REPORT
OF
ROYAL COMMISSION
ON
THE VERMIN ACT

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by His Excellency’s Command.

[SECOND SESSION OF THE EIGHTEENTH PARLIAMENT.]
Report of Royal Commission on The Vermin Act.

May it please Your Excellency:

WE, the Members of the Honorary Royal Commission appointed to inquire into and report upon—

(a) Desirable amendments to the Vermin Act, 1918-1942, as reprinted in Volume 2 of The Reprinted Acts of the Parliament of Western Australia; and

(b) Ways and means of establishing in Western Australia a capital fund from which expenditure and/or compensation necessary may be met in combating all kinds of vermin and disease in the form of scourges, insect pests and plant diseases, such as to include rabbits, emus, dogs and foxes, have the honour to present to Your Excellency our Report, together with appendices, as follows:—

APPENDIX I.—Copy of Royal Commission.

APPENDIX II.—Extracts from the Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly and Minutes of Meetings.

APPENDIX III.—List of witnesses examined.

ORIGINAL APPOINTMENT AS SELECT COMMITTEE.

1. Your Commissioners were originally appointed as a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly by resolution of that House passed on 10th September, 1944. By that resolution the following were the matters referred for the consideration of the Committee:—

(a) Desirable amendments to the Vermin Act.

(b) Ways and means of establishing in Western Australia a capital fund from which expenditure and/or compensation necessary may be met in combating all kinds of vermin and disease in the form of scourges, insect pests, and plant diseases, such as to include rabbits, emus, dogs and foxes.

It was found necessary prior to the prorogation of Parliament by the Governor (whose prorogation would automatically dissolve the Select Committee) and also to enable the Report to be presented as early as possible, to ask for the conversion of the Committee into an Honorary Royal Commission. Accordingly the members were appointed as such a Commission by His Excellency on 2nd May, 1945. The Royal Commission was published in the Government Gazette on 4th May, 1946.

ITINERARY AND WITNESSES.

2. It was not long before your Commission, sitting as a Select Committee, discovered that in order to obtain a proper understanding of the position in these various matters as they affected the whole State, and to satisfy the great demand from country districts, it would be necessary to take evidence in a number of country centres.

An Itinerary was prepared, and while some places were unavoidably missed, a reasonable opportunity (of which but few failed to avail themselves) was given to the great majority of local authorities and representative bodies throughout the South-West land division and in the Murchison district. In addition, your Commissioners were able to arrange for evidence to be taken from representatives of a number of boards from the Kimberleys and the North-West of the State who were available in Perth, and from a Mr. Hogarth, of Mundrabilla Station near the South Australian border, Agricultural Bank officials and agricultural advisers (where available) were also examined in country centres and a number of private citizens testified at their own request. In Perth, departmental officers of various departments, including Agriculture (and its various sub-departments), Railways, Forests, and the Agricultural Bank were examined. Evidence was also taken from a wire netting manufacturer and an employee of his company. In all, 198 witnesses testified at the 43 sittings of the Commission sitting as a Select Committee. A complete list of witnesses will be found in Appendix III, to this report.

SUBDIVISIONS OF REPORT.

3. For the purpose of clarity we have divided this Report into parts as follows:—

Part 1.—Vermin and Vermin Act.

4. It did not take your Commissioners very long to come to the conclusion that in regard to the control and attempted eradication of vermin a great deal remained to be done and that substantial changes in the existing methods were either necessary or desirable.

PROPOSAL FOR CENTRALISATION.

5. Evidence given by departmental officers seemed to indicate a belief that the majority of the 152 vermin boards were apathetic or incompetent and that it would be desirable—

(a) That the powers of local vermin boards, except perhaps as to some measure of advisory power or delegated authority, should be abolished.

(b) That control should be centralised in the Department of Agriculture.

(e) That the central control should appoint a full-time vermin inspector in every district at an estimated cost of about £60,000 a year.

(d) That supervising inspectors should be appointed in addition.

(e) That none of these officers should actually concern themselves in the destruction of vermin, but only in regimentation and inspection of the activities of farmers and others.

SUPERVISION OF LOCAL BOARDS.

6. A proposal such as outlined in paragraph 5 may be considered excellent by some people, but it does not appear to your Commissioners any more likely substantially to remedy the evils needing a cure than does the present state of affairs. We have been
forced to the conclusion that a few local authorities have been lax and/or ineffective. In some instances this has nullified the much greater and indeed completely praiseworthy efforts which have been put forward by other local authorities in some cases over a period of many years. This is especially noticeable in areas where active local authorities to those whose lack of activity may be rightly the subject of criticism. We feel at this stage, however, that we should say that in our opinion the majority of local authorities have done their best in the existing difficult circumstances. But it is clearly necessary that power should be given to some central authority to appoint a local government without interference with their local government where circumstances indicate it to be desirable and that this power should be used whenever and wherever necessary without procrastination. To whom this power should be given and how it should be exercised will be the subject of later paragraphs.

COMMENT ON PAST DIFFICULTIES.

7. Having indulged in this necessary criticism of present methods in general and of certain local vermin boards in particular, we feel constrained to emphasise that much of the inefficiency of certain local authorities has, in our opinion, been occasioned by something akin to a feeling of despair. Vermin, it appears, could not be eradicated, would spread with them. The poisonous cart in which phosphorous poison was used, had produced thousands of unrecoverable cases. Nutritional deficiencies (apparently) had caused the livestock to eat thereof. Toxic paralysin in livestock had followed (although this is now preventable by inoculation) and blennophyia, which were a recurring cause of heavy loss and much work without much success, probably had been increased. Straychance had been increasingly difficult to obtain and when obtained had in some districts joined the fox in the destruction of many of man's feathered friends, the insect-eating birds, so that pests of other kinds grew and multiplied. New pests were appearing. Successfully to cope with all these problems required the expenditure of funds which some boards found it difficult or well nigh impossible to raise. In recent years (if these funds could have been raised) because of manpower difficulties they would have provided no competent labour. In addition, the comments we make in paragraph 10 of this Report have also much bearing on this aspect.

FUTURE ATTITUDE TO VERMIN.

8. But your Commissioners (although sympathetic to these difficulties) cannot subscribe to any policy of despair or of laissez faire. After great consideration we are of the opinion that vermin can not only be controlled, but for most practical purposes eradicated in many parts of the South-West land division and substantially checked in other areas of the State.

COST AND ESTIMATE OF DAMAGE DONE.

9. This state of affairs cannot, however, be reached without the expenditure of a considerable sum of money, the use of every known means of combating the vermin concerned, a measure of research and certain changes in our laws. The expenditure will be required over a period of years (we suggest five years for a start) and will be justified by the immense benefit the destruction of vermin must have on the State's production and in all probability on the health conditions of our livestock and by the possible decrease in insect pests in certain areas which should follow directly or indirectly the activities we later propose. It may be desirable to amplify some of these arguments. We have it on most reliable authority that one cow will destroy at least £21 worth in wheat in one season. The evidence of an Agricultural Bank branch manager proved a loss, to his own knowledge, of 925 bags of wheats worth at least £500 on one farm in one season. All over the State evidence has been given of reductions in carrying capacity caused by the incendence of rabbits and other vermin by from 20 to 50 per cent. At one property (that of Mr. E. H. B. Lefroy at Cranmore Park) since rabbits had been reared a lamb for ten years on account of clogs, so it means to say that power should be given to some central authority to appoint a local government without interference with their local government where circumstances indicate it to be desirable and that this power should be used whenever and wherever necessary without procrastination. To whom this power should be given and how it should be exercised will be the subject of later paragraphs.

Mr. Adkins answered:

I think that is a fair picture of the position in certain areas. It applies to dogs and kangaroos. It applies to kangaroos more particularly in the North-West proper, Port Hacking, Marble Bar and Nullagine. It applies to dogs on the fringe right down to Mr. Hogarth's are (i.e., in the East-Dundas district).

At page 2057 Mr. Hogarth was asked:

What is your area?

He replied:

It is 500,000 acres. We have approximately 400,000 acres dog-proof fenced. For 15 years I never had a dog inside of it. In the last 18 months, however, dogs have increased in spite of all I could do. Eighty per cent, of my work is trapping dogs outside of my area as far as I can get. Last year I had 30 dogs inside which killed 3,000 of my limited flocks. I have never reared a lamb for two years on account of dogs, so it means to say we have to get out. It is pretty hard after the fight we have made. Those dogs will travel to other people's property.

He was then asked:

What is the maximum you were carrying?

He answered:

It was 9,000. Now I am down to about 2,000. I had to build a retired fence which is patrolled every week. I never miss it.

The next question was:

Have you had any Government trappers there?

He answered:

Lately for a fortnight or three weeks. That is the only assistance we have had. In my opinion, one Government trapper there is like a drop in the ocean. Dogs are coming from the Warburton Ranges ... they are breeding in the Warburtons.
On page 805 of the evidence Mr. G. C. Rose, of Mt.
Anderson Station, Derby, was asked:—
Do you think that unless some determined effort
is made to keep down these pests, it will be im-
possible to run sheep stations in the West Kim-
berleys?
He answered:—
It is possible that wild donkeys, goats and pigs
will become a greater menace than kangaroos
because they have only recently got out of hand
and by now must increase to the detriment of
other stock... It is difficult, if not impossible,
to estimate the loss in carrying capacity of coun-	ry by kangaroos, but it is certain they have
greatly increased the sheep population which
must not be improved until the pest is suitably dealt
with.
At page 1793 Mr. E. H. Greene, the Chairman
of the Marble Bar Road Board, was asked:—
What is going to happen to your country if
these kangaroos are not dealt with?
He answered:—
We shall have to walk off. I am not referring
to the whole of the North of course, but to this
hilty country where the inland stations are. My
remarks would apply to the country within a
radius of 80 miles of Marble Bar, and possibly
a bit more.
Looking at the State as a whole, and, if we assume
(as on the evidence we have every right to do) that
these deprivations have reduced carrying capacity by
30 per cent., we arrive at least at one item of loss
which is possible of estimation. Let us say we are
carrying only 10,000,000 sheep. This is, therefore,
79 per cent. of our carrying capacity. The 100 per cent.
would be 4,250,000 greater. This alone would repre-
sent on a moderate computation 30,000,000 lbs. weight
of extra wool per annum which, at 3d. a pound,
would be worth £2,000,000. On this one count alone
it can reasonably be stated that the purchasing power
of rural communities is less by that sum per annum.
The grave effect this has on unemployment in our
cities and towns and on the turnover of every busi-
ness can better be imagined than described. If
we add to this the losses of crops and stock, the decrease
in lamb, the expense of poison and other palliatives,
the cost of the hundreds of thousands of manpower
hours spent on attempts at control, at least we can
gain some impression of the vast loss to the State's
economy and the people of the towns and cities
and the cumulatively bad effect on the progress (and
on the possibility of social advancement of the
people) of this State.

CROWN LANDS, ABANDONED LANDS AND
RESERVES.

10. Hitherto, in our opinion, one of the greatest
deterrents to any really concerted and wholehearted
attack upon the vermin in many districts has been
the almost complete absence of activity on Crown
lands, abandoned holdings and reserves. There are
those who argue that rabbits and other vermin do
not inhabit Crown lands or forest country except
within short distances of cultivation. Your Commis-
sioners can only be guided by evidence, and this is,
in our opinion conclusive, that in areas where
vermin exist within a moderate and perhaps a thor-
oughly limited distance of cultivation, and the pos-
bility of social advancement of the

Railway Department Activities.

11. Similar remarks apply to abandoned holdings
prior to their actual return to the Crown, and
they have been mortgaged to the Agricultural (or
Rural) Bank or any other leading institution. No
longer should the liability for vermin rates be open
to the quibbles as to whether the mortgagee is in
possession or not. The liability for such vermin
rates as are imposed should be upon the registered
holder (and the mortgagee if any) and the permanent
tenant. If the former fails to pay within six months of
assessment, the latter, on receipt of notice, should im-
mEDIATELY become liable for the amount assessed.
It must also be the duty of every mortgagee when the
security becomes vacant to advise the appropriate
Vermin Board and the Taxation Department at once.
If the property is leased to any person under any
agreement, that such person shall pay rates as part
of the lease arrangement, then at least as far as
vermin rates are concerned (and no other is within
the scope of this inquiry) the obligation of the tenant
should be to pay them to his landlord who
would be the party responsible to the assessing
authority. This leaves only properties which have been
abandoned and while not returned to the Crown are un-
occupied and not leased. In respect of these the
mortgagee (who will have given notice of his posi-
tion) should pay not less than Is. per thousand
acres per annum, pastoral leases excluded. Vermin rates
should be recoverable in priority to rates and taxes
of all other kinds and section 62 should be amended
accordingly.

Railway Department Activities.

12. We find that so far as vermin are concerned,
many districts there has been reasonable co-opera-
tion (when present conditions are taken into con-
sideration) by the West Australian Government
Railway Department. Nevertheless, the evidence
discloses that the activities of the Railway Depart-
ment, aside from its actual permanent way and embank-
ments, have been limited to those portions of the
railway reserves which are adjacent to farms where
measures for the control of vermin are being taken.
This indicates that where railway reserves include
Crown lands, abandoned properties or properties that
have been somewhat neglected by their occupiers,
there has been little, if any, railway activity. Sum-
maries the position up and as we recommend hereafter,
the creation of a special fund much wider based than
any hitherto contemplated, we consider that the obli-
gation of the Railway Department (as we feel they must contribute) should be settled by
an annual payment to the Agriculture Protection
Board of £2,500. In this connection certain commen-
tions were asked of Mr. W. A. McCullough, Assistant
Chief Civil Engineer of the Railway Department, at
page 151 of the evidence:—

Should it (i.e., the Railway Department) in other
forest country take its contribution to the total
expenditure?

In the course of his answer Mr. McCullough said:—

We could not let the work of maintaining the
formation which affects the safety of the travel-
ing public pass into any other hands than our
own.

Later he said:—
If a satisfactory organisation existed to deal
with the rabbits, we would be perfectly willing
to pay at a reasonable sum and have the work
taken off our hands.

The work, of course, referred to the work other than
the permanent way and embankments. The authority
to be charged with the control and eradication of
vermin. The Railway Department should specifically
serve for that purpose in the same way and to the same
extent as in respect of other properties, with this very definite proviso however, that no interference can be
made with the railway embankments and permanent way and we suggest in regard to this that a fixed distance of say two yards from each side of the base of the embankment should be the area within which only officials of the Railway Department should be allowed and at the same time required to take action for the destruction of vermin and noxious weeds. The Agriculture Protection Board should have power to
advise the Railway Department when work is being carried out in any area and direct the department to act accordingly. We have ascertained that the Midland Railway Company is already subject to payment of rates in respect of land held by it and therefore we have for that reason given it no special mention. It is proper that the laws governing other landholders, but the reservation must be made in the case of the Government Railways that it has control and obligation also in respect of its permanent way.

FOREST RESERVES.

13. The Forests Department presents a more difficult problem. Their reserves are peculiarly subject to fire. To permit persons inexperienced in forestry indiscriminately to enter upon them for the purpose of using every available means for the destruction of vermin might lead to disastrous results. Yet the need for concerted and strong action in the pursuit of vermin in these areas is very great and not for any reason to be by-passed in the future as it has been in the past. Taking all these factors into consideration we feel that the Forests Department should, at its own expense, equip and maintain mobile units similar to those later described and that these units should (under the control of forest officers) be moved from one forest reserve to another constantly carrying out vermin destruction by all the means later recommended and any other known methods. In the event of the central authority being satisfied either from reports of its own officers, or from reports of the local authority in whose area the reserve is situated, and after inquiry, that regular and concerted steps are not being taken for vermin eradication, the central authority should be at liberty to supersede the control of the Forests Department in any area and to direct its own units to enter (in the company of a forest officer) and do the work required and be empowered to recover the cost from the Forestry Department.

14. Obligations similar to those described in paragraph 13 should be imposed on the Water Supply Department and any other department holding Crown land for the specific purposes of the activities of the department concerned.

CROWN LAND PROPER.

15. That type of Crown land which is left (after railway, forests, water supply and other reserves controlled by or vested in other Government departments have been excluded) represents in present circumstances and may be expected for some time to continue to represent a very large portion of Western Australia. Much of it is far from settled areas and indeed from human habitation. Upon a substantial percentage of it there is probably no vermin. On other very large portions, pests of all kinds breed ad lib and periodically (indeed in some cases regularly) venture forth to invade the more settled districts and the outback stations. The own, the fox, the wild dog and the kangaroo, (where these last are troublesome) have their principal habitat on land of this type. To say that the Commonwealth Government should be asked to recoup to the whole State and for the reason mentioned in sub-paragraph (c), although such a proposal is, we feel, not strictly within the scope of our inquiry, we consider the Commonwealth Government should be asked to recoup to the State one-half of the annual payment under this paragraph.

The Central Authority—The Agriculture Protection Board.

