AYES.	
Mr. Brady	Mr. Murray
Mr. Fox	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Yates
Mr. May	(*Teller.*)

NOES.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Nimmo
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Seward
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Brand
Mr. McDonald	(*Teller.*)

The CHAIRMAN: The voting being equal, I give my casting vote with the noes.

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 to 21, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 2.17 a.m. Wednesday.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 8th December, 1948.

CONTENTS.

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

BILL—BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Introduced by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture and read a first time.

MOTION—ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY

On motion by the Chief Secretary resolved:

That unless otherwise ordered, the House meet for the despatch of business on Friday at 2.30 p.m., in addition to the ordinary sitting days.

BILL—COUNTRY TOWNS SEWERAGE

Report, Etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

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

BILL—MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 9 and a new clause.

In Committee.

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

Clause 9—New Section 26A added:

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I have in mind to move an amendment along these lines—

That in line 2 of Subsection (3) of proposed new Section 26B after the word "consent" the words "and the determination of the Board shall be final and conclusive" be struck out.

If the amendment be agreed to, I shall move to insert a new subsection to read:—

(4) (a) In any case where the board refuses its consent under this section there shall be an appeal to the Court of Petty Sessions. (b) On the hearing of any such appeal the court may make such order as it thinks just.

Since we discussed proposed new Section 26B last night and made some amendments to it, I have been giving further thought to the matter. I still feel that the proposed new section places power in the board which is neither fair to the board itself nor to any producer, vendor or owner of a treatment plant. The board having such complete control over the acquisition or disposal of a person's business under Subsection (3), it seems to me that there should be some right of appeal against its decision either to the Minister or, to the court of petty sessions. As we are giving the board power of life and death over a man's business, it is only fair and reasonable that there should be a right of appeal.

Amendment put and passed.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I object to the suggested further amendment indicated by Mr. Watson. The proposal would be too cumbersome. Regarding the issue of licenses, there is provision for an appeal to the Minister and this has worked quite well in the past. Mr. Watson talked about the board having control over the life and death of the businesses of these people. Where would they be but for the board? They have built up their businesses under a monopoly granted to them by the board, and therefore the board should have some say regarding the sale of the premises and the terms under which they are disposed of. Another point is that the Act sets out with regard to the issuing of licenses that there shall be a right of appeal to the Minister if a person is dissatisfied with the decision of the board as to the transfer of a license. I would be prepared to accept the amendment if Mr. Watson provided the right of appeal to the Minister instead of to a court of petty sessions.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: The prime object of my amendment is to provide the right of appeal. I am not particularly wedded to just where the appeal should lie, although, personally, I think a man is entitled to lodge his appeal before an independent court. On the other hand, there is force in the Honorary Minister's argument that, as matters affecting the issuing of licenses are subject to an appeal to the Minister, it may well be that the appeal in this instance should also be to the Minister. Will the Honorary Minister inform the Committee what appeals have been made to the Minister with regard to the issuing of licenses and what has happened to those appeals?

Hon. L. Craig: The Licensing Court may take a hotelkeeper's license away from him, and is there any right of appeal against that?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I think the man has the right of appeal.

Hon. W. J. Mann: I do not think that is correct.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Even so, the Licensing Court has no power to prevent a man from disposing of his business and transferring his license.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I do not think that is correct. The court is very particular with regard to transfers.

Hon. W. J. Mann: And the court has refused to grant a transfer to a particular individual.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: At any rate, that is beside the point. I would not object to the appeal going to the Minister instead of to a court of petty sessions.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In reply to Mr. Watson's query, one appeal has been made to me since I have been Honorary Minister

for Agriculture. On that occasion, I went into the whole matter very thoroughly and investigated the position regarding both sides. I set myself up as a court of appeal and invited the appellant to see me. He did not take the trouble to come along and state his case, although he was invited to do so by his lawyer. On that occasion, I upheld the decision of the Milk Board. In that one instance I have dealt with, the man concerned was not game enough to put up his case personally.

Hon. H. HEARN: I am glad that the Honorary Minister is prepared at least to meet in some way the objective of Mr. Watson.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Would you not expect that of me?

Hon. H. HEARN: The point raised by Mr. Craig is not analogous, because a licensee of a hotel can still sell his business. The right of appeal should be provided in case the board should be inclined to run wild. In common fairness, we should say to the man who is labouring under a sense of injustice that there is a court of appeal to which he can turn. I am glad that at this late stage of the session, the Honorary Minister is showing signs of mellowing and some reasonableness.

The CHAIRMAN: Do I understand that Mr. Watson desires to move his amendment in an altered form?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Yes. I will accept the Honorary Minister's suggestion. I move an amendment—

That a new subsection be added as follows:—

(4) (a) In any case where the board refuses its consent under this section there shall be an appeal to the Minister within the prescribed time and manner.

(b) On the hearing of any such appeal, the Minister may make such order as he thinks just.

Amendment (as altered) put and passed; the clause, as further amended, agreed to.

New Clause—Amendment of Section 13:

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That a new clause be inserted as follows:—

5. Section thirteen of the principal Act is amended by adding at the end of the section the words "or becomes incapable of carrying out his duties."

Section 13 provides that a member shall vacate his seat if he resigns, dies, becomes insane or fails to attend meetings for three consecutive months without leave. Then will follow the words contained in the amendment. A man might degenerate and be unable to carry on, and there would be no provision to get rid of him. The amendment has been requested by another place. Though it may not go far enough, I consider it to be a step in the right direction.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: The Minister should have the right to dispense with the services of a man who is not competent to carry out his duties.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I think "incapable" would include "incompetent."

New clause put and passed.

Bill again reported with further amendments and the reports adopted.

As to Third Reading.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Before moving the third reading, which will be taken at a later stage, I wish to refer to certain questions raised during the discussion yesterday. Members were not satisfied with the vesting clause and I promised to refer the matter to the Parliamentary Draftsman. The clause does appear to be a little complicated, but the draftsman has assured me that it is quite in order, though it might possibly have been simplified. Dr. Hislop spoke about the coloured-glass bottles used for milk. I have made inquiries and assure him that this matter has been receiving the attention of the board for a long time, but, owing to a certain substance not being available, bottles of white glass can not be manufactured here. I am now given to understand that in the New Year the requisite material will be available and that all or nearly all of the bottles will then be of transparent glass.

Third reading postponed till a later stage of the sitting.

