

the inspector and put the matter in writing he can do something of his own volition. What is the use of rent inspectors if they cannot keep rents down to a proper figure?

The Minister for Health: Many foreigners like to live in large numbers in restricted quarters.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, but they do not like having to pay £10 or £12 a week for it.

The Minister for Health: They get well paid, and they like living in that way.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Is that the view of the Government.

The Minister for Health: No, I am not the Government.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is an extraordinary view to take.

The Minister for Health: I do not think it is.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What the Minister says is, "Why should not the landlord have the money because the tenants can afford it."

The Minister for Health: I did not say that. I say that they are crowding out the house of their own volition.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (a) the words "of his own motion and from time to time" be struck out and the words "at any time with the approval of the Minister" inserted in lieu.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: This suits me quite well because in effect it is just what I intended. If the Attorney General did not want the rent inspector to go round he could tell him to stop doing so. A wink is as good as a nod to a blind horse but if the Attorney General, or the Minister, feels that these inspections should take place then he can give approval for the rent inspector to carry them out. That is satisfactory to me because it will let people outside know that at any time the Minister might give approval to the rent inspector to look at places where overcharging may be occurring. The rent inspector could submit information to his Minister, when he knows that overcharging is being carried out, and suggest that he might make an inspection. In that case the Minister could authorise the rent inspector to make such inspections. That in itself would be sufficient deterrent and I therefore have no objection to the proposal.

Mr. READ: What does this really mean? Does it mean that a person has to go to the Minister before the rent inspector can make an inspection?

The Minister for Education: No, he goes to the rent inspector who submits the case to the Minister.

Mr. READ: I know what the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is trying to do and I think his intention is a good one. Whether the phraseology is correct or not, I do not know, but these cases of overcharging are not isolated. I know of a case where there is a shop and residence attached. The tenant is paying £3 10s. a week and he sublets the residential portion for the same figure of £3 10s. a week. The woman concerned came to me and complained and I told her that if she would write me a letter, or come with me to the rent inspector, the matter would be fixed up at once. She told me she would not do that because she was frightened she would be put out. There is another case in my district which is almost identical but in this case the rent being charged is £2. If power is given to the inspector to make inquiries at these particular places the sub-tenant would not be blamed and it should meet the situation. I would be only too willing to inform the rent inspector of any cases I heard about. But if every application has to be made to the Minister then it will not be very satisfactory.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

*House adjourned at 12.6 a.m.
(Wednesday).*

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 12th September, 1951.

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

QUESTION.**MYXOMATOSIS.**

As to Distribution and Localities.

Hon. C. H. HENNING asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Will the Minister advise the House where the centres to be used for the distribution of myxomatosis during the coming season are located?

The MINISTER replied:

At present it is not possible to advise where these centres will be established, as, although the general areas have been tentatively decided upon, the exact location of most of the sites has yet to be selected.

BILL—NOXIOUS WEEDS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [4.39] in moving the second reading said: This is a small Bill which is necessary to amend new legislation introduced last year. Often, when new measures are passed dealing with something quite different from what has been in operation before, anomalies are discovered. After the Noxious Weeds Act came into force recently, some such anomalies become obvious, and it is to correct them that this small Bill is presented to the House today.

Most of the amendments embodied in the Bill became obviously necessary last year in order to reconcile the parent Act with the Agriculture Protection Board Act and the other two Acts I have in mind—the Noxious Weeds Act and the Vermin Act—which were dealt with last session. In order to facilitate administration it is necessary to provide power to enable the protection board to delegate power to the Chief Weed Control Officer in the same way as the Minister may delegate power to that officer.

Provision is made to transfer certain responsibilities from the Governor and the Minister to the protection board. This is necessary to simplify the administrative machinery and to bring the Act into line with the Noxious Weeds Act wherein a similar provision already exists. Members will appreciate that this provision is obviously necessary and is most desirable. Furthermore, it is desired to transfer the authority for making regulations from the Minister to the Governor, the effect of which will be to bring the Act into line with the relevant section in the Vermin Act. It will be seen that the amendments are quite minor and the necessity for them became obvious some time ago when the amended legislation became operative. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

BILL—RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—FEEDING STUFFS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [4.43] in moving the second reading said: The Bill seeks to amend the Feeding Stuffs Act in order to correct certain anomalies and disabilities that have become apparent, and in order to make the Act more acceptable to the users of certain food-stuffs as well as to the manufacturers concerned. I may add that the users of mixed mashes and other feeding-stuffs are totally in accord with the amendments included in the Bill.