17. From the evidence before us it is quite clear that there are a number of reasons why any system involving complete centralised control is undesirable. It would, in our opinion, definitely discourage local initiative and enterprise which, while it requires some co-ordinating and supervising authority, is most desirable. The area of Western Australia is so vast and the conditions existing so different in its various parts that we consider no central administration could successfully control the varied problems connected with vermin and pest destruction. In this connection the problems of districts in the lower south-west are numerous and varied. No further attempt is made here, than McKinnon's (in right of the State of Western Australia)

(c) Are the source of infestation of more settled areas by certain types of vermin.

(d) Ought to be developed and populated in the interests of Australia as a whole.

For the reasons mentioned in sub-paragraph (c) the expenditure in the area would be a burden upon the whole State and for the reason mentioned in sub-paragraph (d), although such a proposal is, we feel, not strictly within the scope of our inquiry, we consider the Commonwealth Government should be asked to recoup to the State one-half of the annual payment under this paragraph.

Contributions By The Crown.

18. We propose that the central authority (see later paragraphs) should, prior to the 30th day of April in each year, estimate the amount which it considers is required to expend in the ensuing financial year for a determined attack on vermin in the area defined in Schedule "A" and 75 per cent. of that sum (not however exceeding £1,200,000) shall be appropriated from Consolidated Revenue for expenditure in each year. We propose that the Act amending the Vermin Act should provide that such appropriation shall be made each year without further reference to Parliament and that this provision should continue for at least five years after the coming into operation of the amending Act. By his means funds will be provided for a concerted attack on vermin in the outer areas of the State which—

(a) Are sparsely populated and hence of comparatively low rateable capacity.

(b) Are heavily infested with vermin which are obviously restricting all possibility of further development.

(c) Are the source of infestation of more settled areas by certain types of vermin.

(d) Ought to be developed and populated in the interests of Australia as a whole.

The Central Authority—The Agriculture Protection Board.

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(c) Practical knowledge of the habits of the various types of vermin, as far as known, and ability to direct inquiry into problems associated with vermin and their habits, and where they are not a serious menace. We do not think that a bonus should be paid on emus or emu eggs. We have defined this as "any animal destructive to crops and the methods by which this action will be taken. In no circumstances should such a commissioner (in the event of more than one local board being affected) be appointed to undertake his duties in respect of more than one district. It may be necessary to empower the Agriculture Protection Board to exercise this function by a committee appointed for the purpose (whose decision could afterwards be confirmed by the whole board) in order to avoid a special meeting of the board or the alternative to that, viz., undesirable delay in taking action. Certain amendments to the Vermin Act are necessary.

(a) Repeat the proviso to Section 15 (1) permitting the Minister to be appointed as the Board. If this state of affairs prevails, the Agriculture Protection Board should appoint a Commissioner.

(b) Section 46 should be amended by inserting the words "The Agriculture Protection Board" in lieu of the words "the Governor" in the first line of the section.

(c) Section 57 of the Act should be altered to comply with these amendments and our recommendations regarding the power of the Agriculture Protection Board, and to provide for appointment of a Commissioner and not the Minister.

(d) There will, of course, be amendments (consequential on those changes) in other parts of the Act.

In addition, care should be taken (if and when the power to appoint a Commissioner has to be exercised) that the person appointed has knowledge of vermin control methods and ability to apply that knowledge. It will be clear, of course, that we intend the Agriculture Protection Board to have power to reconstitute the Board of the district whenever it thinks it proper to do so.

18. Powers of Central Authority: The following should be included among the powers of the Agriculture Protection Board:

(a) Financial: To receive and disburse (i) the rates collected from town and city lands and the contributions of the Railway Department and those in respect of abandoned and unoccupied properties; (ii) the amounts collected under existing laws from rural lands in respect of the Central Vermin Fund; (iii) the funds to be made available (on a basis similar to that now practised) from Consolidated Revenue in respect of the maintenance of the rabbit-proof fences, for grasshopper destruction, for payment of inspectors, etc.

(b) To determine how much of the moneys collected under subparagraph (a) (i), not exceeding 10 per cent. shall be set aside for assistance in preventing the spread of noxious weeds.

(c) Mobile units: To employ, equip and maintain such mobile units as may be considered necessary and desirable in various parts of the State to conduct or assist in the destruction of vermin on Crown and other vacant lands.

(d) Reference to Schedule A: To assess, as mentioned in paragraph 18, the amount required each year for the area comprised in Schedule A" and to receive and disburse the contribution from Consolidated Revenue in respect thereof.

(e) Subsidies to local boards: To subsidise any local vermin board either generally or in respect of the maintenance of mobile destruction units employed by such authority or in both ways. We suggest that, in addition to the minimum rate proviso mentioned later, in granting any subsidy the central authority shall take into consideration the area of the board, the incidence of vermin on the territory, the incidence of vermin and the pests therein and the fact that any board's activities are resulting in a buffer being created for some more settled area.

(f) Emus and grasshoppers: To control (subject to consultation with and with power to delegate authority in specific matters to the Emu and Grasshopper Zone Advisory Committee later mentioned) all efforts to eradicate emus where the same are causing or likely to cause damage, and grasshoppers, particularly in regard to egg deposits, their identification and destruction.

(g) Borrowing Powers: To borrow money (with the consent of the Treasury) not exceeding £100,000 in all either to deal with any vermin emergency requiring strong action on a large scale without delay, or to provide farmers desiring it with rabbit netting of 1½ inch mesh.

Rabbit netting acquisition: For this last mentioned purpose the Board should be authorised to purchase in wholesale lots direct from the manufacturer and to sell at cost price, plus a calculated rate for railage or freight so that the cost of netting so acquired will be as low as possible, and as far as practicable uniform throughout the State. The terms should be by instalments and for a period of 30 years and the security as prescribed by regulation.

(h) Bonuses: To provide whenever thought fit for uniform bonuses on various types of vermin. Such bonuses not to exceed:

(1) On foxes 6s. each.
(2) On wild pigs 6d. each.
(3) On emu eggs 6d. each.
(4) On wild dogs 25s. each.
(5) On wild goats 50 per 100.
(6) On kangaroos 50s. per 100.
(7) On eagle hawks as now paid.

We recommend that the annual amount to be expended on bonuses shall not exceed 7½ per cent. of the amount collected from the existing Central Vermin Fund, save that in addition, payment of bonuses may be part of the expenditure in the areas comprised in Schedule A from the funds provided for those areas. It will be noted moreover that we recommend a bonus on the collection of emu eggs, and this is done because it is now apparent that emus are nesting in the more southern areas of the State. We do not think that a bonus should be paid on emus or their eggs from any point where they are not a serious menace. We have no desire to encourage the eradication of emus where they are actually causing no damage. We have defined this area in a later paragraph.

(i) Birds causing damage: As there are certain areas in which it will be necessary to gazette black cockatoos, galahs and parrots as vermin on account of the
damage which they are doing to fruit and (especially in the case of parrots at feeding time) to cereal crops, the assistance to be given to local authorities in such districts (at the discretion of the central authority) should be allowed to include assistance for increasing a local bonus on the destruction of such birds.

(2) Regulation of rabbit trapping: To gazette by-laws regulating rabbit trapping by any person in any part of the State so as to ensure that rabbit trapping is followed up by other methods necessary or desirable for the destruction of vermin, particularly rabbits. In this connection the Agriculture Protection Board should be empowered to make by-laws prohibiting professional trappers of rabbits from operating in all or any districts of the State. By a professional trapper is meant a person who traps rabbits elsewhere than on his own land or land held or occupied by him under any bona fide lease. We refer to this question later in this report.

(k) Sundry Matters: To purchase wire netting of 1½ inch mesh at wholesale rates for supply at cost to local authorities desiring to handle it under the method hereinafter proposed.

(l) To maintain the various poisons necessary for the destruction of vermin and to supply them to local authorities at cost price for each.

(m) To maintain the existing rabbit-proof fences and such other fences as may be approved by the Minister on the advice of the central authority, including fences as barriers against or traps for emus.

(n) To exercise the discretion referred to in sub-paragraph (f) of paragraph 26.

EMU AND GRASSHOPPER ZONE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

19. The emu and grasshopper pests present peculiar difficulties.

(i) The Grasshopper: So far as this insect is concerned it is almost certainly largely seasonal in its incidence. Nevertheless no one can satisfactorily forecast seasonal conditions in advance and there is, in our opinion, only one way to approach the matter, namely, that we are as likely as not to have grasshoppers in large numbers any year. It is clear that breaking up of the egg deposits is the surest means of destruction. Once the grasshopper is hatched out and reaches the crawling stage, poison baits create havoc amongst them. But they last not by any means so long as the majority. Moreover, the period in which poison can effectively be used is very short, but it must be used in areas where land is not cleared. Once the “hopper” is “on the wing” the task of destruction is impossible. We fully recognize the work that has been done by the Department of Agriculture in conjunction with officers of the Agricultural Bank. If we say it is obviously insufficient, it does not imply neglect on the part of the departments concerned. We have made the most careful inquiries into the matter and it is clear that a plentiful supply of manpower would have resulted in much greater results being achieved. In any event, it is useless conducting inquiries into past difficulties. Our policy should be to face up to the future with courage and efficiency. There are, it is clear on evidence of official witnesses, vast areas untouched where egg deposits are to be found. Whether or not the right sort of heavy rain will fall and prevent hatching is very problematic. We propose to assume it will not, which, on past experience of the areas concerned, is the more likely. Preparations must therefore be made to “shallow plough” these great areas starting nearest the more settled parts and extending in all directions as far as possible. The branch manager of the Agricultural Bank at Merredin during the course of examination on this subject, expressed the opinion that roughly 90,000 acres per annum would be a reasonable estimate for the eradication of this pest. If this course of examination on this subject, expressed the opinion that roughly 90,000 acres per annum would be a reasonable estimate for the eradication of this pest. If

(ii) The Emu Menace: Most of the districts involved in the grasshopper problem also have the emu in large numbers. It is quite clear that the incidence of emus in these districts will no longer be confined to periodical visitors from the north and available evidence that emus are breeding in these districts (mostly on Crown Lands). It is unfortunate that these birds (so dear to many Australians) should have reached the proportions they have so that in these areas they must be destroyed. But it is no use gainaying the facts. Apart from evidence of their depredations given by Agricultural Bank officials and others, the Yilgarn Road Board alone in four months collected the bonus of £8 per head on no less than 5,388 of these birds. It is quite clear that wing or maze traps must be experimented with in an effort to arrest their inroads from outer areas and subject to existing fence lines. This applies more particularly to that section of the emus which make periodical visits. Activity in the way of poisoning water supplies (which requires care and special fencing at times) should also be indulged in and shooting parties, while capable of extremely valuable work, require organization and supervision. We have already suggested payment of a bonus on emu eggs in an effort to prevent their increase by destroying them (as it were) at their source and in certain districts special efforts might be made for the collection of these eggs as early as possible, i.e., before any contemplated action is taken by Parliament on the major items of this report.

While we are prepared to recommend that efforts for the eradication of rabbits and foxes should be left in the hands of local vermin boards subject to certain safeguards, it is clear from the foregoing circumstances that the emu and the grasshopper in their zone should receive separate treatment. The identification of grasshopper egg deposits, the arranging of ploughing contracts, the supervision of emu destruction by the means suggested or by any other suitable means and decisions as to erection of fences and traps all call for knowledge of the pest concerned, and a great degree of personal and local interest which is more likely to be found in the districts affected than in Perth or elsewhere. So we recommend the establishment of an advisory committee to which power of action could be delegated by the Agriculture Protection Board.

iii. Personnel of Committee.—We have given much thought to the personnel of this committee and we have come into contact with certain persons whose name as peculiarly desirable for one reason or another to be members of it. We therefore recommend its personnel as follows:—

(1) Mr. M. L. Austin, now Branch Manager of the Agricultural Bank, Merredin, as Chairman.

(2) Mr. J. B. Campbell, now Field Inspector of the Agricultural Bank, Koorda.

(3) Mr. H. K. M. Logan, now Field Inspector, Agricultural Bank, Bengough, as Deputy Chairman.

The balance of the seven members should be made up of a representative of each of the Koorda, Mt. Marshall, Mukinbudin (or Westonia) and Yilgarn Road Boards, one of whom should be Visé-Chairman.

iv. Declaration of Zone.—At the commencement the zone should include all those roads which show grasshopper egg deposits have been noted or in which emus have been reported in large numbers and the zone should be notified in the Gazette. The Agriculture Protection Board could add to it or subtract from it as circumstances warranted.

v. Regarding payment of members of the Agriculture Protection Board and the Zone Committee. We feel that Government members or those on the staff of the Agricultural Bank should receive reasonable travelling and actual out of pocket expenses only. Other members should be paid at per day when actually engaged in the work involved or in travelling to or from meetings at reason-
able rates to be prescribed by the Minister, plus actual travel costs, and payments should be made from the central fund. These costs should be kept as low as possible. After the first year it would hardly be necessary for meetings of the Agriculture Protection Board to be more frequent than quarterly, while meetings of the Zone Committee could be limited to those called by the chairman. In order to avoid dissatisfaction, provision might be made for a special meeting to be called to discuss specific business if a requisition signed by a majority of members were given to the chairman.

20. Wire netting--+Where rabbit netting is to be used it will obviously be desirable that the mesh should be no larger than 1½ inches. We are satisfied that rabbit fencing can get through any larger mesh at times. We have no intention, however, of stating that for the control of rabbits it is absolutely necessary to fence every holding with a rabbit-proof fence. It is true that we were greatly impressed with the work done by Mr. Lefroy at Cranmore Park via Walsingham, from which we have seen that after the property had been fully fenced, rabbits have been to all intents and purposes eradicated. This work on an 18,200 acre holding cost in actual figures £2,500. While we, of course, completely accept Mr. Lefroy's figures, it does not appear to us that similar work could be done in the future without greater cost. Wages have continually increased and the cost of netting is higher. Taking Mr. Lefroy's figures into consideration, however, while at the same time having regard to other prevailing factors, it is clear that to achieve the same results on a 2,000 acre farm would average not less than £600. In some of the more difficult districts heavily timbered, or intersected with rock formations, creeks and water courses, the figures would obviously be higher, but at £600 the annual cost, assuming the life of the fence to be as long as 20 years and with interest on the money appropriated at as low as four per cent, and including an annual maintenance charge of 20, there would be an annual obligation of approximately £70 per annum. A majority of farmers are, in our opinion, unable to face the additional expenditure either at all or without severe strain. If it can be avoided (assuming the money could be raised), it can, with greater advantage, be spent on providing some of the amenities which are so lacking and so necessary on many properties.

RABBIT ERADICATION WITHOUT NETTING.

21. We therefore turn to the evidence and ocular demonstration given us by Mr. C. A. Prosser of Marracoona via Katanning which shows that effective work can be done by the use of dogs by those of Mr. Lefroy, but without rabbit netting, provided determination is coupled with organized effort. We recommend a perusal of the evidence of Mr. Prosser to be found on pages 1409-1413 of the evidence taken. We must say that we were impressed by the work which he had done and the almost total absence of rabbits from his property, notwithstanding that similar methods had not been adopted by all those surrounding him. In evidence at page 1409 Mr. C. A. Prosser said—

With regard to methods I would suggest the compulsory destruction of all warrens large and small. The field which comes under a cause seeking relief because by the farmer himself. It causes rabbits to travel and I am sure increases the breeding rate . . . In the eradication of warrens of which I am now free on my property (2,070 acres), I have found dogs of great value both for rabbits and foxes, especially the whippet-kangaroo dog cross. After ploughing all large accessible warrens I used a long haired machine to destroy all small warrens and after continued checking to get the rabbits accustomed to living in some, I have proved the work of keeping them out negligible.

Later he was asked—

Do you advocate that having destroyed the rabbit warrens that poisoning should cease?

He answered—

It would cease if the warrens were destroyed. No warrens, no rabbits.

In answer to a further question—

Is your property fenced?

Mr. Prosser answered—

No, I do not intend to fence it.

He was, of course, referring to rabbit-proof fencing.

SUPPLY OF RABBIT NETTING BY LOCAL BOARDS.

22. Nevertheless there will doubtless be farmers desiring to and able to afford to rabbit-net their farms, perhaps, because of the situation or peculiarities of their farms, which make this more desirable in their opinion. We feel we have a duty to these people in so far as making plans for the provision of wire netting on the cheapest possible terms are concerned. To this end we reiterate that the Agriculture Protection Board should be empowered to borrow money to purchase netting and to supply it to farmers on terms with security as prescribed. The interest should not be more than 10s. per cent, above the actual rate paid for money. We anticipate no difficulty would be raised (at least by local manufacturers) if approached to supply the central authority at factory rates so as to remove all unnecessary costs between the manufacturer and the consumer which we regard as vital. There will be some farmers desiring to net who will, however, find it difficult or undesirable to enable the Agriculture Protection Board to obtain the prescribed security for any advance and the following proposal will, we think, help to overcome this difficulty and also to some extent, relieve the central authority of the burden of finance. It has been suggested to us that the local vermin boards should be given power in the Act to raise money to supply wire netting to farmers in their own districts and in lieu of taking a mortgage or other security to strike annual vermin rates against the properties supplied, equivalent to the actual instalments payable. Rates are commonly a charge on all lands in priority to ordinary mortgages and we have already recommended proposals regarding the recovery of rates in certain difficult cases in paragraph 11 of this Report which will be found substantially to dovetail with this proposal. The power to local boards should be optional. The rating and recovery of rates from individual and separate properties has been satisfactorily dealt with in another connection in sections 73 and 59 of the Health Act. The local authority should of course be enabled to obtain netting at cost price by the means already suggested through the establishment of an Agriculture Protection Board, and should not be permitted to include interest at a rate greater than 10s. per cent, above the rate paid.