BILL—ACTS AMENDMENT (INCREASE OF FEES).

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [2.46] in moving the second reading said: This is a measure for the purpose of amending nine separate Acts. It was thought better to have one Bill covering the lot than to amend each Act in the small way desired. Various Acts provide for the collection of fees, and the Government desires to increase the charges. Where this can be done by the Minister or by regulation, it is being done, but in the case of these nine statutes, it is necessary to put through amending legislation to give effect to the increases. The Acts dealt with in the Bill are—

Auctioneers.
Bread.
Change of Names Regulation.
Factories and Shops.
Land Agents.
Marine Stores.
Money Lenders.
Pawnbrokers.
Secondhand Dealers.

This comprehensive Bill is divided in such a way as to deal with each of the Acts separately. In order that this situation may not recur, power is sought in each section to permit of the fees being altered in future by regulation. This is almost a formal matter and I do not think any member will disapprove of the increases requested. The total gain to the revenue if the same number of licenses are applied for will be £2,643.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Not high enough.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That may be so. The estimate is based on the individual transactions. If members desire details, I shall be pleased to supply them in Committee; but ordinarily they would not be worried about such small matters.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: What is the total amount of additional revenue which it is expected the Government will receive?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The sum of £2,643. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Construction and commencement of section:

Hon. E. H. GRAY: For Mr. Miles' information, I may mention that this is the most simple amendment of the Bread Act that has ever been introduced in this Chamber.

Clauses 4 to 10, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Metropolitan-Suburban) [2.53]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [2.54]: While I do not object to any of the clauses of the Bill, I wish to say a few words on the question of the auctioneers' fees. I point out to the Government that the stock firms of this State employ perhaps as many as 50 auctioneers in the country, for each of whom a fee of £20 has to be paid. These people operate in a very small way; they hold sales of sheep and cattle in their locality, and sometimes conduct a clearing sale. It seems to me that the charge is excessive, especially to firms who employ a large staff of men. Often there are two auctioneers employed in one district, one to relieve the other.

Hon. G. W. Miles: The firms are well paid.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They get big commissions.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Nothing of the sort.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The farmers pay for it.

Hon. L. CRAIG: As I said, I hope the Government will be careful in imposing increased fees of this nature. They are not minor fees, as was suggested by the Chief Secretary when introducing the Bill, but an extra burden on the firms I have mentioned.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Surburban—in reply) [2.57]: I would remind members of a remark that was made when a Bill was recently introduced which would provide another £1,000 or so extra revenue. It was asked, "Why not make it something worth while?" In this instance the Bill covers a number of Acts and the increases proposed to be made in the fees will not be great. The revenue from auctioneers' fees last year amounted to £2,600; on that basis, the fees this year will amount to £3,315, or an increase of £715. This represents an average increase of 28 per cent.

When all is said and done, if stock firms desire to employ auctioneers in every little district, they must be prepared to pay the fees. They could employ one auctioneer who could travel throughout the State for the purpose of conducting auction sales. No doubt, it is worth while to the stock firms to employ these auctioneers, and I have not the slightest doubt that what they pay in these fees does not amount to anything near the amount they pay for advertisements.

Hon. H. Hearn: Are they not paying for a monopoly?

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—LOTTERIES (CONTROL) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [2.59] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill to increase the fees paid to the members of the Lotteries Commission. It provides that as from the 1st January next, the aggregate fees which shall be payable to all members in any one year shall be £1,400, of which the chairman will receive £800 and each of the members £200. These fees were fixed in 1932 at 2½ per cent. of the gross subscriptions but not to exceed £1,000 in any one year. In 1934 the amount was fixed at £1,000, of which the chairman received £500 and the remaining three members the sum of £166 13s. 4d. each. Members will agree that there is a vast difference not only in the value of the pound over the last 14 years, but also in the amount of work that the members of the Commission do. It is a full-time job for one man and a part-time job for the others. I think that the House will agree the Commission has done an excellent job; and the members have been reappointed as from the 1st January. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [3.1]: I am in favour of the Bill but I do not know whether the division of the increase is fair. The Chief Secretary has said that the chairman's job is full-time. I think it is only allegedly full-time because, if I remember rightly, he holds a very important office in another Government sphere. The fact that we are going to pay the chairman £800 and the other members £200 each should receive some consideration. Possibly the part-time members are entitled to a larger increase than is proposed. In the main, the Bill is a good one.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [3.3]: I do not intend to oppose the Bill, but I feel that the House should be given some information as to the remuneration the chairman receives as a member of the Grants Commission. The fact that he holds that office suggests to me that his chairmanship of the Lotteries Commission is by no means a full-time job. The members of the Grants Commission have considerable research work to do in connection with grants to be made, and that must take a good deal of time. Before the Bill is passed, the House should be informed how much of the time of the chairman is occupied in Lotteries Commission work and what remuneration he receives in the other Government sphere.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [3.4]: I do not think we need worry very much about the additional money paid to the chairman of the Lotteries Commission. I do not know how long Mr. Kenneally will remain in the office, but he has done an excellent job. No man has rendered better service, and his decisions have not been questioned by the other members. It is proposed that he shall receive £800, and he probably receives £400 or £500 in respect of the other position he holds. From the point of view of the State, his membership of the Grants Commission is important. I daresay a man like Mr. Kenneally is easily worth £1,500 a year to the State.

Hon. L. Craig: But is his proportion of this remuneration too great?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The other men are employed in other capacities as well.

Hon. H. Hearn: So is he.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The others have almost full-time jobs. One man was working full-time for a firm in town. I do not know what his salary was. The members of the Commission meet only about once a week. With the secretary, the chairman is responsible for the control of the Commission. I am doubtful whether, if a change were made, a payment of £800 would be considered reasonable in view of the amount of money handled.

