

Recommittal.

On motion by Mr. Oldfield, Bill recommended for the further consideration of Clause 6.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; Mr. Oldfield in charge of the Bill.

Clause 6—No Contracting Out:

Mr. OLDFIELD: I do not think this clause is necessary and I suggest the Committee vote against it.

Clause put and negatived.

Bill again reported with a further amendment and the reports adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam): Before moving the adjournment of the House, I would mention that it is intended to sit after tea tomorrow. I move—

That the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 17th November, 1955.

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

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Pensions Supplementation Act Amendment.
- 2, Local Authorities, University of Western Australia Medical School Appeal Fund Contributions Authorisation.
- 3, Junior Farmers' Movement.
- 4, Coal Mine Workers (Pensions) Act Amendment.
- 5, Marketing of Barley Act Amendment.
- 6, Soil Fertility Research Act Amendment.

QUESTIONS.**KALGOORLIE-BOULDER.***Market Gardens and Water Supply.*

Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM asked the Chief Secretary:

- (1) How many market gardens are operating in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area?
 - (2) What is the total acreage under cultivation?
 - (3) How many registered gardeners are there in the Kalgoorlie-Boulder area?
 - (4) What are their respective holdings?
 - (5) What was the total water consumption for market gardens in this area for the years ended the 30th June, 1953, 1954, 1955?
 - (6) What was their individual consumption over the same periods?
 - (7) What new acreage was cultivated during the same periods?
 - (8) What acreage under cultivation has been closed since 1952, if any; and why was it closed?
 - (9) Was the department directly or indirectly responsible for the closure—e.g., due to the denial of water?
 - (10) Who were the holders of these gardens?
 - (11) What is the maximum quantity of water permitted per acre for market gardening purposes?
 - (12) What is the department's policy in granting further acreage for market gardening purposes in this area?
 - (13) Has the area under cultivation in any market garden in this area been extended since 1953?
 - (14) Who authorises these extensions, and on what grounds are such extensions permitted?
- The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:
- (1) There are 32 separate places growing vegetables on a commercial basis.
 - (2) No information is available of the area under cultivation.

(3) There are no "registered" gardeners, as no system of registration exists. Of the 32 owners growing vegetables commercially, 25 are actually operating with "market garden" services, and seven under normal "domestic" rates of supply.

(4) Details are shown on the list laid on the Table of the House this afternoon.

(5) Year ended the 30th June, 1953 — 64,721,000 gallons.

Year ended the 30th June, 1954 — 69,752,000 gallons.

Year ended the 30th June, 1955 — 62,376,000 gallons.

(6) Details are shown on the list laid on the Table of the House this afternoon.

(7) The department has no specific information regarding new acreage since 1952. There was no obvious variation during this period.

(8) No information available, but no market garden water service was discontinued.

(9) and (10) Answered by No. (8).

(11) There is no limit per acre specified by the department.

(12) The department is opposed to granting further market garden services.

(13 and 14) See answer to No. (7).

BETTING.

Country Licences and Population.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

Will the Minister inform the House how many s.p. bookmakers' licences have been granted in the under-mentioned towns, together with the relative population of each:—

Albany
Bunbury
Busselton
Boulder
Collie
Carnarvon
Geraldton
Northam
Northampton
Dongara
Mingenew
Three Springs?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

| | No. of licences. | Population. |
|---------------|------------------|-------------|
| Albany | 3 | 8,265 |
| Bunbury | 4 | 9,869 |
| Busselton | 2 | 2,449 |
| Boulder | 4 | 6,279 |
| Collie | 4 | 8,667 |
| Carnarvon | 1 | 1,453 |
| Geraldton | 2 | 8,309 |
| Northam | 2 | 5,725 |
| Northampton | 1 | 992 |
| Dongara | 1 | 381 |
| Mingenew | Nil. | 633 |
| Three Springs | 1 | 553 |

One additional registration of premises has been approved for Geraldton, but the certificate and licence have not yet been issued.

GRASSHOPPER PEST.

Use of Power Spray Unit.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Minister for the North-West:

Will the Agriculture Protection Board have a power spray unit using dieldrin in the Mullewa-Morawa-Mingenew areas next season, to combat the grasshopper pest?

The MINISTER replied:

It is intended to extend the grasshopper spraying scheme to the northern agricultural areas next season when necessary.