RABBIT TRAPPING.

23. Very strong representations were made to us in many quarters to prohibit the professional trapper whom we have already defined in paragraph 18. We feel that the services of these gentlemen are not desirable or serviceable in the long run as a means of eradicating rabbits. Nor does trapping on his own farm by the farmer himself appear much more commendable unless faithfully followed up immediately by other methods, among which of the greatest importance is the careful destruction of warrens.

We therefore recommend that the Agriculture Protection Board should have power to license rabbit trapping by any person so as to ensure that suitable methods of following up are practised. While the evidence was not strong enough to justify this separate recommendation for the abolition of the professional trapper, we are constrained not to recommend his abo

We have therefore decided to recommend power for the Agriculture Protection Board to take action in this direction when considered propitious. We would say, however, in concluding this subject, that there appear to be those among our citizens who regard the "commercialisation" of the rabbit as a substantial contribution to Australia's economy. If we are cor-
In this belief we recommend these people to sit tight and let the ephemeral gains from the occasional high prices that have been and will be occasioned to Australia's great producing industries by a continuance of the dependences of rabbits. Among these may be included that termidity, soil erosion, the prospective damage from which is almost incalculable and which, we understand, is to be the subject of legislation in Western Australia and other States of the Commonwealth. When these have been considered these losses to which we believe the views we mention will perhaps put these matters into proper perspective is obvious that the present depression of revenues as long as rabbits are plentiful. He then moves away, leaving a scattered rabbit population to re-form and multiply. He is not interested in the rabbit kites. They have no commercial value until fully grown. They are therefore not taken. The whole plan of commercial trapping requires a regular annual population. It seems to be regarded as the antithesis of rabbit destruction.

MINIMUM RATING BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND SUBSIDY CONDITIONS.

24. The scheme which we have in mind involves assistance from a central fund of the local authorities whose rates are insufficient to produce so little revenue. We are of the opinion that local authorities should be compelled to strike a high rate. We have assumed that they have in conjunction with it, a rate of 1½d. per rateABLE or pastoral lease and a rate of 2½d. in the pound on the unimproved capital value of agricultural lands and of not less than 1½d. per 100 acres on pastoral leases. We think that the Minister should be required to employ and pay a full time inspector.

MOBILE UNITS.

25. We have made some reference in earlier portions of this Report to the desirability of the creation of units of workers which we have described as mobile units for the destruction of vermin and other pests on a sound basis. We have recommended that the Agriculture Protection Board should have power to organise such units, particularly for the destruction of vermin on Crown and other vacant lands. It seems to us that it is both necessary and desirable that these units should be formed in order that they may be sent to any area in which outside and well equipped assistance is necessary for vermin destruction. They would, it seems to us, be particularly valuable in the areas in Schedule "A" and also of very great benefit in a number of the districts of the State which have difficulty. One is to require a uniform minimum rate to be struck in every district, leaving the local authority to strike a higher rate if it is considered reasonable or if it is desired. Additionally, with the Agriculture Protection Board, it finds that authority's funds will not permit of sufficient being made available, as we have indicated, to bear in hand without such extra rate above the minimum. On looking through the list of rates struck by local Here be no such high rate will produce so little revenue. We are of the opinion that local authorities should be compelled to strike a high rate. We have assumed that they have to cover all our references. On the same rate struck by the Bunbury Road Board would be sufficient for the purpose of vermin destruction on an organised basis. We have recommended that the Agriculture Protection Board should have power to organise such units, particularly for the destruction of vermin on Crown and other vacant lands. It seems to us that it is both necessary and desirable that these units should be formed in order that they may be sent to any area in which outside and well equipped assistance is necessary for vermin destruction. They would, it seems to us, be particularly valuable in the areas in Schedule "A" and also of very great benefit in a number of the districts of the State which have difficulty. While the war continues it may be difficult to create these units, but a start should be made as early as practicable and when the war ends it is to be anticipated that sufficient labour will be available for the number of them required. We suggest that the rates struck would be a uniform rate of one per cent in any of one per cent in any of the districts of the State which have difficulty.

The type of tractor referred to by Mr. A. A. Prosser in his evidence should also be carried and in areas where ploughing in of rabbit warrens can be successfully carried out, the unit should either be provided with or empowered to obtain the use of a suitable tractor and plough. In this connection suggestions have been made to us (and we are impressed with the desirability of investigation) as to some machine similar to the tank used by the British Army (which, we understand, is described as the flail) for setting off sand mines left behind by the enemy. We feel it may be possible, as suggested, to evolve an adaptation of this system whereby a crawler type of vehicle, such as a tank, could be fitted with implements which when driven over a rabbit warren, would tear it up and break down the homes of the rabbits and we would refer anyone interested in this line of inquiry to the evidence given by Mr. F. B. Smith in Inglis of Dingy at page 310. Equipped in the manner suggested in the earlier parts of this paragraph, it will be quite clear that such a machine would be of the greatest value and should be required to undertake the destruction of all kinds of vermin. The Agriculture Protection Board
POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

26. The more employment by a local authority of an inspector, whether employed full time or for only portion of the year, whose duty it is to travel from farm to farm to ascertain whether steps have been taken to destroy vermin or not, seems to us to be unnecessary. The activity of this type of official certainly does not of itself destroy any vermin and, in our opinion, the money would have been better spent if he had been required to take some direct action. At the present time the onus is almost entirely on the property holder and we believe that a considerable departure from this practice will be advantageous. Many suggestions have been made to us. Among these a proposal put forward by the Mingenew Road Board was among the most constructive. That proposal suggested that the onus of vermin control be removed altogether from the land holder and placed upon the local authority itself and that the local authority should employ men to go from farm to farm and use every available means of destroying vermin thereon and on the adjacent Crown lands. If phosphorous poisoning were to be the main method adopted by a local authority, in more thinly wooded areas there would doubtless be strong reasons why at least ample notice would have to be given to the land holder and the efforts of the workmen coordinated with his livestock operations. But it seems to us that the use of phosphorous poisoning should not be encouraged except in places where the work of destroying warrens (and carefully checking over subsequently) cannot, because of the class of country or topographical features, be successfully carried out. Phosphorous poisoning with the poison cart is undoubtedly a means of destroying a great number of rabbits, but, in our view, it has two disadvantages. Firstly, it does not by any means destroy all the rabbits and leaves their homes in good order for re-occupation by old tenants or occupation by new tenants. It results too in large numbers of unrecognisable carcasses and consequent stock diseases. Secondly, it is undoubtedly a cruel form of poisoning because of the lingering and unpleasant death which it inflicts. While we do not recommend that the use of phosphorous poison and the poison cart should be proposed, we do say from the evidence before us that a far more effective way, even where rabbit netting is not used, is permanently to make untenanted the homes of rabbits by effective destruction of their warrens wherever practicable. This can be done on lightly timbered country with a little extra effort by the use of mattocks and, in our view (where this lightly timbered country is adjacent to cleared land), this method should be adopted. In a number of vermin board districts local authorities have found it necessary to enter under existing law upon properties where vermin destruction has not been carried out in a satisfactory manner (or where circumstances were such that the work could not be done) and do the work and recover the cost from the holder. And it seems to us that between the proposal made by the Mingenew Road Board for the onus of destruction to be completely on the local authority with no outside assistance and the practice of the system previously mentioned, lies the road which will lead to the greatest possible destruction by competent people without any increase, but on the contrary we believe, some reduction in cost and time, the cost of which should be borne by the individual farmer. In this connection we quote from the evidence of the Secretary of the Mingenew Road Board, page 1377—:

From local practice it has been proved that vermin destruction undertaken by this board has proved a definite controlling influence on the rabbit problem. The board should be empowered free of liability... to undertake vermin destruction on private holdings. By working on a face... rabbits can be destroyed much more successfully than by issuing orders on the individual farmer. If the local authority is to those more described, subject to financial assistance being provided wherever desirable.

27. We therefore recommend:—

(a) That the Act be amended so as to place the onus of destruction of rabbits and foxes on all land in the area comprised in Schedule B of this Report, other than Crown lands, on local authorities.

(b) That every local authority within the area comprised in Schedule B be required to carry out the destruction of rabbits and foxes on every isolated property (including unoccupied farms) and on the reserves vested in or under the control of the local authority.

(c) That the local authority be empowered to recover one-half of the cost, not exceeding 12s. 6d. per mean day from the occupier of the property (or in the case of unoccupied properties to claim assistance from the Agriculture Protection Board), that by this means such occupier will be relieved of much expenditure which under the present law he has now to make out of his own pocket. This work should not be done by the local authority, but by independent men who are specialised in the work. Such proposals are made in the hope of relieving the local authorities themselves.

(d) That local authorities be required (as part of this programme) in every instance thoroughly to break up rabbit warrens on all occupied land so as effectively to destroy them and immediately to report the existence of rabbit warrens, where such notice action is necessary on adjacent Crown land, to the Agriculture Protection Board so that early arrangements may be made either with one of the authorities of the Agriculture Protection Board to undertake the work or for payment to be made to the local authority for the work to be undertaken on such land by the above men available.

(e) In regard to the entry by local authority officials on occupied land, the following conditions to be strictly enforced:—

(1) That no poison baits be laid until after the lapse of 48 hours from the delivery of notice of intention (specifying the poison baits to be used and the proposed location thereof) to the occupier or a member of his household.

(2) That where an occupier can prove that owing to seasonal conditions he has no place (other than the proposed location for laying poison baits) on which to deposit or water his livestock, that the laying of such baits be postponed until a more suitable time. The proof of such necessity, however, to rest on the occupier.

(3) That the charges to be levied under sub-paragraph (c) of this paragraph shall be recoverable as vermin rates are to be recovered (under previous paragraphs).

(4) That the provisions of the Bushfires Act be strictly complied with in all respects by the officials of the board.

(5) That entry be not made on such part of the land as crop is actually growing on until after harvest.

(6) That provided there and any other prescribed conditions are complied with, the local authority, its members and servants shall be under no financial responsibility for loss.
(f) That in the area comprised in Schedule A there shall be a discretionary power in the Agriculture Protection Board to arrange for any local authority to undertake the same obligations as are contained in the recommendations of this paragraph. Otherwise the present law shall continue and the effects of the local authority and their ratepayers shall be supplemented by the financial assistance and mobile units and trappers to be provided as freely as possible by the Agricultural Protection Board. In the event of the provisions herein made, it will be noticed earlier in this Report, that not more than 75 per cent. of the Central Terraria Fund be expended on payment of bonuses in any year and the remaining 25 per cent. of the desire to increase the amount available for the provision of trappers, poisoners, etc., from that fund.

(g) That where the proceeds of—
(1) The rate struck by the local authority and
(2) The half cost charged to the occupier are estimated as insufficient to pay the cost to be incurred by the local authority, application shall be made to the Agriculture Protection Board for assistance.

(h) That the local authority shall therefore in April of each year estimate its financial position and immediately advise the Agriculture Protection Board so that the necessary consideration may be given by that authority in ample time for the operations of the ensuing year.

(i) That where a Commissioner is appointed consequent on the decision of the Agriculture Protection Board to supersede any local authority for the reasons previously mentioned, the functions of such commissioner shall extend only to operations under the Vermin Act and (if our later recommendations as to the Noxious Weeds Act are accepted) to operations under the Noxious Weeds Act also, and not to any other functions of the local authority. During the time of his appointment the commissioner shall take the place of the board and all the obligations and rights of the local authority shall accrue to him.

The recommendations contained in this paragraph may seem at first sight to be difficult to put into effect. But on more careful consideration, however, we hope that it will be realised that they are practicable and likely to ensure, if properly supervised, a co-ordinated and skillful attack upon vermin in every district. Subsequent to the time when your Commission had them brought under your notice, the representatives of a large number of local authorities were examined on an outline of these proposals. Although the idea was strange to many of them, the general reception could be regarded as favourable. There seemed to be a realization that the present system had broken down and that some alternative must be found. In addition, it is interesting to note that the Road Board Conference of 1943 passed (among others) the following resolution:

"That this Conference is of the opinion that the rabbit problem is one of State importance and that it is beyond the power of the individual farmer, both physically and economically, to cope with." This resolution will be found in the evidence of the President of the Road Board Association at page 686. The point of view, therefore, that the destruction of rabbits is beyond the power of the individual farmer, both physically and economically, to cope with.

28. Your Commission has tackled this problem to the best of its ability in the light of evidence given to it in the course of the hearing of evidence, and in consequence it submits the above recommendations. There are also other important considerations. Among these we must recognize that rubber tyred tractors are not very efficient in warren destruction. The caterpillar type appears more desirable. But for cogent reasons the farmer prefers a rubber tyred tractor for his uses. He cannot afford both. The local authority can use a 'crawler type' with advantage for both vermin destruction and minor road works. Moreover, a dam sinking pit type of operation (if it is not available to us) is the most efficient. It is not economical for every farm to be possessed of one. In a large local authority one may expect to have in its employ men who are skilled in the type of activity most suitable for use against vermin in its district on a district wide scale. Moreover, it is stated that the services of individual farmers could rarely be used on the large scale work required on Crown lands. The possession by local authorities of men and equipment will be vital for the success of any programme. After the alienated land will simplify this aspect. In view of the necessity for changed methods and co-ordinated effort and the views expressed (and recorded above) at the Road Board Conference, it is assumed that local authorities will accept and act in full co-operation with the proposals we have made.

MYXAMATOsis CUNICULI.

29. Rabbit Virus. In various areas representations were made to us that an effort should be made to have field experiments conducted with the rabbit virus (myxamatosus cuniculi) which has been the subject of much study by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

We have had the report of this work in the Council's journal for May, 1944, since which time we understand no further work has been done. Briefly, the report intimated that myxamatosus cuniculi cannot be used to control the rabbit population under most natural conditions in Australia with any promise of success. Principally, apparently, because of the difficulty in spreading the disease which requires actual contact of rabbit to rabbit or the presence of some suitable insect carrier known, we understand, as a fly. The former is difficult to obtain on account of the alleged habit of the rabbit to isolate himself when sick. The opinion held by those who have raised the question is that interests concerned in the commercialisation of the rabbit have been wholly or partly responsible for the absence of field experiments on a large scale and the feeling is undoubtedly abroad in many quarters that the people concerned with these interests are not anxious to encourage any method which they feel would substantially diminish, in a short time, Australia's rabbit population. So we would like to make our position clear in regard to this matter. There is no proof of any such state of affairs, and it is the absence of that we would like for one moment subscribe to the belief that a body of scientists such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research would permit their scientific efforts to be nullified by any such considerations, but we think it is desirable that those who are in doubt should have the opportunity of satisfying themselves. By that means only, in our view, can the matter be satisfactorily disposed of one way or the other. And we are encouraged in this view by an answer given by the Minister for Customs in the Federal Senate to a question asked by Senator Collett (W.A.) on the 28th February, 1945 (Federal "Hansard" of that date, page 119). In the course of his answer dealing with the aspects first mentioned above the Minister went on to say:

"It seems possible that in some parts of Australia under special conditions, including the presence of insect vectors in abundance and the absence of predatory animals, the disease could be used with some promise of temporary control of the rabbit population. The Director General of Health has not granted his permission for the virus to be brought into Australia for the experiments and field trials of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. The virus has remained under the quarantine not unexpected conditions imposed by the Director General. He has decided that it shall remain under his control, but the Council has undertaken to maintain it and not to supply it to any person or institution except with his approval."
It seems to us therefore, that the Agriculture Protection Board when constituted, should further investigate this matter with a view to taking action on the lines mentioned by the Minister for Customs and giving this virus a proper trial, and for that purpose it would be necessary to obtain the necessary approval of the Commonwealth officials. In this connection a representative of the Counselling Board on behalf of the board, at page 1827 of the evidence said:

It is recommended that rabbit virus be released as an experiment and it is suggested that the possibility of conducting this experiment in the Counselling district should be considered as it is desired to bring under notice of the authorities the prevalence of the type of rabbit flea which is in evidence right throughout the district and which should act as a good medium for the spread of the virus.

We recommend that favourable consideration should be given to this suggestion in conjunction with the earlier recommendation as to an approach to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.

DECLARATION OF NEW TYPES OF VERMIN.

30. We recommend that in the North-West and other areas where cures and kangaroos are numerous they should be declared as vermin. In similar areas, where wild goats, pigs, and wild asses are occasioning heavy losses to which a closer reference to the evidence already mentioned by us will supply all necessary details), that these animals be declared vermin also.