Hon. H. Hearn: They are all responsible, are they not?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The chairman has the chief responsibility. He signs cheques, with the secretary. It is an important job.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture. The secretary does most of the work.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: The secretary and his staff.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: He has a big responsibility.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I do not know about that. I should say it is a responsible job. I hope we will not worry about this; the payment is not too great. A man carrying his responsibility is worth £1,500 to £2,000 a year.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [3.6]: I desire to supplement the remarks of Sir Charles Latham. There is no doubt that the chairman is the key man on the Commission, and has been responsible for a very high standard of administration. There is no possible chance of anything being wrong, because he always sees that everything is closely scrutinised before grants are made from the profits of the lotteries. Anyone who has a slight connection with the office knows that it is run excellently. Mr. Kenneally inspires confidence and has a tremendous influence on all societies and organisations that appeal to the public. More money is being raised through the influence of the Commission, which requires that a certain amount has to be obtained by an organisation in order that it may receive a grant. I am pleased the Bill has been introduced and have pleasure in testifying to the good work of the Commission.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [3.7]: I am not surprised at the remarks made, because at first sight it seems that the amount of money is disproportionately divided. That is not so, however. The chairman has a full-time job. He occupies the position of managing director and the others are directors; and I think the House will agree that £200 a year for a director is excellent remuneration. Apparently the members of the Commission are quite happy about it. Apart from organisation work, the Commission has to give decisions on numerous applications for the conducting of lotteries of all sorts and sizes.

Every month, as Chief Secretary, I have a return setting out the lotteries agreed to and those disallowed, and I am pleased to say that I have not heard complaints of any moment concerning a disallowance. Questions were asked at odd times as to whether a certain section of the community was not receiving more than its fair share. Those questions applied to orphanages. When an inquiry was made, it was found that the grants were made on a per capita basis. Everything, so far as I can see, has been done in a fair and excellent manner, without scandal or friction.

The Lotteries Commission is an organisation in respect of which a tremendous amount of scandal and friction could arise if the work were not properly handled. Most of the members have been on the Commission for some time. I do not know what Mr. Kenneally's salary is as a member of the Grants Commission; that is a Commonwealth matter. But whatever it may be, it is a very good thing that he is on that Commission. I do not think we should worry about that. Matters are so organised that he is able to carry on the work of the Lotteries Commission as well as to give us very good service as a member of the Grants Commission.

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 transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—CITY OF FREMANTLE (FREE LITERARY INSTITUTE).

Second Reading.

HON. SIR FRANK GIBSON (Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.12] in moving the second reading said: This is a small measure that is somewhat different from those that have exercised the minds of members during the last few days, but I am sure it will commend itself to all members of this Chamber. Some years ago my colleague, Hon. E. M. Davies, suggested in the Fremantle City Council the establishment of a technical reference library in our city. The suggestion met with the unanimous approval of our councillors, but with the passing of the years other ideas developed and we are now, in this Bill, asking for power for the municipality to establish a free lending library. We, as a council, believe that as it is our duty to provide facilities for recreation and sport, so it is our duty to provide facilities for the cultural advancement of our citizens.

The Fremantle Literary Institute was established in 1850 and the land upon which it was erected was granted by the Crown. For some years the Fremantle City Council and the committee of the institute have met in conference to agree on mutually acceptable terms for the taking over of the institute. That agreement has now been reached and is embodied in the Bill. In Clause 3 power is conferred on the City of Fremantle to establish and carry on a free lending and free reference library. Clause 4 provides for the assets of the Literary Institute to be vested in the council. Clause 6 enables the City of Fremantle to take over and hold the said land and assets under the terms and conditions of the indenture dated the 18th day of November, 1948, made between the council and the institute.

The payment of all debts and liabilities of the institute is provided for in Clause 7. Clause 8 indicates the powers of the council in using and dealing with the premises acquired by it under this measure. Clause 1 gives power, over and above that which included in Part 24 of the principal Ac to borrow any further sums required for th purpose of implementing any of the wo and undertakings which by this legislatio the council is empowered to carry out. Th power to make bylaws for the control the library is conferred in Clause 11. Pe sons eligible as members of the Literary In stitute and Library are defined in Claus 12 and include in addition to ratepayers all employees of the council and all pe sons who at any time during a period two years prior to the passing of th measure have been subscribers to the in stitute.

Clause 15 gives power to any other loc authority to become a contributor to th upkeep of the library upon such terms shall be mutually agreed on. The indentu provides that the present staff shall be em ployed by the council and that so long the library is continued in the present build ing, Henry Raymond shall be permitted t occupy the caretaker's premises. This a rangement has been made in recognition the long period of loyal service rendered the institute by Mr. Raymond as librarian I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. E. M. DAVIES (West) [3.15]: have much pleasure in being associated wit Hon. Sir Frank Gibson in the presentatio of this Bill to the House. It is some year since the first negotiations commenced b tween the Fremantle City Council an the committee of the institute for th taking over of the building and th library for the benefit of the peopl of Fremantle and the surrounding di trict. I think it will be agreed that th provision of lending library facilities aid the cultural development of a community and the provision of a reference library also of great advantage to students, artisan and others, studying for various professions or already practising in them.

In England and in the Eastern States th provision of free lending libraries has bee part and parcel of local government respon sibility, and for a number of years I hav felt that that should be the practice her Provision already exists for the subsidisin of country libraries, but as yet that assis ance has not been made available in th

metropolitan area. We feel that Fremantle, as a city and as the western gateway of Australia, should have lending and reference library facilities. It will be to the advantage of Fremantle and of Western Australia in general if people who choose to visit Australia and enter through the western gateway are able to be directed to a public reading room and lending library so that they may obtain first hand information about the country upon their arrival here.

This need was impressed forcibly on me during the war when a large number of Servicemen from other parts of the world visited Fremantle. Some of them, being of a studious nature, made inquiries as to where the public library was and I felt somewhat ashamed to have to say that we had provided no such facilities in our city. The Literary Institute has existed for many years and has been of great benefit to the people of Fremantle. The land was given as a grant by the Government to a committee elected at that time. The committee raised a sum of money from the A.M.P. Society, and certain buildings were erected. The committee then provided the necessary library facilities, and during the intervening years that library has been of great service and benefit to the people of Fremantle, but it is only a section of the people that has received that benefit.

By the Fremantle City Council being given power to take over the land and buildings of the institute and operate a free lending and reference library, and make provision for lectures to be given to the students, artisans and others I have mentioned, it is felt that a much needed service will be given to the people. Sir Frank Gibson has explained the Bill to the House, but possibly there may be some points on which members would like further information. Clause 11 gives the council power to make bylaws in addition to those provided for in Part VIII of the principal Act. The subparagraphs of the clause read as follows:—

(i) The conduct of the Literary Institute and Library.

(ii) Regulating the use of the same and of the contents thereof, and for protecting the same and the fittings, furniture and contents thereof from injury, destruction, or misuse.

