

tlement scheme and the very basis of it is war service rendered by the individual.

Hon. J. Cornell: You may take it that if anyone is entitled to benefit under the Repatriation Act, he is eligible under this scheme.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That might be another way of expressing it. The definition of "war service," as contained in the Commonwealth Re-establishment and Employment Act, 1945, is the one that must be read in conjunction with this measure. I am very pleased with the reception that has been accorded to the Bill. I am sorry that there should have been delay in regard to its introduction, but I think I have made it clear that the delay has been no fault of ours. Perhaps we should be grateful, as Mr. Moore said, that the war did collapse when it did. Had it continued for a longer period, the arrangements for soldier settlement might have been further advanced, but in that event the arrangements would perhaps have been further advanced only at the expense of a large number of lives, and to that extent we should be grateful. I hope that the scheme will be put into operation without very much delay, and that the precautions we are taking on this occasion will prevent a repetition of some of the tragedies that occurred in land settlement after the first world war.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short Title:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on this clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

House adjourned at 11.6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 5th December, 1945.

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

QUESTIONS.

WOOL AUCTIONS.

As to Buyers' Support of Small Markets.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Has he noticed a resolution of the Western Australian Woolbuyers' Association and other similar associations in Australia, reported in "The West Australian" newspaper of the 24th November, 1945, to the effect that the woolbuying trade will not give its support to small auction centres in Australia and affirming that the centralisation of competition in large centres is in the best interests of Australia and its woolgrowers?

2, Does he agree that this statement may imply an effort to have Albany and/or Geraldton dispensed with as centres for the disposal of wool?

3, Does he consider that such action would be in the interests of the woolgrowers of Western Australia or of the State's economy generally?

4, Have any representations been made to the Commonwealth authorities to ensure that both Geraldton and Albany are retained as wool disposal centres after the war?

5, If not, will those representations be now made? If not, what reason is there for not making them?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied:

1, Yes.

2, No definite statement regarding Albany or Geraldton appears in the Press paragraph, but it might be inferred that the reference to small markets could include these two centres.

3, There are many aspects involved in this question, and a considered opinion cannot be given until more detailed information is available.

4, and 5, The Government—when all the facts are available—will take measures to support methods for the sale of wool which are likely to be of the greatest advantage of producers and the general community.

COMMONWEALTH SAVINGS BANK.

As to Deposits, Withdrawals, etc.

Mr. WATTS asked the Premier:

1, What is the amount by which deposits in the Commonwealth Savings Bank have during the war period, and in Western Australia only, exceeded withdrawals from that Bank?

2, When will the amount of seventy per cent. of this sum be available to the Government of this State pursuant to Clause 7 of the 1931 agreement?

The PREMIER replied:

1, The exact information is difficult to obtain, but a request has been made to the Commonwealth Bank to supply it.

2, At the expiration of five years after Australia ceases to be engaged in hostilities in the war just concluded.

COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Provision at Gnowangerup.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

1, Are any proposals under consideration for the provision of a water supply at Gnowangerup or for the early extension of the existing water supplies at that centre, pursuant to a recent request by the Gnowangerup Road Board?

2, If so, what proposals are under consideration?

The MINISTER replied:

1, and 2, Yes. Data to enable a scheme to be prepared are now being collected.

BUILDING MATERIAL

As to Services' Surplus Stocks.

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier:

1, Is he in a position to know whether the Fighting Services hold surplus stocks of materials which, if released promptly, would assist builders?

2, Has this matter been clarified as between Canberra and Perth?

The PREMIER replied:

1, The Fighting Services are liquidating surplus stocks of building materials through the Disposals Commission, and the State authority has been given the right of prior purchase of any materials suitable for the building programme as and when such stocks are made available. Materials not required for the State programme are made available to private builders through the Disposals Commission.

2, Answered by 1.

JETTIES.

As to Claremont and Cottesloe.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Works:

1, Are the Claremont and Cottesloe jetties at present outside the control of the municipalities?

2, Has any money been spent on them by the Public Works Department of recent years?

3, Having regard to the fact that the Cottesloe jetty is standing on one leg in the middle and lurching dangerously, whose responsibility is it if a serious accident occurs during the holidays when it is likely to be crowded with visitors?

The MINISTER replied:

1, The Claremont jetty has not been placed under the control of the Council. The Cottesloe jetty was placed under the control of the Cottesloe Municipal Council in 1909 on conditions agreed to by the council.

2, During the past ten years:—Claremont jetty, £25; Cottesloe jetty, nil.

3, The department is not aware that the jetty is in a dangerous condition. The council advises that although requiring repair the structure is perfectly safe.

WHEAT.

As to Price and Stabilisation Scheme.

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture: As no official information is available regarding wheat prices or stabilisation for the coming season, is any and, if so what action being taken by the State Government to obtain an early determination and official announcement?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied: Frequent contacts are being made, and the matter will be considered in all its aspects as between the Commonwealth and States in the near future.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

As to Leave to Introduce, etc.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.35]: On behalf of the Minister for Lands, I move—

That leave be given to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend Section nine of the Bush Fires Act, 1937-1942.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.36]: I think members of the House would welcome some intimation from the Premier as to the conduct of the remaining business on the notice paper. Using the phrase "introducing Bills for the first time" as meaning the moving of the second reading, which is the first occasion on which we know what is contained in Bills, since yesterday 17 new Government measures have been introduced including those on the notice paper. In addition, notice of intention to introduce still more Bills has been given this afternoon. I should like to know from the Premier whether, in view of the suggestion that an early session will be held next year, some of the Bills could not be allowed to stand over till then. I feel that the matter is of some importance to members because, with all the good will in the world, we have endeavoured to facilitate the transaction of business and now, in addition to a very heavy legislative programme, we have this immense avalanche of Bills coming down at this stage.

I have personally found that in sending out Bills that affect sections of the people, before they have time to consider them and give us any information as to the position, the measures have passed this House and the opportunity for making use of such information has disappeared. This leaves the Legislative Council as the sole means of expression of any approval or objection that the people themselves may have to the measures. I am sure the Premier does not want to have Bills dealt with otherwise than after full consideration, and I think he might give some consideration to the possibility of reserving for this year those measures of urgent importance, which the House will assist him to pass, leaving for the next session the Bills that are not of the same urgency.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply) [4.39]: The points raised by the hon. member have received the fullest consideration. I appreciate the co-operation extended to the Government from both sides of the House in the endeavour to facilitate the business. On no occasion during the session has the Government endeavoured in any way to burke discussion or to hasten or prevent mature consideration of Bills. As a matter of fact, I have welcomed adjournments to specified dates in order to suit the convenience of members on the understanding that, business having thus been facilitated, we could proceed immediately with such Bills. That has resulted in great expedition in dealing with measures. In regard to the Bills of which notice has been given to-day, the hon. member is well aware that two of them are almost formal and similar measures are always introduced at a late stage of the sitting each session, because it is necessary to include in them the latest and most up-to-date approvals given by the Lands Department in connection with road closures and reserves. The other Bill is one which will occupy this House a matter of minutes only. It contains two clauses and deals with a specific provision to which I referred when dealing with the Building Operations and Building Materials Control Bill. The other matters on the notice paper are in a condition to be proceeded with speedily by both sides of the House. I can assure the hon. member that the date of adjournment is flexible

and it is the intention of the Government to give the utmost opportunity for the requisite consideration of all Bills it is necessary to complete.

Question put and passed.

Bill introduced and read a first time.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [4.43]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the third reading of the Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill and of the Land Act Amendment Bill to be taken at this sitting.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and assured myself that there is an absolute majority of members present. I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report, etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Report, etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REFERENDUM.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [4.45] in moving the second reading said: Bills similar to this have been before the House on many occasions, and I feel that everyone is fully acquainted with the meaning of the contents of the measure. I do not intend to spend too much time on it, because I consider that as it provides for a referendum and a decision to be given by the people of this State, there should be no opposition to it.

Mr. Thorn: But we would like a full explanation.

Mr. Mann: You need to go into details thoroughly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am handling this Bill; and as far as the details are concerned, they are in the Bill. Nevertheless, if there are any questions later on, I shall be able to reply to them when my turn comes. The Bill deals with the abolition of the Legislative Council and with adult franchise. The referendum is to be taken on those two points. I want to emphasise the matter of adult franchise.

Mr. Doney: You want to abolish the Council first and discuss the matter of the franchise afterwards.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That will depend on the people of Western Australia. On the 4th September of this year, I introduced the Constitution Acts Amendment Bill (No. 2), to deal with deadlocks—

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister is not in order in discussing something else introduced this session.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That was introduced this session. We tried to cope with another place. We tried to give it an alternative. We attempted to put up something to another place, based on the precedent on the English Parliament. A measure was introduced along similar lines in that Parliament 34 years ago and has done a very good job. It has been satisfactory to all sections of the community.

Mr. Abbott: How do you know that?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I know that because—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is not in order in discussing the Bill in any shape or form.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am sorry if I was discussing it, but I did not think I was. Of the Bills that we have sent to the other House, some have been defeated contemptuously and ignominiously.

Mr. Thorn: You have no right to say that.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They have not even been taken to the second reading stage. The Council has not been in a state of mind to compromise with this House.

Mr. Mann: That is a terrible reflection on the other place.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am not making any reflections; but if the hon. member wishes to put that construction on my statement, he may.

Mr. Mann: You said they were not in a certain state of mind.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It seems to me that our experience has been that members in the other place are an example of gerontocracy. They have always been determined not to give anything to the people—that is, those whom we in this House represent—that would in any way adversely affect their own interests.

Mr. Thorn: That is not right.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is correct. We have had examples of it, and the member for Toodyay knows it perfectly well. We have tried at all times to be helpful. We have tried to compromise, but our efforts have not been successful. As to the clear mandate that we received from the people at the last election, it was put up clearly by the ex-Premier, the member for Geraldton—

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We have no doubt as to where those who own real estate are represented. We have only to listen to the voices. Had the other Chamber of this Parliament been reasonable it is more than likely this Bill would not have been introduced.

Mr. Thorn: You are wasting your time, now.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Probably if the member for Toodyay had his way we would be wasting time. We are going to endeavour to ask the people of this State, and those outside it, in accordance with the Electoral (War Time) Act, by referendum, two straightout questions. The first question is, "Are you in favour of the abolition of the Legislative Council as a constituent part of the Parliament of the State?" The answers are, "Yes" or "No."

Mr. Thorn: What do you think it will be?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I think the answer will be "Yes," because I think the people of the State should have a voice in the way in which they are to be governed,

if we are living in a democracy. If we were living in an autocracy the position would be different.

Mr. Doney: That is a feeble argument.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The second question is, "Are you in favour of the franchise for the election of members of the Legislative Council being the same as the franchise for the election of members of the Legislative Assembly?" That is a fair question, and I think the people should have the right to decide whether or not they are in favour of adult franchise or, on the other hand, whether they are in favour of the abolition of the other place.

The Minister for Lands: There would be a wild rush to this House, then.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We cannot allow the 16 per cent. who voted for the Legislative Council power to veto legislation sent up from this House. Should one-sixth of the people of Western Australia be allowed to represent the other five-sixths? Now the one-sixth has the right to veto anything that the other five-sixths sends up to the other place.

Mr. Abbott: Are we to be held up by a de-registered union?

The Minister for Lands: You have the best union in this country and you know it.

The Minister for Works: Pull your eyes back into their sockets.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: All organisations, even those of lawyers or doctors, have their strong unions.

Mr. Mann: Or starting-price bookmakers.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I think some starting-price bookmakers are just as good as some members of this Chamber. I know of some that are just as good.

Mr. Mann: It is a fine thing for the Minister for Justice to make a statement like that.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have no scruple in saying that.

Mr. Thorn: Include them in the referendum.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They will be included in the referendum. They will have the right to vote, just as will anyone else, unless they are disqualified under Section 18 of the Electoral Act.

The Minister for Works: That is the section under which the member for Toodyay should be disqualified.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We want progress in this State and that can only be obtained through the House which really represents five-sixths of the voters.

Mr. Abbott: At the last election—

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask the member for North Perth to keep order.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It has often been said to me, in the country, that members of the other place are too traditional and orthodox. They are out-of-date, and in many instances have lost the elasticity of their mental faculties and are unable to keep pace with modern affairs. If that be so, and it has been endorsed by the people, I do not see that there should be any objection to a referendum being taken.

The Minister for Lands: They do not trust the people.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: As the Houses stand at the present juncture, in accordance with the last election about 16 per cent. of those in the Legislative Council represent the voters of this Chamber. Is that democracy?

Mr. Thorn: Would that be the complete roll?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That was in accordance with the last roll, and in accordance with the percentage that voted for the last Assembly election and the percentage that voted for the Legislative Council election. We cannot get away from the facts but must look things in the face as they are, and not as they might be.

Mr. Thorn: A lot who are not on the roll are entitled to be on it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Leader of the Opposition has often mentioned the surrounding of the incomprehensible by the unknowable. There is nothing incomprehensible in this Bill, or in the effect that it should have, and nothing unknowable. We know everything we want to know, and so do the people.

Mr. Thorn: Let us hope you get it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I hope they get it and I hope the referendum goes to the people. Whatever the decision of

the people of this State may be, the Government will be pleased to accept it.

Mr Withers: The same as it did on the question of secession?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, on a similar basis. We have read a lot about the Commoners of England, of how they battled and put up with adverse decisions by the House of Lords. They battled on, and eventually won, although the House of Lords had a tenacious hold similar to that of the other place in the case of this Parliament. If the people are given the right to decide the question this Government will be satisfied.