CERTAIN BIRDS TO BE DECLARED VERMIN.

31. In certain of the fruit-growing districts, particularly Mr. Barker and Bridgetown, grave difficulty has been experienced with the black cockatoo and in all such areas this bird should be declared vermin, as should also gelants, and certain types of parrots in districts where the evidence discloses that these are a serious pest.

The payment of bonuses on these birds by local authorities and some assistance from the Central Authority in this regard is recommended. In order to minimise the possibility of "importation" claims it would probably be desirable to zone the areas to be declared. Indeed, it might be necessary, so far as the black cockatoo is concerned, to declare him as vermin in the greater part of the South-West Land division at least for a period. The exact areas of these declarations are, however, matters for consideration and action by the Agriculture Protection Board in the light of facts. It is, moreover, necessary that there should be the most urgent and active inquiry into the habits of such birds with a view to devising new ways and means, if any, for their destruction; or at least of keeping them away. Black cockatoos are very cunning birds. It is their habit to take large quantities of apples from orchards, simply split them in half and remove the seeds, leaving the broken apple on the ground. It will readily be seen that their uninterupted progress will occasion grave losses, especially when added to all the existing difficulties which beset those engaged in such branches of primary production.

Every effort to control them or at least keep them from doing damage, should be undertaken as early as possible. We have no doubt whatever (on the evidence) that half a dozen cockatoos will destroy 200 lb. of apples in half an hour. No amendment of the Act is required regarding eagle hawks.

THE EMU.

32. It is, of course, necessary that emus should be declared vermin over the greater part of the State. There is not the slightest evidence, however, that they are doing damage in the extreme south-western portion and we do not think it right we should encourage their extinction in areas where such circumstances exist.

LIMITATION OF AREA IN WHICH EMUS SHOULD BE DECLARED VERMIN.

33. We therefore recommend that emus be not declared vermin south of a line drawn from Esperance on the south coast to a point 20 miles south of the Moore River on the west coast. So far as we can ascertain, the area in which the emus will in these circumstances be declared vermin, will include every area in which he had been noticed in any quantity or in which at the present time he is likely to multiply. There is indeed, some evidence that the type of emu to be found within the area we are defining is different from the type of emus to be found in northern and north-eastern districts.

RATS IN CERTAIN PLACES.

34. In order to enable the Agriculture Protection Board to assist in the eradication of rats in the metropolitan area and certain seacoast towns where they are prevalent, and as their authority to assist can only be derived from the Vermin Act, it seems to us that consideration should be given to declaring rats vermin. So far as our plan of recommendations is concerned, this will not be necessary unless our recommendation for the striking of a rate on urban lands is followed, but if that recommendation is to be followed, it is only reasonable that a portion of the funds collected should be expended in assisting in the extermination of these rodents.

THE ARGENTINE ANT.

36. Strong representations were made to us (particularly by the Albany Municipal Council) in regard to the Argentine ant and we conducted a special examination of Mr. C. F. H. Jenkins (the Government Entomologist) on this subject. So far as actual evidence is concerned, the Argentine ant is present only at the present time in the metropolitan districts, although your committee from personal observation is inclined to suspect its existence at one or two other places, including Moora. We asked Mr. Jenkins at page 2030—

"What is the reason for the great danger of the spread of these ants compared with other ants in the course of his answer he said—

"The Argentine ant has colonising possibilities which are far in excess of most of our native species . . . . Apart from its being a serious pest it also fosters scale and aphids on fruit trees and thus creates a menace that is growing in importance day by day. It is moreover, a very serious nuisance and one which is well worth dealing with. In South Africa the mealy bug is a serious pest in the case of vines, but there the first thing to do is to control the ants before the mealy bug can be controlled. Red scale on citrus trees is another pest that is encouraged by the ant.

He was asked—

Do you think that tourists would carry it from one place to the other?

In the course of his answer he said—

"The Argentine ant has colonising possibilities which are far in excess of most of our native species . . . . Apart from its being a serious pest it also fosters scale and aphids on fruit trees and thus creates a menace that is growing in importance day by day. It is moreover, a very serious nuisance and one which is well worth dealing with. In South Africa the mealy bug is a serious pest in the case of vines, but there the first thing to do is to control the ants before the mealy bug can be controlled. Red scale on citrus trees is another pest that is encouraged by the ant.

Unfortunately it nests in all sorts of places, say in rubbish at the back of a merchant's premises. It may have a nest in a fruit tree in one place and the box may be moved. Apparently that is how it has spread.

The Albany Municipal Council made strong representations to us that a great deal more help should be available from the Government in connection with this matter and stated that if no suitable action is taken to control the pest, its spread over a wide area may be slow, but a stage will be reached when a costly and extensive campaign will be necessary.

In view of the evidence of Mr. Jenkins it is apparent that this may happen and if it will, yet another danger would be added to some of our major producing industries. Once again we are of the opinion that in order to give the Agriculture Protection Board the right to render some assistance in the control of this pest, which is undoubtedly extremely difficult to destroy, that the Argentine ant should be included in the schedule to the Vermin Act.
CONTROL OF APPLIANCES.

36. We find that all sorts of appliances such as fumigators and poison carts are placed on the market from time to time. Some of them appear to us to be almost waste of money. Others are extremely effective in dealing with rabbits. These remarks apply more particularly to the numerous types of fumigators. In our opinion the Agriculture Protection Board should investigate the various types available. If manufactured in Western Australia consideration might be given to the issue of licences to the best types, so that unsuitable types could not be sold. If imposed from overseas, legal difficulties might arise in this connection. At any rate, we recommend that every possible action be taken to discourage the use of such unsuitable types that have been proved to be thoroughly effective for the work they are to do. We see every reason why protection in these matters should be afforded to those who are entrusted with the work of vermin destruction rather than that they should pay dearly for a process of trial and error.

EXEMPTION OF RABBIT NETTED PROPERTIES FROM RATES.

37. Hitherto properties that have been rabbit netted in compliance with the Act have been exempt from certain vermin rates, although not to pay the cost of inspection in order that their effectiveness might be ascertained. This exemption appears to us to lose sight of the fact that there are many kinds of vermin other than rabbits which have to be dealt with and if we are to propose that practically every landholder in the State should contribute to the rates necessary for their eradication or better control, it is surely desirable that reconsideration should be given to the question of exemption of rabbit netted holdings. Indeed, were there any great increase in the number of holdings that were effectively rabbit netted, under the existing law the collection of local rates would be greatly simplified whereas the problem of other types of vermin would still remain. But we have in mind also the fact that there has been a statutory undertaking that such persons as rabbit netted effectively would then be exempt from rates. Taking all these aspects into consideration we recommend that the law be amended so that instead of such a property being exempt from the whole of the rates as at present provided, it should be exempt from 50 per cent. only.

MINOR RECOMMENDATIONS.

38. (a) Properties in more than one district: Where any property lies in more than one vermin district providing the portions adjoin, we recommend that the local authority in whose district the greater portion of that property lies should be permitted to exercise its authority in regard to the whole of that property, to the exclusion of other authorities concerned.

(b) Trafficking in scalp:s: In view of the evidence which has been given to us as to trafficking in scalps, where these are not forwarded (for collection of the bonus) to the Agriculture Protection Board for examination, we have come to the conclusion that no bonus should be paid unless the scalp has first been examined by an officer of the Board.

(c) Penalty for leaving gates open: In view of the evidence given to us as to the frequent occasions on which gates of rabbit-proof fences are left open and inadmissible to their being deliberately left open, in one case so that emus could be driven through them, we recommend that after a period of say six months (during which the Agriculture Protection Board should have given notice of its intention and published it in every possible way) a heavy minimum penalty should be imposed for this type of offence. We recognize the difficulties that will exist in endeavouring to police this type of law enforcement. At the same time we think that every possible means should be taken to educate the public as to the necessity for closing gates and to make an example of offenders when opportunity offers. While we have had much evidence that the police have passed their usefulness, in view of all the circumstances and particularly of the depredations of emus, we feel we cannot support this point of view.

(d) Ammunition: In connection with the supplies of ammunition (both shot gun and ball cartridges) we find that farmers and orchardists have been severely handicapped in their efforts to keep down pests which trouble them, and we consider that every effort should be made to have sufficient supplies of ammunition made available. On this point we feel inclined to recommend that the Agriculture Protection Board should be authorised to acquire ammunition and distribute it as long as it is for the purpose of vermin destruction only. We think that every opportunity should be taken to minimise the cost of this work and provided the distributions are regulated so as to be confined to vermin destruction, we can see no reason why this action should not be taken.

(e) Preparation of certain poison baits: In connection with the distribution of poison baits for foxes and also for wild dogs, we are of the opinion on the evidence that the utmost care should be exercised to ensure that human hands do not touch the bait prior to its distribution, as there is little doubt in our minds that these vermin are unwilling to take such baits whose human nature has been tactfully represented to them. It appears that the scent of the human being is very readily detected by these animals. We received a number of complaints from witnesses on this point. Among these were included Mr. C. L. E. Orton, the Chairman of the Moora Road Board (page 3510), who advocated smoking "the bait over a fire to take away the human smell and do not handle the baits again," and Mr. F. G. England who at page 3572 said, "If you do not wish to poison foxes you have only to handle the baits and they are useless."

(f) Heavier than air gas: As it is desirable that the destruction of rabbits in their warrens should be simplified if at all possible, inquiries are made both in Australia and overseas as to the practicability of providing some sort of biotype or container which, when exposed to the air at the bottom of a burrow, will give off a lethal heavier-than-air gas. If any such substance be found procurable it should not be released nor any public statements made as to its effectiveness until it has been thoroughly tested out and proved effective by the Agriculture Protection Board.

(g) Instruction of vermin destroyers: That efforts be made to instruct the members of mobile units and others engaged in vermin destruction in the best use of the methods evolved and that consideration be given to the holding of a short technical course at regular intervals for that purpose.

(h) Strychnine poison: In our opinion the sale of this poison for vermin destruction should be in the hands of the Agriculture Protection Board and local authorities only and should be made available at cost price.

(i) Increase in number of doyenns: The practice of sending out dog trappers or better still dog poisoners in the bush areas (whether as members of mobile units or not) should be continued and the numbers have been so increased as to cause substantially increased to the limit that the Agriculture Protection Board considers provision can be made and that such trappers or poisoners be permitted to enter upon private property in areas where their services are provided if they have first given the prescribed notice to the occupier (subject to such regulations as may be imposed by the Agriculture Protection Board) at the request of the occupier. We recommend that no trapper be left in the one area for more than three years.

(j) That local vermin boards be required to keep a separate banking account for vermin board moneys and that the account be audited annually by auditors appointed to obtain current account overdrafts in respect of vermin operations in anticipation of the receipt of revenue in the same way as is provided in the Road Districts Act.
THE FOX.

30. We find that all sorts of opinions were held as to the size and importance of this type of vermin. In a few instances it was apparent that witnesses were not anxious to take strong action against him. In one or two cases witnesses went so far as to suggest that he should not be shot. In the majority of cases, however, it was quite clear that he is an absolute menace to the pastoral community. If he does not make good the losses in sheep and lambs at any other period, he certainly takes his toll during the lambing season. In some areas of the State he regularly attacks grown sheep and this is most pronounced in the areas where the rabbits are either non-existent or few in numbers. Among those who looked with a friendly eye on the fox, we find it was because of the rabbits the fox might destroy. Some of these people, when asked to consider the activity of the fox in regard to birds, valued as insect-eaters, were inclined to shift their base and look upon the fox in a rather more unfriendly light. We consider in our opinion, that the fox is a menace to the farming industry and to sheep raisers in some of the pastoral areas. To those who look upon him as valuable because he consumes a few rabbits per annum, we would point out that the object of this report is to eradicate or at least to decrease the rabbit community and if this objective be achieved or substantially achieved, the fox (who will have rapidly increased in numbers in the meantime if there be no activity against him) will descend like the Tartars of old upon the sheep flocks of the State and wreak havoc among them in the absence of any other source of food supply. He is doing great damage today. There is every reason now why he should be destroyed. If he is not now destroyed, at least kept strictly under control, the damage that he will do in the future will be impossible of estimation. Measures against the fox, therefore, should be included in the obligatory measures to be taken by local authorities under the proposals contained in paragraph 26. In the bush country wholesale poisoning should be adopted in the same way as is recommended by Mr. Arnold in regard to attempts at the eradication of wild dogs and in this connection careful note should be taken of our recommendation in paragraph 26 (e).

We recommend too the retention of the bonus on foxes and for the consideration of the central authority, some increase in that bonus not exceeding the amount previously specified. In regard to the wholesale poisoning of foxes we would like to refer to some evidence given by Mr. M. L. Anderson, Branch Manager of the Agricultural Bank, Merredin, in regard to his earlier experiences in the Stirling Ranges, south of Gingin, in which he lived for a period. He was there.

Dealing with the question of poisoning foxes in bush country, when I was a boy at Gingin the district was over-run with dogs. They were in the Stirling Ranges and as we had plenty of poison, we poisoned every week. We put down 300 to 300 baits and destroyed all the dogs in that way. I am told that the same could be done to the fox provided the work was consistently and properly done. Foxes will take bait in any country.

He was then asked—
Have you had any experience of poisoning foxes in this way?

He answered—
Yes, I did quite a lot of it at Kununurra when I was there.

He was then asked—
Therefore you say that if a determined effort were made in the bush country such as Crown lands, against the foxes, they could be thinned down, if not destroyed.

He answered—
I am certain of it.

On the evidence and on the observations of members of the Commission we can do nothing else but recommend that every effort be made to destroy foxes wherever they can be found. When we realise that bonuses were paid on 41,000 foxes during the year 1943-44 and this disregards the many thousands of cases that were never recovered, and when we realise that the number on which bonuses has been paid has steadily increased over a period of years and that there are today untold numbers of foxes throughout the country districts, it will be seen that the Government really has to do something to prevent this destruction. It is quite clear that when asked whether we should recommend action to prevent the attack on rabbits by foxes, we have already said that we should recommend the activities of mobile units and made recommendations concerning the urgent need for activity on various Government reserves and other similar areas.

DESTRUCTION OF RABBIT WARRENS.

40. It will readily be seen that your Commission attaches great importance to the total destruction of warrens as a means of diminishing the rabbit population. Hence our recommendations in respect of the Forestry Department. We now ask that similar action be taken in respect of the Agriculture Protection Board. To these we now add a similar requirement in respect of the Forestry Department under our proposals in respect of that department and in respect of other Government departments similarly situated. We have here referred to paragraph 14. The Railway Department and Midland Railways must also be included in respect of their own handling of the permanent way embankments.

We have arrived at these conclusions on the definite and substantial preference of vermin over other methods of destruction, including fumigation and poisoning by various methods, are very valuable, but these can only be fully implemented by warren destruction to which an adjunct of great value is the use of suitable dogs.

RATING PROVISIONS, PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO PASTORAL LEASES.

41. It appears that the interpretation placed upon subsection 3 of section 59 of the Vermin Act has required local authorities to relate the vermin rates struck in the same district. It will be seen later that this interpretation has been stated to be in error in that the destruction of vermin is partly because
of the anomaly mentioned would fall more harshly on pastoral interests than in the example quoted. This is quite contrary to our intention, and the special provisions we have made regarding pastoral interests in earlier portions of this report.

Therefore we recommend that vermin rates be struck quite independently of the amount of road rates, thus leaving the discretion (subject to our recommendations) to local authorities. Section 59 of the Act should be amended accordingly.

We may add that representations on this subject were made to us in many quarters, both by pastoral interests and local authorities. A perusal of the evidence given by Mr. A. G. P. Paterson and Mr. H. R. G. Addins will make the position quite clear. We deal with the provisions of section 108 of the Vermin Act and other matters relating to rates and their collection in Part 2 of this report.

SOME CURIOUS SECTIONS OF THE VERMIN ACT.

42. We recommend that section 118 of the Vermin Act be repealed. It reads as follows:

118. Any person who in any part of the State situated westward of the Government fence from Stawell East Harbour to the 100-mile beach without the license in writing of the Minister sells or offers to sell or exposes for sale any dead rabbit shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding £50.

It is a defence to a charge under this section to prove that the rabbit was imported from beyond the State or was killed eastward of the said Government fence.

For the information of those who are not entirely acquainted with the geography of Western Australia we point out that under this section the sale of dead rabbits, except under licence, is unlawful over all that area of the State to the eastward of a line drawn approximately 40 miles west of Port Hedland on the south coast to midway between the North-West Cape and the State border on the North Coast. Therefore the section purports to make it illegal to sell a dead rabbit practically anywhere in the populated areas of the State. It is quite clear that this section has been substantially more honoured in the breach than in the observance. We have proposed measures for the control of all rabbit trapping and the prevention of that trapping by certain persons. We can see nothing but futility in preventing the sale of dead rabbits which are lawfully trapped and the prevention of that trapping by certain persons.