(iii) Requiring from any member or person using the same any deposit, guarantee, or security against the loss of or injury to any book, periodical, magazine, reading matter, or other article.

(iv) Enabling the officers and servants of the Council employed there to exclude or remove therefrom persons committing any offence against the principal Act, this Act, or any bylaw or regulation.

(v) Regulating the method and conduct of any election of the Board of Directors provided for in the said indenture.

(vi) Regulating the admission of new members.

(vii) Determining qualifications for membership where same are left to the discretion of the Council.

(viii) Determining the number of books, periodicals, magazines and other reading matter which may be borrowed by any person, or class of persons, and for what period.

In addition to making these facilities available to the Fremantle ratepayers, it has been decided that the employees of the City of Fremantle shall also be entitled to enjoy the benefits accruing therefrom. Members will realise that there are quite a number of people employed by the ratepayers of Fremantle, and it is felt that they should also have the opportunity of participating in any benefits made available by the provision of a library.

It is also set out in the same clause that members of the Literary Institute now shall have the right to become members of the free lending library because they have been subscribing members to that particular institute right up to the time of is acquisition by the council. We feel that we are doing something to assist not only the ratepayers of Fremantle but also those people who live in districts contiguous to Fremantle. The Bill also provides that every contiguous local authority, if it desires to become associated with the institute, can do so on a financial basis to be arranged.

I do not want to mislead members when I say that; it means they will have nothing to do with the ownership of the property or the conduct of the library, but it does mean that any contiguous local authority, by financial arrangement through the Fremantle City Council, can make provision for the ratepayers of its district to participate in the benefits of the free lending library. Although there are no complaints against the set-up at the moment, there is a body elected by the subscribing members which manages the Literary Institute and which arranges for some of its members to be the trustees. Should anything happen whereby the institute and reading

room were not able to be carried on, then the assets of that institute must revert to somebody and can only revert to the Crown.

It is felt that as land has been granted by the Crown in the City of Fremantle and the buildings have been erected by the committee, if there are to be trustees then they should be the trustees of the Fremantle City Council which is a Fremantle body elected from time to time. The Bill also provides that there shall be a committee of management, 50 per cent. of the members being from the Fremantle City Council and the other 50 per cent. elected by the present library subscribers. It is proposed that the management committee will number approximately eight persons, four of whom will be members of the Fremantle City Council representative of the four wards and the others will be elected, in the first instance, by the subscribing members of the institute.

After the first year provision will be made annually for the election of ratepayers' representatives on the management body of the institute. It is rather costly to run a library at present and to depend merely on subscriptions from a limited number of people means that the library cannot be financed and kept going. The cost of books, not only fiction, but also other types, is considerable and a great deal of money is needed for the control of this library. Therefore, we feel that the financial backing of the Fremantle City Council, which has agreed to spend not less than £1,000 per year on books in addition to meeting the other running costs, means that there will be a supply of new literature, technical books and so forth available to the people of the City of Fremantle and districts when the library is taken over by that body.

Without speaking disrespectfully of the committee, may I say that the money raised firstly through the A.M.P. Society and latterly transferred as a mortgage to the Commonwealth Bank, amounting to £1,550, is still unpaid and there is also a private loan of £200 outstanding. When the Fremantle City Council takes over the assets and liabilities all the financial arrangements will be cleaned up, enabling a fresh start to be made. This is something of which we can be proud in the City of Fremantle and I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. W. J. Mann in the Chair; Hon. Si Frank Gibson in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Establishment and carrying o of Free Literary Institute, etc.:

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Th clause states that the City of Fremantle i empowered to establish a free literary in stitute. Does that mean the municipa council? There is a definition of "Council which means the "Council of the City o Fremantle," but there is no reference to th council in Clauses 3 to 5.

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: The definitio seems to cover all that is necessary.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 19, Schedule, Title—agree to.

Bill reported without amendment and th report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted t the Assembly.

BILL—WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION.

First Reading.

Received from the Assembly and read first time.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FO AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Eas [3.37] in moving the second reading said I hope the House will pass the second rea ing expeditiously because the Governme is committed to the measure on account o an undertaking given to the wheatgrowers o this State that if they desired the Co monwealth wheat stabilisation proposals, would introduce legislation accordingly. Th Government of this State was the first decide that the wheatgrowers should be giv the right to determine for themselves wh they wanted. Unlike the other States, Wes

ern Australia offered an alternative proposal; the growers were given the right to a State pool or a Commonwealth pool, whichever they desired. In the other States the growers had no alternative; they had to accept the Commonwealth scheme or get nothing.

The wheatgrowers of Australia decided by an overwhelming majority in favour of the Commonwealth proposals. Whether I like it or not, I have to stand up to the Government's promise to the wheatgrowers of this State and urge the House to pass this complementary legislation. The wheatgrowers of Australia, in voting on the plan, decided in favour of the Commonwealth proposals by the following majorities:—

Victoria	7,780
New South Wales	2,500
South Australia	1,600
Western Australia	1,500

Throughout Australia there were 29,000 votes for the scheme and 16,000 against, giving a majority of 13,541 in favour of the Commonwealth proposals. When the people who own the wheat—I use the word "own" advisedly—state emphatically that they want the Commonwealth scheme, we ought to give it to them. This Bill is a complementary link-up with the Commonwealth legislation. The Commonwealth cannot implement its legislation unless complementary measures be passed by the States.

The plan provides for a Commonwealth wheat pool in which the States will join, and it will be given legislative effect by two Bills recently passed by the Commonwealth Parliament—the Wheat Industry Stabilisation Bill and the Wheat Export Charges Bill. Those are the major measures covering the stabilisation plan and should be considered in close relationship with the complementary Bill now submitted to the House. There are other things in the stabilisation measure of the Commonwealth, but I do not propose to weary the House by giving them. Briefly, the Commonwealth plan guarantees a price of 6s. 8d. a bushel. In the original plan, the price proposed was 6s. 3d., but a committee was set up to investigate the cost of production and it decided that 6s. 8d. was the figure. The Commonwealth Minister, Mr. Pollard, has agreed to that price. So today we are faced with 6s. 8d. as the home consumption price and as the guaranteed price.

The guaranteed price will vary according to an index figure; it may go up or down. Mr. Pollard still reserves to himself the right to say whether he will accept the figure. That was one of the great arguments we had, but Mr. Pollard would not forego that right. However, I want to be quite fair to him. When the committee stated that 6s. 8d. should be the price, he readily agreed to it. I hope he will continue that policy and adopt what the committee decides upon.