Mr. McLarty: What will you do if they vote "Yes" on both questions?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: In that case I think we could leave it to the Government, as to whether we are to have abolition or adult franchise. The people would have the choice of abolition of the Legislative Council and adult franchise. The vote will be exactly the same as for the Legislative Assembly and, in addition, they will have the advantage of the war-time legislation, and that will give all those who are entitled to vote the right to vote on the referendum. The Legislative Council has complete control and though it cannot amend money Bills it can reject them. It has control of all Bills that may be sent up from this House, and, seeing that it represents a minority, while this House represents the majority, I think it is reasonable that that Chamber should at least be put on the same basis. It may modify, alter, mutilate or even defeat a measure entirely.

The Minister for Lands: It mostly mutilates Bills.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: As the Minister for Lands remarks, the Legislative Council mostly mutilates them.

The Minister for Lands: The Council members are great surgeons!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so. I say, and I think that the people of this country also say, that the responsible authority to initiate legislation is in this Chamber. We are the responsible people, for we represent the people as a whole in accordance with the provisions of the electoral law.

Mr. Abbott: But you do not put into force the laws when you pass them!

The MINISTER for Lands: Boo-hoo! Have you not enough work to do?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Abbott: Of course you do not.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The member for North Perth knows that the laws are enforced when necessary.

Mr. Abbott: No, they are not.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That all depends on the people in this Assembly.

Mr. Thorn: It depends on who it is.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is not a fair interjection.

Mr. Seward: It is fair.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: As far as justice is concerned in this State, it is meted out fairly and impartially. Neither this Government nor any other Government so far as I am aware has ever done anything suspicious and has always administered the law fairly. I feel that that interjection was not quite fair.

The Minister for Lands: Ignore it.

Mr. Thorn: It was only too true.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: As the Legislative Council is constituted at present, it is a contradiction of everything that democracy stands for. Democracy stands for rule by the majority, but, as I have pointed out here on many occasions, legislation may be framed by a majority but has to be approved by a minority in another place. If the majority in this House desires something to be accomplished that is necessary for the progress of the State, its desires are subject to the veto of a minority.

Mr. Thorn: But the minority does not veto.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: During one second reading speech I delivered in this House I read a list of 50 odd Bills that, during the past 10 or 12 years, had been vetoed by the Legislative Council, and some of the Bills represented important legislation, which had to be passed by another place before it could become law.

Mr. Abbott: If you bring down important legislation at the last minute, like the Milk Bill, what else can you expect?

The Minister for Lands: That gag is nearly as old as you are! Why do you not get a new one?

Mr. Mann: But it is true.

Mr. Thorn: Of course it is.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Legislation should not be controlled by a block of land or a pile of bricks. Yet they have the final say now, because the Legislative Council comprises members elected on the property qualification. I think the referendum proposed is fair and reasonable. If I remember aright, it was the Leader of the Opposition who suggested on a former occasion when I introduced a Bill in this Chamber that a referendum would be a fairer way of dealing with this matter and he intimated that he would support a referendum proposal.

The Minister for Lands: And he would.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I feel the Leader of the Opposition is democratic enough to support it on this occasion. I have not much more to say beyond mentioning that the Bill has been drafted along the lines of the Secession Referendum Act and the poll will be taken on the Legislative Assembly franchise. The Bill also embraces the provisions of the Electoral (War Time) Act, No. 28 of 1943, which gives members of the Fighting Forces the right to vote. That will apply if that Act is still in operation when the referendum is taken. Voting will be compulsory. I commend the Bill to the House. I feel that so much has been said on this subject that if more is said it will be mere repetition. I trust there will not be much of that, and that this House will agree to the second reading. Then in Committee members will have a full opportunity to discuss points they may wish to raise. I may add that such an opportunity has not been available on many occasions in the Legislative Council, and we have taken exceptionally strong exception to that procedure. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. McDONALD: I move—

That the debate be adjourned till Wednesday, the 12th December.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	27
				—
Majority against	..			12
				—

AYES.

Mr. Abbott
Mr. Brand
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Leslie
Mr. Mann
Mr. McDonald
Mr. McLarty

Mr. Owen
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Seward
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Watts
Mr. Willmott
Mr. Doney
(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Berry
Mr. Cross
Mr. Fox
Mr. Graham
Mr. Hawke
Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Holman
Mr. Kelly
Mr. Leahy
Mr. Marshall
Mr. Millington
Mr. Needham
Mr. Nulsen

Mr. Panton
Mr. Read
Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Shearn
Mr. Smith
Mr. Styants
Mr. Telfer
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Triat
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Wise
Mr. Withers
Mr. Wilson
(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.
Mr. Hill
Mr. North
Mr. Stubbs

NOES.
Mr. Hoar
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Collier

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. ABBOTT: Would I be in order in moving that the debate be adjourned till Tuesday next?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. ABBOTT: Speaking to the motion, I desire—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member can move a motion to adjourn the debate, but he cannot speak to it.

Mr. ABBOTT: I move—

That the debate be adjourned till Tuesday, the 11th December.

Motion put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	14
Noes	28

Majority against	..	14
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AYES.

Mr. Abbott
Mr. Brand
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Keenan
Mr. Leslie
Mr. Mann
Mr. McDonald

Mr. McLarty
Mr. Perkins
Mr. Thorn
Mr. Watts
Mr. Willmott
Mr. Doney
(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Berry
Mr. Cross
Mr. Fox
Mr. Graham
Mr. Hawke
Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Holman
Mr. Kelly
Mr. Leahy
Mr. Marshall
Mr. Millington
Mr. Needham
Mr. Nulsen

Mr. Owen
Mr. Panton
Mr. Read
Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Shearn
Mr. Smith
Mr. Styants
Mr. Telfer
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Triat
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Wise
Mr. Withers
Mr. Wilson
(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.
Mr. Hill
Mr. North
Mr. Stubbs

NOES.
Mr. Hoar
Mr. Coverley
Mr. Collier

Motion thus negatived.

Mr. McLARTY: I move—

That the debate be adjourned till Friday next.

Motion put and passed; debate adjourned.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

- 1, State Electricity Commission.
With amendments.
- 2, Financial Emergency Act Amendment.
- 3, Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment.
Without amendment.

BILL—HOSPITAL BENEFITS AGREEMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna) [5.18] in moving the second reading said: The object of the Bill is to give free hospital attention to those of the people of Australia who seek it. They can go into any public hospital and demand a bed irrespective of their financial position. The Commonwealth Government will pay 6s. per bed per day to the hospital on any intermediate private bed in a public hospital and will pay the same amount to private hospitals. Patients in a public bed are to be treated in exactly the same way as they were prior to the date of the agreement, which goes back to the 1st September, 1945. Therefore, any person who received hospital treatment and medical attention on that date in certain hospitals will be entitled to similar treatment now. The hospitals that will be affected are the following:—Fremantle, Perth, King Edward and Children's. The Commonwealth will contribute 6s. to any other public hospital in Western Australia per patient per day; the difference between the charge made by the hospital and the 6s. paid by the Commonwealth must be met by the patient. Take the Norseman Hospital! A patient may go there and demand a bed. He will be entitled to it, because the means test has been abolished. Irrespective of whether he has an income of £4 or £50 a week he will be entitled to the bed, but he will have to pay doctor's fees.

Mr. Mann: Is the idea that if he wants a room to himself he pays an additional amount?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It does not matter where he goes in the hospital.

Mr. Mann: He is free?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If he does not demand a public bed, then he pays the difference, as I have said. There will be intermediate and private wards. The payments to public hospitals were worked on the 1942-43 and 1943-44 basis. After obtaining all the statistics of our public hospitals in Western Australia, we found that our collections worked out at 5s. 10d. per bed per day. That is the average. However, the hospitals will be compensated on what their collections were before the 1st September, 1945; but the datum is the two years ended the 30th June, 1944. If their collections were 7s. per patient per bed, they will get 7s.; if the collections were 7s. 6d., they will get 7s. 6d. Even if the collections were as low as 3s. or 2s. 9d., they would receive that amount. I hope members will thoroughly understand that the hospitals will be reimbursed on the basis of their collections for the two years ended the 30th June, 1944. No provision is made for out-patients. It was thought that if the Pharmaceutical Benefits Bill had been passed, it would have dealt with out-patients. Our collection figures were—

				s.	d.
1942-43	..	..	..	5	5.5
1943-44	..	..	..	6	1.3
1944-45	..	..	..	6	6.5

So our figures are higher than the amount we are going to receive. If we could have based our figures on the year 1945, we would have received much more than 6s. per patient per bed. The collections of the other States average from 3s. 2d. to 4s. per bed; consequently we got no support for greater consideration from the Commonwealth than the 6s.

Mr. Read: Is the amount contributed by the patients themselves?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The 5s. 10d. was the average of the collections made by all the public hospitals of Western Australia.

Mr. Seward: Why were the Eastern States so low? Was it owing to better organisation?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I wish to give great credit to the Medical Department of this State, because their organisation and administration seemed to be far above that of the Eastern States. I shall quote a few figures of collections that have been supplied to me—

				s.	d.
Victoria	..	..	..	3	2
New South Wales	..	..	..	4	0
Queensland	..	..	..	4	0
South Australia	..	..	..	3	6
Tasmania	..	..	..	3	8

The collections in this State, made on an exactly identical basis, were 2s. 2d. above the average of the Eastern States, which will make a rather handsome profit. This State's profit will be small.

Mr. Seward: Were their collections low because they did not press people to pay?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not know the reason, but apparently they were much more lenient. The people of this State, owing to the better organisation by our department, made a higher contribution. We must give the department credit for its work in that direction. The Commonwealth Government and the other State Governments said that our figures were inflated because of the amount of money in circulation in this State during the war. They thought it would not be a fair basis if we took our figure for 1945 which, as I have pointed out, was about 6d. higher than the amount we shall receive. At the last conference that was held, the Home of Peace and the Infectious Hospital were not included, nor were the hospital infirmaries. They have now been included, as well as the Sanatorium. Had it not been for these institutions, we should have been well behind the other States. There will be a substantial surplus for all the other States. The surpluses will be paid into a trust account and be treated as trust money and will be used only for capital expenditure, that is, for further accommodation for patients. The money will be subject to the control of the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Watts: Will our 2d. go into a trust account, too?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Our small amount, £5,416, will also be paid to that account and be used accordingly and under the same restrictions.

Mr. McLarty: The other States will have far more hospitals than we will.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They have a larger population to deal with and so will have that opportunity. According to my information the surpluses will be as follows:—

	£
Victoria	233,000
New South Wales	293,000
Queensland	126,000
South Australia	61,000
Tasmania	32,000
Western Australia	5,416

Ours is a microscopic amount by comparison.

Mr. Watts: From him that hath shall be taken away even that which he hath!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We tried to persuade the Commonwealth and the other States to give us our quota of £750,000 on a percentage basis. Taking this State as one-fifteenth of the population of Australia, that would have given us £50,000, but they would not agree to it.

Mr. Doney: Are you satisfied with the agreement in that case?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Whether we are satisfied or not, it is a matter of assenting to this agreement.

Mr. Doney: Of course it is.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If we do not, we will deprive the people of something which they can obtain for nothing. The Prime Minister assured us that if we had any specific proposal for hospital building which might be affected by this scheme, he would be prepared to give every consideration to every request we made. He would help this State if it were necessary. After a deal of argument the Prime Minister gave an assurance that if the medical services now given gratis had to be paid for, the Commonwealth Government would meet the cost. If the honorary staff refused to treat those who are in a position to pay, and they took advantage of there being no means test, the Commonwealth Government will

make the payments so that the State will not be a loser in that direction

The agreement provides for a five-year period, and we can give not less than 12 months' notice of our desire to withdraw from the agreement, if we wish to do so at the expiration of that time. The clause regarding the actual rate of payments visualises agreement on this figure from year to year. The figures will be reviewed each year so that if an increase becomes necessary consideration will be given to it. It is under this clause that the matter of rising maintenance costs will be considered. The trouble with the hospitals in this State is that 53 per cent. have less than 10 occupied beds, and as they are spread all over the State the matter becomes a very difficult one to handle. Every hospital in the country will have the choice of intermediate and private beds, because there are some people who have a good deal of dignity and would not want treatment for nothing. They would be satisfied to enter a hospital and receive, as they will by law, 6s. on account, but they would want to pay the difference.

Mr. McLarty: You will not be able to provide intermediate beds in country hospitals because you have not sufficient now.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: So long as anyone who makes an application for a free bed can get one we can call them what we like.

Mr. McLarty: All these different sorts of beds would be in the one ward.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We could provide partitions in some cases. The agreement makes provision for the free care of patients. I have repeated that several times. Any person can demand a free bed. The agreement is for five years and any State has the right to give not less than 12 months' notice of a desire to withdraw from it. No means test is provided and there can be no increase in charges in any hospital unless with the concurrence of the Commonwealth Government. That Government has agreed that we can demand its concurrence so long as we get it. That was agreed to after a lot of argument. Also no charges must be made dissimilar to the customary charges prior to the 1st September, 1935. It is under that provision that the honorary staff who were treating patients free of charge in

these institutions will have to continue as at that time. That means that the status quo will be preserved. A national hospital council is to be formed to advise the Commonwealth and the States if they want information. Nothing in the agreement shall be construed to affect the State's control of clinical teaching and research in public hospitals. The Commonwealth Government cannot take away any such power or privilege that we enjoy at present. This measure will be mostly a Committee Bill. The agreement makes provision for the people of this State to have free care in hospitals if they so wish.