It is proposed to add a new subsection to Section 5 to permit an amendment to be made to the registration of any stock food. This was requested some time ago by the manufacturers. At present, if the ingredients have to be changed, the registration must be cancelled and a new registration effected. This leads to confusion and is inconvenient from an administrative point of view. Owing to considerable variation in the supply and quality of ingredients, manufacturers of prepared mashes and other stock foods requested that provision should be made for amending the registration along the lines provided in the Fertilisers Act. This course will also comply with the wishes of producers. Any amendment would, of course, be subject to approval by the Department of Agriculture, just the same as any new registration would be subject to that approval.

The second amendment is rather important. At present Section 5C requires that manufactured food for stock or any by-product shall bear a label showing the name and place of business of the manufacturer and the name of the stock food. The amendment proposes to provide for the label to show also the chemical analysis of the product. This represents a direct request from the growers. At present, although the ingredients may be varied, the title of a product can remain the same. For instance, a person could be using a certain laying mash and, unknown to him, unless he happened to peruse the "Government Gazette," the ingredients could be changed. If provision is made for the chemical analysis to be shown on the label a producer could then instantly know of any change and he would also be aware of what constituted the product he was using. This will provide an added protec-

tion for the users of prepared stock foods. I think members will agree that that is a most desirable amendment. The present arrangement has for many years caused the users of prepared mashes considerable concern.

The third amendment seeks to remove an anomaly that has arisen under Section 5D. In one section of the Act provision is made for labelling packages over 28 lb. in weight whereas invoice certificates may be given regardless of weight. It is not desired to apply the requirements for an invoice certificate to any package under 28 lb. and in any case both sections should be brought into line. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

BILL—AGRICULTURE PROTECTION BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [4.47] in moving the second reading said: This is another small amending Bill, the necessity for which arises from the experience gained as the result of extensive amendments made to certain Acts last year. I refer to the Noxious Weeds and Vermin Acts. Because of certain provisions in those two measures, it has become necessary to amend the Agriculture Protection Board Act.

The titles of officers associated with the noxious weeds and vermin branches of the Agricultural Department were changed and therefore it becomes necessary to correct the references to them embodied in the Act we are now dealing with. As it stands at present, the legislation does not make sense. The Act contains the titles of officers that do not apply to those concerned. When we passed the legislation last year we knew that this difficulty would arise, but it was not expedient to pass the necessary amending legislation until the new measure had been agreed to. The object now is to rectify the references to the titles of the officers concerned.

Provision was not made for the appointment of deputies of ex-officio members as it was understood that departmental officers could automatically take the places of other absent officials. It was an easy mistake to make. We thought it could be done and I am under the impression that the Crown law authorities were of the same opinion. Officers from several departments are on the board and in the event of one being absent from meetings on account of sickness or some other unavoidable cause, we thought another officer from his department could take his place. The Crown Law Department has indicated that such action would not be legal and this amendment is therefore necessary.

The next amendment will be of interest to country members, and I hope they will listen carefully to what I have to say. Parliament previously refused the Agriculture Protection Board complete power to control the catching or trapping of rabbits. Over the years, I was very much opposed to anybody being prevented from catching or trapping rabbits by any method, but with the advent of myxomatosis, the situation has considerably changed. We hope that before the end of next summer myxomatosis will be very widespread throughout the farming districts.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: How is it used?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Consequently some measure of control must be exercised. We do not want people getting hold of diseased rabbits, first of all from a health point of view. It would not be desirable for diseased rabbits to be offered for sale in the city. But there is another aspect. We hope to set up centres for the contamination of rabbits, and we do not want people willy-nilly removing animals which the department has gone to some trouble to infect with myxomatosis. Later on, when the disease is widespread, it will not matter; they will then be able to take as many as they like.

When we began experiments at Muresk last year, I visualised what would happen; and I told the chief officer who was controlling the experiments that he had better keep quiet as to where the work was being done, or farmers would come from far and wide to take away the diseased animals, with the result that those conducting the experiments would not know where they were. The amendment will enable control to be exercised to prevent trapping in areas where the disease is being spread. That control would not be exercised elsewhere.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Will you also prevent fumigating?

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Hon. A. L. Loton: That destroys rabbits just the same.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Naturally we would not like someone to fumigate rabbits we had just infected, because that would spoil the move. But I do not suppose any farmer would do that. What we want to prevent is some person taking away rabbits that have been infected. That would not do at all. It is not the desire of the board, or the Government, or anyone else to prevent the eradication of rabbits; but there must be some measure of control where officers are trying to establish a centre and infect a little circle of rabbits, in order that people may be kept away, for the time being at least. It is not likely the power will be exercised to any great extent, because the main object is to get rid of rabbits. Experience has shown that the spreading of the

disease can be interfered with by trapping during the experiments. That was demonstrated in the Eastern States.

