The Attorney General: I thought we were putting through an important Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: Judging by the time spent on this measure it is the most important the Government has introduced this session. I find it difficult to satisfy my mind as to the extent of the limitation imposed on ordinary advertising. If a firm advertised that upon receipt of a coupon, its catalogues would be forwarded, it would, I dare say, come within the embargo.

Mr. STYANTS: I am in accord with the principle that a producer who puts coupons with his goods, and a shopkeeper who handles those goods should be liable for a breach of the law, but not that an assistant or an apprentice should also be liable. They would not be aware of the fact that the package contained a coupon. I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of paragraph (a) of Subclause (5) the words "assistant or apprentice" be struck out.

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

Clauses 6 and 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FEEDING STUFFS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 2.39 a.m. (Thursday).

Legislative Council.

Thursday, 9th December, 1948.

CONTENTS.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 3.0 p.m., and read prayers.

BILL—WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION.

Further Recommittal.

On motion by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture, Bill again recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 4.

In Committee.

Hon. W. J. Mann in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—The Western Australian Agency Board of the Australian Wheat Board:

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (a) of Subclause (3) the word "two" be struck out.

Five or six weeks ago I asked the Farmers' Union to submit to me a panel of names from which I could select two to be members of the board. The union agreed to that in good faith, but has now informed me that that conflicts with it constitution in two ways. First of all, the constitution provides for a majority of wheatgrowers on a board such as this. I do not altogether agree that a majority is necessary on the board, which is not in the true sense a marketing board, but to keep faith with the Farmers' Union, which assisted me in this matter, I ask the Committee to agree to three wheatgrowers instead of two.

Hon. H. Hearn: Is this sectional legislation?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I will lay all my cards on the table.

Hon. L. Craig: There is no milk Bill about this.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. I am asking the Committee to do this and if it refuses, the responsibility is on members themselves. This is the only way I can see out of the difficulty as the result of an honest mistake made more on their part.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I would like the Minister to clear up this point. Subclause (2) says—

The State Board shall consist of six persons . . . .

I think the Honorary Minister will have to alter that number.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, Mr. Watson is right. That amendment will have to be made and I thank Mr. Watson for calling my attention to it. I ask leave of the Committee to withdraw the amendment now before the Chair.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of Subclause (2) the word "six" be struck out and the word "seven" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of Subclause (3) the word "six" be struck out and the word "seven" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That in line one of paragraph (a) of Subclause (3) the word "two" be struck out and the word "three" inserted in lieu.

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

Bill again reported with further amendments and the report adopted.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.19] in moving the second reading said: This is a very important Bill regarding which members will no doubt have varying opinions. It is an endeavour to put the Coal Mine Workers' Pensions Fund on a more satisfactory basis. Pensions originally were at the rate of £2 per week plus £1 5s. for a wife, and the Commonwealth pension had to be deducted from that. Last year Parliament agreed to those eligible for the Commonwealth pension being permitted to retain the benefit of the increases granted by the Commonwealth over and above the pension that was fixed when the Bill was passed. Later, increases might be granted until the 31st December of this year. That did not apply to those men who were not eligible for Commonwealth pensions owing to their being from 60 to 64 years of age.

As members will realise, the pensions granted by the Commonwealth do not start until a man reaches 65 years of age, but under the miners' pension legislation, the Act with which we are dealing, the pension starts at 60 years. Those men received the amount provided by the local Act, which as from the inception of the scheme was £2 for a married man and £1 5s. for his wife, a total of £3 5s.

In course of time the gap widened, with, of course, an increase in the anomalies under the scheme. With the raising of the

amounts of the coal miners' pensions in the Eastern States, the original total of £3 5s. is now £4 10s., consisting of £2 12s. 6d. for the man and £1 17s. 6d. for his wife; that is, an increase of 12s. 6d. each, or a total of 25s. In the other States, however, the miners' personal contributions have been raised to 4s. per week each. They had previously ranged from 2s. 6d. upwards. In Western Australia the rate has been 2s. 9d. per week for each mine worker, and twice that rate—5s. 6d.—for each owner in respect of each mine worker employed.

The Bill provides for the mine workers' contributions and pensions to be brought into line with the rates in operation in the Eastern States. This will mean that each mine worker will be called upon to contribute at the rate of 4s. per week and each owner at the rate of 8s. per week per mine worker employed. The maximum pension payable to any mine worker, including dependants, will be £5 10s. 6d. per week, instead of £4 5s. 6d. The group to gain most at present will be pensioners of ages 60 to 64, who are not yet eligible for Commonwealth old-age pensions. At present contributors retire on attaining the age of 60; they will similarly benefit.

As the Act provides for compulsory retirement at the age of 60, the fund is called upon to meet full pension payments for periods up to five years, without relief from deductions on account of Commonwealth pensions, except in cases in which wives have attained the age of 60 and are eligible for Commonwealth old-age pensions. One of the difficulties in connection with the Western Australian Pension Fund is that less than half of the pensioners are receiving Commonwealth pensions and the consequent deductions on that account are much smaller than anticipated. In Sections 6 to 11 of the principal Act various amounts are specified for pension benefits. The Bill provides for an all-round increase of 12s. 6d. per week, exclusive of children, with the exception of pensions for widows, which are increased from £1 10s. to the maximum of £2.

The Bill includes certain protective clauses which are in the New South Wales and Victorian Acts. For example, where the wife is living apart from her husband-pensioner, and he is not maintaining her or contributing a reasonable sum to her support, the addition to his pension in respect of his wife will not be paid to him. Where a pensioner is in employment or his dependants are employed, the permissible amount of earnings in excess of pension will be the uniform amount of £2 10s. The opportunity has been taken to include in the Bill clauses intended to clarify certain items in the principal Act.

A contentious matter relates to open-cut contractors and their employees. The definitions of "mine worker" and "owner" have been amplified. An employee wholly or mainly employed on the excavation of overburden or the winning of coal will be treated as a mine worker, but a person who is employed wholly or mainly as a transport worker by a contractor will not be included. It is generally recognised that it is essential for the protection of the fund and the employees that new entrants should be free from disease and should be of sound constitution. Provision has been made in the Bill to exclude from retirement pension benefits all new employees who fail to pass the prescribed medical examination and all new employees over the age of 35. In regard to the latter, the actuarial advice is that each new entrant over the age of 27 is an added liability to the fund. As it is hoped that in course of time new entrants will be confined to those of younger ages, a margin of eight years has been allowed.

To avoid the position of differential treatment in respect of contributions and to limit as far as possible the engagement of older men, provision has been made in the Bill for all employees to pay contributions, with consequential payments by owners; but the benefits in the cases just referred to will be limited to invalidity or incapacity, after the stipulated minimum period. If the services of one of those employees terminated, his contributions would be refunded in full, unless he had drawn invalidity benefits, in which case the refund would be reduced.

The principal Act specifies five years as the minimum period for eligibility for a refund of contribution if a person is leaving the industry. It is proposed to alter five years to 10 years and to limit refunds to a surrender value basis of 75 per cent., the refund not to be made until two years after the date of termination of service, unless the latter was caused by the curtailment of cessation of operations on the mine con-

cerned, or unless the mine worker died. In Victoria, the basis of refunds is the surrender value of 75 per cent. In New South Wales and Queensland, refunds of contributions are not made.

There should be a time limit to the lawful absence of a mine worker to protect the fund and to place a limit on the period during which the person concerned and the owner are required to pay contributions. A maximum of 12 months has been specified in the Bill and that is regarded as reasonable. Similarly to the course followed with pension benefits, the increased contribution rates have been specified in the Bill, and it is proposed that the new rates shall apply until the completion of the second triennial period of operation of the fund in June, 1950.

At present the procedure in regard to the annual estimate of the fund requirements is detailed in the regulations. To bring it into more practical form, the Bill provides for the actuary to furnish periodical estimates of the amounts required, including the provision of a reserve and the amount, with a maximum of £16,000 in any year, which the Treasurer shall pay to the fund by way of subsidy. In the principal Act, the maximum annual subsidy was fixed at £4,500. In view of the provisions of the Act in regard to compulsory retirement at the age of 60—that is, five years before a Commonwealth pension is payable at age 65—it could be argued that the State is under an obligation to assist the fund to a greater extent. Without accepting a suggestion that only the State is liable to place the Coal Mine Workers' Pensions Fund in a solvent condition, the Government agreed, subject to the approval of Parliament, to increase the annual subsidy to a maximum of £16,000.

The principal Act, in Sections 21 and 22, included certain provisions of a special nature, under which the contributions of an owner could be included in the cost of production of coal to the extent that those contributions exceeded the equivalent of 2d. per ton of coal sold. When the principal measure was being dealt with in the first instance, it was not taken into account that, if the output of coal increased to a sufficient extent, the impost of 2d. per ton would extinguish all profits and dividends. The proposal in the Bill is to fix a maximum tonnage of coal to which it would apply, and the figure of 580,000 tons has been inserted for the purpose.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Should not the quantity be 480,000 tons?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No; I shall explain that point in Committee. If the tonnage were exceeded the company could include as part of the cost of production the total of its contributions to the pensions fund in excess of £4,833 6s. 8d. It would then be a question of taking that position into account in arranging contracts or fixing the price of coal. The approximate position is as follows:—

Fund Income from—	1947-48	Prospective.	Increase.	
	£	£	£	
Mine Workers	8,300	12,000	3,700	
Owners ..	16,600	24,000	7,400	
State ..	3,000	16,000	13,000	
	£27,900	£52,000	£24,100	(a).
Cost to State—				
Owners ..	16,600	24,000	7,400	
Less 2d per ton	4,800	4,800	—	
	£11,800	£19,200	£7,400	
Say 90 per cent. =	£10,600	£17,300	£6,700	
Subsidy ..	3,000	16,000	13,000	
Approximate cost to the State ..	£13,600	£33,300	£19,700	(b)

(a) Increase in income of fund over £24,000.

(b) Increase in cost to the State nearly £20,000.

If the consumption of coal increases, the cost to the State would also increase.

The actuarial report on the Coal Mine Workers' Pension Fund after the first three years' operations showed that the capital deficiency exceeded one-third of a million pounds. It will, of course, be realised that that is not an amount representing a present cash deficiency; but it is the estimated additional amount, taking into account the present value of future income and future expenditure, that would be required by the fund to meet its future liabilities at the existing rates of income and outgo. The actuarial advice is that when the proposed alterations covered by the Bill become effective, the capital deficiency will be reduced to approximately £150,000.

Numerous anomalies have been created by the principal Act. Some of them have been remedied. Others are considered inequitable, but cannot be remedied under the present provisions of the Act, or for the reason that the cost would be financially impracticable. At the next actuarial investigation, which will cover the triennial period ending on the 30th June, 1950, the whole position will again be reviewed in the light of further experience.

The progress towards the abolition of the means test in the Commonwealth Social Service Act has been slower than desirable from the viewpoint of the Coal Mine Workers' Pensions Fund, which would have appreciably less financial difficulty if a fixed "nominal" amount of social service pension were deemed to be payable in all cases. With the easement of the means test, a larger number of pensioners will be entitled to receive Commonwealth old-age pensions, and the deductions from the miners' pensions will accordingly increase. In the year 1947-48 only 46.5 per cent. of the mine worker pensioners were receiving Commonwealth pensions. In 1946-47 the percentage was 50.9. In Victoria there is a much higher proportion, those drawing Commonwealth old-age pensions representing 85 per cent. of the total.

Another major difficulty in connection with the Western Australian fund is that it is called upon to pay what may be described as "free" pensions; that is to say, pensions for which no provision or entirely inadequate provision was made. The sequel is that present benefits are being met out of contributions paid by or for younger men. To illustrate that, the liability on account of present pensions is estimated at about £190,000. It is anticipated that there will be some gains from the several special provisions made in the Bill and that when the 1950 actuarial report is received, the outlook will be more favourable.

This is a measure which I think I personally opposed when it was originally introduced; but the Act has become an established fact, and the coalminers feel—perhaps rightly so—that they are entitled to this pension. It is paid in other parts of the Commonwealth, and to withhold it from the miners here would jeopardise industrial peace. This Bill will put the whole matter on a far more satisfactory basis; though, unfortunately, it means that the Government will have to pay an extra £20,000 per annum. It is no use baulking the issue. Of the contributions paid by the owners, 90 per cent. will come from the State, because the State is the biggest consumer of the coal. However, I am pleased to say that Collie coal will give us a better return on an £ s. d. basis than imported coal. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [3.37]: The Minister has explained fully the import of this Bill. There have been some serious anomalies, and quite a lot of time and thought has been given to endeavouring to rectify them and at the same time put the position here on a uniform basis with that prevailing in the other States. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 14—agreed to.

Clause 15—Amendment of Section 22:

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I would be obliged if the Chief Secretary would answer the query I raised during the second reading. The clause refers to 580,000 tons of coal, and I suggest the figure should be 480,000 tons.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The figures with which I have been supplied are as follows:—

COLLIE COAL OUTPUT.
(In Tons.)

Calendar Years.	Total of Field.	Amalgamated Output.	Amalgamated (Financial Year).
1946	642,286	540,846	564,104 1946-47
1947	730,506	595,817	567,496 1947-48
Mean	....	568,300	565,800

The figure in the Bill is 580,000 tons, that is 16,000 tons less than the Amalgamated Collieries output in the calendar year 1947. I think that if the figures were taken into consideration it would be found that this is a very great and correct relief from the impost of the original measure. The idea is that the preference dividend shall remain approximately what it is at present. In that way we maintain the present market

value of the preference shares. The dividend was 8 per cent. but is now something over 5 per cent. Obviously the market value of the shares is based on the present dividend.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 16, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—PHARMACY AND POISONS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Amendment to Section 20:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I consider the striking out of the clause to be the only way possible to bring to the notice of the Committee the curious method by which the work of chemists in this State is controlled. I do not believe that an elected body should be responsible for all the various facets and factors that go together in this work. The Pharmaceutical Society is a body to which all men practising pharmacy in the State must compulsorily belong. It is curious in a profession which is not granted any actual degree, that there is a section in the Act which makes it compulsory for all men who have accepted this way of life to belong to this society. That accounts for the reason why one so often sees on signs outside chemists' shops, the letters "M.P.S." after those chemists' names, in very much the same way as the letters of a degree or a diploma are attached to a man's name. I feel we have reached the stage at which, if it is necessary to give pharmaceutical chemists letters indicating that they are qualified practitioners of their occupation, a degree or a diploma should be awarded which they can rightfully attach to their names.

Hon. L. Craig: How are they under compulsion?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Under Section 4 of the Act. I do not know of any other members of a profession similar to this who are compelled to join an organisation. The council, by regulation, says that a man shall pay a fee and the council has laid down that fee for all members joining this society by compulsion. The fees are used for the purpose of administering the affairs of the society as well as to some extent for administering the Act itself. The council, therefore, must be elected, and methods of election are laid down in the principal Act but will be altered by this Bill.

Previously, it was possible for this council only to erase and, I believe, to restore to the register, the names of pharmacists who had offended against the Act. The Bill proposes to increase the powers so that the council may award lesser penalties for lesser offences, and it will be able to suspend a chemist for 12 months, or order him to pay any costs or expenses of and incidental to an inquiry, censure him or require him to give such undertaking as it considers just. My objection there is that an elected body should have so much power. In addition, the council employs its inspectors under the Poisons Act and lays down the number of subjects and the type of subjects on which examinations are to be held in order that a diploma may be received by a chemist and, although that examination is conducted by the Perth Technical College, this council of elected members registers that person. In addition, the Pharmaceutical Council, through the society, also holds what we call cultural meetings for chemists. Because of that peculiar setup, there has grown up within the State the Guild of Chemists.

In the medical profession, there is an association known as the B.M.A., which is composed of individuals. That body looks after its own domestic affairs and its own cultural affairs and fosters the ethics and standards of the profession. However, the actual disciplining of members of the profession is done by a statutory body known as the Medical Board, which is not appointed or elected by members of the medical profession but appointed from members of the profession by the Governor-in-Council. With medicine, the university lays down the subjects which shall be considered

and the Medical Board lays down the standards of qualification necessary for registration. The board registers medical practitioners and disciplines them, when necessary, and I would prefer to see a similar organisation in relation to pharmaceutical chemists.

This is not an Act to protect the pharmaceutical profession any more than the Medical Act is to protect the medical profession, but it is an Act to protect the public against members of the profession who do not adhere to a high ethical standard. It is also used to maintain within the profession a high standard of conduct in relation to the work and the occupation that these men carry on. I ask the Government to adopt my suggestion so that a full inquiry can be made and if, after due inquiry, the Government considers this to be the correct method of conducting the affairs of the Pharmaceutical Society, I will not raise any objection.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: I ask the Committee not to adopt Dr. Hislop's suggestion for the deletion of the clause. The Pharmaceutical Council has been in existence for over 50 years and during that period the Act has been amended from time to time to keep pace with modern trends and the council has administered it in keeping with the times. The council not only administers the Act in the interests of the profession and the public but also from the disciplinary standpoint. During all that time there has been no cause for complaint in that respect.

Sitting suspended from 4 to 4.15 p.m.

Hon. R. J. BOYLEN: I do not think that it has ever been necessary for the Pharmaceutical Council to deregister a chemist, although it may have been necessary for the council on odd occasions to discipline a member. It reflects creditably on the vigilance of the council that there have been but very few breaches of the Act. There is no necessity for the creation of a board, such as that suggested by Dr. Hislop, similar to the medical board. Most of the business transacted by the Pharmaceutical Council is of a domestic nature. As regards the letters "M.P.S.," these merely indicate that the chemist is a member of the Pharmaceutical Society. After a person passes his examinations, he may use the letters "Ph.C.," which simply denote that he is a pharmaceutical chemist. He must become a member of the society before he can practise. I agree with the provision in the Bill which staggers the terms of office on the council. The council has its own inspector, who inspects shops, drug registers, poison registers and dangerous drugs registers. The public is sufficiently protected by the supervision which the council exercises. I hope the Committee will not consent to any alteration of the clause.

Hon. Sir FRANK GIBSON: I feel myself somewhat at a disadvantage in following Dr. Hislop, because I usually find myself in agreement with him. The use of the letters "M.P.S." is certainly not for the purpose of deceiving the public, but merely to indicate that the person using them is a member of the Pharmaceutical Society. I suggest members of the society are just as much entitled to use those words as are some men, who hold the degree of Bachelor of Medicine or Bachelor of Surgery, to call themselves doctors. I have been a member of the Pharmaceutical Council for 25 years, and the council has superintended the profession not only with credit to itself, but with every advantage to the public. The proposed alteration in penalties is one that should appeal to the Committee.

It is thought advisable that the society should have power to inflict lesser penalties, such as to caution a man, fine him, or remove his name from the register for a period only. Such a person may, if he feels aggrieved, appeal to a magistrate against a penalty. Dr. Hislop referred to the standard of education set by the council. He thinks it is not right that the council should examine men for the profession. I point out, however, that the councillors are men of standing in the community. They have earned the confidence of their fellows and I could not imagine any set of circumstances in which they would be guilty of conduct such as was suggested by Dr. Hislop. I trust the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Hon. G. FRASER: The safeguard in the parent Act was that the Pharmaceutical Society, before it could inflict a penalty for an offence, had to obtain the consent of the Governor-in-Council. The Bill provides that that should not be necessary; but it also gives the aggrieved person the right of appeal to a magistrate. I consider the Bill

is an improvement on the Act and therefore shall oppose the amendment.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I do not for one moment want to say one derogatory word about the council, many of the members of which I number among my personal friends. My protest is that an elected body is to lay down the course of training, register the person, police the Act and discipline the members of the profession, all at the same time. It must be borne in mind that the elder statesmen will not always be members of the council. We owe it to the public to see that a disciplinary body, such as this, should be appointed by the Governor-in-Council. As long as I have been in Western Australia, the Pharmaceutical Council has always acted fairly, but we have now reached the stage when it would be unwise to give all these powers to an elected body. I believe the time has arrived when this should be reviewed.