If we can get nothing but futility in preventing the sale of dead rabbits which are lawfully trapped and the prevention of that trapping by certain persons.

We can see nothing but futility in preventing the sale of dead rabbits which are lawfully trapped and the prevention of that trapping by certain persons.

Section 95.—It is suggested to us that this section should be repealed. We do not agree that that would be desirable. From all we can gather it has not been of any great use in the past because the onus of the destruction of vermin remained, so far as the Act was concerned, upon the occupier of the property. The destruction of vermin on Crown land being everybody's business became nobody's business. Thus it was of little value for anyone to give notice to the authorities mentioned in the section, but the provisions of the section will be of value when the onus for destruction is removed as per our recommendations to local authorities and the Agriculture Protection Board in occupied properties and Crown lands respectively. The section however, should be amended to read that notice shall be given to the nearest local authority or to the director of Pest Destruction.

Section 96: It will readily be realised that our recommendations will involve the repeal of this section which places the duty of destruction on the owners and occupiers of properties and the insertion of the relevant provisions required in the Act and in its place, together with the repeal of subsection (1) of section 102.

CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS.

43. There will be also a number of amendments consequential upon our recommendations that will be required to other sections of the Act. It is not our intention to enumerate these. They are, we consider, self-evident.

PROPOSED CREATION OF SEPARATE VERMIN BOARDS.

44. We did give consideration to a suggestion that instead of the onus of vermin destruction being placed on the existing road boards acting as vermin boards, a separate vermin board should be set up in each district, entrusted with the same powers and subject to the same obligations as we have proposed. It is obvious that this would merely increase the cost of administration. It would either minimize the amount available for vermin destruction or result in an increase in the charges to be made in rates or for the work done. It seems to us that many local authorities will readily take on the extra work involved "in their stride." Those few to whom the position will present some difficulty will, we consider, by co-operation with the Agriculture Protection Board and through the interest which we hope and believe that board will take in them, shortly and readily accept and carry out in a capable manner the responsibilities imposed on them. In short, we do not feel inclined to encourage any method which would increase administration costs and the above suggestion would certainly have done that. In that case the funds available for active work on vermin control would be diminished.

SCHEDULE A.

All that portion of Western Australia lying to the north of the 29th parallel of south latitude plus the balance of the area of the State situated eastward of a line drawn midway between the North-West Cape and the State border on the North Coast. The section however, should be amended to read that notice shall be given to the nearest local authority or to the director of Pest Destruction.

SCHEDULE B.

All that part of the State not included in Schedule A.

PART 2—NOXIOUS WEEDS.

COMMENT ON PAST METHODS.

45. We have viewed with amazement, not to say consternation, the ineffective and spasmodic efforts that have been made in Western Australia in regard to the control and eradication of noxious weeds.

In consequence, the spread of certain noxious weeds in many districts has been such as to make the task of controlling them now virtually impossible. Where certain types of noxious weeds have become uncontrollable, farmers are sometimes inclined to regard them as sections no longer and to suffer the consequences entailed thereby. This has gone on to such an extent that in certain instances farmers appear to have defended themselves into the belief that weeds which are likely to do grave damage to pasture are good food for livestock.

The inattention to the problem of which we complain has not been confined to the local authorities. It is true that we rarely heard of any concerted efforts being made by local authorities to rid their districts of noxious weeds, even where those had only recently appeared and were confined to small areas. In a small number of districts there was considerable activity and in those districts the efforts
being made can be regarded as commendable. So far as the Crown and its departments are concerned they must accept their share of criticism for the existing state of affairs. To this, of course, there are exceptions. For example, assistance has been given by the Department of Agriculture in the control of Bathurst Burr in the goldfields district, but this assistance which was of a financial and advisory character, has not been sufficient to cope with the work that was required and we commend the work which has been done by the local authorities of that area in regard to this particular weed.

EXPERIMENTS BY DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

46. Various experiments have been conducted by the technical advisers of the Department of Agriculture as to the best means of controlling certain noxious weeds, of which the blackberry and St. John’s wort may be quoted as examples. We do not extend our criticism to the professional officers of the department. We feel that within the limits imposed upon them they have done very good work, but it has been infinitesimal as compared with the work which should have been done and remains to be done in the future. It is apparent that the experts of the department have been handicapped by lack of facilities and shortage of staff. It is admitted that the difficulty of obtaining trained botanists (who are essential for this particular work) is very great and every effort should be made to increase the supply of these officers and to provide for better accommodation and more and better facilities for investigation and research.

SOME WEEDS NOW UNCONTROLLABLE.

47. Suggestions were made to us that where certain weeds in certain districts are completely out of control, they should be removed from the noxious weeds list. Included among these are the wild turnip, watsonia, doublegeese, and in some districts, Cape tulip. There are, of course, a number of others which we will not attempt to enumerate. We have simply quoted four of those which in various parts of the State are very widespread. We discussed matters at considerable length in the course of the evidence given by Mr. W. R. Meadley, the Assistant Government Botanist and Weeds Officer of the Department of Agriculture. In the course of his evidence on page 2026 Mr. Meadley said:-

Quite a few of the weeds are beyond control in certain districts and in consequence it would be a little foolish to declare them noxious for the State. At the same time, however, I can envisage that if a systematic survey of the weeds is made it would be possible to zone the State and have certain zones in which specific weeds will be declared noxious.

Letter on Mr. Meadley continued:-

By having a small list of the most serious weeds we will have a concentration of effort on those weeds. In the list you will notice weeds such as burr, St. John’s wort, red wort and skeleton ... They are at present localised in this State and definitely are controllable.

On this and a great deal of other evidence on the same subject we have come to the conclusion that one of the first things that should be done is to survey the State, so as accurately to mark out the weeds that exist, the places where they are to be found and their spread in each district. It would not appear that this survey need extend outside the boundaries of the South-West land division as we had little evidence of the prevalence of noxious weeds in districts which are outside that area.

WEEDS OUTSIDE THE SOUTH-WEST LAND DIVISION.

48. Exceptions may be made to this general statement in regard to certain road districts whose territory is on the eastern fringe of the South-West land division. We also had evidence from Mr. G. G. Rose, of Mt. Anderson Station, near Derby, as to the presence of a weed in his area which he referred to as burr seed. In this connection it may be of interest to quote from the evidence of Mr. Rose on page 795. He was asked:-

You have a burr that affects the wool?

He answered:-

There is a new burr introduced from Broome and threatens to be a very serious menace to the country. I consider it is going to be one of our big problems. It is spreading rapidly. We have tried to eradicate it, but there is no hope of preventing it from spreading.

Mr. Rose then went on to say that the burr had been in his district for about three years, that no officer of the department had recently been there, but that he had been unable to give any suggestion for coping with the burr or eradicating it. The plant was described as very similar in appearance to buffalo and bird grass and was slated to be completely out of control. This was the only weed, so far as the evidence before us is concerned, that was occasioning trouble in the areas outside the South-West land division except in one or two districts. The need for further investigation in these areas is apparent, and shows the necessity of more skilled officers being available.

FUTURE CONTROL BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

49. It seems to us that it should be possible for local authorities to undertake a far greater measure of control of noxious weeds than they have done in the past by co-ordinating their noxious weeds work with the work we have already recommended in Part I of this Report in connection with the destruction of vermin. It is necessary that the presence of noxious weeds should be immediately reported. If they have been decided by the authorities concerned to be out of control, then efforts would have to be confined to preventing their spread to other districts. If they are considered to be controllable or of such a poisonous nature that they must be dealt with in any case, then measures must be taken for their eradication.

EFFECT OF WEEDS ON PRODUCTION.

50. The noxious weed problem, while not perhaps as serious as the vermin problem, from the point of view of diminished production, has grave repercussions on production. The growth of pasture is greatly retarded, The value of wool clips is diminished. The difficulties of stock raisers are increased by losses of stock or the presence of minor diseases. Obviously by these and other effects of the noxious weeds on cultivation and soil fertility, there must be grave detriment to the State’s productive capacity. It is true that in many large areas, even in the South-West land division (and noticeably in the parts of that division further from the coast) there are few, if any, noxious weeds, but the progress of the State demands that the best means must be devised of coping with them.

FUNDS TO BE USED.

51. In another portion of this Report we recommend that certain funds be raised by a tax on all lands in the State and we consider that 10 per cent. of that fund which is specified in Part 5 of this Report, should be set aside by the Agriculture Protection Board for the purposes of making some provision for noxious weeds eradication. There has been certain expenditure out of Consolidated Revenue on salaries and occasional subsidies to local authorities such as these in connection with Bathurst burr, and similar incidentals. The amount paid in salaries will, of course, he continued to be paid in the ordinary course, but we feel that an amount at least equivalent to the maximum which has been expended in any year in the last ten years on the other avenues mentioned should be appropriated from Consolidated Revenue and paid to the Agriculture Protection Board.
to supplement the fund we mention. On the evidence of the Under Secretary for Agriculture (pages 75 to 101) we consider £500 per annum would be a fair sum to allow.

MOVEMENT OF SEED AND LIVESTOCK AS MEANS OF SPREADING WEED PESTS.

32. Turning to the question of preventing the spread of noxious weeds, we feel it is obvious that the carriage of noxious weeds by seed and livestock from one district to another has been responsible in many instances for their spread, as has also the movement of livestock and of clover burs. It is easy, of course, to say that there should be tightening up of the law in regard to these various matters. It is apparent that if a law once passed could be continually and effectively policed and enforced, the spread of noxious weeds by these means would practically cease. But in a country which is substantially dependent upon various types of agriculture, and where transport of seed and livestock occurs over long distances, the task of those who are endeavouring to police legislation of this character must be extremely difficult, particularly as it is essential that production be not hampered. Nevertheless these difficulties do not excuse laxity or failure to make the attempt to exercise a reasonable measure of control. We feel that if that effort is made and is coupled with notification of the appearance of a new weed in any district as soon as it appears, followed by measures of eradication in that district, the possibilities of control will be very much greater.

It might be pointed out that certain weeds which, owing to their spread and loss of control a year earlier in certain districts, are of considerable danger to stock when introduced into districts which are free of them. In this regard Cape tulip could be given as an example.

ADMINISTRATION OF ACT AND SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS.

53. Taking into consideration these various matters and on the evidence before us, we recommend—

(a) The Agriculture Protection Board.—That the Noxious Weeds Act be administered by the Director of Pests Destruction under the supervision of the Agriculture Protection Board.

(b) Local authorities to act where weeds not declared uncontrollable.—That the officers of local authorities when engaged in vermin destruction under our recommendations in Part (f) be required to attend to the eradication of noxious weeds except those weeds which have been declared uncontrollable. In the case of uncontrollable weeds, they must attend to any outbreaks on land previously not affected.

(c) Assistance to Local Boards.—That within the discretion of the Agriculture Protection Board financial assistance be provided to local authorities in areas where any substantial quantity of this work has to be done by local authorities and application is made to the Board for assistance.

(d) Survey of Noxious Weeds.—That as early as possible a survey be made of the districts of the State in which noxious weeds are. The object will be to declare weeds uncontrollable in regions where they are regarded as such and either remove them from the noxious weeds list altogether or declare them as noxious in regions where they can still be controlled or eradicated.

(e) Weeds poisonous to Stock.—That no weed be removed from the noxious weeds list or confined to any region in cases where such weed is known definitely to be poisonous if eaten by livestock. If any such weeds are so regarded it may be impossible for those entrusted with their eradication successfully to undertake it. And of course sympathetic consideration would have to be given by the Agriculture Protection Board to such a case.

(f) Additional Staff.—That the Agriculture Protection Board be empowered to employ botanists (we suggest two) for the purpose of co-operating in the survey in question, and advising local authorities and making investigations into the best ways and means of dealing with specified noxious weeds. These officers would, of course, be in addition to those of the Department of Agriculture.

(g) Livestock Movements.—In an effort to minimise the spread of noxious weeds no person be permitted to send livestock from a property in any road district in which any weed is known definitely free of other district without giving notice to the local authority of such other district that such livestock are being sent to that district. The vendor of the stock shall give notice to the broker or agent negotiating the sale and such broker or agent shall give such notice to the local authority of the other district. The particular noxious weed concerned shall be named in the notice. Where dispatch of the livestock is in the first instance to a metropolitan market for sale there, notice shall be given to the broker or agent handling the stock and the venta shall be on such broker or agent of giving notice (if such stock are subsequently sent out of the metropolitan area) to some other district. In the event of no broker or agent being employed in the sale, the notice shall be given by the vendor to the local authority of the other district. In either event a copy of the notice shall be sent to the Department of Agriculture. The vendor must not be allowed to alter the existing regulations regarding the shearing of imported sheep which should be strictly enforced.

(h) Railway Payments.—That the Railway Department and Midland Railway Company be required to make a contribution to the central authority towards the fund for the eradication of noxious weeds of such amount as the Agriculture Protection Board may annually determine, not exceeding in respect of the West Australian Government Railways the sum of £500 in any year and in respect of the Midland Railway Company £250 in any year.

(i) Sales of Seeds, etc.—No person to be permitted to dispose of agricultural seeds, chaff or hay of any kind (including clover burs) to any place outside the particular road board district within which he resides without a license from the Agriculture Protection Board. Such license should be an annual license (not for separate consignments) and be granted him without charge. Written application would be required from each applicant. One of the conditions of such license be to that when any licensee sells to any person in any district other than the one in which he resides he shall give notice to the local authority of such other district (and to the purchaser of the seeds) of the existence of any noxious weeds on his own property and the names, of such noxious weeds. In regard to sales to metropolitan markets similar provisions to those in sub-paragraph (g) should apply where subsequent despatch of the goods to some other rural district takes place.

(N.B.—We have considered the provisions of Section 96 of the Agricultural Seeds Act as applying to clover burs and in the circumstances of the demand for this product, we feel that its sale should be permitted notwithstanding that the Act at present appears to make it illegal by prescribing that all seeds sold should be brought up to 96 per cent. pure seed.)

COMMENTS ON RAILWAY RESERVES.

54. At this stage we desire to make some general remarks on one or two matters. Firstly, dealing with the railway reserves, we feel that treatment must be given to these by the local authorities in respect of areas other than permanent way and embankments and by the railway management themselves in respect of the latter. In the course of evidence it appeared to us that some of the efforts made by railway employees to eradicate noxious weeds was practically nil. The great efforts which have taken place from time to time, resulted (through lack of the knowledge of the best methods) in failure, and not in eradication. Secondly, dealing with the question of weed eradication generally, we have already made proposals.
regarding weeds of an uncontrolable nature and we consider that all other weeds can be dealt with by the road board officials and should be dealt with by them in the course of their vermin activities. To this end it would be desirable that the men employed by the local authorities in these works should be given the power of noxious weeds inspectors.

COMMENTS ON THE ACT.

55. It will be apparent from these observations that the Noxious Weeds Act will require considerable amendments. We have not attempted to deal with the pests of the existing Act. This activity is, we consider best left to the Crown Law officers, but as an example of the type of major amendment that would be required we would refer to Section 8 of the existing Act. This section provides that every local authority shall destroy noxious weeds growing on any road or land under its control. When it is remembered that we propose to apply the same system of noxious weeds control as is to be applied to vermin control, it will be quite clear how this section will require alteration. Nor do we view with enthusiasm the provisions of the Act which make by-laws by local authorities an essential part of the procedure. No local authority produced to us a copy of the by-laws in question. Where they were asked for they did not exist or could not be found. It seems to us that uniform by-laws should be provided and be effective throughout the State carrying out, among other things, the intention of the recommendations which we make.

PENALTIES.

56. It will, of course, be necessary to prescribe penalties for failure to comply with the recommendations which we have made in regard to movements of stock and sale of seeds and it will be necessary moreover to empower inspectors to deal with these matters. We do not propose that any special rate shall be imposed by local authority or otherwise in respect of noxious weeds. We feel that these problems can be tackled within the confines of the ordinary revenues of the boards, and particularly within the confines of the vermin rates, coupled with assistance approved by the Agriculture Protection Board.

SUGGESTED AMALGAMATION OF ACTS NOT RECOMMENDED.

57. It was suggested to us that the Vermin Act and the Noxious Weeds Act should for this purpose be amalgamated. We do not consider that this is necessary, but we do consider that provision should be made to enable a local authority lawfully to charge to its vermin account work done in the course of the same operations in regard to noxious weeds, as these operations that in their effect on our agricultural operations, vermin and noxious weeds are closely related. The Act of 1924 and its amendments of 1939 will obviously therefore require a complete overhaul so as to dovetail with these proposals. Existing laws applying to local authorities enable ordinary revenue to be expended on noxious weed control. This power should continue.

The power of supervision of local authority contained in section 28 of the Act of 1924 could, we think, be repealed in favour of the power of the Agriculture Protection Board set out in connection with vermin activities. In part (1) of this Report it would be wise to have two systems under which a local authority could be superseded when two departments of its activities are for most practical purposes amalgamated.

NATIVE POISON PLANTS EXCLUDED.