I have to admit that in Western Australia last year, owing to the restrictions imposed by the Commonwealth Health Department, we were late in beginning our efforts with myxomatosis. Therefore, the results obtained by officers of the department were not successful, though through no fault of theirs. I am also prepared to admit—and so are they—that they were not well versed in all the ramifications of myxomatosis. At the Agricultural Council meeting held in Brisbane a few months ago, we decided there should be a conference of all vermin officers in Australia; that they should go to Melbourne and collate the information secured as a result of work already done, principally in Victoria and in portion of South Australia and New South Wales.

Our officers were highly delighted with what they learnt as a result of that trip. As they proceed with their experiments they discover that they can learn a good deal more. I believe that we have not reached anywhere near finishing point in regard to what will happen from the use of myxomatosis. It was originally thought necessary to have the virus in a bottle, though how it was to be carted round I do not know. It is now believed possible to carry the virus in an envelope, and experiments are being made along those lines.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Are any rabbits being distributed at present?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. We began at the earliest possible moment at Glengarry Station in the Geraldton area, where spring starts at a time when it is only the end of winter in the South-West. I do not pretend that the department knows all there is to ascertain about the subject; but our officers are willing and anxious to learn, and centres will be established in farming areas all over the State, wherever it is desirable and to the extent that manpower will permit. It may be of interest to Mr. Henning to know that a centre is to be established at Coolup, quite near his place in the heart of his district. The inauguration of the centre is being delayed through lack of materials and manpower; but we hope to overcome those difficulties. If distribution in little boxes or envelopes proves easy, I believe that after a month or two we will be able to send the virus to many places.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: Is it a humane method of getting rid of rabbits?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am glad the hon. member brought up that question. I consider it is not; but neither is any other method, except cyanide poisoning. I have had a lot to do with the extermination of rabbits, and I do not think there is any method that could be called humane, except the use of cyanide, which is very quick acting. However, cyanide

cannot be used in many places. It can be used only where water is scarce and where the rabbits can be shut away near a little trough, where they are soon bowled over. I am glad the interjection was made, because I intend to enumerate cruelties that occur in the extermination of rabbits. We have, for instance, the iron trap. That is permitted by the S.P.C.A.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You are not advocating the abolition of the iron trap, are you?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member was not listening to me or he would not have made an interjection like that. In answer to Dr. Hislop, I am trying to tell the House of inhumane methods of exterminating rabbits, methods which nevertheless have not been queried over the last 50 years. I am not opposed to any method of eradicating rabbits, because they have to be exterminated. I have always favoured trappers, because I know what they have done. In the past I have been at variance with different people and officers of the Agricultural Department, and with the Chief Inspector, because they would not have a bar of the trapper. It was contended that trappers increased the rabbit menace. I do not think it is so.

Reverting to the iron trap, a rabbit may be caught in such a trap at 6 o'clock in the evening and remain there until 6 or 7 o'clock the next morning. Sometimes an animal gets away, minus a leg. Again, an industrious trapper who visits his traps at 11 o'clock at night may take one rabbit out and catch another before next morning. In view of the cruelty of the iron trap, the S.P.C.A. was very inconsistent in summoning whoever was responsible in New South Wales for the use of myxomatosis.

Then there is the poison cart so strongly advocated by the Department of Agriculture. In my opinion, officers of the department in past years were ruthless in their advocacy of the poison cart. They implied it did not matter how many sheep were poisoned, so long as rabbits were exterminated. That is a very cruel method of extermination. A rabbit gets phosphorous in his stomach and it depends upon how much he eats as to how long it takes him to die. I have known rabbits go for days with the phosphorous slowly eating out their insides, in cases where they had taken only a little of it. Where they get a lot of it they generally have a drink and then die very quickly.

Traps and poison carts have so far been the principal means of destroying rabbits. Another method is to dig the warrens in. That may or may not be a humane death for the rabbits, I have no idea whether they die quickly once the warren has been dug in. I have mentioned these matters to show members and the public generally that the use of myxomatosis is not so inhumane as the S.P.C.A. appears to make out.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: I understand that the rabbit gradually dies from mosquito bites.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No; the mosquito merely transmits the disease from one rabbit to the other. I have watched a rabbit die of myxomatosis in the laboratory and I know they can last up to a week; but I hope that after the first couple of days they do not feel very much. They become very weak and hardly move, though they remain alive for anything up to seven days, according to the degree of infection. It is difficult to say whether they are suffering, and nobody can tell us that, though the infected rabbit is certainly very sorry for himself. His eyes are running and he has lumps all over him, but I trust that he does not feel very much. I hope that what I have said will satisfy Dr. Hislop.