Hon. G. FRASER: The only point I wish to make is that if the amendment is carried, it will not alter the Act or do what Dr. Hislop is setting out to do.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 11 to 28—agreed to.

Long Title:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move an amendment—

That the words "Poison Acts" be struck out and the words "Poisons Act" inserted in lieu.

Hon. G. Fraser: I do not want to be difficult, but I point out that we cannot strike out words and then re-insert them.

The CHAIRMAN: They are being altered from singular to plural.

Amendment put and passed; the Long Title as amended, agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment to the Long Title, and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time, and returned to the Assembly with an amendment to the Title.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

1, The West Australian Club (Private.)

2, Builders' Registration Act Amendment.

3, Road Districts Act Amendment.

4, Friendly Societies Act Amendment.

5, McNess Housing Trust Act Amendment (No. 2).

6, Poultry Industry (Trust Fund).

7, Justices Act Amendment.

8, Foundation Day Observance (1949 Royal Visit).

9, Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment.

BILL—COUNTRY TOWNS SEWERAGE.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 1 to 3 and 5 to 8, and had disagreed to No. 4.

The Deputy President (Hon. J. A. Dimmitt) took the Chair.

BILL—LAND SALES CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.41] in moving the second reading said: In the measure passed earlier this session the word "three" instead of the word "ten" appears in Section 11. It is now sought to rectify the oversight. There is nothing more in the Bill than that. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [4.42]: Section 11 of the Act, which the Bill seeks to amend, provides for the making of an order by the Under Secretary for Lands which precludes a person selling his property during the period in which an option over it for war service settlement purposes may be granted to the Under Secretary. It has been found in practice—

Point of Order.

The Chief Secretary: The Bill is introduced only to alter the word "three" to "ten" in Section 11. The matter which Mr. Watson wishes to discuss does not come within the Title, the provisions, or the scope of the Bill.

The Deputy President: The hon. member must confine his remarks within the scope and title of the Bill.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I draw attention to the fact that the Bill is for "An Act to amend the Land Sales Control Act, 1948," and the whole purpose of the Bill is to amend Section 11.

The Chief Secretary: In one respect.

Hon. H. K. Watson: It is to amend Section 11; and I remind the Chief Secretary that a precisely similar point was raised and taken advantage of by him, and upheld by the President, on a recent occasion. When the Bill is in Committee I propose to move an amendment to Clause 3 in order further to amend Section 11 of the principal Act. I submit it does not in any way go beyond the Title or object of the Bill. I was taking advantage of the second reading to give the House preliminary notice of the amendment I propose to move.

The Deputy President: I suggest that the hon. member reserve his remarks until the Committee stage.

Debate Resumed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. G. Fraser in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 11:

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I move an amendment—

That a new subsection be added as follows:—

(3) Any order made under this section shall cease to have effect at the expiration of three months from the date of the gazettal thereof and no order shall be made in respect of land which has already been the subject of an order.

Section 11 of the principal Act provides that the Under-Secretary for Lands may from time to time make an order specifying that certain land is reserved for settlement by former members of the Defence Forces. Subsection (2) provides that the controller shall not grant consent to the sale of that land. The effect is that when an order is granted, the Commonwealth may take an option over the land with the order against the sale of the property. Once the order has been granted, the owner cannot sell the property or work it, and he is in a state of uncertainty. There should therefore be some limit to the period for which the order shall run. The object of the amendment is to ensure that the order shall not extend beyond three months.

The CHAIRMAN: I think this a clumsy way for the amendment to be submitted, although it is not out of order. I think the purpose could have been achieved more easily by moving to insert the letter and brackets "(a)" after the word "amended" in line 1 and then adding another paragraph (b) containing the proposed new subsection That might be better understood by another place.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Then I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 after the word "amended" the letter and brackets "(a)" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I move an amendment—

That a new paragraph be added as follows:—

(b) by adding at the end of the section a new subsection as follows:—

(3) Any order made under this section shall cease to have effect at the expiration of three months from the date of the gazettal thereof and no order shall be made in respect of land which has already been the subject of an order.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

[*The President resumed the Chair.*]

BILL—TRADING STAMP.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.0] in moving the second reading said: Repre-

sentations have been made to this and previous Governments to submit legislation to Parliament to prohibit the use of trading stamps and gift coupons. Local traders and manufacturers have been consistent in their requests for such legislation which, for some years, has been successfully administered in the States of South Australia and Queensland. To a large extent, the present Bill is practically a copy of the South Australian Trading Stamps Act.

The main reason advanced by Western Australian manufacturers and traders for such legislation is that it would prevent large business houses from again commencing to operate systems of gift coupons, whereby they obtain an undue advantage over small businesses, since the latter cannot offer such a variety of gifts. Although the Bill contains several clauses, these are designed with the simple purpose of prohibiting the system and providing reasonable means to deal with anyone who contravenes the law. The time is particularly opportune for the introduction of the Bill because, owing to the shortage of the types of article that generally comprise the gifts, and owing to labour difficulties, there has not been for some years, and there is not at present, any gift system operating in this State.

South Australia, before amending its legislation in 1938, caused a very searching inquiry to be made by a specially appointed committee. The committee considered the legislation operating in other States and countries and the submissions for and against trading coupons, including proposals to remove the restrictions then in force in South Australia. The committee also considered submissions by the Housewives' Association, organisations representing manufacturers, retail traders and consumer interests, as well as the effect of the coupon system on retail prices. The general conclusions and outstanding points were summarised as follows:—

(a) Goods given in exchange for coupons do not represent something for nothing to the consumers. They are paid for by the consumers in the price paid for the commodity.

(b) There is no evidence that coupon systems, whether operated by retailers or manufacturers, result in any lessening of the retail prices of commodities.

(c) A vigorously conducted coupon system operated by a competent selling organisation is capable of attracting to it business which is not justified by the prices or quality of its commodities. Smaller traders, whose commodities are of equal quality and price, are placed at a disadvantage on account of their inability to conduct a coupon system as attractive to consumers as that of the large competitors. It is possible for the result of such a system to be that the smaller trades may be gradually forced out of business. This would apply very largely in this State to the local manufacturer and trader versus the larger interests in other States. To this extent the system tends to enable control of business in a particular class of commodity—tea, soaps, etc.—to be vested in monopolies or small groups of powerful traders.

(d) By means of a coupon system it is possible for large manufacturers to eliminate or considerably reduce competition, and in this manner exert over the business of retailers a form and measure of control which is neither justified nor desirable.

A real danger has existed that large manufacturers in Victoria and New South Wales could use the coupon system to eliminate smaller manufacturing concerns, especially in this State. It may be thought that the offering of coupons with goods is a method of sharing profits with the consumers, instead of spending money in other avenues of advertising. However, such a conception is wrong, as general advertising is carried on, catalogues are prepared, and advertising of the "gift" coupon scheme itself takes place. The coupon system can develop into a bad and hidden force to the detriment of competitive secondary industries. It will be readily appreciated that local manufacturers have not the finance to compete with large, wealthy organisations and find the thousands of pounds which it is necessary to spend in buying large quantities of gifts, providing showrooms and staff for checking and display purposes.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: A lot of it costs nothing at all. The shops will advertise it free for them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will deal with that aspect. It is an unnecessary and wasteful system costing far more than the value received by the consumer. The enactment of this legislation will not affect any person or firm insofar as purchasing or trading conditions apply today, as no coupon or "gift" system is in operation in this State now. On the other hand, it will stimulate honest trade through goods having to be offered on their real quality and merit, and help to give all manufacturers

and traders, irrespective of financial resources, an equal opportunity. This is especially apparent when one considers that the only manufacturing concerns which would favour the coupon system are those which have the essential features of—

(a) Making large profits;

(b) ability to stifle competition;

(c) willingness to distract purchasers' attention from quality and fair price;

(d) forcing storekeepers to stock goods; and

(e) making the storekeeper the agent for the manufacturer.

The manufacturers advertise to such an extent that they create a demand for that type of goods because there is a free coupon attached to it, and the majority of people think it is a free gift, although it is not.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is equally as free as the social services are.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not prepared to argue about anything else. I am now dealing with the contents of this Bill, and the Deputy President will probably insist that I confine my remarks to it.

Hon. G. Bennetts: They would not get it for nothing.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Nowhere does anyone get anything for nothing. I do not know whether Sir Charles is in favour of the Bill or not. If he is, he should allow me to proceed; but if he is against it, there is good reason for him to interrupt. The storekeeper is forced to have these goods on his shelves because there is a demand. The demand increases and eventually puts the goods off the shelves and when that happens, owing to the demand for free gifts, the storekeeper has to cut down on his profits to such an extent that he becomes a mere agent, with only a marginal profit on the sale of his goods. I have here letters setting out the position.

The Retail Traders' Association went into this matter when it was first given consideration. They sent out over 1,000 letters to storekeepers in this country and 1,000 wrote back saying they were in favour of the abolition of the coupon system. Other storekeepers did not reply, but not one storekeeper in Western Australia, being a member of the Retail Traders' Association, objected to prohibition of th gift system. I have, like other member had a certain amount of propaganda ser to me, and among other things was th report of a committee on gift coupons an trading stamps, published in England i 1933. I would like members to bear tha year in mind. That was a time when i was necessary to stimulate trade and ge things moving in a country like England with its settled population. Even ther they say this—

We have had some evidence that in a fairl numerous and possibly increasing class o cases individual traders have been constraine to accept the services of trading stamp organ isations against their will by the fear that i they did not do so their customers would trans fer their custom to other retailers who wer prepared to do so. This we regard as an un desirable feature of stamp trading, but i our view the proper remedy is for the indi viduals through their trading associations t combine and either to abjure the use of trad ing stamps altogether or to perform for them selves the functions which are now being performed by the trading stamps organisa tions.

Another very interesting pamphlet which had sent to me is headed, "The Case fo Gift Offers as a Method of Advertising." will read portions of it, which are very en lightening. This was prepared by the Manu facturers' Gift Advertising Association. W know quite well that salesmen belong to very clever class, and they do put up a lo of material which, generally speaking, i true as far as it goes, and no further. Thi association points out—

Retailers do not suffer because goods are given as gifts. A simple illustration will show that the retailer does not suffer loss of sales If he deals in bath towels, his contention is that a free towel given away by the manu facturer means the loss of the sale of a towel The housewife who receives the towel as a gift either intended to buy one—in which case she spends the money on some other article—or never intended to buy a towel—in which case no sale has been lost by the retailer, but the towel manufacturer has increased his output through this method of advertising. It is obvious from this simple illustration that the spending power of the housewife is not reduced and that the money is kept in circulation.

Have members ever heard such bunkum?

Hon. E. M. Davies: Who published that?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It was prepared by G. Reeknell, secretary of the Manufacturers' Gift Advertising Association of Box 413, C. G.P.O., Melbourne. It

is quite obvious that that is to eliminate competition. Under the heading of "Advantages to Victorian Employees" it says—

Manufacturing concerns using gift offer advertising are old and well established concerns employing men under award rates of pay and proper working conditions. The continuance of this employment depends upon the success of the advertising policy of the business. If this is not soundly based, sales will suffer, output will be restricted and obviously the jobs of many employees will be endangered.

Apart from the manufacture of the product advertised, large quantities of goods distributed as gifts are manufactured in Victoria. This all leads to stimulation of industry and employment.

That is the reason for the introduction of this Bill. We want to stimulate trade in Western Australia, not in Victoria. Here it distinctly says, "to stimulate trade in Victoria." Let me refer again to the pamphlet. Under the heading of "Benefits to the Purchasing Public" it says—

The manufacturers' gift offer is the only form of advertising which rewards the housewife for her constant use of a particular commodity. By obtaining a useful article free she receives some benefit from the money spent on advertising. She gets something instead of nothing, not, as our opponents suggest, something for nothing. If gift offers were prohibited, the housewife would be an absolute loser. She would then have to pay for the household necessities she now receives free of cost. It is therefore obvious that the housewives in a community which prohibits such a method of advertising are at a great disadvantage as compared with their sisters in Victoria, where up to the present there has been no interference with gift offer advertising.

People under a false impression frequently state that gift advertising increases the price of the goods. Gift offers do not increase the price of goods. This is borne out by the fact that many well-known and long-established household goods advertised by means of gifts are sold throughout all the States of the Commonwealth at the same price, notwithstanding that in some States gift offers are prohibited. The money used to purchase the gifts comes from the advertising fund and, if it were not spent on gifts, would have to be spent in some other form of advertising. In short, gift offers are nothing more than an alternative to an equal or greater expenditure on some other form of advertising. If gift offers were abolished in Victoria tomorrow, the price of the goods advertised by this means could not be reduced.

If the price of goods were not reduced and the money thus saved were not spent on other advertising, there would obviously be an excess of profit, and we would derive the benefit from the income tax collections spread over the whole of the people. The money thus saved would not go to the four winds of Heaven; these firms would advertise in another way. I think members will agree with me in confessing a feeling of disgust on hearing that some person has received £270 for answering a question associated with the advertising of a commodity. Who pays for that? Obviously, it is added to the price of the commodity.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That applies to all advertising.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am not suggesting otherwise. Generally speaking, however, goods advertise themselves, and it is not necessary to offer people some inducement to buy.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Quality advertises them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. Let me go a little further in my quotations from the pamphlet—

Manufacturers' gift offers.—This is a form of advertising and, like all advertising, represents part of the selling and distributing costs.

So they admit that it is part of the selling and distributing costs.

It is just as necessary as the cost of the wages paid to workers and the cost of the raw materials used in manufacturing the goods.

Will Sir Charles Latham suggest that, if the cost of wages is lowered, the price of the article will not be lowered? Will he suggest that, if wages costs go up, the cost of the article will not go up?

It is indisputable that advertising is necessary for the successful conduct of any commercial undertaking. The successful marketing of a product depends very largely upon the use of the most effective method of advertising. There are many well-known forms of advertising, including Press, gifts, radio, shop displays, posters and outdoor signs, mail or mail order, canvassing.

Strangely enough, these people do not mention what to my mind is the best advertising medium, namely, the quality of the goods. They say, in effect, "Never mind the quality. That does not matter two straws. Let us give people something for nothing. They will not realise that the cost of advertising forms part of the cost of the article." We do not want to countenance the stupid idea that people can get something for nothing. That is not possible in this world. Therefore we desire to stop this stupid business

of beguiling the people into thinking that they can get a watch for so many coupons without having to pay for it. Either the quality of the goods for which the coupons are given must diminish or the trader must be collecting an excess profit.

Admittedly, advertising is necessary in order to get a commodity on the market and, when it has reached the market, a certain amount of advertising may be necessary to keep it before the minds of the public, but the quality of the article does the rest. The coupon scheme, however, is one to beguile people into purchasing goods irrespective of quality. I feel sure that members will be only too pleased to support the measure and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [5.20]: I do not say for one moment that I do not appreciate that advertising has some value, but why the Government should introduce a Bill, especially in the last hours of the session, to differentiate between the various forms of advertising, I cannot understand. The mere introduction of the measure indicates to me that the Government considers the commercial men of this city are not capable of running their own businesses, but must come to Parliament for protection against what they describe as a vicious system.

The Chief Secretary: It is for the protection of the public.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Chief Secretary objected to my interjecting when he was speaking.

The Chief Secretary: No, I replied to you.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I can deal with the Minister's interjections. To my mind this measure belittles the business capabilities of our commercial men. Surely we should not interfere with their business methods! That is not the function of Parliament. Our function is to make laws for the good of the people, not for the protection of one section against another section.

Hon. G. Fraser: We want to protect people against confidence tricksters.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I would not say that anybody who advertises puts up a confidence trick. I shall leave that to the hon. member, because I consider it to be an unnecessary insult.

The Chief Secretary: Do not take any notice of interjections.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am not so inclined to be sensitive about interjections as is the Chief Secretary. The Minister made a very long speech in moving the second reading, and quoted from pamphlets that had been circulated amongst members. I put my copies in the wastepaper basket. My own commonsense guides me in the remarks I make in this Chamber. We know very well that the coupon system is a form of advertising and that the cost of goods is increased by all forms of advertising. On Sunday evening, I listen over the radio—because the family insists upon having the wireless on—to some story or fare associated with advertising.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Have not you a second room?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, but probably not so conveniently placed as is the lounge. When I listen to such advertising, would anyone suggest that I am unaware of the cost it must be to the public? If my experience of broadcasting is any indication, it is a very expensive form of advertising. The Minister did not say that what we in this Chamber ought to do is to provide for a lowering of the cost of advertising by limiting the amount of advertising that firms might do. If that were done, we should be taking an intelligent view of the situation. If it is the desire of the Minister to ensure that people shall be able to buy the articles they require at the lowest possible cost, let us pass a law to provide that only a small percentage, probably one-half per cent of the total turnover or income shall be spent on advertising. Then there would be some chance of lowering the cost of goods. If a man or woman purchased some goods and the vendor allowed a cash discount of sixpence, that would be an inducement. What is the difference between a cash discount and a present?

Hon. H. A. C. Daffen: It costs less.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It does not. Does not competition determine the price of an article? What is the difference between advertising by way of issuing coupons and advertising in the newspapers or over the air? The Minister has not told us that, and Mr. Fraser has not had an opportunity to do so. Now that the Government has seen fit to introduce this meas-

ure, I hope that the subject will be thoroughly discussed. In my opinion, we should continue the discussion to the point when it will be considered advisable to defer any decision till next session.

Hon. G. W. Miles: That is what you are out for.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I hate to find such a frivolous measure being introduced at this late stage of the session. I am rather afraid that members may be led astray by the remarks of the Chief Secretary, though they conveyed nothing to my mind.

The Chief Secretary: Then do not refer to them.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I intend to refer to them in order that their significance may be conveyed to members and that they will realise that there is another side. For many years coupon systems have been operating in Australia. I remember them when I was a young fellow, and I do not think anybody suffered because of them. As a matter of fact, there was a lot more advertising of that sort in those days than there is today. Nowadays, advertising has over-run itself.

Hon. W. J. Mann: It is a science nowadays.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I know that an advertising journalist—if I may use the term—can command a terrific salary. I know a man associated with a soap firm in Australia who is paid a very high salary.

Hon. L. A. Logan: More than a member of Parliament.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes; yet manufacturers come to members of Parliament, who are paid less, and ask to be protected against their competitors.

The Chief Secretary: No; they are asking that this system of advertising be knocked out.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: To my mind, they have a very weak case. Why we should be called upon to deal with such frivolous legislation is a surprise to me. When I was a member of another place, a measure was introduced to prevent dog racing, and not since that time can I remember such a frivolous piece of legislation having been introduced. I cannot recall any time during my association with Parliament when there have been so many strangers about the House canvassing members. I must be ugly or have an unattractive manner, because not one of them has approached me. Had I been approached, however, my opinion would still be the same. I am not sure whether the Chief Secretary was not also a member of another place when that dog Bill was introduced. I think it likely that he was.

The Chief Secretary: I do not think I dogged you then.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I should not be surprised if the Minister did. If the people want the coupon system, why not let them have it? They will not have to pay any more for the articles they buy—not a penny piece more. Let me remind the Minister of something which he knows is quite true. Although we may pass this Bill, there will be nothing to prevent Eastern States' manufacturers, if they so desire, from putting their goods on the market in this State and enclosing coupons. Let me explain how it can be done. The articles will be put up in Melbourne, Sydney or elsewhere in the Eastern States where coupons are permitted and sent across here, and the coupons will be redeemable in the State of issue. Consequently, nothing in our legislation will be able to prevent that, because Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution could be invoked.