58. We would make it clear at this stage that except for the provision of advice where necessary our recommendations do not apply to certain plants which are indigenous to Western Australia such as York Head and box poison plants and others similar. Those wildlife and matters that are assoelated with the major insect pests and plant diseases will be of a less substantial character than its proposals regarding vermin and noxious weeds. Nevertheless certain matters can be recommended and should receive urgent attention.

MAJOR INSECT PESTS.

62. We have had some very interesting and instructive evidence from the Government Entomologist and other officers of the Department of Agriculture and we have given considerable thought to the problems that are associated with the major insect pests mentioned by Mr. Jenkins, and have closely examined a great number of witnesses in areas where they are prevalent. As a result of all this inquiry, we have come to the conclusion that the pests of this kind that should occasion us the most concern and should be the subject of the greatest activity are:-

(1) Blowfly and Fruit fly.
(2) Red Mite.
(3) Lucerne Flea.
(4) Grasshopper.
(5) Argentine Ant.

We do not propose to deal with the grasshopper and the Argentine Ant in this part of the Report. The former has been declared vermin under the Vermin Act for a considerable period. We have also recommended in regard to grasshoppers under the Vermin Act. In regard to the Argentine Ant we have made recommendations regarding it and suggested its inclusion in the schedule to the Vermin Act.
BLOWFLIES AND THE RESEARCH PROBLEM.

62. We were astonished to find that no actual research is being carried out in Western Australia in regard to the blowfly. The Government Entomologist told us that it had been exhaustively investigated by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research but that at the time of his evidence (October 3rd, 1944) the work was not being so actively carried out because some of the main workers had gone into the Army.

There is undoubtedly a grave fear in the north-western areas of the State that after the recent heavy rains the blowfly will reappear and add to the already heavy losses incurred in areas where the considerable further loss must be suffered from the ravages of this insect. In the evidence of Mr. A. G. P. Paterson, representing the Pastoralists' Association (at page 151 of the evidence) he was asked:—

What about the blowfly?

Mr. Paterson answered:—

That appears in certain seasons but we have had only two seasons when it has been a serious menace and we have sustained serious losses. It will become very serious in any season when we have a lot of rain and green feed.

This evidence was supported by testimony from the same districts.

So far as we can understand, investigations conducted by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research have mostly been in the direction of determining the value of repellents or remedies to keep away or cure the effects of the blowfly, rather than an examination of the reasons that occasion its development and investigations in the field as to the causes of infestation. It seems to us that if investigations were conducted into these aspects on the spot (in the northern areas of the State) by competent officers, there is a possibility that results might be achieved. It is perfectly clear that if results were achieved in those areas they would be of advantage to other parts of the State where the same types of blowfly appear. In addition, field and laboratory experiments should be conducted with the insecticide known as D.D.T.

FRUIT FLY AND COMMUNITY SPRAYING.

64. There is a strong indication that many fruit-growers, principally those with fruit trees not grown for profit, are quite indifferent to the spread and breeding of fruit fly. Compulsory spraying appears to vary Commissioners to be the most effective means of combating this pest, and we recommend that this should be carried out in the fruit areas within a radius of approximately 100 miles of the Perth G.P.O. This radius could be extended if necessary, but there is no present need for it. If such action is taken there is every indication that the spread of fruit fly could be more effectively controlled. The work should be carried out by persons employed by the orchard inspector in each district who should be controlled and supervised by him. If any further inspectors are required (as has been suggested to us as necessary even under the existing law) we contend that they should be paid for from Government funds and that there should be no increase in the orchard registration fees. The prevention of the spread of fruit diseases is a matter of great moment to the State, its economy and its development, and it is not reasonable, in our view, to impose any further tax upon the orchardists themselves in this regard, but the cost of the compulsory spraying will have to be paid for by the orchardist on a reasonable basis. This will, however, not involve him in any extra expense. So far as the backyard orchardist is concerned, it will involve in most instances the spraying of all his fruit trees. As far as the "commercial" orchardist is concerned it will involve only the spraying of the trees to the extent that will satisfy the inspector.

We are therefore not able to specify the charges that should be made, but they should do no more than cover the actual and reasonable cost of the work involved on each property.

A FIVE-YEAR PLAN.

65. We recommend in this case also a five-year plan. By placing the onus on the inspectors of seeing that this work is carried out, we are approaching the matter in the same way as we have approached the question of vermin destruction because we feel that there must be an obligation on some recognised and statutory board to control and participate in the work instead of acting as mere inspectors, if any satisfactory measure of control is to be arrived at as we believe it can be.

HONORARY LOCAL COMMITTEES.

66. An honorary local advisory committee might, we feel, be appointed in the district of each inspector. It should consist of, any, three local fruitgrowers elected where possible by the growers only, and be paid for by themselves. Where that cannot be done they should be nominated by the Minister. Each such committee would assist the inspector in an advisory capacity and form a liaison between him and those who would be subject to his visits.

At this stage we would comment that it will be necessary to ensure that the activities of the inspector are carried out more regularly and the law better compiled with. We have no hesitation in saying that great damage is being done to citrus fruit, but the cost of the compulsory spraying is not grown for profit and we believe that it should be an obvious need for these investigations to continue on an increasing scale.

RED MITE.

67. In regard to the activities of the red mite we have no hesitation in saying that great damage is being done to pastures in very wide areas of the State. In almost all the areas which we visited, complaints were made of the damage being done by this particular pest. Unfortunately, whilst insecticides can be found that will kill the red mite, it seems obvious that it would not be economical to treat thousands of acres in this manner, and although we gathered that investigation had been conducted over a period of five years by an officer of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in this State, apart from some results of a minor nature there was little benefit resulting from his work. No parasite has been discovered which will deal with it. There is an obvious need for these investigations to continue on an increasing scale. If the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research will provide another officer for the purpose, that will be all to the good, but it does not seem to us that it is reasonable to leave the whole of the work to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research when one considers the depredations of Western Australia upon agricultural development. An officer holding a degree of Bachelor of Science should be appointed at a satisfactory remuneration by the Government of the State to undertake immediate further investigations into this problem.

LUCERNE FLEA.

68. Turning now to lucerne flea, a parasite was found at Woorooloo and until a couple of years ago was collected extensively and distributed to various parts of the State with very satisfactory results. We have been informed by the Government Entomologist (evidence, page 104) that more recently that work has not been continued because of lack of manpower due to the war. We have no hesitation in saying that immediate efforts should be made to put
a period to this shortage so that such valuable work as has been carried out previously may be started again and continued.

LABORATORY AND RESEARCH ACCOMMODATION.

69. The need for increased laboratory accommodation and better facilities for research generally is very evident. From the evidence before us it is clear that the provision of increased facilities and the appointment of at least another man to serve under the Government Entomologist in research work would be of the greatest assistance.

OTHER INSECT PESTS—THE NEED FOR INCREASED STAFF, ETC.

70. While we have enumerated the principal pests, there are many others which require constant scientific investigation and new pests arise from time to time which, broadly speaking, are receiving no attention at all. We do not make these observations in any spirit of carping criticism. We are not unappreciative of the excellent work that has been done (within the limitations existing) by the officers of the Department of Agriculture, but we feel it necessary to point out that it is quite clear, as a result of our inquiries, that this work has not been sufficient and we feel we have only to indicate that opinion and the recommendation will be prepared at once to take steps to remedy that state of affairs. In the course of his evidence at page 105, Mr. Jenkins was asked:

The provision of more adequate accommodation would be of great help?

He answered:—

Yes, it would help considerably.

He was then asked:—

What about staff?

And Mr. Jenkins replied:—

The staff we could employ on the work would be almost unlimited. For instance, the red-legged earth mite had the attention of one officer for five years. There are other pests that could be dealt with in the same way.

This increased accommodation and increased staff would result in the advice of officers of the department being more freely available to persons in difficulty with various pests. This of itself would be invaluable. These additional officers should be able to trace the origin of some of our more serious pests and to recommend measures to prevent the importation of fresh pests liable to damage any of our industries. All such officers whose duties take them into country districts should be provided with motor vehicle transport to ensure speedy and regular activity.

We feel that improved transport facilities, particularly the aeroplane, make the risk of new pests reaching our shores greater than it has been in the past. In the post-war period we simply cannot neglect any opportunity that is open to us to minimise the difficulties of those engaged in agricultural pursuits and thus encourage the chances of the successful development of substantial areas of the State which are at present so thinly populated.

THE FRUITGROWING INDUSTRY TRUST FUND ACT.

71. It is well known that this Act provides for the imposition of a tax consented to by the industry and administered by a committee comprising one representative of the Department of Agriculture and two of the West Australian Fruitgrowers’ Association Incorporated. This tax is collected by a charge not exceeding ½d., on every bushel of apples and pears, assessed by the method set out in section 17 of the Act, the actual rate of tax being declared from time to time by the Minister. By section 18 of the Act the tax is to be expended—

(a) In the cost of administration.

(b) In the prescribed fees and allowances of members of the committee and thereafter (subject to the approval of the Minister)—

(i) In the payment of the whole or portion of the expense of eradication of pests and diseases affecting fruit trees.

(ii) In the payment of compensation to growers in respect of the whole or portion of losses suffered as a result of such measures.

(iii) In the payment of the cost of the promotion and encouragement of scientific research.

(iv) In the provision of financial help for the association and its branches (when recommended by the Committee).

(v) For any other purpose which, in the opinion of the Minister will promote and encourage the fruitgrowing industry.

In our opinion the Act should be amended to provide that the tax to be raised should be sufficient only to pay the amount which the Committee declares is required to pay—

(a) The fees and allowances of the members of the Committee.

(b) The provision of financial help for the Association and its branches in the carrying out of its activities for the benefit of growers; and

(c) The payment of the cost of the promotion and encouragement of scientific research for the improvement of fruit crops or the transport of such crops, but only to the extent which the Association recommends and the Committee approves.

In other words, this special tax collected from the fruitgrowers should, in our opinion, be collected only for the purpose of providing funds for the administration of the Fruitgrowers’ Association and such research as that association considers it desirable to make. It is quite obvious that in the event of any serious outbreak of fruit disease in which it becomes necessary (as it has been necessary in the past) for heavy losses to be suffered by one or a few fruitgrowers in the interests of all fruitgrowers and of the State, that the portion of the present Fruit Industry Trust Fund that is likely to be available will be insufficient for adequate compensation. The fruit industry is of such importance to the people of Western Australia and has been so ready in the past to assist financially with little or no public assistance in the control and eradication of disease affecting the industry that in our view it is reasonable that compensation when required (in such circumstances as are mentioned above) should be paid by the whole community. We must remember it is already heavily taxed under the law relating to orchard registration. The eradication of a serious fruit disease or pest may at times involve the loss of the whole crop and may even involve the destruction of the orchard itself. In consequence, we recommend that an amount of £1,600 per annum be paid from the special fund to be collected under Part 5 of this Report to a trust fund to be kept by the Committee appointed under the Fruit Industry Trust Fund Act. This contribution would be used for the purpose of building up a compensation fund. In the event of an outbreak requiring compensation to be paid, Consolidated Revenue should contribute an amount of 1½d. for every £1 that has to be taken from the Fruit Industry Trust Fund, thus ensuring in order to meet by way of compensation at least 75 per cent of the damage and loss suffered in the work of eradicating the disease or pest concerned. This fund should also be available at the discretion of the Committee and with Ministerial approval to assist orchardists in combating diseases or pests which, if not checked or limited to the place of outbreak, are considered as likely to do grave damage to the industry—
even though compensation for loss of crop or tree is not involved. The fund collected under the existing Act is at present in credit. The Committee and the Minister should be empowered to decide the fair proportion of the credit balance which should be used to form the nucleus of the new fund.

In our opinion the contribution of £1,500 a year previously recommended from the special fund should cease when the Trust Fund shows a balance of £6,000, but should be resumed with the idea of maintaining the fund at such last mentioned figure at any time when the Trust Fund credit falls below it.

PART 4—ANIMAL DISEASES.

72. From the evidence it appeared to us that serious epidemic diseases of livestock have been prevalent in Western Australia. Nevertheless, we feel that modern transport facilities will increase the risk of an outbreak of these diseases, especially in view of the State's proximity to Asiatic countries where diseases not existing in Western Australia are prevalent. Therefore, no relaxation, but rather an increase in vigilance is required.

We desire to commend the research work that has been conducted by veterinary officers of the Department of Agriculture. This is to be commended as it has been conducted under very unsatisfactory conditions and with inadequate equipment. We are aware that the executive, an up to date laboratory in now about to proceed and we must express the belief that nothing should be allowed to delay its completion. It is clear that the premises and equipment that have been in use are not only entirely inadequate, but have had a detrimental effect on the progress of otherwise admirable work.

In Part V of this Report we make certain recommendations regarding investigation of a fund for compensation for cattle compulsorily destroyed. In the same way we express the opinion that such a fund is not desirable in regard to sheep and comment on the existence of such a fund in regard to pigs.

FOOT ROT IN SHEEP AND DISEASES TRANSMISSIBLE SIMILARLY.

73. Foot rot in sheep, however, has occurred in many districts of the State. It seems very prevalent in the lower South-Western districts, but is also met with in the drier areas, e.g., at Mingenew. The germ responsible for the disease can be found wherever affected sheep have been. The stock yards and sale yards therefore, it seems, are a source of infection at least for a considerable time after affected sheep have been in them. As conditions stand, there are practically no stock inspectors and before action can be taken any likely damage is done. Sheep suffering from foot rot or any other disease which can be communicated to other stock by infection of the land or by contact, should not be allowed to be sold in sale yards, so that they will go to some other farm. They should be sold for immediate slaughter.

The regulations should provide that the fact that such sheep are suffering from foot rot should be notified to the auctioneers prior to the sale, so that they may define the portion of the yard to be used. The portion of the sale yard used by such sheep should not be used by other and uninfected sheep until it has been thoroughly disinfected by prescribed methods. If such affected sheep are allowed into railway trucks or other public transport vehicles for carriage to a sale yard, they also should be disinfected in the same manner. The owners of the vehicles should be notified beforehand of the condition of the stock. Foot rot, we are assured, can be cured and every effort should be made to ensure that farmers whose stock are suffering are made aware of the most effective means of cure and required to put them into practice. The department and the Government should spare no effort in attempting to supply the necessary officers to deal with these matters. Very heavy penalties should be imposed for knowingly offending against the regulations.

74. It seems useless for us to recommend an immediate substantial increase in the number of veterinary officers of the Department of Agriculture in view of the State's stock problems and veterinary men being available in country districts. The need for a greatly increased number of such persons is apparent, but the scarcity of students and the length of the training course required make it impossible quickly to fill the gaps. A veterinary practitioner's course is over a period of six years. A veterinary practitioner's course is only one year less. A medical practitioner is not asked to practice under the minimum remuneration of £600 a year. A veterinary officer of the Department of Agriculture in this State, notwithstanding the high proportion of his salary which is devoted to the maintenance of that of the medical practitioner and if continued for another year could place him in the latter category, receives a far smaller sum by way of salary. It is no wonder then that there are few veterinary students, especially when it is realised that the course cannot be taken in this State and imposes an obligation, in consequence, on those responsible for the student's welfare of at least £2,500 for the course and maintenance during his student days. Nor is it extraordinary in these circumstances that there has been an inclination among some of the few veterinary officers we have had in this State to go elsewhere, if better opportunity presents itself. A policy of parsimony in this matter cannot but react unfavourably on the prospects of alleviation of the State's stock problems and hence on its favourable and successful development. We therefore express the hope that the remuneration of those engaged and to be engaged in veterinary work under government control in this State will shortly be very greatly increased.

The vigilance to which we have referred, the advice and instruction that stock owners obviously require and the increased research that is advisable, make necessary the appointment of more veterinary officers who should be stationed at reasonable intervals throughout the State. We do not think that there is a reasonable living for the private veterinary practitioner in these areas. We do not think that farmers would object to paying a reasonable fee in cases where they deemed it advisable to call in a Government veterinary officer for the treatment of some specific case. Such fees would help to reduce the expense to the department of such officers.

But all this, although very necessary, is impossible of performance at the present time, and cannot be more than a piecemeal operation until more trained personnel is available. To give Western Australian youth the opportunity of obtaining the necessary training in this direction, we recommend that next year 10 scholarships of £200 a year each should be made available by the State Government in order that 10 students from this State should be given the opportunity of taking a veterinary course. The exact terms of the scholarships should be left to the hands of the Director of Education and the Minister. In each succeeding year three such scholarships should be provided for such period of years as the Minister thinks desirable.

In order to ensure as far as possible that the persons so trained are available for service in Western Australia (bearing in mind our opinion as to salaries payable), we suggest that the amount should be repayable (less a proportionate part for any period of service less than seven years) unless the practitioner serves at least seven years in Western Australia after he has qualified, and that such employment for that period should be guaranteed to him.
DISTRIBUTION OF ADVICE BY PAMPHLETS.

76. In any road board district or districts in which any diseases of stock require the dissemination of special information or advice as to prevention, early diagnosis or treatment, we consider the department should make available to the local authorities prepared pamphlets giving the necessary information put into the simplest possible language and that local authorities should be asked to co-operate in their distribution among stock owners.