The means test is to be abolished so that irrespective of the station in life of any person or what position he might hold he can demand a public bed. In the case of private hospitals, people will make their usual arrangements and pay the difference between the 6s. allowed by the Commonwealth Government and the charge that the hospitals usually made prior to this agreement. These private hospitals cannot increase their charges except with the concurrence of the Commonwealth Government. Although the Bill will not be of any great advantage to this State we have no alternative but to agree to it. The other States are all willing to have it; there is no question about Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, and Tasmania. If we do not agree we will be the only State standing out from the agreement and disallowing anyone, who wishes to have free treatment and free care, from getting those benefits. Except in the case of the four hospitals I have mentioned the patients will have to make no provision other than for their doctors. In those country places, especially on the Goldfields provision has been made by the various funds. At Norseman a contribution of 1s. 9d. a week, which includes the hospital and the doctor, is made. I take it that if this scheme comes into operation that will be reduced to cover the doctor only because there will be no need to include the hospital.

Mr. Watts: Unless the subscribers want to be intermediate patients.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. They might want to be intermediate patients or have a private bed, in which case they would make their own arrangements. But there is really no need for those who are on the basic wage and find it a burden to

make payments to these various funds to make contributions other than to secure the services of a doctor.

Mr. McLarty: When do you expect the scheme to come into operation?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: As far as I know, on the 1st January next. At the conference the matter was fully discussed and the Eastern States were perfectly satisfied. We were not quite so satisfied, but we had no redress because the administration and collections in this State were so much better than the other States. There is no alternative to accepting the agreement as passed by the Commonwealth Government. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Mann, debate adjourned.

BILL—ALBANY FREEZING WORKS AGREEMENT.

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [5.40] in moving the second reading said: This Bill, as the title indicates, is to ratify an agreement for the purchase by the Government of the assets and business of the Albany Freezing Works, Ltd. This company started operations in 1936 after having taken over premises that were then in the hands of the Government and which had been used initially as a butter factory and afterwards, under lease, as freezing chambers. The company commenced operations with an authorised capital of £20,000, of which £17,200 was represented in the shares taken up at that time. Mr. F. R. Heron of Fremantle was the principal shareholder with 12,430 shares. To enable the works to become established and then to deal with the operations necessary, particularly in connection with the killing of lambs for export, it was necessary for further finance to be made available and in 1938 the Government was asked to render financial assistance. That was given at the time in the form of a guaranteed overdraft amounting to £18,000, security being taken over the whole of the assets of the company. Mr. Heron, who was the chairman of directors, as well as the principal shareholder, put in a lot of his own cash to assist the concern.

In 1938, which was the peak year for fat lamb production in this State, approximately 380,000 lambs were treated for export. It will be remembered that all interests, including livestock salesmen, exporters and producers anticipated that the peak of 1938 would continue and that there would be a necessity, not only at Albany, but at Fremantle, for considerable enlargements to enable this State's freezing works to cope with the anticipated export demands. As a matter of fact, in the year that war broke out the anticipation was a minimum of 500,000 lambs and the progressive expectations went much higher. Unfortunately, although the anticipations were as I have mentioned, there was a serious falling off in the numbers available for slaughter, particularly for export, during 1939. The war broke out and even prior to that event the season was not up to expectations and all works in the State treated fewer lambs than in 1938. In anticipation of an increase, and also at the request of the Commonwealth Government to prepare for a step-up in the production of the Albany works, we asked that company to enlarge and increase its capacity up to 80,000 to 100,000 lambs.

So that the Albany works could be increased to that extent the Government provided further finance by way of a loan of £20,000. Since then and during the years of the war not only have bad seasons militated against the anticipations being realised, but the increase in the price of wool has also had a very bad effect on lamb production in all areas of the State. There was a big drop in the number of lambs available in all districts, and very many farmers changed from lamb production to what appeared to be the more definite prospects associated with wool. The price of wool was guaranteed for the duration of the war and for 12 months after. The fat lamb industry shortly after the war broke out, when it was suffering from adverse seasons, therefore received a definite setback in that connection. There also was the fact that the export of third-grade lambs was refused at a time when producers in this State had approximately one-third of their total production represented in third-grade lambs. That was the unfortunate feature of the requirements of the lamb industry during the early period of the war.

Although that restriction was removed after a few months, the fact of its being

imposed caused very many producers to switch back to wool which had the guaranteed price I have mentioned. It is unfortunate, too, that this company, enterprising though it was, having investigated every district which had a prospect of using Albany as a port in an endeavour to stimulate the production of those commodities which it could store as a freezing works or as a place of storage preparatory to export, found that the works operated from their inception at a loss. Mr. Heron, the principal shareholder, has put in a very large sum of money in an endeavour to keep the company afloat. He has provided the following sums:—In share capital, £12,430; personal guarantee to the Union Bank, £10,700; guarantee to the Fremantle Cold Stores £13,000; and £5,000 in additional cash of his own, making a total of £41,000.

Mr. Berry: Why did he put that money into a sinking ship?

The PREMIER: It was thought that the prospects of the Albany district of which the hon. member is well aware, if fully utilised and expanded, would give to the works a very bright outlook. Unfortunately, the dwindling lamb production and the other factors which lessened his turnover gave him the dwindling prospect I have indicated. In the early part of the year, he felt he could not continue. If the war had not intervened and an expansion of the district could have taken place, as was indicated it would, in any way comparable with the set-up in lamb production during the pre-war years of the operations of the company, there would have been a different story to tell. This gentleman, and those associated with him, thought that by holding out till after the war they could keep their position long enough to ensure that the prospect was a good one financially, and one that would do credit to the State as well as to the export works. At the close of last year's lamb season, however, Mr. Heron, on behalf of the company approached the Government and informed it that the company was unable to continue further and requested it to go into the question of whether it could take over the works, and if so at what price.

The liabilities of the company at the 30th June, 1945, were £96,800, including accumulated loss up to that date amounting to approximately £30,000. The Government

adopted the same course that was taken when the request came to take over the Robb's Jetty Meat Works some years ago. It appointed independent valuers in connection with the buildings and also a representative associated with the meat trade in the company's employ to go into the matter. The buildings were valued by Mr. W. L. Brine, the Managing Director of A. T. Brine and Sons, Perth's biggest contractors, while the plant and machinery were valued by Mr. Brearly, the chief engineer of the W.A. Meat Export Works. The valuations arrived at were as follows:—

	£
Buildings	23,506
Plant and machinery	23,620
Stocks and stores on hand ..	4,120
Sundry debtors	6,345
Sundries	609
Total	<u>58,200</u>

It will be seen that the shareholders lost the whole of their share capital, £17,200, while Mr. Heron in addition to the loss of his shareholding of £12,430 was also a heavy loser by way of his personal guarantees to the Union Bank. The undertaking was considered by all residents of the State, particularly of that part of the State, and by the Government, as a very necessary enterprise and an asset so that the State could have the advantage of the slaughter and treatment for export of various commodities, and one that would serve the very many districts upon which it was possible to draw for export commodities.

Mr. Berry: I presume you have to make a profit out of this.

The PREMIER: Yes. That profit will be associated with the ability to step up production.

Mr. Berry: There will be an indirect profit?

The PREMIER: It will be necessary to increase the turnover and enable the State to give the services to producers that it has done at Robb's Jetty at a reasonable rate and one that is attractive both to farmers who export on their own behalf, to those who use the stores, and to any companies which find benefits from such storage, as well as to the works themselves. The Government is anxious that this area of the State should be developed. It has perhaps the greatest potential for such development,

and in association with the officers concerned in the various departments who can assist in the stimulation of production of many commodities we hope that, with the cessation of hostilities, there will be that ready opportunity for an increase in production of many types of livestock, of fruits, and other commodities which these works will serve.

For example, since the agreement has been signed the firm of Watson & Co., Fremantle, has made an arrangement with the Government to kill all export pigs bought by that firm at the Albany Freezing Works. Through the activities of departmental officers we are finding that there is a likelihood now that hostilities have ceased, that farmers will be interested in moving to a surer line of production in fat lambs than the Merino types because of the deficiency associated with the production of lambs from mothers of a sterile type. They are going back to cross-breds in that district, and are finding that although there is a tendency towards sterility disease that is affecting Merino flocks, the cross-breds appear better equipped to resist that disability; thus there is created a tendency to revert to fat lamb production. The cross-breds in this area show about 85 per cent. drop, whereas Merinos are severely afflicted in many of the districts concerned.

The Albany Freezing Works, in a letter to the Government, showed that it was not able to secure any other suitable purchaser for its assets, and therefore when it approached the Government through the director and the company's auditors, we gave the whole subject consideration, set investigations in motion and obtained the independent reports to which I have referred. It was then decided that the most economic and efficient way in which the works could be carried on would be to take them over at a valuation. An agreement has therefore been made that the Government shall take the works over with all assets as a going concern. It may be that some will consider the Government has been ungenerous. In taking the works over at a valuation of £58,200, the Government gave every consideration to Mr. Heron in regard to the interest which was owing on moneys borrowed for the specific purpose of making additions to the works at the Government's specific request. So far as I know, although

his loss has been extremely heavy for an enterprise of this character, he and his auditors were quite satisfied that the Government had been fair in the matter. The independent valuations that were made and the whole of the inquiries that were undertaken show that the Government, in taking the works over at a valuation, firstly has a lesser annual commitment to meet in the difference between the interest on the capitalisation at which we took over and the amount of the capital account under which the works operated.

Although we may find there will be difficult days for the Government, every effort will be made to stimulate production to its utmost in order to build up these works to their maximum capacity, and we feel that in association with the Robb's Jetty undertaking, even if we can anticipate only a minor success compared with the success of the Robb's Jetty venture, the Government will be rendering excellent service to the district concerned and the community in general. It is necessary that works such as these, at such a strategic point for such works, should belong to the Government rather than to any monopolistic interest owned overseas. I am hopeful that although it is to be expected the works will have a somewhat uphill fight and perhaps find difficulty in holding its own for the time being, it will make a valuable contribution to the part of the State concerned and to the whole of Western Australia, well worthy of the attempt of the Government to do a fair thing by the present owners, and will eventually retrieve the position.

Mr. Mann: The works have a big future before them.

The PREMIER: If the country in the neighbourhood of Albany and to the north of it is satisfactorily developed, within the next ten or 20 years there must be a tremendous future for such an enterprise. I hope that the future history of these works will be bright, that they will survive all difficulties, and that the services they will render will be more than commensurate for any worrying times that may lie ahead. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Hill, debate adjourned.

BILL—LOCAL AUTHORITIES (RESERVE FUNDS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [6.0] in moving the second reading said: The main purpose of the Act, which was passed in 1942, was to permit local authorities to place surplus funds into reserve so that, when the war ended and plant and manpower were available, they would have money with which to carry out work that had of necessity been postponed during the war. The whole of the money placed in these reserve funds came from the ordinary revenues of the local authorities. Section 11 of the Act precludes any local authority from raising a new loan for any proposed work except to the extent by which the amount required for the work exceeds the money in any reserve fund. This means that where a reserve fund exists to the extent of, say, £2,000, and a new work costing £3,000 is required, a new loan could be raised for £1,000, the balance having to be made up from the £2,000 in the reserve fund. Practically the whole of the moneys in the reserve funds were put there with the intention of spending them on roads when conditions were favourable for such work to be undertaken.

Mr. Seward: It was only because they could not use the money at that time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Money expended on roads is non-revenue earning. Therefore it is desirable that most of the reserve funds should be retained for expenditure on road work. It is in connection with this aspect of the matter that complications are now arising. A road board in the country is anxious to take over the local hall, which is under the control and in the name of trustees. The hall is revenue-producing, and is the sort of scheme on which a local authority would prefer to use loan money as against money in the reserve fund. The local branch of the bank is willing to make a new loan to the road board to enable it to liquidate the overdraft on the hall, and the three trustees are willing to make a contribution of their own to lighten the burden on the ratepayers, but because of Section 11 of the Act, the local authority is bound to take money from its reserve if it desires to go ahead

with the proposal. It cannot raise a new loan because Section 11 prohibits it from so doing when it has sufficient money in the reserve fund.

It is thought quite proper that any local authority in this position should be given the right to raise a new loan instead of being compelled to draw upon its established reserve fund. This Bill aims at amending Section 11 to give the Governor power to authorise a local authority to raise a new loan whenever he considers the circumstances justify that action, instead of its being compelled to draw upon the money in the reserve fund. This amendment, therefore, is one that is calculated to assist the local authorities to maintain in their reserve funds the money that was put there from revenue mainly to be used on roads when conditions were favourable to that work being done. Members will agree that it is desirable that money paid into reserve from revenue should be used mainly for road work as against being spent on revenue-earning activities such as the taking over and operating of a public hall or any other number of activities which local authorities are empowered to carry on and which are fully or partly revenue producing. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Leslie, debate adjourned.

BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 29th November.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [6.6]: This is merely a Bill to continue the Act until 1947. I think I express the view of members on this side of the House when I say that we approve of that action being taken. The Minister quoted figures for rural activity and the Leader of the Opposition, by way of interjection, sought to find out what the losses had been on industrial activity. I believe that information is not available.