Hon. A. L. Loton: It is getting on towards election time.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but I desire to give credit where it is due. He has made a good start, so let us give him credit for it. If he does something different after the election, I shall be amongst the first to condemn him, and I promise members that I shall not miss him. So far he has played the game.

Hon. A. Thomson: We have to accept the Bill.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but while I feel sure that the House will pass the second reading, members may desire to make some amendments in Committee. In the Commonwealth plan provision is made for the appointment of the Australian Wheat Board. The board will consist of 13 members as follows:—

The chairman.
A person engaged in commerce with experience of the wheat industry.
A finance member.
A representative of the flourmill owners.
A representative of the employees.

All of those are to be appointed by Mr. Pollard. Then there will be two wheatgrowers representing the growers of New South Wales, two representing the growers of Victoria, one representing Queensland, one South Australia and one Western Australia. I strongly opposed the proposal to appoint only one wheatgrower from this State. Western Australia should not be put on the same basis as Queensland.

Hon. A. Thomson: We grow more wheat than Queensland does.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And export more.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The export of wheat from Western Australia is far and away

greater than the export from Queensland. Sometimes Queensland does not export any at all.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: More often it has imported wheat.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but I think it has overcome the necessity for importing wheat. However, its export is so small as to be almost infinitesimal, whereas Western Australia exports about 80 per cent. of its production. I know it is futile to protest at this stage, but I do not think Western Australia was treated rightly in having only one representative on the board. However, the wheatgrowers were apparently satisfied and, as I have said, we promised to do what they wanted. The Commonwealth measure provides that the State may set up a State board, which will be an advisory one, to advise the Australian Wheat Board in regard to movement—not marketing—of wheat, and will appoint one of its representatives to the Australian Wheat Board. If a State does not avail itself of that provision, there shall be an election of the wheatgrowers to send a representative to the Australian Wheat Board. It is optional for the States to do what they like.

Western Australia desires a State board, and so does New South Wales. Victoria and South Australia have left the whole thing to the Australian Wheat Board. I commend the desirability of a State board. It will give us some sort of control. I believe the Australian Wheat Board made a general mess of wheat-handling in New South Wales. I do not think it can be said that any mess has been made of wheat-handling in Western Australia. The handling authority in this State will be Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., because it is the only authority constituted by a State Act, and therefore is the only one that can handle our wheat. I have in the Bill made provision for what I consider to be a desirable board. I asked the Farmers' Union to submit to me a panel of names for the State board. The Farmers' Union submitted a panel of six names to me, and it will be my privilege to select two for the State board.

I thought it right and proper, in view of the fact that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. will be the authority, to have two people from that organisation. So, in the Bill provision is made for the manager and the chairman of directors of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. to be on the board. The chairman of directors must be a farmer, of course, under that company's constitution. So, they will link up the two organisations, and there will be three farmers on the board. Also, as this is a board dealing principally with the movement of wheat, I have provided for a representative of the Railway Department and one of the Flour Millers' Association. It is desirable that the flour millers should be represented on the board as they play a big part in the export of wheat from this State, and the handling of it.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: They do not export wheat, but flour.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member knows what I mean.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I am not opposing it.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I know. The hon. member could not.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Could I not

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The board is a most desirable one. I spent many weeks thinking about it, during which time I had to withstand pressure from people who wanted to be on it. I came to the conclusion that this was the board that would suit Western Australia best. Another duty of the board will be to appoint one of its members to the Australian Wheat Board. I am glad to say that the name of the person I think should go on to the Australian Wheat Board has been submitted to me in the panel of names from the Farmers' Union. That is a nice action by the union, because that man has played a big part in the wheat industry in this State. I shall not mention his name.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It needs only one guess. It would be a mistake otherwise.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think so, too. It has made the job much easier for me to have his name on the panel.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are fortunate to have his services.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. A stabilisation plan is provided for. There will be a tax on wheat going oversea, which will be put into a stabilisation fund so that the farmer may be guaranteed 6s. 8d. for his wheat until 1952. I have heard people talk about what the Commonwealth is going to do. Personally, I do not think the Commonwealth is going to do anything. I believe the wheatgrower is going to stabilise himself. I cannot visualise a slump in wheat in the next two or three years. There will be sufficient in the stabilisation fund to carry the wheatgrowing industry for the five-year period. We had a tremendous number of arguments at Canberra and elsewhere over these advances. I found myself in Canberra three times in two months to get the best for the wheatgrowers of Western Australia.

The first proposal was to fight for what was known as the 15-point plan. I make it plain that this is not the 15-point plan, but only part of it. The Wheatgrowers' Federation said, "If we can get this, it will be a starting point and we shall get a little more later." From what I know, as a result of my discussion at Canberra, they will not get any more. The wheatgrowers are happy about it, but I think they have been misled as to what they will get However, time will tell, and I sincerely hope I am wrong.

I want to see the wheatgrower get as much as he can. After all, he has had a pretty rough spin throughout Australia, and this is his opportunity to get on his feet again after many years of, not only low prices, but drought, grasshoppers and goodness knows what else. Even today, some of our wheatgrowers are not in a very good position. I have been told that in Mr. Logan's district and others the farmers have lost all their wheat on account of grasshoppers.

Hon. L. A. Logan: There were 81 bags from 600 acres.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I was told by a man yesterday that he had lost the lot at Nungarin. The wheatgrower is deserving of all that is coming to him. While the stabilisation plan will give him quite a lot, I believe that a State plan might have given him a bit more, but I do not want to stress that point now because it is past, so far as I am concerned. In view of the promises I have made on behalf of the Government—and I hope this House will stand behind the Government—I trust this Bill will pass. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned till a later stage of the sitting.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Hide and Leather Industries.

2, Land Sales Control Act Amendment Received from the Assembly.

BILL—CITY OF PERTH ELECTRICITY AND GAS PURCHASE.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban) [3.57] in moving the second reading said: Members, no doubt, will be aware of the object of the Bill through the publicity it has received in the Press. Its purpose is the ratification by Parliament of the agreement that has been entered into between the Government on the one hand and the Lord Mayor and councillors of the City of Perth on the other. This agreement provides for the purchase by the Government of the electricity and gas works owned by the City of Perth. The agreement is set out in the Bill. It was signed by the Lord Mayor and the Premier. It is essential to introduce the Bill and also to have the agreement. The negotiations with the City Council have been protracted over a period of 15 months, and were finalised only a little while ago. Hence the lateness of the Bill coming forward.