I am not aware that the people have shown a great desire in the past for these coupons. Let me say something else about the traders of this State. Some years ago they appealed to Parliament to prohibit the system of cash orders. But what did they do subsequently? They combined and set up an establishment in Murray-street, which they called, "Traders' Cash Orders."

Hon. L. A. Logan: "Mutual Cash Orders."

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: They condemned it on the one hand and then said, "Let us get together. There must be something in this. We will have it." The traders in this State absolutely surprise me, not because they are dishonest or anything like that, but because they decide on one course one day and the next day reverse their decision. To my mind they do not do themselves the credit they should. Would any of us here worry about a bit of competition from coupons if we had articles to

sell and the people to buy them? I heard a statement that ever since a certain tea firm had dropped the coupon system its sales had fallen 60 per cent., but the reason that occurred was that people could not buy all they wanted to. I am not sure that the statement made in another place is right. We cannot check these statements.

The Chief Secretary: What was said?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It was said that since the firm had stopped putting coupons in packets of tea the sales had dropped 60 per cent.

The Chief Secretary: You say you cannot disprove that?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not think that we can for one moment. The Minister might be able to do it. He has the facilities. He has a staff to whom he can say, "Please advise me what imports have been received from the Eastern States and who were the firms concerned?" People should not be permitted to run to the Legislature and say, "We have not sufficient stability, nor organisation, nor business acumen to protect ourselves from someone who is coming here with coupons," and ask for protection from us. If advertising is done by coupons, it is no more than is done over the air or per medium of newspapers. What is wrong with it? Why are we interfering?

The Chief Secretary: Ask hon. members; do not ask me!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Not the hon. member the Minister gets his instructions from?

The Chief Secretary: What hon. member?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know. The Minister told me to ask the hon. member.

The Chief Secretary: I said "hon. members."

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The Chief Secretary is in charge of the Bill. This should not be a Government measure. The Government has many more important things to do than decide what form of advertising wholesalers or retailers are going to have. I have no doubt that, members having been influenced by some means or other, this Bill will be passed. I do not mind whether it passes or not, but there is a responsibility on individual members this House and I feel it is my duty to t them that this is not a function of t Government. The Chief Secretary read fro a parliamentary document issued in En land. He did not tell the House that t committee which framed that report advis that no action should be taken.

The Chief Secretary: I thought you sa you threw your copy in the wastepap basket!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I di but I read that portion of it which advis that no action should be taken. The co mittee said it was not a function of t Government to interfere with these thing Of course, the probability is that we are low in our form of government, that we c afford to belittle our dignity and positio by engaging in something that is not o function. I daresay that members will carried away by nice plausible stories ab how difficult it is to control this and tha I know most of the business people of th State, however—or a great many of them and nobody can persuade me that it is eas to put anything over them. They can loo after their businesses very well.

I am amazed that because people fro elsewhere have said they are going to some advertising, our local traders felt necessary to run to Parliament to ask f protection because they cannot look aft their own business. I suppose the next thin will be that if a firm undertakes to suppl suits within a month or six weeks, tailo will try to prevent that. They will say should not be allowed; that somebody wh is a better business man than they, and wh is living in Sydney, will flood our marke with the clothes the people want.

Hon. L. Craig: They have said that.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I di not expect to get even the hon. member wit me, but evidently I have.

Hon. L. Craig: He came willingly.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: To m it is a most extraordinary thing that on th last day or two of the session we shoul be discussing this kind of legislation. A these people are asking is that we shall pas legislation that will enable us to differentiat between forms of advertising. I ask an

member to contradict that statement truthfully.

The Chief Secretary: Is it a free gift?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There is no such thing as a free gift except what the hon. member gives me immediately after I leave this Chamber before tea.

Hon. G. Fraser: And is there a quid pro quo attached to that, too.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I suppose there is.

The Chief Secretary: I hope I will get it!

Hon. W. J. Mann: What about the advice he gives you?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It is pretty expensive. He has given us bad advice today.

The Chief Secretary: You must admit that is very unusual.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I will not admit anything. I am trying to convince this House that it should not interfere with forms of advertising. If the Minister will bring down a Bill next session limiting the amount of advertising a firm can do—

Hon. W. J. Mann: Oh!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That is all right! I suggest the hon. member is in some way connected with newspapers or broadcasting or something like that and feels that such a proposal might injure his trade. But the hon. gentleman himself is above attending to his own personal interests when he is in this Chamber. I am satisfied about that. If the Minister will bring down a Bill limiting the amount any firm can spend on advertising, I will support him. It is true that every article is loaded with costs for which the people receive little compensation. Look at the proprietary lines! We have had a Bill introduced giving further protection to chemists. Proprietary lines must return a terrific amount of profit; and because taxation is so high on such profits, these people spend an enormous amount on advertising, in order to reduce those profits rather than the price of the articles. That is absolutely correct. If this House is going to be concerned at all about advertising, it should deal with it in such a way as to lessen the cost of goods to the consumers.

Hon. A. Thomson: Then you should support the Bill.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No. Not long ago a firm gave a discount, which is a form of advertising.

Hon. L. Craig: It is no different from this.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No. I had no objection to it. I cannot picture very many sensible people buying an article because they will get an extra towel in that way. I could not understand what the Minister meant when he was referring to that matter. I tried to reason it out.

The Chief Secretary: I was only reading from a pamphlet.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I was referring to the Minister's interpolation. If towels are scarce I should think that a towel would be a useful present for somebody who could not get one, and would be most acceptable.

The Chief Secretary: Marked "B.O. Soap" or something!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: On a previous occasion merchants asked Parliament to protect them against cash orders. Then they started the system themselves. I wonder, therefore, whether they are genuine in asking for protection of this kind. Let the people who are asking Parliament to prohibit the use of coupons come along and say, "Will you help us to reduce our advertising costs?" If they do that, they will have my wholehearted support. There is no justification for the Bill. Legislation which interferes with business in this State is the worst form of legislation of which I know.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: What about your interference with the insurance companies?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I did not interfere with the insurance companies! I gave them full value in the suggestion I made. People in the country said I was very modest. They said it should have been 50 per cent. instead of 25 per cent. I hope other members here will see things as I do. I am often in the minority, but I do not mind that in the slightest.

The Chief Secretary: We notice that!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: As I have said before, the minority are often right. I have seen legislation come back to this House, demonstrating that if the advice

I had tendered had been followed, it would have been better, and there would have been no necessity for Bills to be returned. I know that members have been well canvassed in connection with this measure, and I am sorry they were not able to stand up to the people who canvassed them. I regret that they did not say, "We represent the people and not you individually. We will decide the issue on the evidence we have before us and will express the opinion we know the public would have us express." If the Minister takes my advice, he will withdraw this Bill.

The Chief Secretary: If I heard from you any arguments in favour of that, I would do so.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: That does not make me wrong. Will the Minister answer me this when he replies? Is not this piece of legislation differentiating between the forms of advertising? It is prohibiting one form to the advantage of others.

The Chief Secretary: I will answer that.

Hon. A. Thomson: Don't waste time on it.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I have never said that the hon. member's speeches are a waste of time and I have listened to him whenever he has spoken. As far as I am concerned, I intend to express myself whether I please my friend from Katanning or not. I do not support this class of legislation and I do not consider that Parliament is here for the purpose of considering it. We should—I was going to say amend it—discharge it from the notice paper and tell these tradespeople that they are capable of looking after their own business. The less interference that people have in legitimate trading the better it will be. We are building up in Australia, and in this State, a method of control and our children, when they are grown up, will wonder if there was ever such a thing as freedom. I believe that we are going to pass a Bill in this Chamber tonight which will restrict freedom. Yet members come along and say that there is too much restriction.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You have not much faith in your convictions if you say that it will not be passed.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: But that does not stop me from arguing against the Bill in the same way as the Honorary Minister argues when he has a small number of members behind him. I know that the Bill will be agreed to but that does not stop me from expressing myself. I warn merchants in this city, and those responsible for the Bill being here, that they have to be careful that they do not give encouragement to this class of legislation. We have too much of it; this is a form of restriction and I ask members to give that side of it some thought.

In the early stages, when the Government had to accept legislation that was passed over by the Commonwealth Government, I thought it was about time that we let up on some of our restrictions but here is a piece of legislation that prevents people from exercising their own ideas on advertising. To say to the public, "You shall pay for advertising from which you will get nothing," is not right. If the cost of advertising by the gift coupon method was worked out, it would be found to be very small and would probably not be worth worrying about. I intend to oppose the Bill on the second reading and I will continue to do so throughout the remaining stages.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.50]: I hope that other members feel the same as I do; completely unimpressed by the shouting and table punching of Sir Charles Latham. I am disappointed that Sir Charles did not do what I consider to be the sensible thing, and that was to read the matter that was submitted by both sides in connection with this legislation. Arguments were adduced by those who supported the measure and arguments were put forward by those who opposed it. It would have been in the best interests of Sir Charles Latham if he had read both sides of the story instead of consigning the papers to the waste paper basket as he said he did. He stated that people have been influenced by the pressure that has been brought to bear.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I never used the word "pressure."

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: The hon. member used a word which meant the same thing.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I used the word "canvassing" not "pressure."

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Apparently the hon. member has been canvassed to very good purpose.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I have not.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Sir Charles Latham suggested that the Bill was a reflection on the business ability of the local manufacturers and packers. That is a most unfair statement to make. It is, I think, an admission by the local manufacturers and packers of the power of the big groups of manufacturers in the Eastern States and their ability to spend much larger sums of money on advertising campaigns than can the local manufacturers.

Hon. A. Thomson: That is the whole thing.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: I am not so much concerned with the ethics of the various types of advertising as I am with the effect on our industries in this State and on our employment. Sir Charles made a most erroneous statement when he said that Eastern States manufacturers previously enjoyed 60 per cent. more of the trade than they do now—tea was the commodity he mentioned, I think.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I repeated what was said in another place.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: What was said in another place?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I said that the trade had fallen off by 60 per cent.

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Because people were unable to sell owing to the shortage of supplies and the high price of tea? The position is not as the hon. member describes it. Prior to the cessation of the coupon system the Eastern States packers and blenders of tea enjoyed 60 to 70 per cent. of the business in this State. When, during the war, regulations prevented the use of coupons, the local packers and blenders of tea gradually built up their business until today they have between 60 and 70 per cent. of our tea trade. It is not that the tea trade has fallen off but that the percentage previously enjoyed by Eastern States packers and blenders has gone over to their Western Australian counterparts.

The attack on this Bill is an endeavour to reinstate that advantageous position which the Eastern States packers enjoyed and I am going to support the Bill just as vigorously as Sir Charles Latham said he intended to oppose it. I am frankly concerned with the employment position and I am satisfied that if the 70 per cent. of the trade which our local packers enjoy today returns to the Eastern States, considerable unemployment will result. I am not prepared to support any measure that will enable those big, powerful groups of manufacturers in the Eastern States to regain a market which they have lost. That would be a serious detriment to the employment position in this State and to our industries. I compliment the Government for giving the help that this Bill will afford local manufacturers and I intend to support it wholeheartedly.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [5.55]: I find myself in accord with the remarks of Sir Charles Latham. He made one of the best speeches that he has made for a long time.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Thank you!

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Saying the same thing over and over again.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Sir Charles said in words what our Government has been preaching for years; the right of the individual to live his life as he wants to do. It has been repeated almost ad nauseam by Mr. Hearn, so I am sure that he will support the Bill and the right of people to live their own lives as long as they are within the law—

Hon. H. Hearn: Like you did the milkmen!

Hon. L. CRAIG: —to trade as they would like to trade.

The PRESIDENT: I trust the hon. member will not invite interjections.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The placing of little tickets inside parcels entitling the purchasers to some sort of gifts after a certain number have been collected, is no different from any other form of advertising. It is no different from the principle adopted by co-operative societies, who pay, on trade done, a cash bonus. There is no difference between a cash bonus or a teapot. I am surprised at the attitude adopted. Some members seem to think it is a wrong principle

to advertise goods by putting tickets in parcels. This Government has gone to the people and said, "We stand for freedom of trade and of the individual; to run our businesses as we want to run them and not as some Government institution would tell us to run them." Advertising by coupons is not half as expensive as advertising by radio.

Hon. G. Bennetts: The consumer would not be any better off, anyhow.

Hon. L. CRAIG: He is not any better off now. All advertising by Press, radio or by different forms of posters is added on to the cost of the goods. Nobody pretends that it does not cost the consumer more. All forms of advertising increase the cost of goods.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Hence it is not a gift.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Of course it is not and neither is the five per cent. bonus paid by co-operative companies a gift.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: In that case it is taken from them before it is given back to them by way of bonus.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is originally added on to the price of goods. It means that they have made that much more profit than they needed to make. It is no different from the gift coupon system. I am not pretending that I like this form of advertising, as it builds up a system that is not attractive, but surely a principle is involved and we should not say to the people, "You have no right to advertise in this manner."

Hon. G. W. Miles: How are you going to keep prices down that way?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Then why not stop advertising on the radio and in the Press? Is this any different? The great interest that has been taken in the Bill is because of the pressure and propaganda that have been brought to bear and by people holding out their hands and saying, "You must protect us."

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Did you know that there is counter-propaganda?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, but had this Bill been put forward entirely on its own merits, without pressure from anybody, it would have been rejected by this House in about two minutes as interfering with the rights of the ordinary citizen. I do not like this sort of advertising or a lot of radio adve tising either. Ask our friends from t Labour Party what they think of Jo Henry Austral? They say it is utterly u fair and the Commonwealth Government bringing in a Bill to stop it. This just another form of advertising, and v as a Liberal-Country Party Governme should not say to a man, "You shall not a vertise as you want to." We are breaki away from the principles that were enun ated during the election campaign and th is the only reason why I am opposing t Bill. It is foreign to the principle that boast about. I congratulate Sir Charl Latham upon the spirited speech he made.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: His noisy spee

Hon. L. CRAIG: He did not thump t desk at all.

The Chief Secretary: Metaphorica speaking!

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am glad I can suppo Sir Charles Latham occasionally, but, course, he is very often wrong.

The Honorary Minister for Agricultur He thinks he is always right.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Well, not more than per cent.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Then the must be something wrong with me if, your opinion, I am right this time.

Hon. L. CRAIG: The hon. memb enunciated a principle that is sound. the Bill is agreed to, we will regret it son day. This measure would be quite prop as a private member's Bill, and it wou be perfectly justified as an attempt to pr tect a section of the community.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Hear, hear!

Hon. L. CRAIG: It would be perfect right, especially in the opinion of anyo engaged in the tea trade. It is not t function of the Government to deal with matter of sectional interest like this a say to a firm that it must not offer i ducements to people to buy its goods. Th deals with a perfectly legal form of adve tising, but the Government says it will n stand for it. I shall oppose the seco reading of the Bill.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Central) [6.2 I listened with great interest to the speech delivered by members and, much as I d

like saying so, I shall not support the attitude adopted by Sir Charles Latham and Mr. Craig but shall assist the Government. The reasons advanced by Mr. Dimmitt were quite sound, as were those presented by the Minister. Too much has been said about freedom and not enough about protection. Rightly or wrongly, Australia has adopted the policy of protection in order to safeguard its industries against the threat of organised oversea competition. Under the Constitution, we are not allowed to impose a tariff upon articles from other States, but there are ways and means of protecting our industries and enterprises against the threat of unfair competition from those parts. The introduction of this legislation has been sought by quite a number of organisations that will be affected if it is not agreed to.

Similar legislation is already in force in two of the other States. As having a bearing on the policy of protection, I will give members an instance of what did happen. When the war loomed up, there was the immediate need to use the whole of Australia's industries for the manufacture, as far as possible, of war materials. The necessary machines, tools and so forth could not be obtained from America or England because they were earmarked for local use. They could not be secured from former sources of supply, which were then enemy countries. In order to manufacture tools, a machine was required capable of a pressure of 1,100 tons per square inch. There was one machine that gave a pressure in one direction of 600 tons, another with a side thrust of 400 tons pressure, and another with a down thrust of 300 tons.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We should down thrust this Bill!

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: By an ingenious system of cranks, it was made possible to apply all three thrusts in the one direction. If in the first place protection had not been forthcoming to enable industries to establish themselves here, we would have had no machines that could have been adapted for the purposes of war. Similar protection is required here, and in the interests of our local industries. I hope the Bill will be agreed to.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [6.5]: I support the Minister in this matter. We should protect the interests of our own State. On this occasion I am on the side of big business.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: But you are really supporting little business.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I support the Bill in the hope that it will lead to a restricted amount of advertising, the effect of which should be to bring down prices in the interests of the consumers. When one appreciates the expenditure involved in sending representatives of Eastern States' traders to Western Australia on this particular occasion and knows that the object is to push the sale of their goods against those manufactured locally, it is certainly time this House supported the Chief Secretary. It is not hard to appreciate what is happening. All this cannot be done without the expenditure of a huge amount of money. When we realise the large prizes provided in connection with quizzes and so forth, we must appreciate that the money has to come out of the pockets of someone, and it is provided by those who use the commodities manufactured by the sponsors.

The different forms of inducement offered to secure the promotion of sales tend to make housewives think they are getting something for nothing, but, of course, that is not so. Take the position regarding soap. One firm puts out a line that contains certain ingredients not available to a competitor. The competitor then sets about to foster the sale of his line by issuing coupons and free gifts and so increases the use of his product as against the more genuine article. I certainly hope the Bill will be endorsed. My constituents will not worry about coupons, so long as they realise that the action proposed has been for the purpose of protecting local industries and providing more employment.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [6.9]: I shall not delay the House in replying to the debate.

Members: Let it go!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It was said that it costs nothing to put a coupon in a packet, and I agree. On the other hand, advertising costs a tremendous amount of money, especially in the provision of free gifts. Some members say they are not worth anything, but they are certainly

worth something as an advertising medium. The suggestion was advanced that this is restrictive legislation. I am sorry that Sir Charles Latham forgets he was a member of another place in 1936 when the Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act was passed.

Hon. L. Craig: But that dealt with false advertisements, and there is nothing false in this instance.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Is there anything false about the free gifts?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Nothing.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They cannot be described as free gifts if they are made available for advertising purposes! They must cost something. Members know from the pamphlet that has been issued by those concerned that it does cost something. It is a charge against the business under the heading of advertising. I draw the attention of Sir Charles Latham to the wording of Section 8 of the Trade Descriptions and False Advertisements Act.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair: the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Interpretation:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I am surprised at members rushing the Bill through. When the Minister got up to reply to the debate, they almost ordered him to sit down. That is not very helpful.

The Chief Secretary: Was that not a sufficient tip to you?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, to get up and challenge that course of action. Under the interpretation of "goods," nothing very much has been missed, and I cannot see what application some of the items mentioned has to the issuing of coupons. Will the Minister explain what the definition means? Will firms not be able to provide free railway tickets to people whom they want to come to the city? Surely that is stretching it a bit. Firms are not allowed to provide tickets for the pictures!

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—Use of trading stamps prohibited:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I should like the Chief Secretary to tell the Committee whether it is proposed that both the agent and his employee should be prosecuted for the one offence. If the word "also" did not appear in paragraph (a) of Subclause (5), I should think the prosecution would be against either of them.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think the intention is that both the agent and the apprentice or the assistant should be prosecuted.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I think that is unfair. I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of paragraph (a) of Subclause (5) the word "also" be struck out.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There might be some risk in agreeing to the amendment. Take the case of goods coming from outside the State and the sale being affected by the giving of free gifts. A person outside the State could not be prosecuted.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and *passed.*

BILL—MARKETING OF APPLES AND PEARS.

Received from the Assembly and read first time.

BILL—PHARMACY AND POISONS ACT AMENDMENT

Assembly's Message.