Experience has shown that the spread of myxomatosis can be seriously interfered with by the trapping or taking of rabbits in the area being dealt with. Under the Health Act, diseased carcasses may be condemned, but there is nothing to prevent the trapping of rabbits for sale. That means that rabbits could be trapped and, providing there was no health officer about, they could easily be sold for human consumption. I think this measure is an extremely desirable one. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. McI. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—POULTRY INDUSTRY (TRUST FUND) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [5.3] in moving the second reading said: This is an amendment to the Poultry Industry (Trust Fund) Act. The original measure was introduced in this House by me three years ago. Like other industry trust funds, this one has proved to be of considerable benefit though it is not large enough for the purpose for which it was designed.

The present levy is 1d. on 30 dozen eggs which, at 4s. per dozen, are worth nearly £6. The present levy, therefore, amounts to about 1d. in £6. Unlike other industry trust funds, this fund is not nearly sufficiently large to fulfil the purpose for which it was intended. The fruit industry trust fund, for instance, runs into many thousands of pounds, whereas this one has been built up to only £3,000 or £4,000. The poultry industry realises that the fund is too small. When I was asked to bring down the original measure two or three years ago, I told those engaged in the industry that they were only playing with the position and that they should make the maximum levy 2d. or even 3d.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Is the Poultry Growers' Association asking for this measure?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. I would not be introducing it otherwise. The Bill seeks a maximum levy of 2d. per case of 30 dozen eggs and, in view of the fact that it has been brought down to meet the wishes of the industry, I ask the House to agree to it.

Hon. G. Fraser: Is this the fund that covers compensation for losses through disease, and so on?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The fund is for that purpose and also, portion of it, for the use of the association subject to the Minister. Neither I nor any other Minister would let those concerned have the lot to play with. The object is to build up a substantial fund to cover compensation for losses through disease or other causes. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned.

BILL—POTATO GROWING INDUSTRY TRUST FUND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [5.7] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is somewhat similar to the previous measure, though there is a little more to it. Not only does the measure increase the maximum levy from 1d. to 2d. but it also provides for other things. The present Act sets out that an election shall be held every year, and as only one nomination has been received at each of the last two elections it has been recommended that the two elected members shall hold office for three years. On this board there are two members elected by the producers, and a chairman who is the principal vegetable officer of the Department of Agriculture.

The board administers the fund, subject to the will of the Minister. That proviso regarding the Minister is there for the people who may not agree with this sort of thing and who are therefore fully protected. I have had similar boards come to me asking for more money and I have said, "No, I think you have had enough for this year. Come back again next year." As there has been only one nomination received at each of the last two elections, it seems a waste of time and money to hold elections every year. We therefore seek power for the elections to be held every three years, the elected members both to hold office for that period.

Another amendment contained in the Bill is for the purpose of increasing the levy from 1d. to 2d. per cwt. of potatoes

sold. The industry has asked for this increase, which I think is justified, to keep this fund in line with the all-round increase in costs and to provide for compensation for loss of potatoes due to disease or flood damage. The increase in the fund will allow the people concerned to look after themselves rather than seek assistance from the Government.

The other amendment recommended by the Trust Fund Committee is that the financial year for this fund shall end on the 30th September instead of the 31st July. This is purely for the convenience of the administration, as it places the fund in line with the Potato Marketing Board and the Potato Growers' Association, whose financial years end on the 30th September. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. L. Roche, debate adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. G. B. Wood—Central): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 18th September.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 5.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 12th September, 1951.

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

QUESTIONS.

SERVICEMEN'S LAND SETTLEMENT.

(a) *As to Dairy Farms, Allottees and Development.*

Mr. HOAR asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) How many dairy farms have been occupied under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme to date?

(2) How many of the original allottees to these farms still occupy them?

(3) Have any of these farms reached the standard of development, viz., 40 cow standard, as laid down in the original agreement? If so, how many, and where are they situated?

(4) Is it his intention to enable purchase of these farms before the above standard is reached?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) One hundred and ninety.

(2) One hundred and sixty-six.

(3) Yes. One hundred and forty-three. Perth, 15; Kudardup, 30; Pemberton, 37; Denmark, 19; Northcliffe, 5; Hester, 32; Albany, 5.

(4) No.

(b) *As to Use of Esperance Areas.*

Hon. E. NULSEN asked the Minister for Lands:

In view of the fact that numbers of applicants, trained and experienced in farming are unplaced, and thousands of acres on the Esperance Downs await development—

(1) Why has the War Settlement Scheme Board not considered opening up this land for soldier settlement?

(2) Has he given any thought to the potentiality of the Esperance Downs?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Because of extensive commitments for land settlement in other parts of the State.

(2) Yes. Large areas have been made available for general selection under special settlement conditions.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

(a) *As to Results of Pollution Tests.*

Mr. GRAYDEN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Have the results of the monthly tests for pollution in Fremantle Harbour, carried out over the last 3 years, been collected and collated?

(2) Will he make them available for perusal?