The history of the transaction is somewhat interesting. On the 16th October, 1913, the then Premier, the late Hon. J. Scaddan, and the Mayor of Perth, Mr. J. H. Prowse, entered into an agreement pertaining to the supply of electricity within the city boundaries and to consumers in other local authorities' districts who resided within five miles of the G.P.O. That agreement, which today is inequitable and has proved disastrous to the Government, is still in force. In the 35 years that the agreement has been in operation it has involved

a loss of more than £1,000,000 to the Government of this State. The annual loss at present amounts to £140,000 and I might add that this has been the cause of some very pertinent observations by the Commonwealth Grants Commission which, 12 months ago, told the Government that such a situation could not be allowed to continue.

Sitting suspended from 4.0 to 4.20 p.m.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The 1913 agreement, which was ratified by the Electric Light and Power Agreement Act of that year, proved to be legally water-tight. It provided that the agreement should remain in force for 50 years—that is until 1963—and it specified that the Government could not charge the council more than .75d. per unit for electricity. There is no provision whatever in the agreement for an increase in the price to meet variations in monetary values or increased costs. There was, of course, no anticipation that there would be two world wars and other circumstances that would depreciate monetary values throughout the world.

Although the value of the £ has diminished appreciably since 1913, the Government is bound to honour its agreement to supply current to the council at the price that was considered equitable in 1913. I might say that although .75d. was specified as the maximum price chargeable, it became the actual charge shortly after the agreement became operative. The sum of .75d. was agreed on, not to allow the Government any profit, but to permit the council to obtain current at cost. This sum now represents a sale by the Government to the council at a loss of 25 per cent., a loss which, if the present situation were allowed to remain, would increase as costs continued to rise.

In 1913, hours of work were, of course, longer and wages lower. In addition, coal for electricity was purchased at 6s. per ton in 1913 while the figure today is about 25s. per ton. It has become more than increasingly evident that the Government could not continue to supply current at the maximum rate permissible under the 1913 agreement and to sustain a substantial annual loss. The Government, therefore, in September, 1947, invited the Lord Mayor and other representatives of the City Council to discuss the matter.

Several conferences were held as a result of which a committee was appointed to endeavour to arrive at a mutually satisfactory decision. The members of this committee were Messrs. Dumas and Reid, representing the Government, and Messrs. Green and Edmondson, representing the City Council. The committee's recommendations were considered at several conferences, and were followed by the agreement, which is included in the Bill. I might add that the terms of the agreement are a little more drastic than the Government at first envisaged but, on review, the Government was satisfied that they were equitable. A perusal of the Bill will indicate to hon. members that it is proposed that the State Electricity Commission shall take over the administration of the Electricity and Gas Department on either the 20th of this month or the day after the Bill becomes law, whichever is the later.

The Electric Light and Power Agreement Act, 1913-1928, which contains the 1913 agreement, is repealed by the Bill, which also terminates all contracts made by the City Council for the supply of electricity to other local authorities. There are only two such contracts, two others having already expired, and these contracts have been maintained for some years on a short term basis. The Electricity Commission for the time being will continue to supply current to these two remaining local authorities under the same conditions as in the terminated contracts, and in due course will discuss future conditions with the local authorities. I might mention that the contracts that will be terminated contain a clause reading—

> This Agreement is dependent on the continuance of the hereinbefore recited agreement of the 16th October, 1913, and if for any reason that agreement is determined, then the Corporation shall have the right to determine this agreement and the Board shall have no claim whatever against the Corporation by reason of such determination.

On the transfer day, all the real and personal property acquired by the Government under the agreement will be vested in the State Electricity Commission, which will assume the responsibility of all liabilities. The staff of the Electricity and Gas Department will be transferred to the State Electricity Commission under terms not less favourable than their existing ones. Their superannuation rights will be carried on.

The City of Perth Superannuation Fund is established on a basis different from that of the far larger State fund, and it would not be possible to transfer the contributors from one fund to the other.

The Electricity Commission will, therefore, create a new fund for the staff it takes over, and the conditions of this new fund will be identical with those of the City of Perth Fund. No more members will be admitted to this new fund, which will eventually die out. Contributors will be encouraged, but not compelled, to transfer to the State scheme and those who do so will receive twice the amount they have paid into the City of Perth Fund. These conditions ceive twice the amount they have paid into the City of Perth fund. These conditions have been recommended after very thorough investigation by officials of the State scheme. The City Council made it one of the conditions of the agreement that the gas undertaking be taken over as well as the electricity one, and to this the Government was quite agreeable. The State Electricity Commission is empowered under its Act to manufacture and sell gas.

As members are no doubt aware, the cost of New South Wales coal has increased materially and the City Council had intended, if the transfer had not eventuated, to increase the price of gas. Another factor in the council's wish to transfer the gas undertaking was the Government's experiments in regard to the establishment at Collie of a Lurgi treatment plant. This may, in the future, result in the reticulation of gas from Collie to the metropolitan area. Such a project would, of course, materially affect the value of any gas undertaking owned by a local authority.

Apart from these reasons, it would probably not be economical for the City Council to administer the gas undertaking without the electricity undertaking. Members will note that the agreement provides that in taking over the assets of the Electricity and Gas Department, there is excepted all moneys standing to the department's credit at its bankers and all fixed deposits belonging to the department. The amount that the Government has agreed to pay for the undertakings is £3,000,000. This will be paid in monthly instalments, without interest, of £5,000 over a period of 50 years.

Provision is made that the sums payable to the City Council by the Electricity and Gas Department for contributions to general revenue, street lighting payments in lieu of rates and for lopping of street trees, will cease on the transfer day. So far as street lighting is concerned, an agreement will be entered into for the supply of current to the City Council for 15 years at the same price as the council is at present charged by the Electricity and Gas Department. When I say that the payment will be made in monthly instalments without interest, I should point out that the interest is included in the sum of £3,000,000. A figure was arrived at for the price of the undertaking, apart from interest, and then the final round figure of £3,000,000 was arrived at.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: What is the price being charged for street lighting?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I will deal with that in a moment.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Is the loan indebtedness included in the £3,000,000?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We take over the existing liability. In regard to the lopping of street trees, it is possible that this will be done by council employees at the expense of the Electricity Commission. The Second Schedule to the agreement reveals the loan indebtedness of the Electricity and Gas Department. This includes three loans, and stood at £157,793 on the 31st October, 1948. The indebtedness was originally £450,000. It will, of course, be taken over by the Government.