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

BILL—CITY OF FREMANTLE (FREE LITERARY INSTITUTE).

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Mining Act Amendment.

2, Land Sales Control Act Amendment.

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' PENSIONS.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [7.42] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is to give effect to some extent to requests that have been made to practically every member of both Houses of Parliament by people who are known as 1871 pensioners and who were in the employ of the Railway Department. Under the Superannuation Act, 1871, pensions may be granted to persons who were in an established capacity in the Public Service. "Established capacity" has been decided by the Courts to apply to public servants employed in a position specified in the Estimates. In 1905 the law was altered; pensions were entirely abolished for civil servants. The Act of 1871 did not grant a pension as a right, but at the will of the Governor, who might or might not grant it. There was no appeal against his decision. The railway workers who had retired considered they were entitled to a pension under the 1871 Act.

All persons who were employed in the Public Service prior to, I think, April, 1905, are still entitled to a pension under that Act. There still remain a few civil servants so entitled. The railway workers, including some of the present ones, have always demanded a pension. The other place has passed resolutions recommending it. It is now the Government's desire to give effect to those resolutions, and the Bill has been sent to us from the Legislative Assembly for that purpose. Summed up briefly, the position has been as follows:—Pensions under the 1871 Act were permissive, the Governor-in-Council being the final arbiter. The Act provides that employees must have served in an "established capacity in the permanent Civil Service of the Colonial Government whether their remuneration be computed by day pay, weekly wages or annual salary." "Established Capacity" was not defined in the 1871 Act. There were a number of conflicting opinions as to whether it did or did not include wages employees. Those opinions are set out in the report of the evidence given before the Select Committee. In December, 1936, the then Government declared its policy as follows:—

> Claims for superannuation by railway servants will be inquired into and receive consideration only—
>
> (a) When the claimant establishes that he was holding a salaried staff office on the 17th April, 1905, or
>
> (b) When the claimant establishes that, although he was not holding a salaried staff office on the 17th April, 1905, he had prior to that date held a salaried staff office for an aggregate period of at least 10 years.

The policy of the Government as declared at that time was in reality a re-affirmation of the practice which had operated over a long period previously and that policy has been consistently adhered to ever since. The 1937 Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly considered that it was not the intention of the Legislature to confer a benefit on persons in one section and annul it in another and expressed the opinion that persons employed in the railway service of the State, prior to the 17th April, 1905, whether on day pay, weekly wages or annual salary, had a legitimate claim to a superannuation allowance, provided they had complied with the other essential requirements of the Act.

A motion moved subsequently, "That in the opinion of this House the Government should give effect to the recommendations of the Select Committee," was passed by a majority of 14. The then Government decided to adhere to the policy defined in December, 1936. Following the introduction of the 1938 contributory scheme, those wages employees who were still employed on the 1st March, 1939, and who had not attained age 65 on that date, became eligible to contribute for a pension under the Act. Most of them could only afford to contribute for the first four age 30 concession units since, owing to their advanced ages, the cost for additional units at actual age rates would have been prohibitive. But those over age 65 and those who had left the service prior to the 1st March, 1939, were disqualified from contributing for

benefits under the 1938 Act. They were in the position—

(a) of being deemed to be ineligible under the 1871 Act although permanently employed prior to 17th April, 1905, and

(b) because of their advanced ages, of being disqualified from receiving benefits under the contributory scheme.

Since the present Government assumed office, representations have again been made by those concerned to have their claims recognised. Apart from the questions as to whether or not they had any moral or legal claim under the 1871 Act, and whether the policy of successive Governments was just and equitable, I do not think anyone will dispute the fact that the circumstances mentioned have been rather severe on this group of ex-employees. An estimate prepared in 1938 showed that the probable annual cost of paying pensions to railway wages employees under the 1871 Act, at that time might have been in the vicinity of £135,000 per annum and the total ultimate liability over £2,000,000. With a view to ascertaining the probable position as it exists today, a list has been prepared of all the wages employees who were in the service prior to the 17th April, 1905, and who are known to be still living. The 647 persons listed come within the following categories:—

(a) Contributors or pensioners under the 1938 Act, including those still in the service	462
(b) Retired prior to the 1st March, 1939, and ineligible under the 1938 Act	154
(c) Retired after the 1st March, 1939, but ineligible because of age to contribute under the 1938 Act	7
(d) Still employed on the 1st March, 1939, but who did not elect to contribute under the 1938 Act, including five still employed ..	12
(e) Those of doubtful eligibility, for reason of resignation, etc., before attaining age 60 ..	12
Total	647

There will, no doubt, be others under the heading of (b) of whom particulars are not available. It is not known who they may be and whether they are still living or not. There will also be others from departments other than the Railway Department but it is thought they will be few in number. In view of the changed circumstances which followed the introduction of the contributory scheme, the Government has given consideration to ways and means of providing a measure of relief for this group of ex-employees whose numbers are rapidly diminishing. The Government has given consideration to the alternatives of—

(a) recognising the claims of ex-wages employees for superannuation under the 1871 Act, or

(b) providing some other scheme which would be regarded as reasonable to the men and which would not involve the State in an unreasonably large expenditure of public funds.

If the Government were to do the former and pay all of those 647 men pensions in accordance with the 1871 Act, the cost in the first complete year on the basis of an average pension of, say, £5 per week—increased from £4 by the amending legislation last year—would be in the vicinity of £170,000 but, as an offset, there would be a reduction of approximately £60,000 on account of the Government's share of pensions under the 1938 Act for the 462 contributors or pensioners under that Act. It is thought that the average pension might be considerably more than £5 per week when accurately computed. Even if it were no more, the State would be required to find at least £100,000 in the first complete year. The Government was faced with—

(a) the serious responsibility of finding a substantial sum of money for the purpose, and

(b) upsetting the procedure, practice and policy which had been followed by successive Governments ever since the 1871 Act came into operation.

It was decided that the Government would not be justified in paying pensions to those persons under the 1871 Act. As an alternative a Bill has been prepared to provide for a modified scheme and is submitted for consideration by members. It is proposed that a person shall be eligible for benefit under the scheme only if he was permanently employed prior to the 17th April, 1905; he was continuously employed for not less than 10 years from the date prior to the 17th April, 1905; he was still in the service on attaining age 60 or he was retired before age 60 through invalidity. A person shall be disqualified if he is receiving or eligible for a pension under the 1871 Superannuation Act; he is a contributor or a pensioner under the 1938 Act; or he was dismissed from the service for disciplinary reasons.

If a person resigned or was discharged or retrenched before attaining age 60 years, he would be eligible only if he were re-employed in the Government service and was still employed at age 60. In any such case he would receive a pension calculated on his first period of continuous service, only provided it was not less than 10 years. Subsequent service would not count for the purpose of calculating the amount of the pension payable. The amount of pension payable is to be calculated in accordance with the number of years of continuous service—minimum 10 years—and the average annual amount of wages received during the last three years of his service.

For example, if he served continuously for 10 years from a date prior to the 17th April, 1905, he would be paid 10/48ths of his average annual wages. If he served for 11 years he would receive 11/48ths of his average annual wages, and so on up to a maximum of 40/48ths for 40 years' service or longer. But in no case is a person to be paid a pension in excess of £130 per annum which is equivalent to £2 10s. per week. There will be no retrospective payment of pensions. A pension will become payable when the Act is proclaimed or subsequently where necessary. There is no provision for the payment of a pension to the widow of a deceased pensioner or eligible employee. No contributions from employees are required.

Those are the principal features of the proposed scheme. Other features can be explained at the Committee stage. It is desired to make it clear that the proposed scheme will only apply to that group of persons who were permanently employed prior to the 17th April, 1905, and who were refused pensions under the 1871 Act and who were unable to participate in the 1938 contributory scheme. Persons who joined the service after the 17th April, 1905, are not included. They may or may not be eligible under the 1938 Act. Those who were eligible under the 1938 Act had the opportunity of contributing for the first four units of pension at age 30 rate. The cost to them of those four units was 8s. 5d. per fortnight which provided them with a pension of £2 10s. per week—increased from £2 last year—and their widows with £1 5s. per week, almost wholly at the expense of the State.

It is considered that provision has been made by the State for that group and any scheme for the remainder who were ineligible should have as its basis a maximum pension comparable with that payable for the first four age 30 concession units mentioned, i.e., £2 10s. per week. Admittedly those covered by the 1938 scheme were required to make contributions but, whereas their widows are eligible for pensions, the widows of those who will be covered by the present proposal will not be eligible for pensions. In fixing the maximum amount of pension payable at £2 10s. per week the Government was influenced by the amount payable in respect of the first four age 30 concession units under the 1938 Act; the ability of the State to finance the scheme; and the incidence of the Commonwealth means test in respect of old age pensions.

The amount of pension in respect of the first four age 30 concession units is £2 10s. per week. Because of the advanced ages of those concerned, the Government is responsible for the payment of almost the full amount of £2 10s. per week. The amount payable from the fund is only a shilling or two per week. Only ten per cent. of those covered by the 1938 Act contributed for units of pension in excess of the age 30 concession units. The additional units were at actual age rates and were very costly in the case of the older employees. In the circumstances it was considered that a maximum pension of £2 10s. per week under the proposed scheme would be equitable and would not create an anomalous position in respect of those covered by the 1938 contributory scheme.

The cost to the State was an important factor in deciding the maximum amount of pension. There are 168 persons known to be living who would be immediately eligible under the proposed scheme. If 25 per cent. were added to cover the unknown number, the maximum might be approximately 210. If everyone were eligible for the maximum pension of £130 per annum, the cost in the first complete year would be between £22,000 and £27,000. All but four of the 168 mentioned will be over 75 years of age on the 1st July, 1949, and 73 of them will be over 80 years of age on that date.

Therefore, it may be anticipated that the annual cost will decrease fairly rapidly. It is reported that, since the figures were com-

piled in May this year, several have died. At the end of ten years the annual cost might be between £2,000 and £3,000. The ultimate liability over ten or more years might be between £100,000 and £125,000. If a higher maximum rate of pension were fixed, it would create an anomaly in respect of those who are covered by the 1938 scheme and it would involve the State in additional expenditure.

It was also necessary to consider the effect which the payment of a State pension would have on the Commonwealth old-age pensions which many of those concerned would be receiving. The payment of £2 10s. per week to a married man would be within the limits of £3 per week permitted to be earned without reducing his own or his wife's old-age pension. Should each be in receipt of the maximum old-age pension, their joint income from both Commonwealth and State sources would be £6 15s. per week. Should they be in receipt of any other income exceeding 10s. per week in addition to the State pension of £2 10s. per week, the amount of the old-age pension would be correspondingly reduced.

The payment of £2 10s. per week to a single man who is in receipt of the maximum old-age pension would result in a reduction of the old-age pension by £1 per week, if he had no other income. He could receive by way of both pensions a total of £3 12s. 6d. per week. The Government gave consideration to the practicability of fixing a nominal rate of pension in excess of £2 10s. per week and deducting the amount of the Commonwealth old-age pension. If this were done we would be faced with the same problems as those associated with the Coal Miners' Pensions Scheme.

The incidence of the means test would result in the payment of a multitude of different rates of pension. Those disqualified under the means test from receiving the old-age pension would be entitled to the maximum amount from the State, but those who were in receipt of an old-age pension could be paid only the amount permitted under the means test. There would be no uniformity of treatment and there would be many difficulties associated with the administration of such a scheme. In conclusion it is desired to mention that the provisions of the Bill in respect of qualifying service, method of computing rat of pension, break of service, etc., follo closely along the lines of the procedur practice and policy established under t 1871 Act. I think members will agree th although these people are not legally e titled to any pension, the State has gone the limit in endeavouring to satisfy wh may be a moral claim. It cannot be ma a retrospective measure or there is no te ing where it would end. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [8.3 While I intend to support the Bill, was disappointing to me to know its exa terms, and I think that this dissappoin ment will be shared by many employe who were previously considered to eligible under the 1871 Act. I am sor to see the differentiation between the t sections of the employees who were in t service prior to April, 1905, and in so cases for a number of years after that da Some of them are still employed in the Ra way Department. As regards the salari staff, that section of railway employees w still retire on pensions, under the 1871 A considerably in excess of those proposed this Bill. The measure differentiates betwe the employees who were eligible under t 1871 Act. There is a number of employe who were in the service prior to April, 19 and who were considered not to be eligib for the 1871 Act pensions. They then took upon themselves to contribute to the sche introduced in 1938.

It is true that, irrespective of their ag their contributions were based on the a 30 rate, which was appreciated, but th have mostly contributed for four uni which entitles them to £2. per week pensi —since increased to £2. 10s. The other se tion of employees, who retired before 19 are now to receive a pension and those w contributed to the pensions will recei nothing under this Bill. I appreciate wh the Government has done in this regard b I feel that many workers will share the d appointment I have expressed. Those w were in receipt of pensions under the 19 contributory scheme should at least, I fe have received some proportion of the pe sion that it is proposed to give those w contributed nothing. Many have approach me on the question of old age pensions a what they could get over and above t

£2 10s. that they receive from the superannuation fund. They have expressed the view that it might be wise if they deferred making application, pending the passing of this measure through both Houses of Parliament.

Not knowing the contents of the Bill, I expressed the opinion that possibly some consideration would be given to them in the framing of the Bill. I am now disillusioned to find that those who are in receipt of the £2 10s. under the 1938 contributory scheme, and have paid some contributions, will be no better off than those who made no contribution. I would draw attention to the differentiation existing between those who retired from the wages staff and those who will be retiring from the salaried staff. I do not think the Government went as far as it might have. In 1931 many promises were made by people who were not supporters of the then Government. As the Chief Secretary has explained, the financial burden on the Crown would be great if the Government had gone to any great lengths, but in 1931, in the middle of the depression, when it was not possible to find money for the employment of the people of the State, we had to resort to paying our people 1s. per head per day for their families.

After this long delay I hoped that when the Government did bring down such a measure it would make provision for those who were compelled to become contributors under the 1938 scheme. I know it is not within the province of a private member either here or in another place to move an amendment to this measure, but I think that before the legislation is proclaimed the Government might give it further consideration, with a view to recompensing those who are in receipt of the £2 10s. pension under the 1938 scheme and who would have been entitled to pensions under the 1871 Act.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Central) [8.10]: I desire to express my appreciation of the Government having brought down this measure to help railway workers who have battled for many years for some form of pension scheme. I do not know much about the rest of the Bill, but since I have been in this House I have received many requests from these old railway workers, and it is pleasing to know that the Government has at last given consideration to providing them with some relief, even at this late hour. There are not many of those old employees left, and those that are still alive may not have many years in front of them. It is therefore doubly pleasing that they are now to receive some of the benefits to which I consider they were entitled in past years. I appreciate the action of the Government in helping those who are left and enabling them from now on to have some of the comforts of life denied to them in the past.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [8.12]: I support the measure because I have advocated this principle throughout. I also feel disappointed that the pensions to be allotted under the Bill are so small that they do not reach the amount which men are entitled to draw while receiving the Commonwealth social service pension. The sum granted could have been £3 per week in the case of a married man, instead of £2 10s. per week. Like Mr. Davies, I regret that some of the employees will be debarred from any benefits under the Bill because they have contributed to certain units in the superannuation scheme. The Bill gives differential treatment to various sections of employees who have exactly the same type of claim to benefit. One section is paying for its pensions and will be denied any benefit under this measure, which is to apply only to a very small number who have made no other provision. With those reservations I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10 and 11 made by the Council, had disagreed to No. 1, and had agreed to Nos. 3, 6 and 8 subject to further amendments.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 32, New Section 11, page 2—Delete paragraph (b) of subsection (3) and substitute the following:—

(b) Is directly financially interested in the production, transport, supply, treatment or distribution of milk.

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's reason for disagreeing is—

The intention of the Bill is to exclude from the control of the industry as members of the board all who have a personal pecuniary interest in the industry whether indirect or direct.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

This amendment is not so important as to cause any great worry. The clause is rather comprehensive and debars anybody connected with the milk industry in any way from serving as a member of the board. Although it does tie up people who have a small indirect interest in a milk business, it would probably never occur in a lifetime that anyone with that interest would require to serve on the board.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I appreciate what the Honorary Minister has said, but I feel it probably will debar men whom he would like to place on the board. I have in mind those who are ordinary shareholders in the Westralian Farmers Ltd. They are legion throughout the country and are men with agricultural pursuits. If the Minister knows exactly who he is going to put on the board that is all right. For the Minister's own protection he should ensure that he has a large number of people from which to choose.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

No. 3. Clause 9: New Section 26A, page 4—In subsection (2), delete the words "affecting, or likely to affect, the production or distribution of milk, or both," in lines 20 to 22 and substitute the words, "to prevent or be likely to prevent the distribution of milk so that a state of emergency has in the opinion of the board arisen or is about to arise."

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly agrees to the Council's amendment subject to the deletion in line 5 of the word "be" and after the word "the" in the same line insert the words "production or."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the Assembly's amendment be agreed to.

I do not think the amendment means anything regarding production. If a producer was not satisfied he would not produce any milk, and if he did he would be glad to get it away to the board if the board insisted on it. He could easily evade it if he desired; he could spill it down the drain, or feed it as swill to his pigs.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: He would not be allowed to.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, but how is it to be enforced? This provision was in the Bill before and the Farmers' Union, after discussion, said it did not care whether it was there or not.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: When this matter was submitted before in Committee and the word "production" was struck out, I thought a very unwise argument was submitted to the Chamber, namely, that the dairymen had a perfect right to go on strike. It was said that having produced the milk and its having gone on its way to the consumer through the retailer or the conveyor, they had no right to strike, but the producer did. We have to remember that this Bill is giving the producer a reasonable price for his milk, and a monopoly. If a man is protected and guaranteed a reasonable price, at least he should not be one of those to prevent consumers from receiving the milk.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Sir Charles is drawing upon his imagination when he says that the reason why the words were previously struck out was because it was felt that the producers should be permitted to strike. I have no recollection of that argument having been advanced.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I heard it.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: The idea of those who supported the amendment was that any man, be he either a producer or a retailer, should be under control and direction if he attempted to go on strike. I suggest that the amendment made by another place would still permit the board to order a producer to deliver his milk. If the milk had been produced, the pouring of it down a drain would be an act cal-

culated to affect the distribution, and would constitute interference just as much as would the cutting off of the supply at the other end of the line. If the amendment is not insisted on, the clause will be open to the original objection.

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

No. 6. Clause 9: New section 26B, page 10—Delete the word "business" in lines 13 and 14, and substitute the word "license."

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's amendment is to insert after the word "business" the words "or any part of it."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the Assembly's amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 8. Clause 9: New Section 26B, page 10—Substitute the word "license" for the word "business" where it appears in line 18.

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's amendment is to insert after the word "business" the words "or part of any business."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the Assembly's amendment be agreed to.

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

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

BILL—PURCHASERS' PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [8.40] in moving the second reading said: Members will recall that in 1933 there was some trouble over land being sold far in excess of its value. A Royal Commission sat, a report was made and finally the original legislation was passed. The proposal in this Bill is the result of representations made by the R.S.L.

In 1946 the Act was amended to protect ex-Servicemen and others from a few land agents who had been somewhat unscrupulous. The amendment provided for the cancellation by the court of contracts under certain conditions. The Bill proposes to repeal Subsection (1) of Section 10 and substitute another subsection. The subsection to be repealed is rather clumsy in its verbiage and, unless read very carefully, is difficult to understand. The words proposed to be inserted are intended to make the meaning clearer while retaining the original intention of the provision. Reference is made in the subsection to "vendor," but fails to add that the term may include his executors, administrators and assigns. This addition will be made by the Bill.

