common thing to see erected fences with iron standards fastened to posts and leaning outwards. This was the type of fence first introduced by the department as vermin proof. When the Act was passed it contained no definition of a fence, and this was laid down by regulation. It was, however, impossible to comply with that provision. If the fence was as described by regulation, the owner became exempt from the payment of vermin tax, but it was practically impossible for any man to build a fence according to the description given. Clause 7 of the Bill, however, removes the question from the sphere of the regulations and gives the owners of properties something to work upon. I therefore commend that clause to the earnest consideration of the House. The fence is supposed to be 6 feet 6 inches in height. The bottom portion of it must carry wire netting which is rabbit-proof, and above that must have a series of wires up to 72 inches in height, either plain or barbed. Above that there must be another 8 inches of plain wire. I do not think any dingo is likely to surmount a 6 feet 6 inches fence, or even one of 5 feet 6 inches in height. I therefore suggest to the Minister that this height might be reduced. As I have said, in many parts of the agricultural areas the dingo is practically unknown.

Hon. W. J. Mann: But he returns.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: He is unknown except on the fringe of the settled areas, in places where he can get to his native haunts under cover and occasionally work back again.

Hon. W. J. Mann: He comes back very frequently.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: A 5 feet 6 inches fence, well topped with barbed wire, would serve as an efficient break for any dingoes. The only animal that could get over it, but it is not classed as vermin, is the kangaroo dog that is bred around the country. These

dogs are as big a curse to the districts as any number of dingoes. The Bill provides that the rabbit-proof netting must be placed in a perpendicular position 6 inches underground. The experience of many people is that if the wire netting is placed underground in a horizontal position it is more effective than in any other way. When a rabbit scratches under a fence, he can, if the netting is perpendicular, get underneath, but if he comes across it as it lies in a horizontal position, he is generally deterred from going any further. The Bill, however, does not permit a man to use his own judgment. In my opinion the word perpendicular should be altered so that a farmer may be allowed to erect the fence to his own satisfaction.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: You mean it should be 6 inches under the ground irrespective of the depth?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The 6 inches of netting should be under the ground, but I prefer that it should slope outwards. A rabbit will readily scratch down 6 inches but, if he strikes the netting a few inches below ground, he will not continue to scratch at that place. The proposed type of fence is not altogether in conformity with what is best, and the height is greater than is necessary. In other respects the Bill is satisfactory, and has my whole-hearted support.

On motion by Hon. G. W. Miles, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 5.58 p.m.*