Street lighting is at present carried ont by the authority distributing electricity in any area and is a charge against the local authority. An annual charge is made for each type and size of street light; for example, £1 7s. 6d. per annum for a very small power lamp up to £14 10s. per annum for the larger power lamp. It will be the objective of the Commission to establish uniform annual charges throughout areas supplied by it, in order that all local authorites may be placed on the same basis at the cheapest possible price. The Commission will not be in a position to determine the extent to which the unit rates for electricity will have to be increased until after it has taken over the City of Perth Electricity and Gas Department.

There is a general misunderstanding as to the increase in the charges for electricity. At present, as I pointed out, the City Council pays .75d. per unit, but retail the cur-

rent at various amounts, so that it is anticipated it will be necessary to charge a little more—but not much more—than the City Council is now charging consumers. The reason is that all supply authorities have already increased their charges, in some cases up to 25 per cent., because of increased cost of coal and basic materials, increases in the basic wage and the 40-hour week. As regards gas, the Perth City Council would have had to raise the price of gas, and the matter was already in train, but was suspended during the negotiations.

The reasons for the increase in the price of gas are the same as those given for electricity—the increased price of coal, increased basic wage, increased cost of wages due to basic wage rises and the 40-hour week. All gas companies throughout Australia have increased the price of gas up to, in some cases, approximately 25 per cent. As most gas companies are private companies, all the increases were made after investigation by the Prices Commissioners. Should members desire any further information, I shall be pleased to supply it when we are in Committee. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East) [4.34]: I congratulate the Government upon having arrived at what is apparently a satisfactory agreement with the Perth City Council. It has been common knowledge for many years past that the Government has incurred considerable loss in supplying current to the Perth City Council under cost. We have been informed that the loss last year was £1,000,000.

The Chief Secretary: No. That was the loss spread over 35 years.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I assure the Minister that over £500,000 was lost during the past four years by the Government in supplying the Perth City Council with electricity. Members will recall that early in the session I asked the Chief Secretary questions regarding the amount of the loss. The reply was held over from day to day and week to week, but that is now accounted for by the fact that the Government had been negotiating with the City Council for a period of some 15 months. I congratulate the Government upon having faced a serious position. Members of the previous Government have freely criticised the Administration for many of its actions, but they must realise that it has faced up to a serious position There is no shadow of doubt what the intention was, because we find by paragraph (a of Clause 6 of the Schedule to the Electri Light and Power Agreement Act of 191 that the undertaking was not to be run at loss. That paragraph reads—

The said cost price per unit for any yea shall be arrived at by dividing the total cos for such year by the number of units take by the Corporation and by the Governmen otherwise than under Clause 11 hereof; an for the purpose of ascertaining the number o units so taken by the Corporation the curren shall be metered at high-tension at the Corpora tion's substations on the said ring main an the number of units consumed by the Goverr ment shall be metered at high-tension at Gov ernment substations on the ring main or a the power station or where required.

Paragraph (b) of the same clause reads—

The total cost shall be arrived at by addin to the operating cost a percentage, to be mad up as hereinafter provided, on the capital cos and extras (including the necessary costs an extras of raising the money) incurred by th Government under Clauses 1 and 2 of thi agreement, representing antiquation fund sinking fund and interest.

Paragraph (d) reads—

The operating cost shall mean and include a the costs and expenses properly incurred b the Government in operating the said powe station, supply mains, service apparatus, an plant, to be provided by the Government and i generating and delivering as aforesaid the cu rent taken by the Government and the Corpora tion from the said power station (excluding th capital expenditure and the interest thereon and the cost of repairs, other than replac ments of plant because it has become ant quated.

Any unbiased person will at once admit tha the intention, when that contract was entere into, was that the Government should no make a loss. The then Mayor of Perth, M John Henry Prowse, in view of rising cost succeeded in having the following provis added to paragraph (d):—

Provided always that the cost per unit t be charged by the Government for current sup plied by the Government to the corporatio pursuant to this agreement shall not exce three farthings per unit.

Coal was costing 3s. a ton at the pit, whi the freight was 6s. 4d. when the contra was entered into in 1913, or a total of 9 4d. per ton. In 1948, the cost of coal 26s. per ton, while freight charges amou to 16s. 10d., or a total of 42s. 10d. per to

I charge the previous Government wit allowing this matter to drift. It shou

have taken active steps to see that the contract with the City Council was cancelled, or at least placed on a satisfactory footing as far as the State was concerned. After all, the taxpayers of Western Australia generally have had to pay their share of the loss incurred by the Government in supplying electricity to the City Council. I do not blame the Perth City Council, but I draw members' attention to the fact that in 1947 the City Council made a profit of approximately £95,000 from its electricity and gas undertakings.

Hon. E. M. Davies: What was the term of the agreement?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Fifty years.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes. In view of the position, I contend that the previous Government should have faced up to the position in the way this Government has.

Hon. E. M. Davies: It is rather serious to break a contract.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes. Had it been a private company that was concerned, it would have gone insolvent, but it was the Government. We must remember that the Government is the people. I repeat that the loss over the past four years was over £500,000, so that the statement made by the Chief Secretary was certainly on the low side. Any private person certainly would have made an attempt to rectify the position. I have carefully looked through the Bill, and I note that the Chief Secretary drew attention to the fact that the Commission was not in a position to determine immediately the alterations that may be made. Because increased costs are being incurred in every direction, it seems quite reasonable to face the position. We must have some slight increase. Each of the thousands of homes being built under the various housing schemes provides a potential customer for the Perth City Council and also for the Metropolitan Water Supply Department.

I would like to include a provision in the Bill that the Electricity Commission be instructed to make provision for the charging of a flat rate for electricity. I understand that that system is in existence in Victoria. Of course, there would be differential charges with respect to industrial users. I am afraid this House was rather stampeded when the Electricity Act was before us, because quite unintentionally the country people were misled in that they all anticipated being supplied with electricity. The average farmer or settler was naturally under the impression that if a main passed his premises he would only have to tap it, and he would have electricity.