The most important amendment has been rendered necessary by the large-scale resumptions being carried out by the State Housing Commission. When land is resumed in this way, owners are compensated by being paid a fair value. However, it has happened in some instances that the fair value has been considerably less than the price the purchaser had contracted to pay to the vendor. It is rather hard on a man if his land is compulsorily resumed at a price, not merely less than the one he agreed to pay, but less than he actually owes after having paid a certain amount of the purchase money. The Bill seeks to rectify that matter.

If a man buys a block of land for £1,000 and in the course of years the district deteriorates and the value drops to £500, that is an unfortunate speculation and will not be affected by this Bill. The measure relates to land sold at an excessive value. In these cases the purchasers have been taken advantage of by unscrupulous vendors. This has resulted in some purchasers receiving in value less than they owed to the vendor after having made some payments. It will be realised that if, in such cases, vendors took action against the purchasers, the land could not be restored to the vendors, as it would be in the possession of the State Housing Commission. Members might ask, "Why should the State Housing Commission step in?" These are areas which are very suitable for the Housing Commission because a number of houses can be erected thereon. The Bill provides that where a vendor takes action against a purchaser for the recovery of purchase money and the land has been resumed by

the Housing Commission, then the Court, on the application of the purchaser may order that—

(1) The contract be cancelled.

(2) The amount of purchase money paid to the vendor be retained by him.

(3) All compensation from the Housing Commission be paid to the vendor.

(4) Damages may be awarded by the Court to the vendor provided that these do not exceed one-fourth of the purchase price.

However, the total received by the vendor must not exceed the original contract purchase price. If the amount already paid by the purchaser to the vendor plus compensation from the Housing Commission exceeds the purchase price the amount of the excess shall be paid to the purchaser and no damages shall be awarded.

Those are the provisions of the Bill. They are designed to improve the Act in its efforts to protect the public against the rapacity of certain land agents, who, I am pleased to say, are in a very small minority in their profession.

Hon. L. A. Logan: You are not making an allowance for rates and taxes?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: They will be taken into consideration. A number of ex-Servicemen have fallen victims to these persons and therefore the R.S.L. has asked for these amendments. Men who have been away on service have not been able to pay the exorbitant price charged for the land, and have possibly become a little backward in their payments. Now the land is being resumed at less than what was originally paid.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Not only ex-Servicemen, either!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I agree, but this has been requested by the ex-Servicemen. I commend the Bill to members. No injustice is being done to the vendor.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The first or the second?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The original vendor, the rapacious vendor. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [8.49]: The Government should be complimented on bringing forward this Bill, even though it is late in the session. Only four weeks ago I handed a letter to the Minister for Housing having a bearing on the subject, and I was happy to find that a Bill was being considered. In the case to which I am referring a large parcel of land was wanted by the Housing Commission for subdivision. The lady, a widow, who wrote the letter, had bought two blocks for £140. If I remember aright, at the time of the resumption she had paid over £50. That land has been resumed at a valuation of £22 a block, and the lady has already paid £50 on the two blocks. The resumption price is only £22 a block, yet, under the existing legislation, she has to pay the balance owing to the original vendor. She is paying 10s. a month and what will happen if the Bill is not passed is that her home will be taken from her. This Bill will prevent that sort of thing. No injustice will be done to the people who bought such land for much less than £22 a block. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [8.51]: Two years ago I came in contact with two cases similar to that mentioned by Mr. Baxter, and I am wondering whether this measure will be made retrospective in its application so that the people I have in mind may be compensated.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Central) [8.52]: I commend the Government for bringing this Bill forward. Not long ago I was approached by people in my district who told me that they bought land for £60 and since then had paid an amount which brought the value to about £99. Then the Housing Commission resumed the land and paid them £25 a block. I will concede that they may have paid more than the blocks were worth when they paid £60; but if the blocks were not worth that amount in those days, they are worth more than that today. Yet they are being paid £25 a block and have no redress! Under this measure relief will be given in such cases. When they asked my advice, I told them to stick out as long as they could, knowing full well in my heart that they had no redress whatsoever. This Bill will afford them some relief.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [8.54]: I think the Government is doing the right thing, but I consider the State Housing Commission is acquiring land at below its real value.

Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There is a large area of land at Scarborough, in two-acre blocks, which has been subdivided. The amount paid to the vendor was £300. I know quarter-acre blocks that have changed hands in that district for close on that amount. I do not think we should pat the resumption officer on the back for acquiring cheap land.

The Chief Secretary: We are not doing that.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: In years gone by land was sold at high prices all over the place, not only in Western Australia but in the Eastern States and in New Zealand. Some New Zealanders came over here not so long ago who had acquired land in South Perth. On a search being made at the South Perth Road Board Office, we found that the blocks were in a gully and were not anywhere near the value that had been paid for them. In the meantime the New Zealanders had been paying rates on that property. I think an adjustment should be made and that the State Housing Commission should pay a reasonable price for land resumed. A man came to see me the other day. He has land at Scarborough and wanted my advice. I told him to see a valuator and ascertain its value.

Hon. H. Tuckey: That is expensive.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes; it is not fair to ask that of people. We should be able to say that when the resumption officer places a value on land, it is fair and reasonable, neither extortionate nor below value. The man of whom I have spoken wants some of that land for himself, but he must wait till it has been acquired by the Commission and then repurchase some of it. The Commission will resume the whole lot and he will be put to the expense of reacquiring it with a view to building a home for himself. I hope the resumption officer will be given to understand that he is expected to pay a fair and reasonable price for the land.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [8.57]: I think that the Government has gone further than one would have liked. The Bill is a little over-generous to the original vendor. We have to assume that when the Commission resumes land it will pay what is regarded as the real value plus 10 per cent. compensation. Let us suppose that a person some time ago paid £60 for a block of land worth £25. The State Housing Commission on resuming that land at its fair value will pay £25 plus 10 per cent. compensation. The whole of that goes to the original vendor. In addition to that the court may award damages not exceeding one-fourth of the amount of the purchase price.

The purchaser who undertook to pay £60 for the block and who has subsequently found out that he made a bad deal and has not gone on with the purchase to any greater extent than he was compelled to, can now be fined one-fourth of the original purchase price, which would be another £15. Thus the original vendor would get everything—his fair value of the land, plus 10 per cent. compensation, and also one-fourth of the original price. I think the Government has gone a little further in this matter than we would have expected, particularly as the one-fourth is to be one-fourth of the original purchase price. If it were one-fourth of the price paid by the Commission, that would not be so bad.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [9.0]: This Bill is really to protect the purchaser. The instance given by Mr. Fraser was on the assumption that the original purchaser had never paid anything at all off his purchase price.

Hon. G. Fraser: A number of them did not.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If they did not, then they are no worse off, and if anything, better off, because they are rid of a bad contract.

Hon. G. Fraser: They are paying a fairly substantial part of an original bad contract.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The original rapacious landowner is getting more than he ought to get, but it will relieve the unfortunate purchaser from all liability.

Hon. L. Craig: That is a very big concession.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is. It is rather unpleasant to cancel a contract, and some purchasers have not been entirely free of blame. In that regard I think the Government has been reasonably fair. Mr. Bennetts asked if this was to be retro-

spective. My answer is that it is and it is not. For instance, a man cannot come along and say that he has been swindled in the purchase of a block of land when the deal has been concluded for some considerable time. If anything has been paid for and finished, he has been swindled and that is the end.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Would that apply to land which is compulsorily resumed under protest?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This applies only to land which has been purchased. It would not be possible to cover every case. Suppose a person paid £100 for a block of land, it would be very difficult to say now that that land was worth £100 when the man bought it—it might have been some years ago—because since then times have changed and the values are probably altogether different. If this applied willy-nilly, every man whose land was resumed at a less value than the price he gave for it would come along and there would be no end of litigation and trouble. If the transaction is finished then that is all there is to it. The aim of the Bill is to relieve those purchasers who are still in the clutches of vendors who have not given them a fair deal. I do not think we can go any further than that.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you not think that one-fourth is a bit high for compensation in view of the fact that the man is getting a fair price and compensation which may be 10 per cent?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: But the Bill says, not exceeding one-fourth. That does not mean that that particular sum of compensation has to be given.

Hon. G. Fraser: But it can be given.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is up to one-fourth. It may be that the Court will give one-fifth, one-sixth, or one-tenth, but one-fourth is the limit.

Hon. L. Craig: It is serious for a vendor to have his contract cancelled by law.

Hon. G. Fraser: A man could get £15 awarded to him for a block worth £5.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Court would only take that into consideration when there is a divergence of opinion. The vendor would probably have someone in Court who would say that the block is worth say £60 and the purchaser will have a valuer who will say it is worth £30 only, and the magistrate will then decide on the case. He may award £5 or £10. It all depends on the circumstances.

The aspect raised by Sir Charles Latham in regard to the Housing Commission purchasing land at a low figure rather pleased me. The usual complaint is that the Government, whenever it buys land, gives an exorbitant figure for it, and passes that figure on to the ultimate occupier at a price which should never have been paid. Where land is resumed the owner has the right to proceed to the Court to have a fair and proper value fixed, but I do not know of any cases where that has been done. Apparently the vendors have been satisfied with the prices being paid. A number of people have been dissatisfied because they are losing their land which they were holding for speculation purposes. They were not complaining about the fair price being paid. In any case, I am pleased that the Housing Commission is not paying an exhorbitant price for its land.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It certainly is not.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Then I am very pleased to hear it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed.*

BILL—RAILWAY (MT. MAGNET-BLACK RANGE) DISCONTINUANCE.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [9.8] in moving the second reading said: It is unfortunate that this Bill must be brought forward at this late hour, but it is somewhat urgent because of the inability of the Railway Department to get rails in order to carry out urgently required maintenance work. Orders have been placed in the Eastern States but it is impossible to obtain the rails required. All other sources

having failed, the only one left to the department is for the less important lines that we have to be taken up.

Before proceeding with the reason for selecting this particular line for closing, might I give members some idea of the difficulties facing the Railway Department in getting supplies of rails. The Chief Civil Engineer has had searching inquiries made through all districts to determine what permanent way material could be made available through the lifting and shortening of little used sidings. It has been found that approximately 3¼ miles of rail can be procured from this source. In addition, Westralian Farmers offered the unused portion of the siding and lay-out at Bassendean constructed by the Australian Wheat Board. It is essential that the grid be maintained, but material of a length of approximately three-quarters of a mile should be available. Thus a total quantity of light rails equalling four miles can be obtained.

Against this it is estimated that the year's requirement of light rails for maintenance, etc, of both public and private sidings, together with an amount of four miles required in order to reach the Asquith timber permit, is nine miles. In addition, the State Sawmills are in urgent need of nine miles of track, and it is essential, from the State's point of view, that the State Sawmills obtain this length of rail in order to maintain supplies of hauling material. The State Sawmills have even considered going to Tasmania to try to get rails from that State. It is obvious, therefore, that during the next 12 months we must face a shortage of 14 to 15 miles of light material, and the only manner in which this can be procured is by lifting one of our unpayable lines. The one selected is the Mt. Magnet-Sandstone section.

The expenditure incurred by the department on the Mt. Magnet-Sandstone section of the line during the year was approximately £3,000 or £32 10s. per mile. That figure is very much below the average for the system and has only been achieved by confining maintenance to the barest necessities without doing any re-sleepering whatever. In 1933-34, 44,000 "manganese" and 41,000 jarrah sleepers were placed in this section, since when a further 12,000 sleepers have been renewed. If the line is to remain in operation, considerable re-sleepering is essential in the near future, and a considerably increased cost of maintenance must be expected. For the last six months the percentage of revenue credited to this section was £296, as against an expenditure by the C.C.E. Branch alone of approximately £1,500. The tonnage figures show that during six alternate months of the year 1947-48, 609 tons of paid traffic were moved, equivalent to 1,218 tons for the full year.

It can be seen, therefore, that this line is an unpayable one by at least £1,000 a year, even when maintenance is kept at as low a figure as possible. When certain expenditure becomes essential then the loss must become much heavier. A glance at the timetable shows that trains to Sandstone ran fortnightly, and the same applied in the reverse direction. The length of the line is 93 miles, and there are three sidings only between Mt. Magnet and Sandstone. In determining the question as to whether this line should be closed or not, it can be stated that in the preliminary survey of the lines likely to be standardised—if an agreement on that matter is ever reached—the Mt. Magnet-Sandstone line was not included. Its diminishing value determined that. Before coming to a determination on this matter, however, a report was obtained from the Transport Board as to the likelihood of obtaining suitable road transport to function—either privately owned or a railway road service.

Previous to May, 1947, the railways were hauling approximately 750 tons of firewood to Mt. Magnet for six months of the year. Firewood is now being hauled by road transport from a different direction to the existing railway line. It is reported that the quantities of goods, etc. would not represent more than could reasonably be transported by road goods service. It is further stated that the introduction of a road service between Mt. Magnet and Sandstone would compare with the road service that has been operating for some years between Leonora and Mt. Sir Samuel. There may be a possibility of linking two railheads at Leonora and Mt. Magnet by a through service. In addition a report on the road was obtained from the Main Roads Department and it records that—

Generally speaking, the route follows good road country except perhaps 20 miles over the

Challi Flats. For perhaps 30 miles at the Sandstone end, the road is over spinifex country which would not require any treatment for the light traffic involved.

It would, however, be necessary to carry out certain road works if the line is removed so as to provide an all-weather road.

Dealing with the question of road transport, obviously if the railway is taken away it is essential to provide the people concerned with an adequate road service. With the advent of diesel trucks and better forms of road transport, it should be possible to provide that district with an even better service by road than it has enjoyed by rail. It is not easy for stockowners to secure a special train for shifting their cattle, but it would be a simpler matter to provide specially constructed trucks for that purpose. Tenders would have to be called for a service by road and they would have to be on a freight basis comparable with railway charges. Members will recollect that provision is made under the State Transport Co-ordination Act dealing with that phase and the board will decide upon the best tender for acceptance. It is regrettable that we have to pull up the railway, but it would be foolish to maintain a line that is non-paying, particularly when rails are urgently needed elsewhere. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Central) [9.17]: I suppose that under present conditions and in view of the figures submitted by the Minister, it is too much to hope that the Government will reconsider its decision to pull up the line. I know this particular railway very well, having lived in the district for some years; in fact, I was at Mt. Magnet when the line was built. At that time, four mines were in operation at Sandstone and 80 teams were employed in carting the necessary supplies and stores for the people in the township most of whom were connected with mining operations. Incidentally, that is a revelation of what traffic can be created when mines are in full swing. I know most of the people who are served by this line, and I know what its disappearance will mean to them.

There is always a possibility of further mining development and that would justify the Government in postponing action as long as possible. The Youanmi Mine was served by this line. Operations continued there for some years until the decline in values, together with labour troubles, necessitated its closing down. Later on, developments made possible the re-opening of the mine, which continued for a further three or four years. Another but smaller mine served by this railway had a similar experience, which indicates that with goldmining there is always the possible gamble of a mine re-opening and becoming once more a payable proposition. I have every reason to believe that there are prospects of gold values again increasing, and that may be reflected in mining operations in this district.

There is always a certain quantity of wool and stock to be railed but, on the figures the Minister has supplied, I have to admit that the continuance of the line is not warranted. On the other hand, it is not a proposition that calls for the construction of a line but rather of maintaining it in being, and it is from that standpoint that I could hope for a postponement of the decision to pull the line up in anticipation of a revival in the mining industry. It has always been my desire to urge on the Government the adoption of a policy to encourage prospectors to go outback with a view to their discovering a lode or outcrop that might result in the establishment of a mine that could be worked at a profit. No-one who has not worked in a mine can have any conception of the weight of machinery and plant necessary to establish and keep a mine going.

Naturally, the suggestion of pulling the line up raises a query as to what the Government has in mind for providing an alternative service. Some years ago, when speaking to the then District Traffic Superintendent of the W.A.G.R., I ascertained that he was concerned about the line being definitely an unpaying proposition. Without hinting at any possibility of the line being pulled up, he suggested that it might be advisable to institute a truck service that would not necessarily follow the route of the railway but would weave in and out, as it were, and deliver goods to the various stations, thus obviating the necessity for station-owners to make periodical trips to sidings to collect goods. He considered that the extra revenue derived from such a proposition would be equivalent to the station-owners' cartage and railage expenses from Mt. Magnet, which was the nearest point of the main line. I hope that the Government has a scheme of

that description in mind. The people who have been served by the railway will expect something to be done for them in compensation for the loss of the advantages that the railway provides.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: How many people live along that line?

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: There are ten or 12 stations, and more further back. Under the scheme propounded by Sir Harold Clapp for the standardisation of the railway gauge, he pointed out that there were 16 spur lines of a total mileage of 750 that would not be changed over from the narrow to the broad gauge. I suggest to the Minister that it might be worth while investigating those spur lines to decide upon their relative merits in the hope that this particular line will be left alone for the time being. I am rather sanguine that with a mining revival, the Magnet-Sandstone line might once more become a payable proposition. I am under the impression that when it was first constructed the traffic earnings in the first few years of operation must have gone a long way towards not only providing full running costs but covering the capital cost as well. I trust the Government will consider the matter from that point of view and give the residents concerned the utmost consideration possible.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Central) [9.25]: I deplore the necessity for the Government's bringing in a Bill to discontinue a railway that serves the outback areas. It has not always been easy to secure the construction of such a line. If the line were pulled up, the possibility of having another constructed would be very remote. A few years ago a line was constructed to serve the manganese deposit at Horseshoe. Unfortunately, the market price dropped so low that it became unpayable to work the deposit, and in due course the line was pulled up. Today manganese is in heavy demand, and it has to be carted by road over a long distance. If the line were still in existence, that ore could be hauled much more expeditiously and at a much cheaper rate.

Goldmining in the outer districts is unpredictable and that applies also to Bills that are dealt with in this House. We never know when a prospector will discover a lode that will lead to the establishment of a payable mine. I do not subscribe to the idea that road transport is an adequate substitute for a railway. For the purposes of the latter, we produce what is required for power within the State, whereas, with road transport, the fuel has to be imported. While the Chief Secretary submitted figures showing that the line was unprofitable, he did not give us other statistics to indicate the cost of maintaining an all-weather road. Figures that I have received indicate that the cost of such a road would be £30,000.

According to the Railway Department, between £1,000 and £1,500 is being spent annually on the maintenance of this line. That means it would take 25 years or more to make up the £30,000 that will have to be spent on the construction of an all-weather road alone, on top of which there will be the annual maintenance. Over the 90-mile stretch, I think that cost will represent just as much as would the maintenance of the railway. Although the line is being run at a loss, I do not think it is any worse than would be the cost of maintaining an all-weather road.