The Minister for Lands: In those figures there was nothing at all for industries,

Mr. THORN: I have no desire to press for the other figures. What would be the

use of doing so if they are not available? I see no objection to the Act being continued until 1947.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th November.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [6.9]: I listened with keen interest to the remarks of the Minister in moving the second reading, and though he described the Bill as bulky but not contentious, I feel that various amendments are necessary to make a better measure of it. The position of the egg industry is such that a definite system of control is necessary. Apparently Western Australia is one of the States that has not made proper provision for the organised marketing of the commodity. With the Minister, I feel that the great expansion in the industry and the enormous production of eggs necessitates our passing marketing legislation unless the industry is to suffer a total collapse. For many years it has been noticeable that eggs at a certain period of the year have been excessively dear, while at this season of the year or later, eggs are in abundance and farmers are selling them for as little as 6d. per dozen. This indicates that control is necessary. The producer would far sooner have all his commodities marketed on a basis where he would gamble only on the season instead of on the price of his commodity.

If we consider the export side of the business, we must come to the conclusion that there will be for some time a heavy demand for eggs throughout the world. I cannot see any immediate prospect of a world glut, because conditions of war and drought have created such shortages in the supply. There are some aspects of the Bill with which I cannot agree. I am not a poultry raiser, but I think I am able to take a broad view of the proposals in the Bill. It is intended that control shall apply to owners of 20 hens or more, and there is a margin between

that and the commercial producer with 150 fowls. During the war period, city dwellers were requested to run a few fowls in their backyards in order to ease the demand. Now it is proposed to bring many of those people who have 20 laying hens or ducks—which is really a very small number—under control. Why should we penalise them? Why should we include all such people and deny them the right to help themselves? Twenty fowls kept by a family with four or five children would not provide a great number of eggs for consumption. The minimum for the ordinary producer should be 50 fowls. I do not consider that people who keep a few fowls in their backyard can be regarded as expert producers of eggs. A man running 150, 500 or 1,000 fowls, can be reasonably regarded as an expert, and his hens as egg-laying machines.

The Minister for Agriculture: If owners do not sell the eggs, they may keep 1,000 fowls.

Mr. MANN: That is a question which I intend to raise in Committee. Then there is the prohibition against selling. Seemingly no person may sell eggs without the approval of the board. What will be the position in the country where many a housewife exchanges eggs with somebody else? Under this measure, people will be prohibited from exchanging eggs. Mrs. Brown might own a certain desirable breed and Mrs. Jones might want four or five dozen eggs in order to change her stock. Under this measure, there will be no right to barter or exchange. If we are going to pass a law, we should ensure that it is one without anomalies and capable of being put into effect. If we make a law stupidly drastic, people will have no compunction about breaking it. I believe that one-half of the black marketing which is being so prevalent is due to the extraordinary nature of many of the laws that have been passed. If we prohibit the exchange or barter of eggs, we shall be inviting the introduction of black marketing methods into this business.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MANN: I was raising a point with regard to the exchange of eggs and also touched on the limit of 20 fowls. I suggested that eggs obtained by the owner of the ordinary backyard property which has

only 20 fowls cost about 6d. each to produce, because those people are not experts at egg production. Some farmers who run a number of barnyard fowls are in the same position. The birds are not fed in the proper way, so that eggs are not obtained for more than about six months of the year. Poultry raising and egg production is a matter for experts who have made a long study of the diet which is necessary to ensure that the best results are obtained. I consider that the number of fowls a backyard run is permitted to hold should be raised from 20 to 50. In some cases fowls lay for two months, and the rest of the year there are no eggs and that leads to a heavy cost in upkeep.

The Premier: How old are the fowls?

Mr. MANN: I admit that some of them are eight to ten years old.

The Premier: That is too old. For best results from laying, fowls should be kept for only two years.

Mr. MANN: That is not recognised by many people. Again, there is a certain sentimental attitude adopted towards poultry, even in the farmyard. I now come to the question of the personnel of the board and I want to know why there should be six members. That is likely to lead to deadlocks. Even numbers are bad at all times; odd numbers are far better. Under this proposal two of the members, not being persons engaged in the production or selling of eggs, would represent the consumers. One would be a commercial producer nominated by the Minister, and there would be the chairman and two other persons who are commercial producers. I hope the Minister will reduce the number to five, omitting the commercial producer nominated by the Minister.

There seems to be an objection to the producers controlling their own business; but the Commonwealth Government has at last acceded to the request of the Wheat Board and the Wool Board and there is a majority of producers on both of those boards. The Egg Board is one that concerns the producers. Why should they not have a right to decide matters for themselves? Let it not be thought that because men are farmers they have no knowledge of business affairs. Today farmers have to be practical business men. What would the Lumpers' Union or the Metal

Workers' Union think if two farmers were appointed to their executives? But for some unknown reason, the producers are told that they cannot manage their own businesses themselves. The farmer is not parochial.

The Minister for Works: Not much!

Mr. MANN: I hope the Government will give consideration to the amendment I propose to move concerning the constitution of the board. Apparently the board is to have extensive powers and is to be able to appoint inspectors. It may become a very large board. Boards have a tendency to grow and, instead of the profits going back to the producers, they are absorbed by the organisation. I suggest that the Minister should agree to the inspectors being appointed by him. Those inspectors would then be Government employees, and I think that would have a good effect. Unfortunately inspectors are not always helpful. We find that with regard to the rabbit question. We have rabbit inspectors and fruit fly inspectors and all sorts of inspectors; and these men, instead of helping, very often harass individuals.

The board is to engage in all manner of activities. We find that it can undertake printing and publishing, transport and carrying services. That is extraordinary. Is this board to be a huge commercial undertaking? We have no idea of what revenue will be received yet we are going to appoint a large body of men under this board and run the show at an enormous cost. There is another extraordinary item in the Bill which will have the effect of preventing owners of hotels, boardinghouses, restaurants and manufacturing businesses from using eggs produced by poultry owned by them or under their control. So if there is a hotel at Mukinbudin or Beverley or a boardinghouse and the proprietor has a number of fowls he will not be able to use the eggs produced from them on his premises.

The Minister for Agriculture: It all depends!

Mr. MANN: Yes, the board will decide the matter. I do not think such a man would be engaged on a commercial basis of production, and he should be allowed to use the eggs in the business.

The Minister for Agriculture: Provision is made in the Bill for a permit to be granted.

Mr. MANN: I would also like to raise the question: When is a business wholesale or retail? I hope the limit to the number of fowls that may be kept without a license will be raised, and I think we can help the Minister if he will accept the amendments of which notice has been given. The time has come when we must have control of marketing because of world competition. In many aspects the Bill is good. The final question I would like to raise concerns the winding up of the board. It was submitted by the egg producers who met at Armadale recently that the limit should be five years, ending the 31st December, 1950. If the board does not function satisfactorily, and if the producers are entirely dissatisfied, there is no limitation at present on the board's existence. I think the producers should be able to decide its fate.

The Minister for Agriculture: You prefer three years.

Mr. MANN: Yes. I would add that if we seek to force the issue by legislation no eggs will be produced. The farmer is not going to be coerced. If any body of men has had a sickening of control it is the farmers who have been subject for so long to National Security regulations. At last, however, the farmers are adopting a much more independent attitude; and they will simply say, if this measure presses hardly on them, "I will not produce." Then we shall see whether the farmers can be made to engage in production. I have tabled my amendments in good faith with the idea of assisting to make the Bill a good one. I hope they will be acceptable.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [7.41]: I had no intention of speaking on this measure until I heard the remarks of the member for Beverley. I want to say now that I am opposed to boards of this description. Since this board has been in existence, the price of eggs has been raised by 2½d., and I have never had an absolutely fresh egg except when I happened to be on a farm. It is not possible to buy a really fresh egg in a shop; whereas, before the board existed, fresh eggs were obtainable. Not only has the price been raised, but black marketing has occurred. During the scarcity last year, if one new where to obtain eggs and had a motorcar one could get them, provided one had the

money to pay. But the ordinary person who had not a motorcar and did not know where to go for the eggs, could not secure them. People with cars obtained them from a black market.

I remember one particular place that produced 400 dozen eggs a week and the man had thousands to sell. I think he had a license to sell 70,000. I asked him what he did with the rest, and he said, "I sell them." Can we blame him? I do not propose to give names. The point is that eggs could be got during the scarcity. On the other hand, when eggs were scarce, if one happened to have a large family of young children and was a small wage earner, although there was an allowance of so many eggs per child or per person, unless one had a good account at a certain grocer's store one could not obtain the eggs. I know dozens of young people with children of under three years of age—the mother nursing a baby—who could not get the eggs that were allowed. They were deprived of them during the scarcity. It was a real disgrace. I would have liked to take the Minister to some of the homes I know of where young married people with small children were unable to secure eggs because they happened to be honest and did not run a credit at any particular shop.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are disregarding the existence of an abnormal period when eggs were required for servicemen.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: Servicemen fared fairly well, but I know women with very young children who were nursing babies and who needed those eggs more than did the servicemen who were in Australia. The serviceman outside Australia may have needed eggs, but did not get them. I oppose this Bill wholeheartedly, and trust that this and a few other boards dealing with foodstuffs will soon go out of existence.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [7.46]: The question of establishing an egg marketing board has frequently come before this Parliament for decision. On the last occasion the number of fowls that a person could keep without having to register as a producer was fixed at 75. There is a large number of poultry farmers in the district I represent. Prior to Commonwealth control

coming in many of the bigger poultry farmers in my district favoured the continuance of the voluntary egg stabilisation scheme, one of the primary reasons in favour of it being that if a board was set up it would increase the expense to the producers. There are egg marketing boards in other States of Australia. Many of the producers in my district own up to 4,000 birds and produced eggs for the local market and for export, receiving 1s. 11d. per dozen on the export parity basis. It is now sought to use the machinery established under wartime conditions in setting up this egg marketing board. I am not opposed to the creation of the board, but would point out that the limit of 20 fowls previously fixed was found unworkable and was extended to 40 birds.

The Minister for Agriculture: And they have regretted it.

MR. J. HEGNEY: There are many people such as old age pensioners and others who keep a few fowls, but if they owned perhaps 21 birds they were brought under the provisions of the measure and had to contribute to the Commonwealth scheme. When the Bill is in Committee I will move to have it put on the same basis as hitherto existed. Some years ago a Bill was brought down, which is now the Act. It provided for 75 hens to be the number to qualify the owner as a producer. That number was reduced to 20. Many people with perhaps 50 fowls would not make much out of the eggs. As the member for Subiaco said, such people may sell a few eggs to their next door neighbours, which the department could not prevent. If we keep to the machinery that existed during the war period, and which worked very well, particularly as to the sale of eggs through the shops where they had to be candled and graded, we will be doing what is best.

Many men returning from the war would probably like to go in for poultry but are not encouraged to go into the industry because of the filip given to it during the war. Many people then went into that industry and were encouraged to raise fowls to supply themselves with eggs, and it is now said that because they kept perhaps 40 fowls during the last few years they are now to come under the provisions of this Bill. Many of the boards in existence have not worked out as members thought they would work out, as, for instance, the Apple and Pear

Board. In many cases the producer does not get the benefit which he expected from the board, nor does the consumer get the benefit to which he is entitled. There is a great disparity between what the producer receives and what the consumer has to pay, due to the overhead costs and charges. There will be charges for the board to be set up under this Bill. The inspectors that are to be appointed to police the measure will add to the cost.

I am prepared to see whether the board will function properly but I will not support the provision which sets out that a person owning only 20 fowls, which may be laying or over the age of 9 months, must register. Some hens do not lay at all. The backyard farmer may have 30 or 50 birds and, because of the difficulty of getting proper food for them, in many cases a lot of them may not be laying. The large producers who carry on poultry farms on a commercial basis also have their problems. If it is laid down that a producer is one who owns 20 birds that are laying or 20 birds over the stipulated age, there will be many people hostile to this measure, because a large number of workers, pensioners and others who have a few fowls will be affected. I discussed this matter with many men who are poultry farming in a big way, prior to the Commonwealth control, and they supported the voluntary egg stabilisation scheme. They did not favour a board, because of the overhead charges that they would have to pay.

Over the years there have been proposals to establish an egg marketing board, but I do not think one has yet been established here. One proposition was put up under which a poll was to be taken, and that measure laid down the number as 75 birds. That was the provision in the Bill that is now an Act, which is now proposed to be amended. Because of the difficulties in shipping there may be difficulty in exporting eggs in the immediate future. Consumption has been great in Australia during the war period owing to the presence of Allied Forces and the use of eggs in pulp and powdered form, but whether we can find an export market when other countries again get into production is another matter. At one stage the price of eggs was down to 8d. per dozen, and I can remember its being as low as 6½d. per dozen, and producers had great difficulties at that price.

For a few years we may be able to find markets for our surplus, but when other countries are able again to produce their own supplies we will meet difficulties. I remember when eggs were bringing 7s. 6d. in Queensland. Notwithstanding the fact that egg marketing boards then existed in Victoria and New South Wales eggs from those States were dumped into Queensland in order to get the higher price, and the Commonwealth was forced to come into the picture, resulting in Commonwealth control. If the cost of the board can be kept to a minimum and if the number of fowls allowed to be kept without registration is set down at 50, I will support the Bill.

MR. TELFER (Avon) [7.56]: I support the Bill, which I think is the only way out. Without stabilised markets and orderly marketing there is no knowing where the producer will finish. Prior to Commonwealth control eggs were being sold in the country for 6d. per dozen, but immediately that legislation came into force the price doubled. For that reason alone I think the Government is to be congratulated on bringing down this Bill.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [7.58]: I think this Bill is the greatest compliment paid to me since I have been in this Parliament. It is modelled on the Bill read in this Chamber for the first time on the 16th October, 1941. That Bill was carried in this Chamber after a struggle. I put in six months drafting it and studying the position, but when it got to another place nobody would take the first reading of the Bill. I was reminded of that today when I received a ring from a producer in my electorate who said that a member of the Legislative Council had the cheek to come to Armadale and claim credit for the Bill. I believe in stabilised markets for our produce. The provisions of the Bill conform very closely to those of the Bill I introduced and which I regret did not find a place on the statute book because of the foolish behaviour of the Legislative Council at that time.