BILL—TRUSTEES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

- Supply (No. 2), £16,000,000.
- Perpetual Executors Trustees and Agency Company (W.A.) Limited Act Amendment (Private). (Hon. H. K. Watson in charge).
- West Australian Trustee Executor and Agency Company Limited Act Amendment (Private). (Hon. H. K. Watson in charge).
- Retailing of Motor Spirits. (Hon. L. C. Diver in charge).
- Hospitals Act Amendment. Received from the Assembly.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the amendment made by the Council.

RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS.

To Revoke Dedication.

Message from the Assembly received and read requesting concurrence in the following resolution:—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State Forests Nos. 28, 29, 51 and 53 laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Governor on the 10th November, 1955, be carried out.

BILL—EDUCATION ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West [4.48]) in moving the second reading said: Some time ago a deputation representative of a number of the private schools requested the Minister for Education to consider supplying teaching aids to their schools on the same basis as to Government schools. The Government considered this was a reasonable request, and decided it would subsidise half the cost of projectors and radio equipment purchased by these schools. In regard to radio equipment it was decided that it would be fair to limit the amount to a maximum of £50 to any one school in any one year.

In addition, the Government has been considering the matter of supplying all schoolchildren with other school requisites free of charge. It was decided to include private schools in this concession. This means that, as from the beginning of the next school year, spelling books, school papers, high school magazines, pads, and writing cards will be supplied without charge to pupils in Government and private schools. This concession will be extended from the beginning of the 1957 school year to include exercise books, writing books and cutting-out books.

I might add that private schools are those which have been approved under the parent Act as "efficient" schools. As members know, these include the principal and quite a number of the lesser private schools in the State.

It will be noted that the Bill provides that similar concessions can be made in the future by regulations. This will include the transport of private schoolchildren in Government school buses, a procedure that is now being carried out to some extent in the country. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned.

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT (FUNDS APPROPRIATION).*Second Reading.*

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. G. Fraser—West) [4.50] in moving the second reading said: This measure is about as long as the title. Since 1941, similar Bills have been agreed to by Parliament on seven occasions. Members will recollect that, prior to 1941, the Commonwealth Grants Commission recommended the reduction of the annual grant to Western Australia because this State, unlike other States, did not use funds available to the Main Roads Department from the

metropolitan traffic fees for the purpose of paying interest on loans raised for main roads. In order to overcome this situation, Bills have been passed to provide for the use for this purpose of 22½ per cent. of metropolitan traffic fees up to a maximum of £70,000 each year.

The existing legislation expires at the end of December and it is therefore necessary to forestall any punitive action by the Grants Commission by placing a further measure on the statute book. The Bill, like its predecessors, will remain in operation for the same period as does the Federal Aid Roads Agreement Act, plus an extra term of six months to enable payment to be legally made during the time the Commonwealth will be giving consideration to the re-enactment of its legislation. I might add that the whole of the money used will come from metropolitan licence fees and will not adversely affect the country road programme in any way. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. C. H. Simpson, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.*Assembly's Amendment.*

Amendment made by the Assembly now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2. Add at the end of the clause the following:—

(3) The maximum penalty that may be prescribed under this section shall not exceed the sum of five pounds.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

I am doing so notwithstanding that I believe the amendment to be unnecessary. But it cannot do any harm. We have laid down penalties in the measure, and they are nowhere near the amount of £5.

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

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

BILL—FERTILISERS ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 15th November.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [4.57]: As the Minister explained, this Bill is designed to bring the Act up to date, the original legislation having been passed in

1928. With some of the purposes of the measure, I can agree; but there are one or two provisions about which I do not feel too happy.

It is intended to compel the manufacturers of superphosphate to attach to every bag a label stating the analysis and the measure of the contents. At present, these particulars are shown on the invoice, and I cannot see that this labelling will be of any advantage to the farmer. If the label becomes detached before he uses the superphosphate, he will not have any record of what he has got; but if the particulars are shown on the invoice, he is in a position to refer to it at any time.

Then there is the cost of this additional labelling to be considered. Although in single instances it may not amount to very much, in the aggregate it must add to the cost. When we consider that something like 6,000,000 bags of superphosphate are manufactured in Western Australia a year, it would mean that 6,000,000 tags would have to be printed and then attached to the bags, and for no purpose whatever except that this is the practice in the other States.