Those who know the North-West appreciate that in the wet season washaways often occur, and over the past 12 months the Main Roads Department has been forced to spend many thousands of pounds on the all-weather road from Meekatharra northwards. From reports I have received, I understand that the road is in no better condition now than it was when first constructed. I ask the Government to consider carefully all the circumstances before finally deciding to pull up the line. I do not see that I can do other than support the second reading of the Bill, but I would ask the Government to remember that careful consideration should be given to the whole question. It is not only the present but also the future that we must consider.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [9.29]: Like Mr. Logan, I deplore the necessity for the removal of this line. Once a railway is established, people affected consider that they have been provided with a permanent form of transport. No doubt some of the people in the district concerned were encouraged to settle there because of railway communication. Now they are confronted with the removal of the line. While the Government may have very good reasons for so doing, I would like to know whether

the capital cost of the line will still be debited against the Railway Department. This has been a burning question for a number of years. Railways were laid down which it was known at the outset would not pay, and that has contributed to the losses sustained by the Railway Department. This department has a huge annual interest bill to pay and it would be interesting to hear from the Chief Secretary whether further interest charges on the line now proposed to be pulled up will be debited against the department.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [9.31]: This district is situated a long way from my province, but I feel the position must be desperate when the Government is forced to pull up a railway in order to provide rails for maintenance work in other parts of the State. I understand the district is by no means deserted, as there is still an hotel, besides business places, there. If there is any possibility at all of a revival of mining in the district, it would be detrimental to its interests if this line were pulled up. I agree with the previous member who said that it is not easy to construct roads in some parts of the State. Some roads have cost more per mile than some of our railways. I venture the opinion that a road in this district—I understand the road would be some 90 miles—would prove to be a big and costly undertaking. The difficulty, however, is that the Railway Department cannot buy rails. I am not well informed of all the circumstances of the district, but, from a commonsense point of view, I support the remarks of the members who have spoken to the measure.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [9.33]: I never like voting for a measure to discontinue a railway and it is only in extreme cases that I would do so. I do not know the circumstances and consequently was looking to the members for the district to give me some guide, by their attitude, on the way in which I should cast my vote. Both members for the district have said they would regret the loss of this railway, but they did not take up a definite stand, so we can assume that it is their intention to support the second reading. If that be their attitude, I, as an outsider, do not feel compelled to vote against the Bill.

During the course of the debate, it has been suggested—and it is also suggested by the Press—that one of the reasons for taking up this line is the shortage of rails for use in other parts of the State. If that is so, I wonder why these words appear in the Bill—

> . . . may be used in the construction or maintenance of any other authorised railway or may be sold, disposed of or otherwise dealt with as the Minister for Railways may determine.

I presume that is the saving clause which is inserted in Bills of this kind. I would suggest to the members for the district, however, that if they desire portion of the line to be saved, they should move in Committee to strike out that portion of Clause 2. I support the second reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [9.34]: Replying to Mr. Fraser, the material he referred to would be sleepers, or perhaps some other portion of the railway which could not be used elsewhere, but which might have a saleable value.

Hon. G. Fraser: Do you think that the sleepers would have any value now?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I told the House the number of sleepers required to be used. I should have mentioned before that it is not intended to take up all the railway at once. It will be taken up from the Sandstone end and transport will be provided in accordance with the length taken up. Like other members, I do not like the idea of taking up railways; but I am afraid the district is a dwindling one and we cannot afford to keep the railway going. As regards interest charges, I remind members that this session we passed a Bill for the purpose of re-organising the accounts of the Railway Department, and no doubt matters such as this will be taken into consideration. I do not know how the amount will be written off, but no doubt it will be adjusted. In any case, it will be only a book entry. Someone has to pay the interest, and presumably it will be paid out of railway revenue.

Hon. G. Fraser: Whether the line is there or not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed.*

BILL—MARKETING OF APPLES AND PEARS.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [9.40] in moving the second reading said: This is an important Bill, not only to the people directly concerned but to the State as a whole. It deals with the marketing of apples and pears for the coming year, and is another measure to continue a control which the Commonwealth Government has indicated that it intends relinquishing. I refer, of course, to the Commonwealth marketing scheme for apples and pears instituted under the National Security Regulations. The Commonwealth's constitutional power under these regulations is now doubtful, as we have heard in connection with the wheat scheme. This measure is complementary to legislation in Tasmania.

The Commonwealth scheme was instituted in 1940 and applied to every State up to the year 1944, and to Western Australia and Tasmania up to the present time. The object of the scheme is the stabilisation of the industry, which has always been dependent on the oversea market. Had it not been for this scheme, chaos would have resulted during the war years on account of the inability to export. The scheme has cost the taxpayers of Australia a large sum of money, but the expenditure was justified to keep this important industry alive. Western Australia and Tasmania were particularly affected, on account of the huge proportion of their crops which was exported. As much as two-thirds of our State's crop was exported in pre-war years.

The advent of war, with the shortage of shipping and the closure of European markets, practically stifled the fruit export trade of Tasmania and Western Australia. Therefore, this scheme was evolved to maintain the industry, and those dependent on it, until such time as conditions should become normal. The Bill will continue for a further year, as far as is possible, the National Security Regulations. I hope that this period will be sufficient to enable the industry to re-establish itself. From my own observations, I believe the coming crop will be a big one, which makes it all the more desirable for some scheme to be evolved. A further embarrassment has been the shortage of locally made fruit cases. In August of this year it was estimated that 1,180,000 cases would be produced locally for apples and pears, and that approximately 500,000 more would be required. The sawmillers do not like making fruit cases. I suppose the reason is that other lines are more profitable to them.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The labour is used for building timber wherever possible.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. This shortage of cases, of course, was not noticeable during the war when markets were dormant and crops small. However, this phase is now passing and the demand for cases is becoming acute, particularly in Tasmania where the shortage is estimated to be 2,000,000. It became necessary to endeavour to meet the local shortage of cases by purchases oversea. This was done by obtaining 510,000 cases from Sweden. This was financed by the Commonwealth Government. The Swedish cases cost 3s. each compared with 1s. 8d. for the local article. Whilst some members do not like control, I point out it was necessary to control the supply and distribution of the cases and put them all into the kitty and average the price so that no grower would get a cheap case at the expense of the man who had to take the Swedish case.

Hon. H. Hearn: What did the average work out at?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know, but I would say, roughly speaking, about 2s. 3d. a case. Members will realise the necessity for an equalisation scheme in regard to these cases. When the State Government received advice from the Commonwealth that it proposed to allow the marketing scheme to lapse, immediate contacts were made with the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, Mr. Pollard,

who, while regretting that the Commonwealth must adhere to its decision, was most co-operative.

Hon. L. Craig: He has been very decent about this.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. I had occasion to say something in his favour last night in regard to wheat. He stated that if a substantial majority of growers in Tasmania and Western Australia indicated that they desired this scheme, the Commonwealth would make available all the assistance it possibly could. About 86 per cent. of growers in this State desired the scheme. On receiving this welcome assurance, the Government decided to consult those persons directly engaged in the industry. As a result the following motion was carried unanimously at the annual conference of the Western Australian Fruitgrowers' Association:—

That the Executive be requested to take an immediate poll of growers as to a scheme for the marketing of apples and pears as similar as conditions may permit to the 1948 acquisition plan with provision for guaranteed advance and distribution to growers of any surplus.

That with this in view the Minister be requested to keep the Apple and Pear Marketing Board in being, and that this conference recommends that growers vote for this scheme.

This resolution referred to the crops to be harvested at the commencement of 1949. The Bill, therefore, is confined solely to the 1949 crop. All the growers know about it. I intend to read from a pamphlet which the association distributed amongst the growers, as follows:—

The essential features of the plan, which the association's recent annual conference endorsed are—

(1) State legislation be enacted to "vest" all apples and pears in an appropriate authority. (The State constitutionally has this power, which is equivalent to acquisition, except only as to interstate sales.)

(2) A similar enactment or, failing that, an effective means of control of at least 80 per cent. of apple and pear production, to be established in Tasmania.

(3) The scheme to be administered in both States, and centrally co-ordinated, by the Australian Apple and Pear Marketing Board; that authority to be kept in existence by the Commonwealth as an experienced administrative body with existing organisation, etc.

(4) This plan to operate, so far as concerns this poll, for 1949 only.

A major objective to be that of facilitating the adjustment of all sections of the industry to the transition from the acquisition plans of 1940-1948 to circumstances of "open" marketing.

(6) The Commonwealth to provide and guarantee payments to growers on delivered fruit not less than the basic advances of the 1948 season; also all "presentation" costs.

The "presentation" costs are marketing expenses.

(7) The plan to operate on a pool basis but with separate pools for the two States. All State surpluses, after providing for ratable proportions of central administration, to be returned to growers in proportion to quantities delivered by them in accordance with Board instructions.

(8) The Commonwealth, as the guarantor of basic advances, to meet any losses.

(9) The Commonwealth to provide immediate finance for the procurement of estimated requirements of cases and packing materials.

A voluntary poll was held of growers with 300 or more trees. Some 889 growers were entitled to vote, and of them, 597 recorded a vote. Of those, 515, or 86 per cent., voted in favour of the plan. Only 77 recorded a negative vote, and five votes were informal. As a result of this display of overwhelming opinion, a conference was called at Canberra by the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture and was held about three weeks ago. Tasmania and Western Australia were represented at the conference by Ministers and officials, and the basis of a plan was agreed on. This provided that the States of Tasmania and Western Australia should make their own arrangements to secure markets. This entailed taking steps to acquire, take possession of or secure contracts over the apple and pear crops in each State. Upon this being decided, the Commonwealth agreed—

1. That the Commonwealth Apple and Pear Marketing Board should continue in existence and undertake the marketing of the apple and pear crops as the agent of Tasmania and Western Australia.

2. That it would guarantee to the growers in each State a return equal to that guaranteed to them at the beginning of this year.

3. If the sales proceeds of the 1949 crop were such that any surplus remained over the guaranteed price, then that surplus would be distributed amongst the growers.

The Bill provides that the Governor may make with the Commonwealth such an

agreement as I have outlined. I have the agreement here, and it contains this clause—

> This agreement shall be provisional only, and shall have no force or virtue unless and until the Parliament of the State passes, prior to the thirtieth day of December, 1948, an Act in substantially the same form as the annexed "Bill for an Act relating to the marketing, sale and disposal of certain apples and pears."

I intend to lay a copy of that agreement on the Table of the House. It cannot be put into force until the Bill is passed, which I hope will be tonight. It provides for the appointment of a State board to be known as the Western Australian Apple and Pear Board, this being necessary because in the terms of the plan proposed to the growers by their association and endorsed by the growers, there must be an acquiring authority in this State.

It is proposed that this State Board shall be comprised of the members of the State committee constituted under the Commonwealth regulations, these being four representatives of the growers, one of the local marketing agents and one of the consumers, together with the State Superintendent of Horticulture. In view of the export trade that is possible, it is more than likely that a member of the Fruit Exporters Association will be included on the board. The personnel of the Commonwealth board will be similar to that which has done such a good job in the years gone by. The State board will be as I have intimated, with the possible addition of an exporter. So, we shall have on these boards men of considerable experience who will be able to handle this important industry.

It will be of interest to members to know that the British Government may require 3,000,000 bushels of apples from Australia in the coming season. This order has, however, not yet been substantiated, nor has a price been confirmed. The Commonwealth Minister for Commerce and Agriculture has intimated that the fulfilment of this order will be undertaken probably by Tasmania and Western Australia. At a recent meeting of the Agricultural Council at Canberra, South Australian representatives were annoyed because that State was not allowed to participate in a very good contract oversea. They wanted to have it both ways. They were not in the acquisition scheme but were annoyed at not being allowed into the contract.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They missed the bus.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. I had a terrific argument on behalf of Western Australia and Mr. Pollard supported me, so that we got away with it. Had I not been there representing this State and had I not received the support of Mr. Pollard, something different might have resulted. That shows how desirable it is to have some scheme such as this. I anticipate that the 1949 crop in this State will be from 1,250,000 to 2,000,000 bushels, and that the quantity to be packed will possibly be 1,250,000 or 1,500,000 bushels.

Members will realise that this is only an estimate, as so much depends on weather conditions and so on. I think, from personal observations, that the estimate will prove correct. The value of the crop to the State should be between £1,000,000 and £2,000,000. Many people do not realise the value to the State of the fruitgrowing industry, and particularly this section of it. The State board will not act, unless specially authorised, as agent for the Crown. The registration of all growers with not less than one acre of apples and pears is required under the Bill. Those persons who are now registered under the Commonwealth regulations will be automatically registered under the State legislation.

New growers will be required to register within one month. When the apple and pear crop in this State has been acquired, the Commonwealth board will become the marketing authority and will sell the fruit, both inside and outside Australia. The Commonwealth board will attend to the fruit case position and will also make advances to the growers, based on the marketing costs, and will ensure that the growers receive a return at least equal to that which they received for the last crop. The administrative costs of the Commonwealth board will be shared in a proportionate manner between the two States.

The financial terms of the agreement with the Commonwealth are generous, as if there is a loss on the guarantee, the Commonwealth will be responsible for it; should there be a profit, it will be received by the growers. As members will realise, the finances of the scheme are very considerable. Marketing costs require to be

paid and growers have to receive progress payments to enable them to keep going. Therefore, for a long while, there will be large expenditure under the scheme and little return. It will be noted that the Bill provides for the State Treasurer to guarantee the Commonwealth Bank for advances to be made to the Commonwealth board mainly, and to the State board to some extent.

Members may query a guarantee being given by the State, when the Commonwealth is assuming the full financial liability for the scheme and has agreed to meet all losses. The Commonwealth Government, however, considers this to be the most desirable procedure, though whether for constitutional reasons or not I do not know. When Mr. McDonald returned from Canberra and told me of that, I thought it was a queer arrangement, but nevertheless the whole financial set-up is favourable to our growers. The Commonwealth wishes the State, by giving a guarantee to the bank, to provide the Commonwealth and State boards with funds with which to administer the scheme. As sufficient money is received at the bank from the sale of apples and pears, the guarantee will be cancelled.

No financial risk is involved, as the entire scheme will be guaranteed by the Commonwealth in precisely the same way as that in which it guarantees the present scheme. The Bill and the proposed agreement with the Commonwealth have received the earnest attention of the W.A. Fruitgrowers' Association, the executive of which last week passed the following resolution:—

> That this meeting of the State Executive of the Western Australian Fruitgrowers Association, Inc., expresses on behalf of the Association its hearty appreciation of the representations made by the State Government to the Commonwealth Government and of the intention of the two Governments to implement a plan for 1949 and endorses this and the methods proposed for its application and emphatically trusts that the plan will be implemented accordingly.

Members will therefore realise that the plan is one that has been sponsored and approved by the fruitgrowers' representatives, and one that the fruitgrowers have accepted in overwhelming fashion by ballot. The Bill is the result of conferences with the Apple and Pear Board, the Commonwealth Minister and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Draftsman. It incorporates all the provisions required by the local fruitgrowers' association, the Apple and Pear Board and the Commonwealth Minister, and it must be passed without amendment in order to conform with the legislation of the Commonwealth and the other State concerned, as the Commonwealth is bearing the full brunt of the financial responsibility and has, as have the producers, accepted the Bill in its entirety. I trust the House will pass the Bill expeditiously, without amendment, as did another place, though I do not wish to restrict debate on the measure. It is a most important piece of legislation, which might easily mean £2,000,000 to this State. I commend the Bill to the House and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [10.7]: It is with pleasure that I, also, commend the Bill to the House. This is the first occasion, for a long time, that we have had before us a Bill in which the Commonwealth has had a hand and under which we are to be treated generously. In fact, the treatment offered on this occasion is unique and is better than many of us anticipated. This Parliament would be extremely unwise not to accept the measure readily. In his comprehensive survey the Honorary Minister for Agriculture dealt with the main aspects of the measure, and I will not traverse that ground again, but there are one or two phases of the industry in this State to which I will refer.

For a long time now, mention of the Apple and Pear Board has conjured up in the minds of some people a picture of a large number of civil servants working in luxurious offices and doing little else but deny the people fruit at a price that might be considered reasonable. When reference has been made to orchards, many people have thought of areas where thousands of tons of apples were going to waste. Those pictures are entirely unfair to the officials administering the acquisition scheme and the men who gain their livelihood from the industry. The acquisition scheme has saved hundreds of our fruitgrowers from ruin in recent years.

At the beginning of the war, when it was known that shipping would be urgently required for more essential purposes, those in charge of the apple industry set about

bringing into being an organisation to help keep the industry in existence and afford growers a means of carrying on until times returned to normal. After lengthy negotiations with the Commonwealth Government the acquisition scheme emerged. It started from nothing, and the board has had to build up its present complex machinery which covers the measurement, assembly, transport, storage and marketing of apples, both in the acquisition States and markets oversea.

It is a compliment to those concerned that so valuable are the statistics obtained by the board considered by those in the fruit industry, that the Fruitgrowers' Association has made a special request that they be made available to the industry when the acquisition scheme eventually ceases, as ultimately it must. During the period of acquisition every effort has been made to market a maximum quantity of fruit, so as to give a reasonable return to the industry, while keeping the price to the public within reasonable limits.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Do you think the prices are within reason?

Hon. W. J. MANN: I will refer to prices later and give members an idea of how they are arrived at. Much was said in the Press during the early war years about the waste taking place in orchards, but actually that had no basis in fact. In pre-war years when labour was plentiful and the industry was reasonably prosperous, it was the practice of growers in many districts—in some places it was compulsory—to pick up all windfalls.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Those are what you sell to the public in this State.

Hon. W. J. MANN: During the war that became impossible and apples that normally would have been fed to stock were allowed to lie under the trees. Much of that fruit—here again the public have been given a wrong impression—was quite unfit for human consumption, but it was not wasted. As the orchardist were almost unable to get fertiliser of any description, the fruit was dug in and returned to the soil all the elements that were taken from it in the first place. Although it is not the function of the board to spend the growers' or Governmental money for the growing of apples, it has not been unmindful of its obligations to those whom I might call the needy institutions in the community. Much fruit has been supplied to these institutions free of cost and sometimes at considerable cost to the grower.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I did not think they were allowed to do that.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Also, considerable quantities of fruit were bagged up and given to the Fighting Forces as a gift from the people concerned. Those things should be mentioned because they have a bearing on the position, and it does something towards removing a kind of stigma that has been placed on the grower who, it has been stated, although he had a good crop, was only concerned with export and home markets and did not care what happened to the remainder. I assure members that it would be practically impossible to compute the amount of fruit that was sent away to charitable institutions, and the Army and that might be surprising to those people who make these foolish accusations against the grower.

One of the reasons why acquisition for next year is in a transitory stage is to allow the industry time to adjust itself to the impact of changed world conditions. Today, for a grower to finance his season's operations, it would require approximately twice the amount of money that it would have done pre-war. By the operations of the board growers can, if the Bill is agreed to, arrange for materials and payment for these goods by later deduction from moneys due to them. Mr. Bennetts interjected just now regarding the price of fruit.

I wonder if members realise what the basic price has been per case of apples returned to the grower for bare fruit in the last three or four years. It has been 4s. 3d. for "fancy" grade Group 1 varieties, and these are the bulk of the crop. Out of that 4s. 3d. per case, the grower has to cultivate his orchard right throughout the year. He has to find fertiliser; attend to his pruning; he has to go around the trees and see that they are in proper condition to hold the weight of the fruit; he has to spray; pay for hired labour; watch losses from normal weather conditions; depreciation and all the other charges.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: And pay his orchard registration fee.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Just to take an illustration of what it costs to put a case of fruit on the market, I will quote some figures. I have told members that the basic amount that the grower receives is 4s. 3d. per case.