MR. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not reflect upon another place.

MR. RODONEDA: That as a compliment!

MR. CROSS: If proof of my statement were needed, it is to be found in the fact

that the position is similar now to what it was at that time, and had the Bill been passed the producers would have enjoyed four years of organised stabilised marketing. I am glad that the Government has introduced the legislation at this stage, and I hope it will meet a different fate in another place from that which attended my Bill. I am not worrying about who gets the credit for the legislation so long as we render assistance to one of the hardest working sections of the community.

Mr. J. Hegney: Are you referring to the fowls?

Mr. CROSS: No. Poultry farmers are tied to their holdings for seven days a week. A ridiculous position is created under existing conditions because when a glut occurs there is no means by which it can be got rid of. So far, what work is done has been carried on by a voluntary marketing board that possesses no real power to do anything. If the Bill is agreed to, the board to be constituted will have power to control the marketing of eggs, to license producers, buyers and sellers, and so forth. It will be able to ensure that people get eggs in a decent condition. I trust the board will take care of that side of the market because so far the position has been most unsatisfactory. We know what has happened in the past.

Everyone knows that when the eggs come in they are put on the egg floors. Some come from the country during the hot weather and those eggs that have blood spots and are otherwise deficient are graded as third class and sent to the suburban shops where they are disposed of as fresh eggs. I made a serious attempt to get eggs candled and disposed of to the public within a reasonable time. I know it is a difficult problem, but at present people do not get fresh eggs even though they may be stamped. Of course, no-one knows when the eggs were stamped. I had a sorry experience some weeks ago when I bought a dozen eggs and found that five of them were nearly rotten! It does not mean that if eggs are candled and stamped they will be fresh to the public, unless they are disposed of fairly quickly. I certainly trust the board will institute some method to deal with that phase. I consider the date should be stamped on the egg when it is candled, in which event the consumer when buying eggs would know whether they were newly laid or were six months old.

We should be sympathetic with regard to the egg producers because during the last few weeks they have suffered what they may well consider to be another blow. The price of poultry feed has been increased, and information I have received indicates that it will cost them 1¼d. more per dozen for feed. During the last few years the Price Fixing Commissioner raised the fixed price of eggs by 1d. per dozen when the season fell off, but that has not been done this year. Some of the producers will find themselves in a precarious position because the increase in feed plus the loss of the advanced price this year represents a decrease of 20 per cent. in their returns. The number engaged in poultry farming in Western Australia has considerably increased. In fact, I think there are more in my constituency than in any other electorate in Western Australia. Included among them are many who have newly embarked upon the industry.

The increase in the number of producers was in response to the urgings of the Commonwealth Government that egg production should be increased for export to the Old Country. Many old people who should be living in enjoyment of their old age pensions bought a few fowls and built up their flocks, so that they could contribute towards the increased output. In all the circumstances, an organised and stabilised market is necessary in the interests of the producers. If the position is handled properly, there is no reason why the producers here should not be able to send large quantities of eggs in the shell to Great Britain. This increased avenue of production has provided extra work for many people and it should be profitable because we can produce eggs and place them on the English market when there is a scarcity there. In the past egg supplies were drawn from China and Denmark, but I am sure that the people of Great Britain would welcome guaranteed good quality eggs from Western Australia.

I think there is a better likelihood of the Bill finding its place on the statute book this time because the Bill has the support of the Chief Secretary in another place. There is one provision in the Bill to which I desire to draw attention. I refer to the limit upon the number of fowls that a suburban producer may keep. In the outer suburban areas there are many who intend to go in for poultry farms.

They start off with a few hens and then build up their flock. I am certainly not in agreement with the limitation of 20 fowls before a license is required. I regard that as a ridiculous proposition.

Mr. North: How many would you advocate?

Mr. CROSS: I would advocate 75.

Mr. North: That is better.

Mr. CROSS: That is the provision I included in my Bill, and I am glad I have the support of the member for Claremont. With a low limit of 20 head the tendency will be to build up a black market in eggs. We know what will happen. When men are farming a few miles away from the city, the tendency will be to dispose of their eggs irrespective of the legislation. They may exchange eggs for a few vegetables, and they will continue to do that as they have in the past. Indeed, it would be remarkable if they did not. In order to accomplish that end, I intend to move an amendment to increase the number to 75 head of poultry.

Mr. W. Hegney: And you will receive fair support for that.

Mr. CROSS: Certainly, because it is a fair thing.

The Minister for Agriculture: Producers do not think so.

Mr. CROSS: In the light of their experience, I think that provision would be more satisfactory. I trust that now the Government has introduced a Bill modelled on the one introduced some time ago, it will be passed and will prove of benefit to both the producers and the people of this State.

MR. OWEN (Swan) [8.8]: When he introduced the Bill, the Minister mentioned the increased production of eggs that had taken place to meet requirements during the war period. We have now reached the stage in Western Australia where without organisation the industry is likely to suffer immediately Commonwealth control ceases. It has been suggested, and there seems strong probability that it will eventuate, that when conditions settle down a Federal organisation will be set up to handle the surplus eggs. It will be a co-operative concern governed by a Federal board which will consist, I under-

stand, of one representative from each of the State egg marketing boards. In those circumstances if this legislation is not passed, Western Australia will be without a board and this State will be out of step with the rest of the Commonwealth. Should that happen there will be no control over the importation of eggs produced in the Eastern States, and the growers there will be able to flood our market during the period of shortage here when prices are high.

Those who had experience of poultry farming before the war knew that during the early spring months when eggs were plentiful the price dropped to from 7d. to 8d. per dozen, whereas in late summer and the autumn when eggs were scarce the price rose to about 3s. per dozen. Instead of the local grower benefiting from the high price available during the lean season, the market was flooded with eggs from the Eastern States. As members are aware, under the Commonwealth Constitution there is no possibility of legislative action by the State to prevent those eggs being dispatched to Western Australia. On the other hand, if there is co-operation between the States, as envisaged by the Federal scheme I have referred to, then while there would be no legislation to prevent the eggs being sent here, I presume there would be an agreement whereby there would be no dumping from one State to another. On that ground alone the Bill is necessary in order to preserve the industry in this State.

Over the years poultry farmers and, in fact, all primary producers have suffered due to the lack of organisation and properly controlled marketing schemes. Prices fluctuate enormously during a season and if the poultry keeper were to have sufficient fowls to provide eggs in the lean season it would mean he would have two or three times as many eggs as could be consumed in the flush season. In the pre-war years, those eggs could be exported in the shell mainly to Great Britain and at that time the market was sometimes profitable but at others not so remunerative. With organisation as between the States, that market could be properly controlled and stabilised so that when the local market was more than satisfied there would be a chance of a profitable market for the eggs oversea.

There is much that could be said about other aspects of the Bill, and I hope to have something to say regarding some matters during the Committee stage. One point in particular refers to the producer who will be allowed to have 20 head of fowls before he need be licensed. I think that 20 is quite sufficient to constitute a producer. If the number were increased to 50 or 75, we would have a lot of the backyard commercial producers operating in the industry.

Mr. Cross: You would require 75 to supply a big family.

Mr. Mann: Some family!

Mr. OWEN: Many of these producers, because they have either improperly bred fowls or do not properly feed their flocks, produce very few eggs during the lean period when the householders need supplies. The trouble I foresee is that those who have a considerable number of eggs produced by 50 or 75 hens would not contribute any levy, and would tend to spoil the market during the flush season and be of very little benefit to the market during the off season.

With regard to black-marketing, I venture to say that a person with 50 or 70 fowls would be in a better position to black market than a person with only 20; because a person with 20 fowls could, more than likely, use all the eggs they produce in his own household. If, however, a person has 50 to 75 fowls, his household could certainly not consume all the eggs. The obvious thing for him to do, as he could not sell them on the open market, would be to sell them on the black market. Such a person would do much more damage to the industry. I am heartily in agreement with the definition of "producer"—"a person who owns or controls 20 adult female fowls and/or ducks and sells the eggs or any of the eggs produced thereby." I think there will be much discussion during the Committee stage of the Bill, and I shall therefore reserve my further remarks till then.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [8.17]: There are some brief observations I wish to make on the Bill which cannot properly be made during the Committee stage, so I cannot do other than mention them now. If the chaotic conditions which prevailed—and I use the word "chaotic" advisedly—in relation to the supply of eggs some months ago can be taken as an illustration

of what control of marketing eggs means then that state of affairs is something which everybody, consumers in particular, must deplore, if it is an indication of the result of an attempt to control marketing and it will not encourage a welcome for a measure of the nature of this one.

Mr. Cross: That was caused because the eggs were sent to the Pacific.

Mr. LESLIE: On the other hand we cannot allow those circumstances to prevent us from doing our utmost to bring about stabilisation of production and a payable return to the grower. That is the purpose of the Bill. As I view it, the Bill is designed for the big man. The owner or controller of 20 head of poultry is required to register under the Act if he sells the eggs produced by his fowls. A person may own from 20 up to 150 hens but so long as he does not sell the eggs which they produce he will not be bound by the Bill. The Bill provides that the definition "producer" means a person who owns or controls 20 adult female fowls and/or ducks and sells the eggs or any of the eggs produced thereby. The word "sells" includes barter and/or exchange. If he sells or barter the eggs, the person owning from 20 to 150 fowls comes within the scope of the measure. I do not consider that to be right particularly in view of the fact that the main representatives on the board are the big producers—the men who own 150 fowls or more.

It is all very well to say that those people rely entirely upon the industry for their living. I challenge that statement. That number of poultry is very small indeed, and most of those producers have other sources of income probably more profitable than the poultry. If the Bill is passed it will exclude from the poultry industry very many country people who own perhaps 50 or more fowls, and to whom the egg-money makes the difference between a bare existence and a reasonable living. I suggest that in view of the fact that country people today are being called upon to subsidise the egg producer, it is but reasonable to afford them ample opportunity in an avenue of production which is just as important to them as it is to those for whom this measure will provide protection. The idea is to squeeze the country people out of the industry. Egg production has unquestion-

ably fallen in the rural areas as a result of the control which has been applied in the past.

Admittedly, the egg production on a wheat farm is the merest sideline compared to the total turnover of the farm, but it is a very necessary sideline. Those people find they have no means of disposing of their eggs because the local storekeeper, who formerly bought them, will not trouble to apply for a permit to become an egg-buyer. At the same time they are not producing sufficient eggs to send them to the market while they are still fresh. They have the option of holding the eggs until they have a sufficient quantity to send to the market, which means that stale eggs are sent to market. If there is to be control of the industry, nothing should be done to discourage farmers from producing eggs as an adjunct to their farming activities, as they can do now. It will be necessary for hotelkeepers and boardhouse-keepers to get permission to use their own eggs if they have more than 20 hens. I should like to mention for the benefit of members who are not aware of the conditions in country districts that many hotels consume more than the product of 20 hens in the course of their business.

Mr. Cross: We can make the number 70.

Mr. LESLIE: It will have to be 75 as the present provision is unacceptable to those people. They prefer to have their own fowls so that they can be sure of a fresh supply of eggs. They are far removed from markets, and if they get their supplies from that source they must depend upon an agent to purchase the eggs and rail them to the country. They do not know the quality of eggs they are getting; and as these are received in fairly large quantities, by the time they get to the last of the eggs they are very stale. The interests of those people must be considered in order to give them a reasonable spin under the Bill. There is one other matter I want to point out to the Minister. Under the Bill it is not possible for a producer to give away an egg. In country districts many farmers are unable to write out a cheque or put their hands into their pockets when an appeal is made on behalf of some charity; but frequently they will say, "I have three, four or six dozen eggs which I am prepared to give towards this

charity." As I say, under the Bill they would be precluded from doing that, while the receiver would also be liable to prosecution for an offence under the Act.

Mr. Needham: The eggs could be saved up for election time!

Mr. LESLIE: The farmer might be able to do that. I hope there will be an insufficient quantity of eggs should the hon. member visit the country.

Mr. J. Hegney: The same principles apply in the Milk Bill.

Mr. LESLIE: It seems to me that some provision should be inserted in the measure under which a person who desires to make a gift of eggs to a charity would be enabled to do so without becoming criminally liable; and this remark would apply also to the receiver of the eggs. I support the second reading, but I hope the Minister will carefully consider the amendments which are to be submitted in the Committee stage.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [8.27]: A feature of this Bill which has not been referred to but concerns the residents of the metropolitan area is the question of roosters. The Bill provides for commercial producers and producers; it provides the number of hens which they may own in each case. However, in the metropolitan area there has been for many years a big problem—the rooster nuisance.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. NORTH: The danger might occur that there might be producers, if not commercial producers, within the metropolitan area. In that case, those who are pursuing the industry would, of course, have the right to make their own selection of cocks or roosters. There is no law in this State to deal with the nuisance to which I refer. I understand that it cannot very well be prevented.

The Premier: What time do you get out of bed?

Mr. NORTH: I raised this question because I am told that the egg which is infertile is better to eat at the breakfast table than the fertile egg.

Member: When did you find that out?

Mr. NORTH: I asked a person with some experience. It should be possible to include in the regulations to be made under this

measure a provision to prevent roosters from being a nuisance, and to provide for their control as regards their duties for chickens, and not for the eggs which we need to eat.