I have not heard of a complaint by any farmer regarding the information given on the invoice, so I see no reason why the department should desire to foist this requirement on Western Australia. The Act as it stands does not permit of superphosphate being sold in bulk. The handling of superphosphate in bulk in this State is increasing year by year; and, with this tendency to increase the cost, every assistance should be given to the producer to enable him to handle the commodity in this manner.

Another proposal in the Bill about which I am not happy at present is the one requiring additional information where the package is at least of 28 lb. weight. When a merchant is dealing in small quantities of superphosphate, most of it is handled in paper bags, and in that case there would be no difficulty in having the particulars printed on the paper bag, and the contents of the bag shown in that way. It would to some extent control the merchants and would, at the same time, ensure that the purchaser of superphosphate of whatever type would know exactly what he was buying. Today I think people take some risk with fertilisers which they purchase in packages from stores. As we know, the bags in which superphosphate is sold have on them the name of the manufacturer, the place of manufacture, the phosphatic content, the water soluble percentage, and so on, and it is still intended that that information shall be given.

The advent of the use of trace elements in superphosphate in this State has also necessitated alterations to the parent Act. Trace elements are playing a much greater

part in production in Western Australia now than hitherto, and it is only right that they should be provided for in an Act dealing with fertilisers.

Another provision has to do with the neutralising effect of the lime content of fertiliser; and here it is necessary that the past practice should be altered, as few farmers have sufficient knowledge to apply the formula given and most, therefore, would not know what effect it would have on their pasture. I believe that under this method, showing the neutralising effect, the farmer will have a better idea of the effect of the fertilisers he uses.

I have here a copy of the invoice which is sent out to each farmer. It gives a comprehensive survey of the make-up of the superphosphate. It sets out the percentage of water soluble phosphate, the citrate soluble portion, the phosphoric acid and acid soluble content, etc., together with the percentages of minor elements.

Hon. L. Craig: What document is that?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: This is attached to the invoice sent out to the consumer.

Hon. L. Craig: What about the nitrogen content?

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There is no nitrogen in superphosphate, although there is some in potato manure. There are about 15 different types of fertiliser shown on this invoice, which is therefore of interest not only to the wheat farmer but also to potato growers and so on.

The Bill contains a better definition of the organic content of fertiliser, and that will be of value. At present, some organic substances could be included in superphosphate, and it could also include a bone fertiliser; and if the company did not put the correct formula down, it would be selling something which it had no right to sell. All in all, the Bill is in my view a good one, with the exception of the points I have mentioned.

I endeavoured to prepare some amendments for the notice paper; but unfortunately those I had typed were not quite correct, and so I would ask the Minister to agree to adjourn the debate until next Tuesday so that I may have my amendments in the proper form. I know the Minister will not object to the amendments, except possibly the third one relating to the contents of the bag being shown on a card attached to it. I repeat that that would be of no advantage to the producer, but would add to the cost, and so I think the Minister might agree to that proposed amendment, also.

A point raised by farmers in relation to the contents of a bag of fertiliser refers to the phosphate grade rather than the analysis itself. Over the past few years farmers have suffered considerably through super going hard; and at one

stage, protest meetings were held throughout the State in an endeavour to force the companies to eliminate this trouble.

Most people thought the moisture content was so high that it caused the hardening, but I understand that that was not correct. The chemists employed by the manufacturers were also concerned with this problem; and the hardening was due, according to the information available to me, to the fact that the Christmas Island rock was being ground too fine, and they were using too weak a solution of acid, with the result that the superphosphate would set like a cement. I understand there is some hardening today, although not much, and that the improvement has been brought about by coarser grinding of the rock and the use of stronger acid.

The superphosphate will still set if it is left out in the rain or stacked under pressure, bag on bag, but the trouble is nowhere near as great now as it was two or three years ago. I believe the manufacturers realised that they had to supply a good article. I, for one, used to believe that the high moisture content was responsible for the hardening, but I am now informed by the experts that the trouble was due to the causes I have mentioned. There are few things worse for the man on the land than having to put his superphosphate through a grinder in the middle of seeding. Only the man on the land knows what such a delay at seeding time means, and it can easily represent the difference between a five-bag and a 10-bag crop. I trust the Minister will give me an opportunity to place my amendments on the notice paper. In the meantime, I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 8th November.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [5.10]: This Bill was introduced to broaden slightly the franchise of this Chamber because the Government believes the time has arrived when the franchise should be widened in keeping with the development and expansion taking place in this State. When this Legislative Council was first constituted its franchise was very restricted, there being a number of nominee members and a number of elected members.

