

WILD DOGS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second reading.

The COMMISSIONER of CROWN LANDS (Hon. R. S. Richards—Wallaroo)—This Bill is introduced for the purpose of making minor administrative amendments to the Wild Dogs Act, 1912, which experience has shown to be necessary. Under the Wild Dogs Act, 1912, the Governor every year by proclamation fixes for the purpose of the Act the amount of rates payable per square mile of land, the maximum rate being 1s. per square mile. The rates become payable on the first day of March in every year. Under the Act as at present drafted the following anomaly arises. Rates are only payable on land which is occupied on March 1, and if land is unoccupied on March 1 and subsequently becomes occupied no rates are payable for the proportion of the year during which the land is so occupied. Rates under the Wild Dogs Act are payable in respect of the calendar year. Clauses 2 and 3 therefore make provision for the declaration of the rates in the month of January in every year. Rates will become payable as soon as they are declared, but no fine for the late payment of rates will be imposed until the 15th day of March next after the declaration of the rates. It follows, therefore, that the same time for the payment of rates will be allowed under the amendment as now obtains. Subclause (3) of clause 2 provides for a case where the land becomes occupied at any time after the rates are declared. In such a case, the occupier will be obliged to pay such a proportion of the full year's rate as the unexpired portion of the full year when he first enters into occupation bears to the whole period of one year. Section 4 of the principal Act provides that no rate imposed is to exceed, in a case where the land rated is held under lease or on agreement from the Crown, one-half of the amount of the annual rental for every square mile of such land. This provision is defective, as there is no reference made to the limit of amount payable when the land is held

under an agreement for sale and purchase. Consequently, subclause (1) of clause 2 amends this section so as to provide that the rate shall not exceed, in the case where the land rated is held under lease or agreement from the Crown, one-half of the annual rental or the annual instalment payable under the lease or agreement, as the case may be, for every square mile of such land. This is purely a machinery measure, and one that I can commend to the consideration of members. I move the second reading.

The Hon. G. R. LAFFER secured the adjournment of the debate until July 14.