Mr. SPEAKER: I must ask members to keep order.

Mr. NORTH: I am surprised that the House is so interested. If we did what I suggest, we would be doing a good job. One way of getting over the difficulty would be for the producers to provide, where the birds rest at night, a long pole just above where they roost, so that when they start to raise themselves and jerk their heads upwards to get ready for the duty which keeps us all awake at night, they will bang their heads on the board and the trouble will be overcome.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle—in reply) [8.31]: What a great comfort it would be if we could only produce a breed of roosters that did not crow and a breed of fowls that laid eggs with the date on! But we have to take the hens and roosters as they are and endeavour to make provision for the orderly marketing of the product. A good deal of the matter that has been submitted during the course of this debate has dealt more with specific detail than with principle, and I propose not to comment on those matters until the Committee stage. The member for Subiaco is the only one who proposed to vote against the Bill because she said she was against all marketing boards. The hon. member has not given that impression when she has been in the country, as she has been quite a lot within fairly recent times. She has not taken up that attitude with the producers. It should be recognised that this legislation is introduced, first of all, in the interests of producers and, in doing so, the welfare of the consumers is adequately safeguarded.

Chaotic conditions would exist in the industry unless some provision were made for the proper marketing of the product. The producers requested that legislation be introduced this session so that provision could be made in time to continue the controlled marketing of eggs in Western Australia. The member for Beverley has said that control is necessary from the producers' point of view,

and I agree. The producers realise that, too, and that is why they have asked for the Bill. But the member for Beverley foreshadowed that he intended to move amendments that would result in the termination of the control, because he suggested that this marketing legislation should not continue beyond three years. That means that the control would cease at the end of that period. If control is necessary from the producers' point of view, why terminate it?

Mr. Mann: This is a sort of test case.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Beverley has already spoken.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I repeat that not a great deal was said on the general principle of the Bill with which most members are in agreement. They agree that there should be provision for the marketing of the product. Our war experience has demonstrated clearly how necessary it is, in the interests of the producers, that some control should be set up to prevent the occurrence of chaotic conditions. Requests are coming forward from producers who have benefited considerably from this control for the continuance of the various boards that have been set up, and this is no exception. In making the necessary provision for looking after the interests of the producers in the poultry industry, the Government has not lost sight of the interests of the consumers and that is why it is intended that the representation of the consumers on the Marketing Board shall be at least equal to that of the producers.

The member for Subiaco made great play on the fact that it was not possible for a number of nursing mothers and small children to obtain eggs because of the existence of egg control in this State. There is no egg marketing board in Western Australia at present, but a Commonwealth egg control scheme. There was no necessity for any nursing mother, or child under six years, to have gone without an egg, because the Rationing Commission gave a special priority to such persons. If nursing mothers went without eggs it was because they neglected to make application for their priority.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: They did make application.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

The consumers have nothing to fear from this legislation. It will give a guarantee to the producer that there will not be a wide fluctuation in price, and I submit that that is of no greater benefit to the producer than to the consumer. It is far better that the price should be stable and reasonable. The producers are satisfied with a reasonable price. They do not want a high price at one period of the year and a low price at another. They want a reasonable price, and so long as they can budget during the year on the basis of a certain revenue and cost of production, it is far preferable than for them to be at the mercy of the law of supply and demand and getting 8d. a dozen at one time and 2s. 6d. or 3s., or more, at other times. When prices are high they have few eggs to sell, and they get small returns. When prices are low they have a quantity of eggs to sell and they get their return then.

The producers generally, not only the poultry farmers, but the wheatgrowers, barley-growers and apple and pear growers, have come to realise the great advantages to be obtained from orderly marketing, under which surpluses can be kept off the market and rationed out during periods of scarcity. Taken all through, the producer fares far better with a stabilised price. How often have we seen, because of market reports showing high prices for commodities, producers rushing in to take advantage of that price with the inevitable result that during that particular week or month the market has been glutted and prices have fallen to a ruinous level. That is of no use to anyone, and it is to prevent the occurrence of that type of marketing that these boards are established, and because they have proved their worth is the reason why the producers are so anxious for their continuance. This Bill is before the House as the result of representations made to the Government by producers, and because the Government believes that it is in the interests of the consumers as well that the product should be marketed in an orderly manner.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Interpretation:

Mr. MANN: I move an amendment—

That in Subclause (1) the definition of "licensed collector" be struck out.

What is the idea of a licensed collector? Is he to be paid a fee to go around and collect eggs? An inspector is one appointed under the Act and a licensed collector is to collect eggs. The whole thing is hopeless. This amendment is to be taken in conjunction with a later amendment that I have dealing with Clause 20. The Government itself should appoint its own collectors.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:

I hope the Committee will not agree to this amendment. The Bill provides for power only to appoint the collectors, and it is not intended that there shall be any interference with persons who are now satisfactorily performing the collection of eggs, but there is the possibility of pirating. A grocer who delivers his groceries to a poultry farmer might say to the farmer, "If you permit me to take your eggs to market I will give you a certain reduction in your grocery bill." By doing that he would take away that particular business from the men who are engaged in collecting eggs and rendering this service. Frequently such people carry the eggs without adequate protection from the sun and wind, with the result that there is evaporation and an increase in size of the air cell in the egg so that in a short time—as short as half-an-hour—an egg can be reduced a grade.

It is against the interests of the producer that any Tom, Dick or Harry should come in and, because of some attractive offer, take the producer's eggs to the market. It is better for a man to make a business of collecting eggs and have a proper vehicle for the purpose. The board would have power to license such a person, but exercise of the power is not mandatory. There will be no interference with the people who are satisfactorily conveying eggs to market, but the board should be empowered to say that proper collectors

shall be engaged for the work. If the board could not license collectors, the collection of eggs would be done in a haphazard fashion to the detriment of the producers.

Mr. MANN: The Minister has not made clear to me the need for licensed collectors.

The Minister for Agriculture: If you have a regular collector, he will do the work far better than a man who undertakes it as a sideline.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Will not that increase the price of eggs?

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

Mr. MANN: Is the idea similar to that of insisting upon the collecting of milk in large sealed vans? The provision of licensed collectors seems extraordinary to me.

Mr. SEWARD: I am afraid the Minister's explanation has aroused my suspicions. Licensed collectors might be all right in the city, but I am thinking of the country districts and the grocer to whom the Minister referred. If it is advantageous for one grocer to collect eggs, the opposition grocer would have to do likewise.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is what I want to avoid.

Mr. SEWARD: If it is necessary to have a proper vehicle to protect the eggs in transit, each grocer would need one and the producer would have to bear the cost. There is more danger in this small definition than I realised, unless the intention is to appoint a collector in each town.

The Minister of Agriculture: Yes, where it is necessary in the interests of the producers.

Mr. SEWARD: If that is to be done in places like Northam, York, Katanning and Wagin—

The Minister for Agriculture: This is to prevent the very thing you fear.

Mr. SEWARD: So long as the board accomplishes that, I shall feel satisfied.

Mr. WATTS: I am very keen on the management of the produce of such an industry by a board representative strongly of the producers. A certain amount of control is essential in order that the scheme may be properly carried into effect. The Minister gave reasons that would actuate me in supporting the general principles of the Bill. Without the application of those principles,

there would be a grave liability of chaotic conditions and ruinous prices prevailing. The object of the amendment is to ensure that the cost of control will not be excessive. The Bill provides for the board to receive certain payments, and the board may appoint inspectors who also must be paid. Then we are to have licensed collectors who will have to be paid. Agents will be appointed to whom the licensed collectors will deliver the eggs, and they will have to be paid either wages or commission. Thus we are running a grave risk of building up a control that will be more expensive than the producers think when they suggest, as some are doing, that every line of the Bill should be accepted. I wish to ensure that producers will get the best return from the rate the board is going to charge. I wish to be satisfied that there is actual need and justification for licensed collectors as well as agents and inspectors, and so far the Minister has not satisfied me.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Bill provides that the board "may" not "shall" appoint licensed collectors. We wish to prevent the conditions that are worrying the member for Pingelly. Storekeepers in a district could go about offering inducements to producers to make their eggs available for carting to market, and so there would be competition and undercutting between people doing the business irregularly. This unrestricted competition could continue to the detriment of the producers.

Mr. Watts: Have we the equivalent of a licensed collector under the Commonwealth scheme?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot answer that.

Mr. Watts: I think we have not, and therefore cannot see the need for it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Experience often shows that the provision of something new is a distinct advantage. If the board has power to appoint licensed collectors, it must be in the interests of the producers, because unrestricted competition by people doing the work irregularly would be prevented. The important point is that the licensed collectors would do the work efficiently. We have had instances of people transporting eggs to market on top of a load of vegetables and exposed to wind and sun. Such exposure for half an hour has resulted in the eggs being reduced a grade because

of the evaporation that occurs and the enlargement of the air cell, thus reducing the return to the producer. We want to ensure that the eggs reach market quickly and in the best possible condition.

Mr. Mann: Is a similar provision included in the Act of New South Wales or Victoria?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I cannot say. We have included it because we think it will be beneficial. The amendment would definitely render a disservice to the producers.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister has submitted a reasonably good but not a complete case. He has conveyed the impression that there will probably not be many licensed collectors. Our experience is that "may be" ultimately becomes "will be." I share the fears of my friends that these collectors may develop into an unnecessary encumbrance. In other States where similar legislation has been introduced, I believe that licensed collectors have not been found to be necessary. All the various servants specified will have to be paid, which means that the money will be drawn from the producers of eggs. Has the Minister estimated the sum total of the several charges for these servants per dozen of eggs?

Mr. READ: Several speakers have confused inspectors with licensed collectors. I think the Minister has had in mind the metropolitan area or the outer metropolitan area. I know of a case at Morawa where there are three large storekeepers who deliver goods in different directions from 8 to 10 miles out of town. The farmers who receive their groceries give to those people a box of eggs to take back each week. Unless the storekeepers rendered that service in the busy season those people would lose the market for the eggs. Most of them have only 40 or 50 fowls and some of those I have in mind are not in circumstances in which they would wish to lose that revenue. I would like to ask the Minister whether he would license those three people in the one town?

Mr. CROSS: I think I have more commercial poultry farmers in my electorate than there are in any other electorate. Those men want their eggs in the market as quickly as possible. I know 200 com-

mercial poultry farmers in my district, and in order that they may take their eggs to market it is necessary for them to knock off work on their farms and run their utility trucks into town. If this measure were agreed to, instead of their having to do that twice a week, licensed collectors could pick up the eggs and take them into market every day. It would be cheaper for the producers.

Mr. READ: That would not work in the country.

Mr. CROSS: Egg producers such as those referred to at Morawa are those who in the past have put snide eggs on the market.

Mr. Mann: Do not talk nonsense!

Mr. CROSS: They are not interested in egg production. It is all very well for the member for Beverley to talk but he knows it too! They do not bother about collecting eggs regularly, but when they come across a nest they shove the eggs into boxes and a week later they are marketed. This Bill is to cater for the commercial egg producer and that is the idea of putting a limit on the number of fowls that can be kept without being registered. We have no objection to farmers having 70 to 80 fowls to provide for their own requirements or to their selling the surplus, but we need provision to make it possible for commercial producers to carry on their business.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I cannot subscribe to the views of the member for Canning. I feel certain that most commercial producers have their own vehicles and most of them I know visit the market once a week. If there is a need for licensed collectors, it is in the case of growers that have 21 fowls, but there would be so many local collectors needed in the various districts that the cost would be tremendous and the whole scheme would break down. I have no objection to the Minister inserting this provision, but I think it will break down of its own weight. I would like to know from the Minister whether it is proposed that collectors shall call on people with 20 fowls and collect their surplus eggs. If that is so, the board will be overloaded with costs.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It must be recognised that many producers, especially in the country, will not

bother about giving their eggs to anybody else but will deliver them themselves. They will not be interfered with.

Mr. Berry: The people in the country will not be interfered with?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No! Also, in many country districts there will not be sufficient eggs to make it worth while for any man to apply to become a licensed collector. The Committee has nothing to fear from this at all. It is only intended that where sufficient eggs are available for collection to make it worth while for them to be collected speedily by a man devoting all his time, or the major part of it, to the business, a person desiring to be licensed for that work shall be able to apply. The board would then give him power and authority to be a licensed collector under certain conditions; and, if he failed to live up to those conditions, his licence would be revoked. The purpose is to make it possible for men to be authorised as licensed collectors in districts where such collectors are necessary.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. CROSS: I do not like the definition of "producer." I move an amendment:—

That in the definition of "producer" the words "who owns or controls 20 adult female fowls and/or ducks and sells the eggs or any of the eggs produced thereby" be struck out with a view to inserting the words "who keeps poultry on his property with a view to making a profit by the sale of eggs or any of the eggs produced thereby" in lieu.

There are hundreds of hotels in the country which keep 70 or 80 fowls in order to have fresh eggs for boarders and staff. Most of those hotels would not sell the eggs. Furthermore, hundreds of farmers keep 70 or 80 head of poultry to feed their staffs and their families. This would put them outside the pale of the Bill. They are not commercial producers. We are attempting to cater for men who earn a living out of poultry farming. Here a producer is defined as one who makes his living out of selling eggs.

Mr. MANN: Would the member for Canning move half his amendment? We on this side agree with the Minister that the Bill is for two purposes, to benefit both producer and consumer. If we lay down the number as 75 fowls, which I think is

the intention of the member for Canning, we will spoil the Bill. I think 50 or even 40 would be better.