Hon. G. Bennetts: He has then to pay for his case.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Members will be surprised to know that although he only gets 4s. 3d. per case, to place it on the market there are costs amounting to between 7s. 3d. and 7s. 5d. which bring the price up to 11s. 8d. When it reaches that stage, the fruit is then subject to auctioneer's commission and is taken away and the retailer then comes into the picture. The orchardist has no further interest in it and has nothing further to gain from it. Members might be curious as to how that 7s. 5d. is arrived at. In the first place a redwood case costs him 2s. 2d. I did not catch what the Honorary Minister said as to what the whitewood case costs, but I am assured that if it was purchased it would be nearly double the cost of the redwood case.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: It is 3s.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I was told that it would cost nearer 4s. However, I am dealing with the redwood case which costs him 2s. 2d., strawboards 3d., fruit wraps 8d., packing, etc., including casemaking and nails and other incidentals, 1s. 2d., cartage from the orchard to the packing shed 4d., which gives a total figure, to that stage, of 4s. 9d. On an average, the grower has had in the past credited to him 8d. a case for railage. That is the general average. I am speaking now of areas which I represent, and which are the main fruitgrowing portions of the State. Then there is cartage ex rail to the store, 3d., cool storage, 1s. 4d., and other charges for handling and assembling, 3d., giving a total cost of 7s. 5d. per case. In quoting those figures I have disregarded the decimals. As I have pointed out, if that 7s. 5d. is added to 4s. 3d., the total cost is 11s. 8d.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: That is 11s. 8d. per case to land it in Perth.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes. There are other charges that come into the picture after the fruit has gone that far. If it is to be exported, customs wharfage costs 2d., shipping ½d., wiring 2¾d., bringing the total cost for a redwood case up to 12s. 1½d. That is an answer to some of the allegations that orchardists are the cause of high-priced fruit. If the figures that I have just quoted are accepted, it will be found that the basic return to the grower gives him about 1¼d. per lb. for his fruit. On the basis of a 40-lb. bushel case, the cost of marketing is 2¼d., so the cost of fruit before the selling agents get hold of it is 3½d. a lb. Add the marketing cost and the retailer's cost to that 3½d., and it will be seen just what is a fair price. But to charge the orchardist who does all the work, takes all the risk, and puts his capital into the business, with being the cause of fruit being high priced is not only unfair but is unjust and totally wrong.

The price today of our Western Australian fruit—I am taking the wholesale price—is, I understand, about 15s. 6d. a case or 16s. at the highest. But the market report from Brisbane today indicates that Western Australian apples are being sold there wholesale at from 27s. 6d. to 30s. a case, so while fruit may seem fairly high in price here it does not approach that which prevails elsewhere.

It is a tribute to the quality of our fruit that it can stand up against Tasmanian fruit, and any that may be grown around the Stanthorpe area in Queensland where they grow most of their apples. I have been there on one or two occasions. I may seem a little boastful, but I do not think the Queensland apples can stand up to Western Australian fruit by way of comparison. I would like to pay another tribute to the work of the Western Australian Fruitgrowers' Association and those members who have been connected with the acquisition scheme.

I was in Tasmania last year, and was taken by the Premier, Mr. Cosgrove, down to the Huon districts to see their fruitgrowing establishments. On several occasions, when introduced as being from Western Australia, the orchard proprietors made extremely appreciative remarks about the Fruitgrowers' Association in this State and the work it had done for the industry throughout the Commonwealth. On one or two occasions it was mentioned that had it not been for the amount of work the Western Australian Fruitgrowers' Association had put into the marketing scheme in the first place, it would never have been as suc-

cessful as it turned out to be. There is another matter which I wish to mention to show that we will not be able to expect cheaper fruit, I am afraid. I have illustrated to members that the growers' return is very small indeed, but to indicate what might be expected in the future, and accepting the 1939 costs as a base, I point out that landed costs have increased as follows:—

	Per cent.
Fruit Wraps (Sulphite)	256
Fruit Wraps (oil)	267
Strawcards	50/75
Nails	57
Cases (excluding imported) ..	126

It can therefore be seen that the orchardist has quite a lot to contend with, and I maintain he has done a wonderfully good job. Also, in view of the statement made by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture that the coming crop might mean up to as much as £2,000,000 to our growers, I think it would be very unwise indeed if we did not pass this Bill without amendment.

HON. G. W. MILES (North) [10.30]: I support the second reading. I wonder how long this appointing of boards is going to continue. We are getting nearly as bad as Russia—nothing but control, control, control, and the producer is the man that receives consideration every time. The consumer gets no consideration at all. In pre-war days we were able to get apples distributed throughout the Goldfields areas and in the North for 5s. a case, whereas today it is impossible to get a case of fruit in the back country for less than about 30s.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Thirty-five shillings.

Hon. G. W. MILES: There is one representative of the consumers on the board, and the consumers are not considered at all; it is the producer all the time. That is the sort of legislation we are getting nowadays, legislation that does not give the public one iota of consideration. I protest against a continuance of this sort of thing and hope something will be done so that the people in the remote parts of the State may be able to get fruit at a more reasonable price than they have to pay today.

HON. G BENNETTS (South) [10.32]: I support the second reading. Mr. Miles has advanced arguments that I intended to use, as I proposed to quote some of the prices years ago as compared with today. On the Goldfields years ago we were able to buy apples at 2d. or 3d. a pound.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What did the grower get out of that?

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Where did those apples come from?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: From the apple-growing districts of this State.

Hon. L. Craig: I do not think you bought them at that price.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: It was a jolly shame if you did.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The apples that are being supplied for local consumption at present are not of a fit quality to be displayed in shop windows. I was at the railway station this morning, and some of the apples displayed there were of disgraceful quality. They should not have been exhibited for sale, especially in a place where they could be seen by visitors.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: How long ago do you think it was since they were taken off the trees?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I am not worrying about that.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That is the trouble.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Fruit of such poor quality certainly should not be exhibited on railway premises where it would come under the notice of visitors from the Eastern States. The quality of fruit supplied on the trains is no better, as I think you, Mr. President, could certify. Much of it is the most miserable looking fruit one could wish to see. I wish I had brought up some of the fruit from the station so that members might have seen it. I consider that growers are not receiving a fair return for their produce, but that the middleman is getting the profit. According to the figures that have been quoted, it seems that the grower is getting about 1¼d. for his fruit, but by the time it reaches the market, the price is up to 7s. 6d. a case. Too much of the price the consumers have to pay is absorbed by agents, auctioneers, and others in between.

Hon. L. Craig: Wages account for most of it.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: I think it is the big business man in between that gets most of it. There is a lot of fruit wasted in

this State, and I have been informed that large quantities are fed to pigs. In fact, it seems to me that the pigs are getting better treatment than are the people. I hope that fruit of high quality will be retained in the State. We should not export all the best of our fruit and leave only the rubbish for our people. The residents of the State are entitled to greater consideration, and if fruit of a better quality were provided for local consumption, it would certainly be a much better advertisement for the State. The taxpayers are the people who have to support the State, and they are entitled to better treatment than they have received. I hope that Mr. Mann will convey the tenor of my remarks to the producers.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [10.36]: The Honorary Minister should be commended for the excellent work he has done in connection with this legislation. From the point of view of this State the Bill is a very favourable one. I understand that the estimated crop for 1949 is 2,000,000 bushels of apples, and 100,000 bushels of pears, so that his estimated value of the industry to the State is not far out.

There has been a good deal of criticism about the waste of fruit, but if members conversed with growers, they would find that, in spite of the waste that occurs, the scheme under which they have been working is far better than if they were operating under open-market conditions. The growers have been concerned to learn that the scheme will be continued. I think we are fortunate in having secured the assistance of the Commonwealth to continue the scheme for at least another year. Of course, if the Bill is not passed, the Commonwealth will not carry on.

I feel considerable concern about the provision of cases. We are producing a huge quantity of apples and young orchards are coming into bearing. I believe that the quality will improve year by year. In the course of time, the industry will be much larger than it is today. When one thinks of the large areas of timber in the South-West, it does not seem right that the State should have to import fruit-cases from Sweden. I venture the opinion that all the cases required could be cut in this State. All that is needed is a little reorganisation of the State Sawmills to do the work. This might mean that we could not export quite so much timber, but when that phase of th industry is carried to such an extent that w have to import fruit-cases from Sweden, it i time we investigated the situation and foun a remedy. There are thousands of acres o jarrah in the South-West not suitable fo first-class milling, and if some encourage ment were given to private enterprise, spo mills might be erected to cut the cases.

Hon. W. J. Mann: A price of 2s. 2d. case should be a fairly good inducement.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: There is more in i than that. Not long ago spot mills wer compelled to close down. The reason give at the time was that they were not employ ing large numbers of men. I was intereste in a couple of small spot mills and that wa the explanation given to us. As a resul of that action, these mills would have t be started again, and it costs quite a lo of money for the requisite machinery t equip a small mill. Another difficulty i that many of the men who were avail able to operate such mills have undertake other work. It is difficult to get the Forest Department to make timber areas available it does not like to permit first-class timbe to be used for the cutting of fruit-cases.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture That is the point.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: If some of the area of second-class forest could be made avail able, possibly people would become inter ested in cutting fruit-cases. So far as know, however, there is no chance of get ting an area granted for this purpose. discussed the matter with a prominent ma in the State Sawmills and he informed m that the mills could cut all the fruit-case in this State if a little reorganisation wer carried out. We cannot expect the frui industry to prosper if the growers have t pay 3s. for a case. Such a price is beyon all reason. Cases generally are very ex pensive. One small sawmill was cutting cases for packing tomato sauce and canne fruit and was getting 2s. 6d. a case. Th Minister explained the Bill clearly an showed that it is favourable to the growers I consider that there is nothing tha can be said against the measure.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan [10.42]: I think there is quite a lot in th point made by Mr. Miles and Mr. Bennett regarding the difficulty of people obtainin

apples of reasonable quality. The price, so long as it is within reason, does not matter much. The grower is entitled to a fair return for his labour, but if there is one thing the housewife wants, it is fruit of good quality. In this apple-growing State, surely the local community should have ample opportunity to secure adequate quantities of apples of high class quality! Yet it is extremely difficult to get quality today. I was rather intrigued at the great reliance placed by the Honorary Minister on the result of the poll of the growers indicating that they favoured the scheme.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: What was intriguing about that?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: When it is a poll of growers, the Minister seems to think that their's is an opinion that must be respected, but if the Minister is presented with the results of a poll of people selling motorcars, indicating how they wish to sell them, that goes into the waste paper basket.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: We have not had such a poll yet.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: The opinions of sellers of motorcars have been brought under the notice of the Minister, and I could only wish that they carried the same weight as do polls of fruitgrowers and other producers. I am a little curious to hear whether the Minister had a poll of housewives or whether the Housewives' Association expressed itself on this question, and, if so, what was the result?

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I have had requests from that body.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: There is another point I would like the Minister to clear up. As I understand his explanation, the Bill is intended to apply only to the season 1948-49.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Actually, to 1949.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I have glanced through the Bill but I am unable to find any provision giving effect to that assurance.

Hon. L. Craig: A contract has been entered into with the Commonwealth.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Although that is so, this Bill presumably permits the entering into of not merely one contract but a number of contracts, and also permits any other modification, and presumably extension, of such a contract. I suggest that the Bill should make it a bit clearer—

Hon. L. Craig: Clause 29 covers it.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: —that this is to operate only for the 1949 season.

Hon. L. Craig: It says that when the terms of the contract have been completed the Act shall cease to operate.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Yes, but if the hon. member will turn to the earlier clauses of the Bill, relating to the contract, he will find there is nothing there to preclude a contract running from one to 20 years. There should be something in the measure to make it perfectly clear that the position is as stated by the Minister.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-Suburban) [10.47]: I must confess that I support the views expressed by some members. I believe the average housewife is concerned not only with the price, which is no doubt the result of economic conditions, but also about the poor quality of fruit. In public places, such as railway refreshment-rooms and shops, the quality of apples is very poor. But we do not have to go further than our own dining-room to get examples of poor fruit. The reason given by Mr. Craig is that they have been in cold storage for some time, and I presume that cold storage is one of the results of control. I was in Adelaide the week-end before last for two days, and at the hotel where I stayed there were apples on the table each day of a standard and quality far in excess of what we have seen on the tables and in the shops in and around the metropolitan area for some years.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Were they Western Australian apples?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: No. That was in a State where apples are not controlled. I was at Tanunda in South Australia on the Saturday afternoon for luncheon, and we had very choice apples there. I cannot help making that contrast: that in a State where apples are not controlled I was able to enjoy fruit of splendid quality; while here, in a State where apples are controlled, we are unable to obtain fruit of the same quality. I feel that perhaps the control of apples and pears has played some part in

the reduction of the quality and excellence of the fruit.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [10.50]: I want to refute the statement that our apples are not good.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: We do not get the good ones.

Hon. L. CRAIG: First-class Granny Smiths can be bought today—first-class considering that they have been in cold storage for seven or eight months.

Hon. W. J. Mann: None better!

Hon. L. CRAIG: No. People who contend they are not getting good apples are not buying as good as they can obtain. Plenty of first-class apples can be purchased today. What do members think apple and pear-growers should do? Here is a wonderful opportunity, with the Commonwealth generously agreeing to finance the scheme! It is no different from a wheat pool, though it is more intricate and difficult, because in apples we are dealing with a perishable commodity.

This is a State with a small consumption and a huge production of apples. What would members do if they were apple-growers? If they were sensible, they would vote for such a scheme as this. Growers will do the same again next year if they are sensible, and if they can get the Commonwealth to co-operate. If they cannot, they should still endeavour to form some pool, if they are wise, so that there will be organised marketing. There can be chaos in this industry if it is not well controlled. People got into the habit, before the war, of getting a sack of windfalls for about a shilling, and they cannot get over the fact that they are unable to buy apples today at that price.

Hon. G. Bennetts: They want something decent for their money.

Hon. L. CRAIG: They can get it, if they pay the price.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: What do you expect for a shilling a sack?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Mr. Mann gave a first-class resume of the industry and its importance to the State. The apple and pear-growers are doing a good job. Theirs is probably the best voluntary organisation in the State in that regard. They have difficulty in securing cases. I believe the time will come when they will have to solv that problem themselves. I think it ha been delayed too long. For too long the have been dependent on spot mills and othe people for cases, and they will have t raise the finance by a grant or a loan fro the Government, and tackle the proble themselves. People are still plantin orchards, foolishly, I think. In the South West apple-trees are being planted, and th future for orchardists is somewhat doubtfu I commend the Bill, and hope it will b passed.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [10.54]: would not like the House to be led astra by some of the remarks that have bee made. Fremantle may be different fro Perth, but it is possible to buy in the mar ket there the finest apples grown in th South-West. I have been buying them al through the season. The trouble in Pert may be that there is too large a proportio of alien shopkeepers who buy the cheape quality fruit and sell it to customers. A Fremantle, if one cares to pay the righ price one can obtain the finest fruit that on could wish for.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FO AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Eas —in reply) [10.55]: I am gratified at th reception the Bill has received. Mr. Watso was afraid that it might be extended fo more than one year. What if it is?

Hon. L. Craig: All the better.

The HONORARY MINISTER FO AGRICULTURE: Of course. I have her the agreement made with the Commonwealt and it refers to only one crop. It reads in part, as follows:—

> Whereas the Honourable Minister o State for Commerce and Agriculture for th said Commonwealth does not intend under th National Security (Apple and Pear Acquisi tion) Regulations of the said Commonwealt to make provision for the acquisition by th said Commonwealth of the 1948-1949 season' crop of apples and pears grown in the sai State.
>
> And Whereas it is the desire of th State that such crop should, subject to th provisions of this Agreement be marketed b the Australian Apple and Pear Marketin Board constituted under the said Regulation and the State has requested the Common wealth to give effect to the said desire of th State . . .

I am entirely with Mr. Bennetts when he says that inferior fruit is exhibited at Kalgoorlie. I do not know who is responsible for that, but I think it should be rectified because it is a bad advertisement. The growers cannot be blamed.

Hon. L. Craig: The people there will not pay the price.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Perhaps that is so. There is some reason, but the growers cannot be blamed, if the people who sell the fruit will not take apples of good quality. I live seven miles from York, and my wife regularly buys apples. I have never seen a bad one. If members go down the Terrace to some of the best fruit shops, they will be able to get good apples. Why should not a reasonable price be paid for them? People moan about dear fruit in Western Australia. Let them go to Sydney. When I am there, I make it my business to stroll around and look at the meat, fruit and various other articles of food and compare them with those in Western Australia. Every article of diet is far higher in price there than here. We are very well off indeed, particularly in regard to the price of fruit. Mr. Bennetts talked about getting apples for 2d. a pound. I can assure him that if he bought apples for that price, they were grown under sweated conditions.

Hon. L. Craig: Slave labour!

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Worse than slave labour. Surely he would not want to pay only 2d. a pound for good apples! He should not expect that. In answer to the question about housewives, at least three ladies asked me to oppose the Bill. I asked why and they said they had seen apples lying under trees and going to waste. I said, "Is that all?" They replied, "Is that not enough?" I have never seen very good apples lying under trees. I think we must forget about that argument. Reference was made to such apples being sold for a shilling a bag.

Hon. W. J. Mann: The bag is worth 2s. 9d. today!

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: How can anyone expect a bag of apples for 1s.? We are concerned about the shortage of cases, not only for apples but also for tomatoes and butter. It is no use saying there is plenty of timber. There is no-one to cut it. The State Sawmills have given us the greatest co-operation and have switched from more remunerative work to make cases for the tomato industry. I am very gratified at the reception of the Bill and I hope I have answered all the questions.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Will this Bill still make it illegal for a person to give away a case of apples without getting a permit and paying the fee.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, that is quite desirable. If we are to have a scheme then we cannot have people breaking its provisions.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Agreement with the Commonwealth:

Hon. H. K. WATSON: The Honorary Minister has read the agreement to the Chamber and it is supposed to cover one season only. Subclause (4) provides that the agreement may be varied or added to by mutual agreement between the Governor and the Governor-General-in-Council of the Commonwealth. By that I assume that the agreement can be varied by removing the words "forty-nine" and substituting any other date in lieu.

Hon. W. J. Mann: It may be advantageous to do that.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: We are being asked to pass a Bill on the assurance that it is for one year only. I want to ensure that Parliament has an opportunity of reviewing it. Unless something is put into the Bill, once it is passed it may operate for all time to the detriment of the consumers.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have never heard such an amazing statement as Mr. Watson made that the Bill may operate for all time to the detriment of the consumers. I am prepared when we come to Clause 13 to insert words which will ensure that the Bill will apply to this season's crop only. That

should meet the wishes of Mr. Watson, who is apparently very suspicious of this sort of thing.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I am not suspicious but merely cautious.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Acquisition of certain Apples and Pears.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 of Subclause (1) after the figures "1949" the words "and before the first day of October 1949" be inserted.

That should meet the wishes of Mr. Watson.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I am pleased to have been of some assistance to the Committee.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It would have been discovered as apparently it was left out by the printer.

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

Clauses 14 to 29, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and returned to the Assembly with an amendment.

BILL—WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Council's amendments.

BILL—HIDE AND LEATHER INDUSTRIES.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. R. M. FORREST (North) [11.12]: I support the second reading of the Bill. Last night I obtained the adjournment of the debate in order that I could gather more particulars, and when the Bill goes into Committee I intend to move that a subclause be added to Clause 9. I was interested to hear the remarks of the Minister when he introduced the Bill, and also thos of Mr. Baxter. It was mentioned by th Minister that if this Bill was to be throw out, the price of footwear would skyrocke and I think the Minister quoted that work ing boots would rise in cost by about 12 6d. a pair, and that the cost of higher clas boots would be increased by 20s. per pair.

If the growers were to receive another £ per head for their hides, taking the averag weight of a hide at 35 lb., and it takes square foot of leather to make the upper and sole of a pair of boots, that means tha a 35 lb. hide would produce 35 pairs o boots. If 35 is divided into 20s. it work out to about 7d., so instead of a rise of 12 for working boots I cannot see how the in crease would be more than 7d. I remembe the time in the North-West when we coul send down a bullock hide to firms in th metropolitan area and receive a side o leather in return; but today eight hide which represent 16 sides, must be forwarde to produce the return of a side of leathe Therefore, we all realise there has been racket conducted by fellmongering and hid merchants in the Australian trade. I hav nothing further to add at this stage, but will go more into detail on the Bill i Committee.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South-East [11.17]: I am going to support the secon reading of the Bill because circumstance are such that we can do nothing else. It i necessary that this legislation pass thi Parliament in order to carry on the arrange ments that have been undertaken by th State Governments in Australia for the con trol of skins. However, it is as well t point out that the producers have had very raw deal by the acquisition of hide Whilst at present the price of hides in Aus tralia is about 7d. per pound, oversea th average price is about 24d. per lb. On th quantity of hides used within Australi the producers are subsidising the con sumers of leather in this country to the tun of about £7,500,000 per annum. The publi should be brought to realise that state o affairs. This is not an instance where subsidy has been found from the public ex chequer in order to keep the prices at low or reasonable level. It is a subsidy tha has been made entirely by the producer.