RESEARCH GENERALLY.

76. Every effort should be made to increase research into stock diseases and pending it being possible to appoint more veterinary officers to enable those we have to function expeditiously motor vehicles should be provided to facilitate the transport of these officers, including sheep advisers and others who at present are frequently delayed and hampered by being compelled to use trains in the outer districts. We cannot stress too strongly the need for the immediate appointment of an animal disease research officer in the northern areas of the State. We quote hereunder from the evidence of Mr. G. C. Rose, of Mt. Anderson, Derby (at page 792-508) of the evidence on the peculiar difficulties of the Kimberley districts in this regard:

"(1) Is this disease (horse) prevalent throughout the Kimberleys?—Throughout the Kimberleys.

(2) But West Kimberley is a bad country for horse disease?—Yes, it is one of our great problems. Once a horse gets the disease it is certain death.

Earlier in his evidence Mr. Rose had stated the following stock diseases as prevalent in the Kimberleys:

"Kimberley horse disease, pleuro, red water fever, lupus jaundice, whiteleg in horses, yellow big hoof and swamp cancer in horses.

In our view these districts and any other whose circumstances resemble them, should be helped in every way possible to overcome these difficult problems.

We have not, it is true, suggested any means of compensation for losses arising from the matters discussed in this part of our Report. Nor have we been able to make provision for any new special funds for combating animal diseases as a whole. We justify the approach we have made to this matter, however, by the obvious need of the State for the more successful carrying on of its stock-raising industries and by the relatively important place that advice freely given (and research) must occupy in the fight against obstacles to progress such as disease.

PART 5—FINANCE TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR COMBATING THE ABOVE AND/OR COMPENSATION.

77. From a general of the earlier portions of this Report it will have been gathered that we have come to the conclusion that the ravages of vermin and to a lesser extent, noxious weeds and insect pests and plant diseases, are having an extremely detrimental effect upon the productive capacity of the rural areas and the economy of the State generally. It is impossible not to face up to the necessity, at least for a period of years, of imposing upon the whole community, as far as possible, the making of a substantial contribution to the financial resources that are necessary to combat them and, in certain instances, to compensate those who suffer heavy losses in consequence of them. We have already made some provision for contributions from Consolidated Revenue, from the funds of the Railway Department, and from the revenues provided to the State by the Forestry Department. We have also endeavoured to ensure that no farming property escapes from the rates struck by the local authorities or from the existing rate struck to constitute the central vermin fund under section 103 of the Vermin Act. We have done the last mentioned by including in our recommendations provisions which will require the mortgagee and the registered holder of farming properties to be equally liable for these rates, and we have provided for a contribution from the mortgagees of abandoned, unencumbered and unsold holdings prior to the time when these revert to Crown lands. Through the funds to be derived from Consolidated Revenue, we have been able to impose some obligation upon the whole of the taxpayers of the State. We have also endeavoured to have enlarged this contribution by a direct contribution from all those who are in receipt of taxable income (rather than from land holders only) had it not been for the uncertain position that exists in regard to income taxation. Of recent years, as is well known, the Federal authorities have become the sole collectors of income tax. They have left the State authorities to approximately the amount of income tax that was derived in each State from the laws existing at the time when uniform taxation came into force. It is true that there has been given an undertaking that 12 months after the end of the present war the States will be able to resume their income taxation rights. There is, however, uncertainty as to when that time will be reached. We do not know when actual hostilities will cease. Even that will not be the 'legal' end of the war. In the absence of knowledge as to the exact intentions of the Federal authorities as to what they would do when the time does arrive, we have been forced to the conclusion that it is impracticable to recommend any taxation on income which would be available in time to commence more native hostilities against vermin and pests as those hostilities should, in our opinion, commence forthwith. In consequence of these considerations we have been compelled to impose an obligation of making the imposition of a small tax upon all the cultivated lands of the State, irrespective of the tenure under which those lands are held from the Crown, and irrespective of who pays the rates for which, or the persons by whom those lands are held. This obviously involves the imposition of this tax upon areas of the State which have hitherto not been subject to vermin taxation. It involves, moreover, the imposition of this tax on metropolitan and urban lands. There may be some urban dwellers who will consider that the last-mentioned tax is undesirable. It is possible that these people may argue that the destruction of vermin and pests is no concern of theirs. If there are such people, we would refer them to those portions of our Report which give some slight indication of the tremendous losses that are being suffered by the State in consequence of the ravages of vermin, and we would remind them that the prosperity of the metropolitan districts and of the country urban areas is almost entirely dependent upon the ability of the primary industries of one kind or another to continue and to extend production. We do not anticipate that any landholder in a rural township will fail to appreciate this point of view. Such people are only too well acquainted with the facts that underlies their business interests and the substantial reduction that causes in their asset values and in employment if and when production is substantially reduced in the districts in which they are. Nor do we anticipate that the majority of those in the metropolitan districts will fail to understand the reasons which actuated us in making recommendations along these lines. Most of them are fully appreciative of the position which agriculture and its associated industries hold in the structure of Western Australia. Most of them are aware of the effect upon employment upon the turn-

over in business, and upon the prospects of the social and economic betterment of the people of the State.
that any substantial decrease in the spending capacity of the rural districts will cause. There is no shadow of doubt in our minds, after a long and exhaustive inquiry into uniform assessments with these arguments, that unless a determined and State-wide effort is made towards the eradication of certain types of vermin and the control of all other types, that the prospects of the future successful development of the outer areas of Western Australia will be very gravely retarded and in some districts obliterated altogether. In consequence, therefore, we offer no apologies for the recommendations that are contained in this part of our Report.

We set out in Schedule "G" (attached to this part) in general terms a statement of the estimated revenue and expenditure covering one year of the prospective operations of the Agriculture Protection Board as a result of our recommendations, if they are to be carried into effect. In that statement the contribution from the Governor and the contribution from certain other Government departments, in regard to vermin, will have been made clear from a perusal of earlier portions of this Report. It remains only for us to identify or explain the amounts which are set out therein under the headings of the Central Vermin Fund and the contribution from lands not now rated.

THE CENTRAL VERMIN FUND.

78. We do not propose that any alteration should be made in the method of assessing the tax collected under section 103 of the Vermin Act, and now called the Central Vermin Fund. This tax is in the discretion of the Minister for Agriculture within the limits imposed by the Act. These limits are 1d. in the £1 of the unimproved capital value of pastoral leases and 3d. in the £1 of the unimproved capital value of other holdings as determined by the Commissioner of Taxation. Since 1929 the Minister has not seen fit to impose a tax greater than one-half of these maximum figures and we think that the decisions of successive Ministers in this regard may be commended. In 1943-44 the tax on the unimproved value of holdings other than pastoral leases was reduced to 3d. and we venture the opinion that this was unwise. On the assumption therefore that this rate will be struck as it was struck in all years between 1929-30 and 1942-43, it would appear that there will be an amount of roughly £37,750 available in each year. There was at April 30th, 1945, a credit balance of £11,834 in the fund. There will be some balances we anticipate at the time the Agriculture Protection Board takes over and any such balances should be handed to that Board. It will help to keep the fund in better shape.

We have already expressed the opinion that not more than 75 per cent, of this Central Vermin Fund should be expended by the Agriculture Protection Board (to which the Board in future the whole of the fund should be paid) in payment of bonuses on the destruction of vermin except in so far as bonuses for the destruction of vermin in the areas comprised in Schedule A out of the moneys to be allocated by the Crown and the Agriculture Protection Board respectively in respect of vermin in those areas. This Board will therefore be at liberty to expend £27,750 per cent. of the Central Vermin Fund as collected in the manner mentioned under section 103 of the Act in any part of the State, but they will be able out of the funds expressly made available for the lands comprised in Schedule A, either to supplement the bonuses payable in the areas comprised in that schedule or to declare the payment of bonuses in those areas as recommended on types of vermin not existing in the areas comprised in Schedule B. In so far as the collection of the Central Vermin Fund is concerned, we do not propose that it should be struck on holdings of less than 160 acres in area or other lands exempted by section 103. We propose, however, to include those lands in the special rate to be struck on metropolitan and urban land which is dealt with in the next following paragraph of this Report. If we brought the lands hitherto exempted under the taxation provisions of section 103, we should be increasing the fund available for bonuses and the payment of trappers more than we should be increasing the fund for the employment of mobile units and the assistance of local vermin boards. That would not be desirable, for the reason, therefore, we propose that these holdings of less than 160 acres, particulars of which are well known to the Taxation Department, should be included in the metropolitan and urban method of taxation.

THE CONTRIBUTION FROM LANDS NOT NOW RATED, METROPOLITAN AND URBAN FUND.

79. We find from figures supplied to us by the Chief Valuer of the Taxation Department (evidence book, page 249-250) that the unimproved capital value of land available for taxation under the proposals we make would be approximately as follows:—

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Area</th>
<th>Approximate Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan area</td>
<td>£5,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldfields towns</td>
<td>29,877,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other towns in the State</td>
<td>357,521</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other holdings including those of less than 160 acres exempt under section 103 of the Act</td>
<td>£2,128,412</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On these lands we propose to strike a rate of five-sixteenths which would yield an approximate revenue of £35,000 after making some allowance for uncollectable amounts and be payable to the Agriculture Protection Board for the purposes of assisting local vermin boards and undertaking the so-called mobile units. It will be noted that these proposals do not impose any further tax on country lands and pastoral leases. Our reasons for this, we have no doubt, will be quite clear, but it may be as well to set them out. Such lands will, of course, be rated under the minimum rate proposed of 5d. in the £1 by the local vermin authorities and will be subject to their contribution to the Central Vermin Fund (under section 103) as hitherto. Assuming that the Central Vermin Fund on agricultural land will be 3d. in the £1, the total tax on such lands will be 5d. in the £1 or twice the amount of the new contribution payable on lands hitherto exempted which, in all circumstances of the case, will be a reasonable proportion of the obligation. Similar remarks, but different figures, apply to pastoral leases.

We have already expressed the opinion that all land should be subject to the tax irrespective of the purposes for which, or the persons by whom it is held. If this matter is to be approached, so far as this State is concerned, from a national point of view (as we believe it should be) and if, as we propose, on metropolitan and urban land holders and others hitherto exempted should be confined by Parliament in the first instance to a period of five years, then in our view them out. Such a matter on which we believe the final conclusions can be left to Parliament in the light of all considerations that may arise between the time of the issue of this Report and attention by Parliament to the matter.

We recommend that the proposals in this paragraph should be incorporated in a new section of the Vermin Act which would presumably become section 105A and should be passed for five years. After that period the matter of continuing the tax should be reviewed.

IMPRACTICABILITY OF GENERAL VERMIN COMPENSATION FUND.

80. The wording of the Terminus of Reference have made it impossible for us to make some inquiry into and give some consideration to the question of establishing a fund which would enable compensation to be paid in respect of the ravages of vermin. We have come to the conclusion that we cannot recommend the establishment of any such fund. The damage being occasioned by vermin is so vast and the difficulties of assessing it in the individual cases so tremendous, that quite aside from the very large amount which would need to be collected to create any worth while fund, we regard the creation of such a fund as impracticable. We have
already expressed the opinion that the damage done in one year by one type of vermin may easily amount to £2,000,000 or more but at the same time we have given expression to the very great difficulty that faced us in making such an assessment. Whether we look at it from the point of view of the tremendous amount involved or from the point of view of the impracticability of assessing the damage to the individual on any reasonable basis, we arrive at the same conclusion namely, that the creation of such a fund is not practicable in Western Australia.

DISCUSSION OF A FUND FOR COMPENSATION IN RESPECT OF CATTLE COMPULSORILY SLAUGHTERED.

81. Strong representations were made to us and most interesting evidence given by officers of the Veterinary Branch of the Department of Agriculture that legislation on this subject was necessary. A fund was created to compensate the owners of livestock which were compulsorily slaughtered as a result of disease, and including those whose beasts were slaughtered to prevent the spread of disease. By arrangement one of the members of the Commission went to some trouble to examine nearly every witness who appeared before us (who was in any way connected with the stockraising industry), on this subject. The majority of such witnesses appeared favourably inclined towards the creation of such a fund. Some of those who were not opposed to it argued that the fund should not be in existence unless and until an outbreak of some new disease—which might necessitate wholesale slaughtering—took place. They considered that it would be unfair to raise such a tax unless there was some actual need for the payment of compensation on a large scale. In short, they desired the circumstances under which the pig industry trust fund was erected to be repeated, namely that the fund was created after the outbreak of swine fever. During the course of our inquiries we came to the conclusion that the creation of a fund in respect of sheep would be extremely difficult now did there appear to be the same risk of disease of the class that was under discussion in these particular livestock. We did not give consideration to a fund in respect of pigs as we already have one on this subject.

Turning again to sheep, we studied the legislation in force in other States, but so far as we know, funds of this nature have been limited to cattle and pigs which, to some extent bears out our contention that it is not desirable in the case of sheep, or at least not so vitally necessary. In regard to cattle, we are reluctant to impose (without strong reasons), any further tax even though the proceeds of that tax would be returned to the owners in the form of compensation. After careful inquiry we feel that those strong reasons exist.

There are three cases, in our opinion, in which cattle are destroyed for the benefit of the health or the general good of the community. These are:

(a) Where a carcass is condemned as unfit for human consumption at an abattoir or slaughterhouse.
(b) Where cattle are destroyed by order of an inspector because they are suffering from some declared disease which is infectious or contagious to other stock.
(c) When cattle are destroyed because they have been in contact with other cattle infected with such a disease in order to prevent the spread of such disease outside the property of the holder.

In all these cases there is ground for the creation of a fund out of which compensation should be paid. Two major questions arise. These are:

(a) What means should the fund be created and by whom should it be administered?
(b) What compensation should be paid and to whom?

Dealing first with (a) we were unable to obtain data and statistics which would enable us fairly to estimate the amount that might be required to permit such a fund to operate successfully or to calculate the number of stock for which compensation might be required in the three cases previously referred to.

We can only recommend therefore that an investigation should be carefully conducted by the Department of Agriculture to determine whether a fund collected by the means hereafter mentioned will be sufficient to pay in respect of all claims likely to arise, compensation calculated on the basis we later mention. We are not prepared to impose a stamp duty greater than 1d. in the £1. This is the figure collected in Victoria and South Australia. If such a tax will provide sufficient we favour its imposition for the payment of compensation in the cases and on the scale we discuss in this part of this Report. Otherwise the project should not be proceeded with.

It may be necessary for the department to decide to create two branches of the fund—one to deal with dairy cattle, the other to deal with beef cattle. In the absence of sufficient data we have not been able to come to a conclusion on the need for this. The tax in £1 should be the same in each case.

2. That this fund (if found practicable) shall be raised by the collection of a stamp duty payable in respect of every sale of any cattle and assessed at a rate not more than 1d. for every £1 or part of £1 of the amount of the purchase money in respect of—

(1) Each head of cattle sold singly or
(2) of the total amount of the purchase money in respect of any number of cattle sold in one lot. The stamp duty in respect of the amount of the purchase money of one head of cattle whether sold singly or as part of a lot shall not exceed 2s. 1d.

3. That the stamp duty shall be collected by ad­hesive stamps issued by the Commissioner of Stamps and affixed to the purchase document prescribed to be used in connection with sales of cattle. Stamps to be cancelled by the vendor.

4. That the fund shall be kept at the Treasury and administered by an advisory committee of three members, of which the Chief Stock Inspector of the Department of Agriculture shall be chairman and the other two members shall be respectively a dairy farmer from the South-West and a representative of a cattle owner from some other portion of the South-West land division of the State.

5. That the tax shall not be imposed on sales of cattle from those areas of the State comprised in Schedule A to Part I of this Report, nor shall any compensation be paid in respect of such cattle.

Dealing with (b) we recommend—

(1) Compensation should be paid only in the three types of cases above specified.
(2) If after destruction the cattle are found to be free of disease, the market value of the same shall be paid.
(3) The salvage value of the carcass in any case shall be paid to the fund.
(4) If after destruction the cattle are found to be diseased, 30 per cent. of the market value (based on the value of healthy cattle) shall be paid.
(5) In no case shall the market value of any one head of cattle be deemed to be more than £55 unless for good cause the Minister directs that a greater maximum be fixed either generally or for specific types of cattle.
(6) If any cattle are comprised in any stock mortgage or bill of sale the mortgage or grantor shall (unless the cattle have been taken into possession or sold by the mortgagee or grantee in the exercise of his powers under the stock mortgage or bill of sale) be deemed to be the owner of the cattle for the purposes of the Act.

(7) The Dairy Cattle Compensation Act, 1926, should be repealed and the balance in the fund credited to the new fund.
(8) No part of the fund should be used purely for administration. Ten per cent. might be used for cattle disease research, particularly in regard to tuberculosis.

Dealing with the assessment of the market value, we recommend that in the event of a dispute between the owner and the inspector on this subject, the matter should be immediately referred to a com-
patent local disinterested person previously nomi-

ned by the Minister for a final decision and that in
the event of doubt as to fair market value, the owner
should be given the benefit of the doubt.