Mr. WATTS: Whether the amendment moved by the member for Canning is carried or defeated the member for Beverley will be unable to move his amendment to delete the word "twenty." I ask for your ruling on that subject Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: If the amendment of the member for Canning is defeated the member for Beverley will be quite in order in moving an amendment to delete the word "twenty."

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The member for Canning might withdraw his amendment at this stage. If his amendment is defeated, all down to the words proposed to be struck out would stand, and the member for Beverley would not have an opportunity to move his amendment.

Mr. CROSS: I do not like the definition as it stands whether or not the number is laid down. I intend to insert the words "person who keeps poultry on his property with a view to making a profit from the sale of eggs or any of the eggs produced thereby." There is no reason why a number should not be inserted.

The CHAIRMAN: Whatever happens to the amendment of the member for Canning it will be impossible to define the number of fowls other than by adding words.

Mr. WATTS: When your predecessor had a similar difficulty, Mr. Chairman, he requested the mover of the amendment to move half of it with the idea of testing the view of the Committee. Perhaps you could follow the same course.

The CHAIRMAN: I can only suggest that course to the member for Canning.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. MANN: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of the definition of "producer" in Subclause (1) the word "twenty" be struck out and the word "forty" inserted in lieu.

The Minister suggests the number of hens to be laid down as 20 and the member for Canning suggested 75. I am willing that it should be 40, because there is a difference of opinion on it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope the Committee will not amend this provision, because it was inserted at the express request of the producers in the industry. A producer is a person who owns 20 adult female fowls and/or ducks. In addition he can have a number of cockerels and chickens, running into some hundreds. When the Commonwealth control scheme was inaugurated it provided that a producer should be a person who had 20 adult fowls or ducks, but a few weeks later the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce altered the figure to 40, against the advice tendered by the producers. The idea was to increase the production of eggs by small producers in order to allow the diversion of a greater quantity of eggs from big producers to the Services.

The Egg Marketing Acts of Victoria and New South Wales lay down the number of birds as 20 and the South Australian Act provides for 25. It is visualised that when Commonwealth control ceases an endeavour will be made to get an arrangement between the States as to the marketing of eggs, so that efforts in one State will not be frustrated by what happens in another State. The producers have to make a contribution to the cost of the scheme, and it is unfair that those who do not contribute should receive the benefits of it. If we say that in this State a producer is a man with 40 or 75 fowls we will have less people contributing than there will be in Victoria or New South Wales.

Mr. Watts: You will have less in any case.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We will have people who make no contribution but who receive the benefit of organised marketing at the expense of those people in this State and elsewhere who do contribute.

Mr. J. Hegney: It is time we got an advantage.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If we have a scheme to enable all States to co-operate it must be on a fair basis.

Mr. Mann: Is the number of birds uniform all over Australia?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Victoria and New South Wales provide for

20 and South Australia 25. I do not know the figures for Tasmania or Queensland. At a recent conference between the Commonwealth and representatives of producers in the different States a unanimous recommendation was made that the ownership of 20 adult female birds should constitute a producer under any marketing legislation. If a person does not wish to sell eggs at the increased price he need not worry about this measure. This scheme of marketing will result in a higher price for eggs during a period of the year when a surplus exists. If we exempt people with 20 or 40 fowls they will make no payment but will receive the benefit of orderly marketing. If a man with more than 20 fowls wishes to sell eggs he can apply for a permit, so hardship will not be caused to such person. I think we should stick to the provisions of the Bill and I hope the Committee will vote against the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Constitution of board:

Mr. MANN: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of Subclause (2) the word "six" be struck out with a view to inserting another word.

This is the vital clause of the Bill. The intention of the Minister is to create a board of six members whereas my desire is that it should consist of five members. The producers claim the right to control the disposal of their own goods. The Commonwealth Government has recognised the position with regard to the wool and meat boards.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Yes, but the Commonwealth fixes prices in that regard.

Mr. MANN: What objection has the Government to the producers controlling their own business?

The Minister for Lands: They came to Parliament and asked for this control.

Mr. MANN: The Government intends to appoint the chairman of the board, but why should not the chairman be appointed by the board members themselves? I regard a board of five members as more workable than one of six, because of the possibility of deadlocks occurring with an

even number of members. For my part, I want to knock out the provision regarding one member who is not engaged in the business of producing or selling eggs.

Mr. WATTS: The growers want majority representation on the board.

Mr. MANN: Why cannot the growers run their own business?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope the Committee will not accept the amendment. Already the Bill provides for three representatives of the producers on a board of six, and so they are being fairly treated. The three representatives provided for on the board must be genuine producers and the chairman is to have one vote only. That means that the voting cannot be overloaded on one side or the other. If the three producers are not able to convince the other members of the board that a proposition they submit is reasonable, then, the voting being equal, the question will be resolved in the negative and will therefore be open to further argument later on. There will be no possibility of a deadlock at all. The main purpose of the legislation is to effect organised marketing, to prevent fluctuation in prices and, as far as possible, a guaranteed regular supply of eggs. That objective is in the interests of all concerned.

If the producers had a majority on the board, it would mean that the producers' angle would always be the accepted angle, and that would not be satisfactory at all. The contentions raised would tend to cultivate the idea that there will always be conflict on the board between the producer-representatives and the other members. Certainly, if the producers had the balance of power there would be no guarantee that personal interests would not weigh and decisions would not be arrived at which were not in the interests of the general community. As it is, with the voting provision, even if the producers' representatives cannot get their way, they can prevent anything being done that will be against their own interests.

Mr. WATTS: Those who oppose the point of view that the producers should, in an organisation such as that under discussion, have majority representation on the controlling body, lose sight of the most important fact that the whole of the goods

dealt with by the board represent the property of the producers themselves. If there is anyone capable of dealing with his own property, it should be the producer himself. In no organisation or institution is it claimed that the property, say, of a businessman, should be dealt with by those not concerned in the business but rather that the businessman should be allowed to administer his own affairs. When it comes to the interests of the producers, the point is raised that there should be equality of control or that the producers should be in a minority. I have never been able to subscribe to that point of view and in recent years the Commonwealth authorities have not done so. On the Australian Wheat Board, the Australian Wool Board and the Australian Meat Board greater representation has been given to the producers. The trend is towards recognition of the right of producers to control their own property.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But who fixes the prices?

Mr. WATTS: I am not concerned with the question of price fixing.

Mr. Cross: That is the nigger in the woodpile.

Mr. WATTS: The trend is that the producers shall have the management of their own concerns. The representatives of primary producers are neither fools nor knaves and to suggest that if they have more than three on a board of control they will tend to defraud the community, which is the suggestion underlying remarks that have been made, is entirely wrong. The representatives of the producers would not make the price of their product so high that no-one would want to buy that product, nor yet to impose on the people charges that could not be justified. Without hesitation I say the time has come when the Committee should recognise that in a matter such as this the producer is entitled to majority representation on a board that handles his product.

Mr. CROSS: The Minister has been generous. If the producers were to have a majority on the board that would fix prices, I know who would soon be paying higher prices for eggs. It has always been an accepted principle of British justice that there should be an independent chairman

on a board of this description. The Minister has been very fair because, for the first time that I know of, the producers have been given equal representation on a board of six.

The Minister for Lands: And if there is an equal vote for and against, the decision will be in the negative, so that the matter can be reviewed again.

Mr. CROSS: That is a big advance in the interests of producers themselves. The egg producers work long hours and are certainly entitled to a fair price, but if the producers had majority representation on the board, the people might suspect that prices imposed would not be fair. We had better leave the provision as it is. I strongly oppose the amendment.

Mr. OWEN: I support the amendment. There is a considerable amount of capital tied up in the poultry industry and that capital belongs to the producers, who are endeavouring to stabilise the industry and get a fair return for their produce. In order to do that, they would certainly try to keep the price within reason so as to sell as many eggs as possible. The fears expressed that the board would put up the price are groundless. One of the representatives is to be nominated by the Minister. Should the other producer representatives be the greatest radicals, I feel sure that the nominee of the Minister would not give his vote without very good reason, as doubtless he would be a person of integrity.

Mr. BERRY: Whenever the question of grower control arises, opposition is expressed to it. That in itself is sufficient to make me thoroughly suspicious. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that those who own something should have the right of say-so. Everybody in the city puts it all over the primary producer.

Mr. Leslie: Hear, hear!

Mr. BERRY: That has been done ever since I was foolish enough to become a primary producer. It is all very well for the member for Canning to babble about tomatoes, but did the primary producers exploit the price, or was the control altered to fit the actual conditions? I definitely favour the amendment. I am determined to do all I possibly can to see that we control our own industries.

The Minister for Lands: Why bring this up here?

Mr. BERRY: What?

The Minister for Lands: Why do you not exercise control outside?

Mr. BERRY: Because the Government legislation is against the cocky.

The Minister for Lands: Cockies bring in the legislation here.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BERRY: The people in the country are just as intelligent as are the people in the city, with perhaps this difference, that the country people are honest and decent. Country people have been fleeced until they are sick to death.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: The question of consumer and grower control is a very big one. It is looming largely in international affairs in connection with monopolies and cartels. We find that some producers tend to become syndicalists who want to control production, price and distribution. People's rights should be respected. The community established an Arbitration Court to protect its interests; yet we find communists are fighting against the principle of arbitration, which has been accepted by the Labour Party and the public in Australia. So, in regard to production, the community must be protected. The reason the Government brought down this Bill is that the producers should get more than they were getting previously. It is special legislation to protect the interests of the consumers. If that could be done easily, the producers would do it themselves. They cannot do it, so they come here to get protection. But the consumers, the great bulk of the people, should get a fair deal. That is the basis of my objection to producer control in most cases. The people should have the predominant say. What would be said if the unions contended that a union secretary should be the president of the Arbitration Court as well as the representative of the union?

Mr. Seward: Do not pursue that argument too far.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: I shall do so at the right time, but not at the moment. I am not prepared to go the whole hog and hand over the majority of the people

perhaps a rapacious few who may get control of the board.

Mr. McLARTY: I would be prepared to support the Minister if he would agree that the producer whom he wishes to nominate to the board would be elected by the producers themselves. When I raised the point on the second reading, I felt that the Minister's reply was not at all convincing; it seemed to me that the Minister was departing from the principles which he usually advocates. If three members of the board were representatives of the commercial producers, for the life of me I cannot see why the Minister should insist upon appointing one of them. He must have some motive to make him insist upon this particular nomination. The Minister's nominee would to a certain extent at least be under the Minister's influence and, if his actions did not meet with the Minister's approval, he would not remain on the board.

Members: No.

Mr. McLARTY: I think that is a fair assumption.

Members: No.

Mr. McLARTY: If not, I ask why the Minister insists upon nominating this producer. Surely, the fair thing would be to allow the producers to elect the three producer-representatives on the board. I hope the Minister will reconsider the position and agree to the course I have suggested.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I support the amendment. If it is carried, then paragraph (b) of Subclause (3) will become unnecessary. The board would consist of two consumer-representatives, two commercial producer-representatives and a chairman. Such a board is to be constituted under the Milk Bill and I point out that the two Bills have come from the same department. Why the variation in principle? The Milk Board has controlled the industry for many years, and it consists of five members. Evidently a board of five has worked pretty smoothly. The more we load the board the greater will be the expenses involved, and they have to be met by the producers. I have no doubt that the members of the board will do their best to administer this legislation in the best interests of the industry and the consumers. If this amendment is carried I will move to delete paragraph (b).

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If by any chance the amendment is carried, I shall certainly support the idea of the member for Middle Swan. The reason why I desire to nominate a producer—and I am prepared to move an amendment to ensure that such nominee shall be a genuine producer—is because I realise that elections, especially initial elections, to such a board do not always give a satisfactory result. The men elected are not always chosen on account of their ability or stability.

The Premier: It is usually because of their affability.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That and their popularity might result in certain persons being elected to a board of this type. They might not be able to do a decent job on the board, but if the Minister has power to nominate a producer he will select someone who is capable. There is the safeguard that the producer nominated by the Minister will be a genuine producer. It is extremely unlikely that such a person, appointed by the Minister, would be subservient to the Minister. He would rather tell the Minister to keep his job than be renegade to the producers of whom he is one. Any man of substance or character would immediately submit his resignation if he felt that he was under the dominance of a Minister in these circumstances. Under the clause at present the producers will have three representatives of the six members on the board. If the Leader of the Opposition is correct in his contention it is equally logical to argue that the worker whose only commodity for sale is his labour is entitled to a majority representation upon the board that deals with the price of his commodity.

Mr. Berry: He has got that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Has he? Take the Arbitration Court which fixes the price of the worker's labour! The worker has one representative of the three on that tribunal. The workers have not got majority representation there, and there are few people on the other side of the Chamber who would support such a proposition. There might be considerable strength in the argument of the Leader of the Opposition if the only interests to be considered by this board were those of the

producers, but the Government might be liable for sums of £20,000 or £40,000 under this measure because it will have to guarantee the expenditure of a board which can enter into contracts in the letting of property and the purchasing of equipment. Is it right that the control should be given to the producers when the State's interests are at stake in that way? The position should be properly safeguarded and, in the provision that half the membership of the board is to be made up of genuine producers, the producers have got as much as they can reasonably expect. It will be impossible for that board to do anything that will seriously affect their interests and, on the other hand, if they desire certain improvements to be effected, they will have the opportunity to convince at least one other member that such and such a thing should be done. For that reason I say that the proposition is eminently fair. I hope the Committee will not accept this amendment.