To be eligible for election to this Chamber, a person had to have freehold property to the value of £1,000; and to be eligible to vote at an election to this Chamber, an elector had also to have a property franchise, which I think was

similar to that obtaining today—£50—or else he had to be paying a rent of £10 per annum. From time to time the franchise has been varied. I believe that originally there were 15 members of this Chamber, 5 being nominee members and 10 elected members.

As the State developed, more members were elected, until 1890, when the Constitution of the Colony was altered and the Legislative Assembly came into being. The franchise for this Chamber was then practically the same as it is now—

Hon. C. H. Simpson: I think there was a qualification of £100.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Yes, for the elector, although I am not quite certain on that point. At all events the £1,000 qualification for members was dispensed with, and the only restrictions on eligibility of candidates were the age of 30 years and the normal provisions about not being a bankrupt or a member of the judiciary, or of the other House, or a member of the clergy, or a rogue or vagabond. Those restrictions still apply.

It is strange that members of the clergy should be included with bankrupts and vagabonds and rogues in being barred from election to this Chamber, but there it is. That provision has never been altered, and I do not suggest that it should be varied; but I know many who take umbrage at it. However, as the State has progressed, there has been very little alteration to the franchise of this Chamber over the past 60 years.

We believe that it is only fair and reasonable that the spouse of a householder or of a freeholder should be as much entitled to record a vote for this Chamber as a leaseholder of land, the holder of a mining lease, or some absentee propertyholder. We say that the wife is the most important person in a household; and we believe she should be placed on an equal footing with the husband when an election for this Chamber takes place. That seems to me to be a fair proposition.

It has been said that the Government has introduced this amendment for the purpose of giving many more of its supporters a vote for this Chamber. I do not believe that to be correct.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Who said that?

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Words to that effect were used. I have had it said to me. I would not say it has been said to me in the Chamber, but I have heard members talking outside. At one stage it was also said by interjection in the Chamber when other members were speaking. I do not hold with that at all, because nobody knows how anybody else is going to vote, particularly when it relates to joint propertyholders—if the wife is considered to be a

joint property-holder, for the purpose of a vote for this House. I cannot see how it can be said that those who vote would be supporters of one party or the other. By and large it would have very little effect. We believe, however, in equal rights for the women, and we believe they should have equal voting power with their husbands for this Chamber.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I think there are as many women on the metropolitan rolls as there are males.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There may be more—I would not know—but the percentage of females as against males on the Council rolls has been less in the country areas. I have not studied the others.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I think they break even throughout the State.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is fair and reasonable. We contend that marriage is a partnership; it is no doubt the greatest partnership in life.

Hon. H. Hearn: There must be a chairman of directors.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: We have no right to set ourselves up as the chairman of directors. In my opinion, the wives should record their votes as partners with their husbands. The time to broaden the franchise for this Chamber is long overdue. I believe that the wife of a property-holder, or a householder, should be eligible to vote if she so desires. It is not a compulsory vote, nor is the enrolment compulsory. Those who are interested would certainly enrol and see that they voted. The uninterested people could be enrolled, but they could not be forced to vote. It would be entirely optional, just as every voter today has the right to exercise his option as to whether he will vote for this Chamber or not.

In supporting this Bill, I would remark that the proposal contained in it has been here before on more than one occasion during my few years in this House. There have, however, also been several other amendments in the same Bill. If I remember rightly, the main objection raised at the time was voiced against the other amendments which were in the measure, and not to any great extent against the wife having a vote.

On this occasion, the Bill is submitted with just one amendment, which is to give a woman the right to exercise a vote for this Chamber if her husband possesses property, or if he is a householder. Accordingly, I think it is a fair and reasonable proposition and I trust the House will give the measure its earnest consideration and support.

On motion by Hon. W. R. Hall, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 17th November, 1955.

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

QUESTIONS.

WHEAT.

Quantity in Store.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How much wheat is held in store at present in each State?

(2) What are the comparable figures for 1953 and 1954?

(3) What was the wheat production in each State in 1952, 1953 and 1954?