I know of nothing else except tallo where the producer has been called upon t

provide such a subsidy as is done in this instance. The cost of leather, which, I think, was mentioned here last evening, would rise from 2s. to 6s. per lb. if this Bill were not passed. Even if it did, I question very much the figures that have been broadcast that ordinary working boots would rise by 12s. 6d. per pair, and better class footwear £1 per pair as a result of the increase in the price of leather. It does not seem to me, from my own personal observation, that the better class footwear contains more than 1 lb. or 1½ lb. of leather, and the other footwear more than a couple of lbs. of leather, so an increase of 3s. or 4s. per lb. of leather should not affect the cost of the finished article to the extent suggested, unless there is a very considerable rake-off in between.

Hon. G. Bennetts: That is, what there would be.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: If the Prices Office is going to take into account the actual price of hides, I submit that the story being broadcast is fantastic. I think the position regarding footwear is something similar to that of clothing. As a result of exhaustive inquiries by the British Board of Trade and the Textile Committee of the Commonwealth, it was found that only 10 per cent. represented the cost of the raw material in the finished article. I stated at the outset that I proposed to support the second reading. There does not seem to be anything else that we can do. If, however, amendments can be moved to ensure a little more elementary justice to the producer of hides, I shall be pleased to support them.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Acquisition of hides:

Hon. R. M. FORREST: I move an amendment—

That a new subclause be inserted as follows:—

(3) Nothing in this Act or in the Commonwealth Act shall be deemed to empower the board to acquire any hide at a price lower than that which the board would be required to pay on the same day for the purpose of acquiring a hide of similar weight and description in the State of Victoria.

I mention Victoria because the price there represents about the average for hides sold in Australia. The proposed new subclause is designed to ensure the discontinuance of the anomaly which has existed for eight years under which our hides have been acquired by the board at lower prices than in any other State of the Commonwealth. Organisations of cattle-growers have endeavoured on numerous occasions to have this anomaly corrected, but without avail. When the appraisement scheme started in 1939, the basis taken was the price ruling on the 30th September, 1939, plus 20 per cent. Before that date, values of Western Australian hides were based on Melbourne values less freight and expenses. Freight and expenses involved in placing our hides on the Melbourne market would amount to approximately ½d. per lb. The injustice which Western Australian producers of hides have suffered is clearly shown in the following comparative statement of prices at which hides have been acquired by the board in four States:—

	Firsts.	Seconds.
	d.	d.
Western Australia—		
30 lb.	7¼	5½
40 lb.	5⅞	6½
South Australia—		
30 lb.	8½	7⅛
40 lb.	7½	6½
Victoria—		
30 lb.	8⅝	7
40 lb.	7	6¼
New South Wales—		
30 lb.	9⅛	7⅞
40 lb.	7½	7⅛

Stag hides are 1d. cheaper in Western Australia. Cut hides, of which there are many, are from ⅝d. to 1¾d. per lb. cheaper in Western Australia as against ½d. to 1d. in the Eastern States.

It might be contended that the proposed subclause is unnecessary as the State Minister can be relied upon to see that justice is done to producers in this State as regards the prices to be paid in future. I would point out, however, that Clause 11 (1) of the Bill provides that the payments to be made shall be those fixed in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Act. A general increase in the level of hide prices is long overdue, but even if the present appraised prices of hides are increased by a percentage common to all States, the anomaly which it is desired to correct would still remain, unless the subclause were inserted in the Bill. It would not hamper the Minister, or the responsible authority, in fixing prices,

but it would ensure that Western Australian hides would not be valued at less than Victorian hides. That is only reasonable. I should like to quote figures relating to the export of tallow, to show what cattle-producers are losing. Some time ago I asked a question in the House to ascertain the export price of tallow, and the price within Australia. As regards tallow, 74,600 tons were manufactured in Australia; the average value was £32 per ton, making a total of £2,387,200. Therefore, cattle-producers subscribed to this fund to the extent of £5,893,400 per annum.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Wheatgrowers are doing their share, too.

Hon. R. M. FORREST: I hope the Committee will accept my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I direct the attention of the hon. member to the fact that his amendment seeks to override a Commonwealth Act. I regret, therefore, that I shall have to rule the amendment out of order.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: An amendment to this Bill was made in another place.

The CHAIRMAN: But the hon. member cannot move an amendment that will override a Commonwealth Act. It is not competent for this Parliament to amend the Bill in such a way as to affect the Commonwealth Act. I rule the amendment out of order.

Amendment ruled out.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Would such an amendment be acceptable if Mr. Forrest struck out the words "or in the Commonwealth Act?"

The CHAIRMAN: No. The amendment would still have the same effect.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Why should Western Australia get lower prices?

The CHAIRMAN: That is not the question under consideration.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I cannot altogether agree with your ruling, Mr. Chairman. This is a State board.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But it is the Commonwealth board that fixes the price, on the advice of the State board. Mr. Forrest raised the matter of differentiation in prices, but possibly that will not be so in future.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Would you like t give the Committee some guarantee on th point?

The HONORARY MINISTER FO AGRICULTURE: I see no reason why ther should be differentiation. Hides in Queens land fetch less than hides in other State Mr. Baxter will bear out that statement There must be some good reason why Vic torian hides fetch a higher price than West ern Australian hides. Producers in Queens land send their hides to New South Wale in order to get the benefit of the highe price.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 10 to 21, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and th report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and *passed.*

BILL—COUNTRY TOWNS SEWERAGE

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying tha it had agreed to amendments Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5 6, 7 and 8 made by the Council and had dis agreed to No. 4 now considered.

In Committee.

Hon. G. Fraser in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

No. 4. Clause 37 (1), page 16—Delete the word "twenty-four" in line 35, and substitute the word "forty."

The CHAIRMAN: The Assembly's reasons for disagreeing to the amendment are as follows:—

The six-year period or less already obtains throughout Australia and is a reasonable period for repayment.

The six-year period operates in the metropolitan water supply area quite satisfactorily.

In cases of hardship the department invariably extends the period.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

In Queensland the period is only 2½ years and I think that six years is liberal enough. It has been suggested that £70 will be the amount to be paid, and surely 90 per cent. of the people will be able to pay that sum

in six years. If some are not able to do so they will not be treated harshly by the department.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: The Kalgoorlie Municipal Council has allowed 15 years for the payment of sewerage charges but the Government is not prepared to allow any more than six years. However, I will not oppose the motion.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not insisted on.

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

BILL—DOG ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th November.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [11.50]: I intend to support the second reading. I obtained the adjournment of the debate so as to acquaint myself with the provisions of the Bill. I find it is for the purpose of rectifying certain anomalies that have existed and have given local authorities some concern in the registration and control of dogs. Whilst I support the second reading of the Bill, I believe a dog is as much a necessity in a home as it is on a farm or station. I do say, however, that there is a proper place for a dog and that it should be properly kept and fed, and not allowed to roam the streets. The Bill provides for these things. If the license fees were not as high as they are there would not be so much difficulty in collecting them. Reduced fees apply to farms and stations.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is only for utility dogs.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: That is so, but I claim a dog in a home is just as much a necessity as is one on a farm or station. Some people desire a dog for the protection of their home, and some old people who depend on this form of protection experience hardship in paying the necessary license fees. A matter which cannot be dealt with in the Bill, because it is not provided for in the parent Act, concerns the members of the Registered Dog Breeders' Association. Quite a number of these people are concerned because the Act provides that a puppy three months old is a dog. They claim it is not possible for them to know at the end of three months the value of a dog. Some concern is felt because penalties may be imposed on them if they keep a litter beyond that period.

Some dog breeders go in for blood stock and import dogs from England and elsewhere. I have been requested to ascertain whether some protection can be given them so that they will not be liable to a penalty if they do not register a litter at the expiration of three months. It is not suggested that they would be entitled to keep the dogs for any length of time, but I am informed it is not always possible to dispose of them within three months. I would like the Minister to give an undertaking that these people will receive some protection.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [11.55]: I support the Bill. We have in Kalgoorlie all the provisions set out here in connection with registration. Our municipal bylaws provide that the owner of any dog running in the town is liable to prosecution unless the dog is on a chain or leash. We have more dogs in Kalgoorlie than there are anywhere else in Australia. There is an average of one dog to every person on the Goldfields. They are a real nuisance to the storekeepers and everybody else.

Hon. L. Craig: Do you carry out your bylaws with respect to dogs?

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes, as far as we can. But on the Goldfields it is difficult to get dog-catchers to carry out the bylaws. The Kalgoorlie Municipal Council does employ a dog-catcher who is supplied with a utility on which is mounted a cage. He patrols the town at different times to pick up stray dogs. He is also allowed to take dogs from homes. We have a system under which if a person wants a dog destroyed he pays 2s. 6d. to the dog-catcher who will take the dog away. We have a pound for the dogs and they are kept in it for so many days—I think seven—and if they are not claimed within that period they are destroyed.

Again, it is hard to carry out these bylaws as we would wish because every person has a dog and if we carried out the provisions of our bylaws we would get a punch on the nose every five minutes. We would want to be Jack Johnsons to keep out of trouble. I have on many occasions seen the dog catcher with a cage full of dogs, go to catch another, and someone open the door

and free those he had already caught. We provide in our bylaws for a registration fee of 7s. 6d. for dogs and 10s. 6d. for females.

Hon. A. L. Loton: That provision is in the Act.

Hon. G. BENNETTS: If a person has an unregistered dog on the premises he can be prosecuted. Since we introduced the by-law we have derived considerable revenue from the registration of dogs. When we send out the electric light accounts we attach a note to this effect, "Have you a dog? If you do not register it you are likely to prosecution." We get considerable revenue from that.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [11.59]: Dogs are not only a nuisance in towns but also, to stock-owners in country districts. Straying dogs are allowed to roam the streets and footpaths in front of shops, and they go into the public parks where they make pests of themselves. It is nothing for sheep owners to find dogs molesting their sheep and, even if a dog is caught, it is difficult to find the owner. The animals have a habit of roaming late at night—perhaps two or three a.m.—and it is not easy to catch them. I think the Bill will do a lot of good and I am glad it has been introduced. The power it provides for the making of by-laws will allow local authorities to bring down by-laws to suit their own districts.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [12.1]: This is the first occasion, since I have been in Parliament, on which a Dog Bill has been received so quietly. Generally the debate develops into a dog fight, but I see nothing in this measure to bring about that result. However, I think the maximum penalty of £2 for omitting to register a dog is a bit high.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: No.

Hon. G. FRASER: I feel it is too high.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It might be the means of keeping down the numbers of dogs in outback areas.

Hon. G. FRASER: There are not many places where the people are a law unto themselves as they are in Kalgoorlie. I think at present many local authorities have powers in their by-laws that should not be there. I never like to see Parliament pass a law that cannot be policed when in operation. Paragraph (g) of Clause 7 outlines provisions that I do not think could be policed. It reads —

> (g) imposing as an absolute prohibition an obligation on the owner of any dog that the dog shall not enter or be in—
>
> (i) such places as may be prescribed, in any circumstances whatever; or
>
> (ii) such places as may be prescribed, unless on a leash held by a person.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: We could try it.

Hon. G. FRASER: I would prefer that the law did not go on the statute book if it is to be observed more in the breach than anything else. I do not think any local authority could enforce those provisions.

Hon. G. Bennetts: We have done it at Kalgoorlie.

Hon. G. FRASER: I suppose it could be given a trial, but I doubt whether it could be enforced, and whether it would be advisable that that provision should be enforced. I do not think the average dog owner in the metropolitan area ever keeps his dog tied up and I cannot imagine the owners observing that provision. However, I have no serious objection to the measure, and I support the second reading.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [12.4]: I would not fine the owner of an unregistered dog £2, but rather £10. Not long ago I called at a farm where the farmer had just yarded his sheep. No less than 12 of them had been dreadfully torn about by dogs, and the blowflies had been at them. That man said that he had shot one of the dogs but that it was impossible to find the owner, as the dog had no disc of registration. The cruelty to the sheep, alone, would justify our imposing a heavy penalty on a man who owns an unregistered dog. I can think of no excuse for people who keep half-starved dogs and let them roam about at night. I think the control should be tightened up.

There may be ornamental dogs that are of some comfort to old maids or widows, but they do not appeal to me. The farmer to whom I referred had shot a dog that had attacked his sheep, but could not find out who owned it. Had it been registered, he would have been able to ascertain from the disc who the owner was.

Hon. G. Fraser: The dogs might not always have their collars on.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Possibly the people at Fremantle would take the collars off their dogs at night and let them go out to get their meals. There is every justification for this legislation. I am glad the Government has introduced the measure and would like to see the penalty increased to £10.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East—in reply) [12.7]: Mr. Davies raised a query about the dog breeder having to license the pups at three months of age. I will take that question up with the Minister for Local Government and see if an exemption can be given to dog breeders. I agree that the £2 penalty provided in the measure is not too high, though I am not keen on Kelpies or other sheep dogs being licensed at all. I do not see why a sheep man should have to pay a license for keeping his dog.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: No, so long as it wears a collar with a disc on it for identification.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I could never see the logic of it, and most of the road boards do not enforce that provision. It is remarkable how little they get in dog license fees. However, I think the dogs of aboriginals and others that go round killing sheep should be strictly controlled; in fact, all useless dogs should be controlled.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [12.10] in moving the second reading said: Division 4 of the Land Act, 1933, deals with special settlement lands. Subsection (1) states that the Government may by notice in the "Gazette" define and set apart any Crown land as special settlement lands. Subsection (1) of Section 85 provides that any land within a special settlement area may be cleared, drained, or otherwise improved by the Minister before or after it is thrown open for selection. The interpretation of the drafting of this section is that the Minister can improve the land only by clearing or draining or by operations of a nature allied to clearing or draining. He cannot build a house or shed, or carry out fencing or the establishment of pastures, orchards, etc.

The days of rough pioneering are over and experience has shown that it is uneconomical to allow settlers to spend the best years of their lives slowly bringing a holding into production. This State has vast areas of Crown lands—more particularly in the Bunbury and Albany zones and in the assured rainfall areas—which must be brought into production.

Hon. G. Bennetts: What about Esperance?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I was just about to mention that I have much pleasure in adding to those districts, the district of Esperance. I have made a close examination of that district and I believe it is the best area for land settlement in Western Australia, for that type of light country. I hope that before very many years are past there will be a huge settlement in the Esperance district.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I congratulate the Honorary Minister for Agriculture on his sentiments in that regard.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not intend to elaborate on what I have said regarding the land at Esperance because I would not be very popular at this time of the morning if I did so. The existing Land Act provides in Section 46 for the allocation of Crown land to a purchaser under the conditional purchase provisions, the terms providing for the purchase price to be extended over a period of 25 to 30 years and to be paid in the form of an annual rental not exceeding 6d. per acre. The lessee is required to provide an adequate water supply within the first two years of the lease, if required by the Minister to do so. Also, "he shall expend on prescribed improvements an amount equal to one-tenth of the purchase money in every year of the first ten years thereof, and shall

fence in at least one half of the land within the first five years and the whole of the land within the said period of ten years."

Hon. G. Bennetts: That is if he can get the wire.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the purpose of the Bill. The hon. member anticipated me. In the Bunbury and Albany areas referred to, the average holding allotted to a settler would be approximately 400 acres and the price in many cases would be between 4s. and 6s. per acre. The total price, therefore, on a 400 acre block may be regarded as £100. Referring again to Esperance, I wish to advise members that that area has not yet been considered by the Land Settlement Board but I would be failing in my duty if I did not make it alter its attitude; not that the members have objected to Esperance as a suitable area. In such circumstances, the improvement clauses would require an expenditure in each of the first ten years of a sum of only £10 and for the total of ten years, a sum of only £100, to be expended on improvements.

The Act also permits the Minister to grant an extension of the time for completion of such fencing or improvements. That extension of time is necessary in these days, not only for fencing, but also because of general shortages. The conditions regarding improvements under the Act are so liberal that in many instances lessees have not developed their land to the extent that the areas can be regarded as farms. Under the provisions of the Bill it will be possible for the Government to ensure that the land is developed to such an extent that each lot will become a valuable farm. The attention of the Government was drawn to this position by the Albany Zone Development Committee in its initial report, when it pointed out that the Government's announced intention of developing the zone would immediately cause a rush for Crown lands within economic reach of the port of Albany. The Government, therefore, suspended the allocation of further Crown lands in these areas, except in very special cases, pending a review of the land legislation in order that trafficking in Crown land under the existing Act could be prevented.

The Government has expedited the carrying out of soil surveys in the South-West portion of the State, and where those surveys indicate suitable conditions for land settlement it is proposed to take steps to bring them into the earliest possible production. Some of the areas which are heavily timbered will require special methods of treatment, and in most cases heavy mechanical equipment of some type will be required for the economical treatment of the virgin areas. At this stage I again mention Esperance. That area does not require heavy machinery and as Mr. Bennetts knows, with an ordinary tractor and a decent sized disc plough, all the land can be brought into production quicker than most other undeveloped land in Western Australia.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It is not destroying valuable timber, either.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is no valuable timber there to destroy, but they can grow it very quickly. In most cases this economic treatment can only be done by the Government, and representatives work preparatory to placing the settler on the land. In some areas the settler will require 400 acres, and in other areas up to 2,000 acres. I would be sorry to have to take up 2,000 acres in some of this heavily timbered country because it is useless unless it is cleared, but if I were 20 years younger I would take up 2,000 acres in the Esperance area tomorrow.

It is desired to amend the Land Act so that the Government may prescribe the conditions of settlement in any particular district or area and set out the improvements required, which will have to be carried out by the settler during his lease. The Government also desires to have the power to provide on the land, either before or during the occupancy of the settler, a house and the necessary sheds and other buildings required by him in addition to improvements necessary for the effective occupancy of the land. The amendments placed before the House would enable this to be done. This is a most interesting measure, particularly to those who are interested or engaged in the settlement of what might be termed our lighter land. I am glad that the Bill has been put forward by the Lands Department and I have pleasure in placing it before members. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed.*

BILL—BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [12.22] in moving the second reading said: This is an extremely small Bill and it should not take long to pass through this House. It is to amend the Bulk Handling Act of 1935 and deals with tolls. The payment of tolls by growers to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., was provided by Section 26. In 1945 when the company was being handed over to the growers an amendment was passed and Section 3 of that Act provided for the insertion of a new Section 26A in the principal Act. Subsection (2) of this new section provided that the toll was to be paid to the company during the operation of the National Security (Wheat Acquisition Regulations or any regulations thereafter made in lieu of or in substitution therefor.

As the National Security Regulations cease to apply to wheat after the 1947-48 season, and as there are no regulations made in lieu or in substitution therefor, it is necessary now to alter the Bulk Handling Act to make provision to legalise the collection of tolls by the company under the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Bill which has passed all stages today. That is the sole object of the Bill now before the House.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Can we have a look at the Bill tomorrow?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I would not disagree to an adjournment, but I am anxious for the Bill to pass to another place as soon as possible. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 11 a.m. today (Friday).

Hon. G. Fraser: I thought that when the Chief Secretary had in mind that the House should sit on Friday the time was to be 2.30 p.m.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The motion was that the House sit on Friday at 2.30 p.m., but this is a special adjournment till 11 a.m. today. I understand that the Standing Orders lay down that the House shall sit on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, but a special adjournment can be made for any time on any one of those days.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 12.27 a.m. (Friday).