Mr. STYANTS: I am inclined to support the amendment for the purpose of achieving the object of the member for Middle Swan. I believe that six members are too many for this board, because it would probably result in many questions reaching an impasse. The greater the number of members on the board, the larger will be the amount to be paid, and the producers, in conjunction with the consumers, will be the people who will have to meet the cost. The producers are not able to control orderly marketing of their products and so have come to Parliament to get legislation to enable them to do so. As Parliament is elected by the people I have never voted for any board to be appointed that was not responsible to the Minister, and that had one-sided representation. Equal representation should be given to the consumer on the one side and the producer on the other, with an independent chairman.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	....	....	....	20
Noes	....	....	....	18
				—
Majority for	....	....	....	2
				—

AYES.

Mr. Berry	Mr. North
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Fox	Mr. Read
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Seward
Mr. Hill	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Styants
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Cross	Mr. Panton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Smith
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Teller
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Holman	Mr. Triat
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wise
Mr. Needham	Mr. Withers
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

Amendment (to strike out word) the passed.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I move—

That the word "five" be inserted in line of the word struck out.

Amendment (to insert word) put and passed.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I move a amendment:—

That after the word "consumers" at the end of paragraph (a) of Subclause (3) the words "one of whom shall be a woman" be inserted.

Women are more concerned about the consumption of eggs than are men. If eggs are required for the sick, the nurse knows, if for the family, the mother knows. Men regard the matter mainly from the point of view of the producer, but women consider the consumer's viewpoint and the benefit to the family. There has been much talk about the importance of the producers, but only through the consumers can the producer live. I have asked previously that a woman should be appointed on such boards because we cannot otherwise get real representation. The consumers, too, would feel that they were being represented better by the appointment of a woman.

Mr. DONEY: I favour the amendment but I think the words should be inserted after the word "persons" in line 1 of paragraph (a).

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I agree with the hon. member and ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: I move an amendment—

That after the word "persons" where it first occurs in line 1 of paragraph (a) the words "at least one of whom shall be a woman" be inserted.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I oppose the amendment. If the Government wished to appoint two women, it would have power to do so. We should not pass special legislation discriminating between the sexes. In this Chamber the member for Subiaco has no more rights than I have, and if she is entitled to no more rights here than I am, why give special rights to women under an Act of Parliament? Women are citizens of the State and are entitled to a vote, and having an equal right in that respect, should be prepared to stand on their own feet. For years attempts have been made to include a woman among the consumers' representatives on the milk board, but the Chamber has rejected the proposal on the ground I have mentioned. If there is a woman of sufficient capability to undertake the duties, the Government may appoint her. I do not know that a woman has a knowledge superior to that of a man as to our needs. A woman certainly has no special knowledge of the inside of an egg. We should adopt a commonsense attitude. We are all aware of the part that women play in all our industries, and we put them on the same plane as ourselves.

Mr. HOLMAN: Why not provide that one of the consumers' representatives shall be a man and thus protect the menfolk? The principle is just the same. The argument in favour of protecting the rights of women by making the provision mandatory could equally be used in favour of protecting the men. The paragraph should be retained as printed and then both sexes will be treated fairly and the most efficient persons can be appointed to the board.

Mr. DONEY: In reply to the member for Middle Swan, I maintain that the proposal is sound sense and thoroughly good law. This is a domestic matter, and it would be desirable for many reasons that a woman should be appointed.

The Premier: Let's vote on it!

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: To the member for Middle Swan, I would say that in the eyes of God we are equal, but in the eyes of man we are not. In most industries

women are not paid a rate equivalent to that paid to men. My argument was that women do most of the cooking in the home and know more about food than do men.

The Minister for Lands: But the men have to eat it.

Mrs. CARDELL-OLIVER: The women also know more about eggs and are not so likely as a man to be taken in. One woman on the board would give confidence to the people that they were being fairly treated. No woman would let the producers down any more than a man would.

Mr. McLARTY: I oppose the amendment. We want the most competent representatives, whether they be men or women, and the Minister should have an unfettered choice.

Mr. STYANTS: I believe that the composition of the board would be improved by one of the members being a woman, but I am not going to vote for a proposition to make it mandatory. At present it will be possible to appoint two women. It is left entirely to the Minister's discretion and I feel sure that the Minister will not lose sight of the valuable services which could be given by a woman as a member of the board, representing consumers. I would like to see the Minister appoint a woman to this board, but I am not going to assist in establishing a precedent by saying there should be discrimination between the sexes.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	12
Noes	..	..	..	23

Majority against	..	11
		—

AYES.

Mr. Berry
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver
Mr. Graham
Mr. Hill
Mr. Mann
Mr. Needham

Mr. North
Mr. Seward
Mr. Shearn
Mr. Watts
Mr. Willmott
Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Brand
Mr. Cross
Mr. Foa
Mr. Hawke
Mr. J. Hegney
Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Holman
Mr. Leaby
Mr. Leslie
Mr. Marshall
Mr. McLarty
Mr. Nulsen

Mr. Panton
Mr. Read
Mr. Smith
Mr. Styants
Mr. Telfer
Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Triat
Mr. Willcock
Mr. Wise
Mr. Withers
Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I propose to move to strike out all words after "consumers" in line 4 of paragraph (a) of Subclause (3) down to "producer" in line 2 of paragraph (b).

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that as the Minister has an amendment on the notice paper to delete the last two words of paragraph (b) the member for Middle Swan should move to delete the words down to the word "(a)" in line 2 of paragraph (b). That will give the Minister a chance to move his amendment if the hon. member's amendment is defeated.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not propose to proceed with my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: In that event, the member for Middle Swan can move to strike out the whole of paragraph (b).

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (b) of Subclause (3) be struck out.

I have already given my reasons for this amendment.

Amendment put and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	15
				—
Majority for	..	..	..	5
				—

AYES.

Mr. Fox	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Graham	Mr. Smith
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Styants
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Telfer
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Holman	Mr. Triat
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wise
Mr. Needham	Mr. Withers
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Wilson

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Berry	Mr. North
Mr. Brand	Mr. Owen
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Doney	Mr. Read
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Mann	Mr. Seward
Mr. McLarty	

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (d) of Subclause (3) the word "commercial" be struck out.

This clause proposes that commercial producers who are to represent the producers are to be elected by the commercial pro-

ducers only. Commercial producers are those who own or control more than 15 head of poultry, whereas all producers who own or control more than 20 head of poultry are to be subject to this measure. Therefore, a man who has 125 head of poultry will have no vote at all in the election of the commercial producers who are to represent the producers. I am not taking exception to the persons who are to be producer-representatives being elected from among the commercial producers. I am prepared to concede there is a measure of wisdom in that. But we are justified in assuming that all those producers subject to this law should have the right to vote for the election of those two representatives. I expect to get strong support from the Premier because there was a proposition of a similar character to the contents of paragraph (d) in a like measure introduced in this House in 1938; and the Premier, who was then Minister for Agriculture, is reported to have said, according to page 3174 of "Hansard"—

I am afraid I cannot give this Bill my blessing or any commendation. Its effect will be to conscript unwilling producers to come within the scope of the board in whose existence they will have no say. That perhaps is the greatest socialistic act of this session of Parliament.

Later on he said—

The definition says that "producer" means the person who keeps more than 75 head of poultry. Later on it is stated that any producer shall not be entitled to take any part in the election of the board unless he has 150 head of poultry. Thus it is proposed to conscript all those who have fewer than 150 head of poultry and say to those with 150 or more "You can vote for the constitution of the board" and still conscript everybody within its ambit.

Those observations, with which I agree, apply equally to the contents of paragraph (d) which we are now discussing.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is a different proposition.

Mr. WATTS: No, because we are bringing within the ambit of this measure those who have 20 or more head of poultry and are saying that only those who have more than 150 head can vote for the representatives. So a limited few, the proprietors, not of bricks and mortar, to which the Minister for Justice is so fond of referring, but of a few fluttering hens—are to be the people concerned, provided the

have 150 hens, in the voting. What applied in 1938 applies equally well now.

The Minister for Lands: That was before the war.

Mr. WATTS: Before the Minister for Lands acquired that congenial and convivial manner that so ill-becomes him on this occasion! All those coming under the control of the board should have a say in the election of the representatives, but I agree, at the same time, that the representatives whom they elect should be elected only from among those who have more than 150 fowls. Although I do not agree with that entirely, I see some justification for it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I hope the Committee will not accept this amendment. The position is not now the same as it was when the Premier made his comments on this point. The previous legislation provided that a producer should be a man with 75 adult fowls. Few people would keep that number, because anybody keeping such a number would probably go in for a far greater number. The producers with a smaller number of fowls would completely out-vote the commercial producers who produce eggs on a large scale. The small man with 20 or 30 hens would decide the policy to control the marketing of the product of the commercial producer.

Mr. Watts: Is not that your complaint against the Legislative Council?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Mr. Watts: What is it?

The Premier: That they are there at all, and that they are old hens.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Under this scheme, the big egg-producers are the men with most at stake.

Mr. WATTS: That is why I think the representatives should be elected from among them, though everyone should have the right to vote.

The Minister for Agriculture: Surely it is clear to the Leader of the Opposition that the producer with 20 or 30 birds would dominate the position for all time.

Mr. WATTS: He could only elect a commercial producer as a representative.

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes, but at the same time it would be the choice of the small producer.

Mr. WATTS: I see no objection to that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That would be against the interests of the scheme generally and for that reason I propose to vote against the amendment.

Mr. LESLIE: The Minister overlooks the fact that the small producer contributes towards the stabilisation fund as well as the big producer, and should accordingly be entitled to a vote. If he did not contribute in any way, there would be some substance in the Minister's contention. Though the small producer is deprived of the right to elect one of his fellows he has the right to vote, and the commercial producers are protected because the persons elected must be commercial producers.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause, as previously amended, put and passed.

Clauses 8 to 16—agreed to.

Clause 17—Officers of board:

Mr. MANN: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subclause (1) after the word "inspectors" the words "as the Minister may approve and" be inserted.

The Minister for Agriculture: Surely you do not want the Minister to bother about that?

Mr. MANN: The danger is that this board will be like many others. It may appoint a large number of inspectors, which would be costly.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you want to limit the number?

Mr. MANN: Yes. We feel that by accepting the responsibility the Minister would limit the number, whereas the board might appoint a large number of inspectors, at great cost.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have no objection to the amendment.

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

Clauses 18 to 23—agreed to.

Clause 24—Restrictions on use of eggs produced by certain producers:

Mr. LESLIE: If an hotel or restaurant keeper owns more than 20 fowls, is he selling those eggs when he includes them in meals cooked and sold to customers? The Bill does not set out that the eggs shall be sold uncooked.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The reason for this provision is to prevent

any person engaged in the business of hotel or restaurant keeper gaining unfair advantage over a competitor who does not own a poultry-farm. Without this provision, such a person could invest £1 in a poultry-farm and get his supply of eggs from that producer. He could use them in his business and get his profit on the sale of the meals in which eggs were included. He would get the eggs at a reduced price because he was not forced to contribute towards the cost of marketing. It is to defeat that, that the provision is inserted. If a man is genuinely keeping a few fowls to assist in supplying his boarding-house or restaurant, he can get a permit for that purpose, but the provision is necessary to safeguard people from unfair competition.

Mr. WATTS: It seems to me that the clause contains an error in drafting. It refers to other businesses "except wholesale or retail". I honestly do not know of any business that is not either wholesale or retail. It would seem that the exception is valueless or alternatively does not set out the position clearly.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will have the point looked into and if necessary have an amendment inserted in another place.

Mr. LESLIE: The clause needs further clearing up. I think the hotelkeeper could still do what the Minister suggested so long as he is not selling the eggs apart from the hotel business. If he used them in the hotel business even in a cooked form the position is not clear, because he is not selling those eggs.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Even in the circumstances mentioned by the hon. member, he would be definitely covered by the definition. If the eggs were used by the hotelkeeper in a cooked form that would be regarded as a sale of eggs and therefore the man would be covered.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 25 to 31.—agreed to.

Clause 32—Payment to producers:

Mr. OWEN: I move an amendment—

That in line 3 of Subclause (4) the word "ten" be struck out and the word "five" inserted in lieu.

It seems to me that ten per cent. would be an excessive deduction for administration charges and five per cent. would be more in conformity with commercial practice.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I oppose the amendment. The ten per cent. is a maximum charge and if five per cent. were stipulated it might not be sufficient to meet the cost of administration. The board is not likely to build up a large administrative account, and more danger would be likely to arise from the provision for five per cent. than for a maximum of ten per cent.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 33 to 39.—agreed to.

New clause:

Mr. MANN: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

40. This Act shall continue in operation until the thirty-first day of December one thousand nine hundred and forty-eight, or for three years after the date of its proclamation, whichever is the later date, and no longer.

I move this new clause at the request of the Poultry Breeders' Association. I regard the Bill as experimental legislation. None of us can forecast its future.

The Premier: Compromise, and make the period 10 years!

Mr. MANN: I would be agreeable to five years.

The Premier: The Crown will have a lot of money in this industry.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MANN: I am agreeable to making the period five years, if the Committee will agree to the alteration in my amendment.

New clause, by leave, amended by striking out in line 3 the word "three" and inserting the word "five" in lieu.

New clause, as amended, put and passed.

Title.—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

The PREMIER: May I make an explanation? I wish to announce that it is my intention, prior to the rising of the House tomorrow evening, to move that the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. on Friday. I do so in case any member wishes to make preparation accordingly and I do not want the sitting to be sprung on him.

House adjourned at 11.14 p.m.