We feel that the creation of such a fund is practi-
cable would net for the general good of the com-
munity. Cattle owners would not try to pass off
diseased cattle in the hope of securing financial loss.
They would realize they would be receiving reason-
able compensation for loss. Nor would they be in-
clined to hide disease in their cattle for fear of loss.
They would be encouraged to advise the stock in-
spectors at once.

The diseases for which compensation is to be made
will be gazetted from time to time by the Minister.

CONCLUSION.

We desire to express thanks for the transport facil-
ities provided by the Premier’s Department and the
Department of Agriculture to enable us to visit many
outlying centres.

We particularly wish to place on record our satis-
faction in regard to the services rendered by
Mr. A. P. S. Armstrong as our Secretary. Mr. Arn-
strong has been courteous, diligent and most helpful
in every way and has conducted the many matters
entrusted to him with noticeable ability.

We appreciate, too, the kindness of the Commis-
sioners of the Agricultural Bank in making his ser-
sives available over such a long period.

Nov can we conclude this Report without express-
ing our appreciation of the very considerable assis-
tance rendered by the Parliamentary “Hansard”
Staff.

The evidence has been lengthy (totaling 2,074
pages) and therefore imposed very considerable work
on both “Hansard” reporters and typists.

That work was carried out cheerfully and with ac-
curacy and dispatch.

The above Report was unanimously adopted.

Dated this 17th day of May, 1945.

ARThUR P. WATTs,  
Chairman.

E. K. HOAR, M.LA.,  
Member.

D. R. MCLARTY,  
Member.

L. J. TRIAT,  
Member.

J. MANN,  
Member.

A. P. S. ARMSTRONG,  
Secretary.

Parliament House, Perth,  
17/5/1945.

SCHEDULE “C.”

ESTIMATED OPERATIONS FOR ONE YEAR OF  
THE AGRICULTURAL PROTECTION BOARD.

Receipts.                  £  £
1. Contribution from Consolidated 
   Revenue as per Part 1 (maxi-
   mum) .................................. 12,000
2. Contribution from Railway De-
   partment as per Part 1 ........... 2,500
3. Proceeds Central Vermin Fund 
   as at present provided under sec-
   tion 103 of the Vermin Act, esti-
   mated at £4d. in the £1 on agri-
   cultural land and 3 d. in the £1 on 
   pastoral leases (approx.) ... 30,000
   Less allowance for uncollecti-
  bles (but see N.B. hereunder) ... 2,550
   .................................. 27,450
4. Contribution from Department of 
   Agriculture re noxious weeds 
   based on past expenditure .... 500
5. Contribution from Railway De-
   partment and Midland Railway 
   Company as per Part 2 (maxi-
   mum) .................................. 600
6. Special tax on lands previously 
   exempted under section 103 of 
   the Act (to be included in new 
   section 103A) at 5/10ths penny in 
   the £1 (approx.) ................... 35,000
   Less allowance for uncollecti-
   bles (but see N.B. hereunder) ... 2,850
   .................................. 32,150
   .................................. £78,500

Payments.                  £
1. Expenditure on the lands com-
   prised in Schedule A (maximum) 16,000
2. Expenditure on bonuses 75% of
   item 1 per contra, i.e., 75% of
   £27,750 .................................. 20,812
3. 10% of item 2 per contra for
   noxious weed fund, i.e., 10% of
   £35,150 (maximum) .............. 3,515
4. Fruit industry compensation fund 
   contribution ........................... 1,600
5. Expenditure on noxious weeds 
   from funds provided by Consoli-
   dated Revenue and Railways 
   Department as per contra ....... 1,100
6. Minimum balance available for 
   mobile units, subsidies to local 
   authorities, provision of equip-
   ment and general destruction of 
   vermin in the lands comprised 
   in Schedule B ....................... 23,573
   .................................. £78,500

N.B.—Our proposal that mortgagees (in their own 
and the general interests) should be liable (on de-
fault of the mortgagee) for payment of vermin rates 
will apply to all rates to be struck and enhance con-
siderably the percentage of collections, and we have 
taken this into consideration in making this esti-
mate. We have excluded from this statement the 
amount recommended in Part 1 for grasshopper de-
struction as it is to be based on actual annual re-
quirements and cannot be reasonably estimated, save 
that we have recommended it should not exceed 
£15,000 per annum.
APPENDIX.
LIST OF WITNESSES EXAMINED.

Abey, C.—General Manager, Agricultural Bank.
Adkins, H. R. C.—Secretary, Pastoralists' Association.
Aitken, A.—Farmer, Chairman Koorda Road Board.
Andrews, H.—Branch Manager, Agricultural Bank, Manjimup.
Arnold, R. E.—Chief Inspector of Rabbits, Department of Agriculture.
Ash, A. W.—Farmer and Member Northampton Road Board.
Atkinson, R. W.—Pastoralist and Secretary Mt. Magnet Road Board.
Austin, M. L.—Branch Manager, Agricultural Bank, Merredin.
Bell, B.—Member Wagin Road Board.
Baron-Hay, G. K.—Under Secretary for Agriculture.
Barrett, A. R.—Chairman Narrogin Road Board.
Becher, F. J.—Member of Fruit Fly Advisory Board, Harvey.
Bednall, B. H.—Divisional Forests Officer, Forests Department.
Beech, W. A.—Farmer and Member Katanning Road Board.
Bennett, H. W.—Veterinary Pathologist, Department of Agriculture.
Birch, E. A.—Field Inspector, Agricultural Bank, Pingrup.
Birkett, H. J.—Field Inspector, Agricultural Bank, Morawa.
Boyd, J.—Pastoralist, Chairman Cap Road Board.
Bradford, D.—Director Great Southern Butter Factory.
Brown, C. J.—Member Goowangarep Road Board.
Buce, E. W. H.—Vice Chairman Tambellup Road Board.
Butcher, O. J.—Farmer and Chairman Dalwallin Road Board.
Campbell, J. B.—Field Inspector, Agricultural Bank, Koorda.
Clarke, A. L. McKay—Chief Veterinary Officer and Chief Inspector Stock.
Coste, F. M.—Secretary Goonwurrung Road Board.
Collinson, W.—Secretary-Engineer Port Road Board.
Conway, T. B.—Secretary Mukinbudlu Road Board.
Coote, W. J.—Farmer and Chairman Dardanup Road Board.
Cooper, W. C.—Farmer, Beverley.
Copus, D. A.—Chairman Kununoppin-Trayning Road Board.
Crawford, J. S.—Government Rabbit Inspector, Department of Agriculture.
Crosley, F.—Chairman Woodamilling Road Board.
Cuming, J. J. S.—Farmer and Member Merredin Road Board.
Cusack, W. J.—Secretary Goowangarep Road Board.
Carlewis, J. B.—Field Inspector, Agricultural Bank, Dalwallin.
Davenport, N.—Agricultural Adviser, Geraldton.
Dentley, H. E.—Farmer and Member Bunbury Road Board.
Diver, J. W.—General President, P.P.A. of W.A.
Diver, J. C.—Chairman Kellerberrin Road Board.
Douglas, C. F.—Acting Secretary Manjimup Road Board.
Eckersley, W. R.—Secretary Harvey Road Board.
Edcock, W. C.—Field Inspector, Agricultural Bank, Corrigin.
England, H. W.—Farmer and Chairman Perenjori Road Board.
Farmer, L. F.—Builder, Busselton, Member Chamber of Commerce.
Folgate, J. M.—Secretary Kununoppin Road Board.
Fewster, C. J.—Farmer and Member Merredin Road Board.
Flintoff, A.—Late Fruit Inspector, Bridgetown.
Flockhart, J. A.—Farmer, Member Merredin P.P.A.
Flyn, G. F. N.—Vermin Inspector, Toodyay Road Board.
Forrest, P. D.—Farmer, Chairman Upper Blackwood Road Board.
Fulleton, A. H.—Farmer, Chairman Greenbushes Road Board.
Garstone, C. H.—Vice Chairman, Katanning Road Board.
Gibbs, W.—Hon. Secretary, Albany Fruitgrowers' Association.
Grant, A. E.—Chairman Geraldton Road Board.
Grant, H.—Secretary Ninson Road Board.
Green, E. H.—Chairman Munde Ker Road Board.
Grendon, H. M.—Farmer, Chairman Quairading Road Board.
Gunns, A.—Vermin Inspector, Goowangarep Road Board.
Guyane, S.—Secretary Armadale-Kelmscott Road Board.
Hay, H. N.—Secretary Mingenew Road Board.
Haymond, T.—Secretary Mount Marshall Road Board.
Hart, H.—Vermin Inspector, Greenough Road Board.
Haslett, D. J.—Farmer, Member Dalwallin Road Board.
Haynes, W. A. B.—Chairman Armadale-Kelmscott Road Board.
Hayward, C. T.—Secretary Dardanup Road Board.
Hayward, G. B.—Vermin Inspector, Harvey.
Hayward, L. G.—Fruit Inspector, Harvey.
Healy, N. R.—Farmer, Vice Chairman Irwin Road Board.
Henderson, G. J.—Farmer, Member Upper Blackwood Road Board.
Hester, W. E. V. S.—Agriculturist, Chairman Bridgetown Road Board.
Higham, J. B.—Member of Narrogin Road Board.
Hogg, J. H.—Pastoralist, "Mundrabilla" Station.
Holmes, T. L.—Orchardist and Dairyman, Chairman Dandaragan Road Board.
Holmes, W. W.—Farmer and Grazier, Vice Chairman Manjimup Road Board.
Hood, J. C.—Assistant Government Analyst.
Hopwood, B. W. O.—Farmer, Bencubbin.
Hoodcroft, L. G.—Chairman Cranbrook Road Board.
House, D. K.—Chairman Goowangarep Road Board.
Howard, B. F.—Secretary Tambellup Road Board.
Ingis, W. H.—Manager, and Member Dandaragan Road Board.
James, J. J.—Member of Municipal Council, Narrogin.
Kennings, C. F. H.—Government Entomologist, Department of Agriculture.
Johns, D.—Secretary Narrogin Road Board.
Johnston, D. J.—Chairman West Arthur Road Board.
Jones, H. D.—Farmer, Manjimup.
Joyce, T. D.—Farm hand and rabbit destroyer, Walpole.
Kenny, L.—Farmer, Member Moora Road Board.
Kee, J. R. T.—Secretary Quairading Road Board.
Kemp, J. P.—Farmer, Member Beacchall Road Board.
Lark, L.—Farmer, Member Corrigin Road Board.
Latham, A. W.—Farmer and Member Narembeen Road Board.
Lew, P. A.—Secretary Merredin Road Board.
Lennon, T. W.—Member Geographe Road Board.
Livingston, J. H.—Farmer and Member Quairading Road Board.
Longhurst, S. C.—Secretary Narembeen Road Board.
Lugton, H. K. M.—Field Inspector, Agricultural Bank, Bencubbin.
MacKay, R. A.—Grazier, and Member Drakesbrook Road Board.
Malcolm, C. A.—Farmer and Chairman, Corrigin Road Board.
Marshall, S. A.—Secretary Corrigin Road Board.
Martin, H. M.—Branch Manager, Agricultural Bank, Katanning.
Martin, G. W.,—Chairman Northam Road Board.
Martin, L.—Wongan Ballidu Road Board.
Maxton, E. H.—Frugivore, Koalb River.
Meadley, G. H. W.—Assistant Government Botanist and Weeds Officer.
Mears, H. H. G.—Pastoralist and Chairman, Boorabbin Road Board.
Melnichuk, B. A.—Farmer, Pithara.
Melzke, J.—Chairman Callallin Road Board.
Miles, A. W.—Farmer, Beverley.
Miller, L. L.—Station Manager and member Port Hedland Road Board.
Mitchell, E. G.—Farmer, Chairman Wyalkatchem Road Board.
Mitchell, H. S.—Farmer, Bunakini.
Mitchell, V. C.—Farmer, and member Preston Road Board.
Morgan, W. J.—Farmer and member Manjimup Road Board.
Morrissey, F. M.—Pastoralist, member of Coo Road Board.
Monslay, C. O.—Secretary Northam Road Board.
Moody, H. M.—Mayor of Narrogin.
Moyle, J. J.—Senior valuer, Taxation Department.
Myers, H. R. D.—Farmer, and President Narramooka Farmers’ Association.
McCollough, W. A.—Assistant Chief Civil Engineer, W.A.G.R.
McElhinny, A. A.—Farmer, and Vice Chairman Carnamah Road Board.
McGrath, P. A.—Acting Branch Manager, Agricultural Bank, Geraldton.
McGrath, J. W.—Farmer, member of Brookton Road Board.
McKenzie, R. A.—Retired farmer, and member Corrigin Road Board.
McNally, J. T.—Dairy Adviser, Department of Agriculture, Manjimup.
Oates, F. J.—Farmer, member of Chamber of Commerce.
Orton, C. L. E.—Secretary, Moon Road Board.
Payne, N. R.—Farmer, Boyanup, representing Capel Road Board.
Plessis, G. A. W.—Chairman Wagin Road Board.
Pike, A. F.—Farmer, and member Dalwallinu Road Board.
Plyddell, A. D.—Field Inspector, Agricultural Bank, Bunbury.
Potts, H. H.—Farmer, North Eneabba.
Powell, R. H.—Superintendent of Horticulture, Department of Agriculture.
Price, T. H.—Chairman, Wandering Road Board.
Prosser, C. A.—Farmer, Katanning.
Purser, G. H.—Farmer, Chairman Victoria Plains Road Board.
Quinn, R. J.—Wire worker, W.A. Wire Netting Company.
Roe, L. C.—Member of Broome Hill Road Board.
Readhead, G. C.—Farmer and grazier, member Mingenew Road Board.
Rob, A.—Farmer, member Northampton Road Board.
Roberts, G. O.—Secretary, Medanahruu Road Board.
Robinson, D. P.—Farmer, Chairman Merovia Road Board.
Rose, W. J.—Vermin Inspector, Manjimup.
Rose, G. C.—Pastoralist, De Grey.
Rose, J. S.—Vermin Inspector, Katanning Road Board.
Rumble, M.—Farmer, Chairman Greenough Road Board.
Russell, C. A. W.—Farmer, member of Dalwallinu Road Board.
Sargent, H.—Secretary, Dowlin Road Board.
Scott, H.—Farmer, and member Balgalba Road Board.
Scott, C. P.—Agriculturist and member Bridgetown Road Board.
Severud, V. N.—Secretary, Ornithologists’ Union of Australia.
Seward, H. S.—Farmer, Pingelly.
Sewell, W. O.—Farmer, Chairman Pingelly Road Board.
Seymour, R. H.—Farmer, and member Moora Road Board.
Sibbald, W. E.—Secretary, Albany Road Board.
Skinner, T.—Vice chairman Plantagenet Road Board.
Smith, F. D.—Farmer, and member Pingelly Road Board.
Smith, H. B.—Farmer, vice chairman Northampton Road Board.
Smith, R. C.—Farmer, President Beverley Horticultural Society.
Sommers, T. G.—Chairman, Plantagenet Road Board.
Symes, J.—Farmer, and acting secretary, Dalwallinu Road Board.
Thomson, C. P.—Farmer, and member Three Springs Road Board.
Tyrning, J. D.—Farmer, and member Murchison Primary Producers’ Association.
Tindale, H. J.—Secretary-Engineer, Dumbleyung Road Board.
Townsend, G. W.—Farmer, Baliduu.
Tregenza, J.—Farmer and grazier, Dangin.
Tuckey, H.—Chairman, Road Boards’ Association.
Twaddle, J.—Chairman, Drakebrook Road Board.
Trudall, R. W.—Member, Geographe Road Board.
Ure, J. T.—Farm manager, Dalwallinu.
Underwood, R. J.—Animal Nutrition Officer, Department of Agriculture.
Walker, D.—Chairman, Balgalba Road Board.
Weaver, G. L.—Chairman, Beverley Road Board.
Wedge, W. H.—Member, Dandaragan Road Board.
Wellard, G. P.—Member, Gnowangerup Road Board.
Wheel, B.—Orchardist, Jardine, Secretary Manjimup Fruitgrowers’ Association.
Whitefield, J. S.—Chairman, Vilgurnu Road Board.
Whittell, H. M.—Agriculturist, Bridgetown.
Whil, A. S.—Inspector, Department of Agriculture.
Wilkinson, A. E.—Vermin Inspector, Northam Road Board.
Wilkinson, T. J.—Farmer, and member Harvey Road Board.
Williams, E. L.—President, Chamber of Commerce, Albany.
Willmott, E. P. B.—Chairman, Margaret-Augusta Road Board.
Wool, G. D.—Member, York Road Board.
Woods, W. L.—Farmer and Veterinary Officer, Gnowangerup.
Wright, A. M.—Committee man, Mt. Barker Fruitgrowers’ Association.

By Authority: ROBERT H. MILLER, Government Printer, Perth.