We were told that current would be supplied to every farmer, but we were not told that it would be necessary to have stations at various points where it could be broken down, and that the local authority or some other body would have to take charge of the mains in the towns. There is a keen request in country districts for a flat rate to apply in respect to water supplies. Our friends from the Goldfields created a considerable agitation over that point. The same feeling is very evident in the Great Southern areas where the water scheme will be extended when the Government can get the pipes to convey the water from the Wellington Dam.

There is also a feeling that all within the area in which the grid is provided should get electricity at a flat rate. I propose to place on record a letter dated the 17th November, that I received from the Katanning Chamber of Commerce. It is as follows:—

> At the Annual General Meeting of members of this Chamber held this week, mention was made of the proposed Electricity Commission Bill to be brought down in Parliament before the end of this year. After some discussion, during which the important matter of decentralisation of population and industry was stressed, it was decided that we write to you with a request that you use your utmost endeavours to arrange for a stipulation to be included whereby all consumers in the areas controlled by the Commission will be charged a flat rate for the current used. Power and water at a reasonable price are the chief requisites of people and industry in any district, and we feel that if the country towns and farms within the area served are charged the same rate for their power as their metropolitan competitors, a big step forward will have been taken towards dispersing the people and the factories and thus preventing the congested areas which now exist and which tend so strongly towards the creation of slums and their attendant diseases. It would help to increase the size and power of the country towns at the expense of the cities but it must be conceded that the State as a whole does, and should, consist of numerous smaller towns rather than two or three large cities. We feel therefore, that the country consumer should be on an equal footing with the metropolitan consumer and we would be glad if you could do your best towards achieving this object.

After a visit paid to Narrogin by Sir Frank Gibson, the following leading article appeared in the "Narrogin Observer":—

To talk of decentralisation in the face of the advantages associated with the metropolitan area is merely sophistry, with no regard for reality. It serves politicians to proclaim their sympathy with any project that aims at keeping the people in the country, but we have yet to learn that they have shown definite determination to establish a basis upon which decentralisation might be brought about.

It is all very well to influence public works and improvements in country areas, but these are, generally speaking, of questionable benefit when charges are levelled against a limited number of people in order to cover the cost. Any or all of them might be regarded as valuable additions to the State's economy and a sign of progress, yet they fail invariably to keep the local population from drifting to the city. It is conceivable that every improvement to country conditions for which the Government is responsible rather precipitates the drift than otherwise.

Decentralisation will never be accomplished unless country people enjoy the same privileges as those in the city. And why should they not? City and country are inter-dependent and neither could be expected to prosper without the assistance of the other. Fundamentally, however, the country affords the greater benefits, without which city values and interests would diminish. What would happen to Perth, for instance, if the whole of the products and business of the South-West were diverted to Bunbury or that of the Great Southern to Albany?

Country people are awakening to their anomalous situation and may be expected shortly to tell their political representatives a few unpalatable home truths. They may even follow these up by relegating some of the number to political obscurity.

The PRESIDENT: I trust the hon. member will connect this up with the agreement.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Yes. I am pointing out that I was requested, if possible, to introduce an amendment which would ensure a flat rate being charged. As the Electricity Commission is not in a position at this stage to determine what the charges in the metropolitan area shall be, it seems it is within our province to suggest that the Commission shall, if possible, provide a flat rate for the country districts. A leading article dealing with the same subject appeared in "The Great Southern Herald" and also in the Albany Press, and the matter was dealt with by the Albany Municipal Council.

I hope I shall be pardoned if I transgress a little, but I am pointing out the difference in the position of those who reside in the metropolitan area and of those in the country. I am quite in accord with this transfe and I congratulate the Government on i action. May I mention just what do happen with the differential charges levie at the present time? Sometime ago I dre attention to the fact that the Albany Woolle Mills were establishing a spinning mil They decided to establish that section at Fr mantle. In the course of the discussio that took place with the company over t matter, Mr. Fernie, the Director of Indu trial Development, made this statement, "E the Albany Woollen Mills deciding to bui a spinning mill at Fremantle, it actuall means a saving, in connection with pow and other charges, of over £8,000 a year I want that to be noted.

How can we expect to build up industri in the country if we cannot supply ele tricity at a cost comparable with th charged in the metropolitan area? Ther fore I feel that the Government has done good job. I recently saw a prominen gentleman and he said to me, "I want congratulate the Government, and you as supporter of it, on the Government havin the guts to do what it has done." Becau of the criticism which has been levelled the Government for its alleged nationalis tion in this matter, I think we can say certainly had courage when it undertook take over these undertakings of the Per City Council. This shows the Governme is looking to the future. It rather reflec to the discredit of the previous Governme for allowing this state of affairs to contin as long as it did.

I support the second reading of the B and feel sure that the State as a whole wi materially benefit. When we remember th more than half of the population of Wes ern Australia is within the metropolita area, we know how essential it is for Governments to realise that it is necessa to get people to go to our empty spaces. we want people to remain in the countr we must give them the opportunity to esta lish industries. If the Government wou agree—as I hope it will—to the levying of flat rate on all consumers coming within t territory covered by the Electricity Commi sion, there would be great possibilities f the establishment of industries at count centres.

When the Prime Minister returned fro England last time, it was suggested th

while there he had discussed with those in power the possibility of transferring factories and their employees holus-bolus to Australia. Towns such as Katanning, Narrogin, Wagin or Albany would offer plenty of space for such factories and, if electricity and water were available there at the same rates as apply in the metropolitan area, we would be in a position to distribute our population far more evenly over the State than can be done at present.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Do you think the Government would ever agree to that?

Hon. A. THOMSON: I have great confidence in the present Government, particularly in view of the way in which it has tackled this serious problem. If the people of the State, and country residents in particular, indicate that they require a flat rate to be imposed throughout the State for water and electricity, there is no reason why the Government should not follow that course.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It would do a lot of harm to the big business interests of the metropolitan area.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Why should it? I am confident that the heads of big businesses in Perth or any other large city would not be opposed to such a scheme if we could demonstrate to them that they would still be able to compete, in towns such as Katanning or Kalgoorlie, with industries established there by virtue of the implementation of a flat rate for electricity and water. So long as they knew it would be in the interests of the State and the people as a whole, the big business interests would have no fear. Many of our country towns have reached a static condition. There is a large number of agricultural towns that will never be in the unfortunate position of the Goldfield's ghost towns, because agricultural production will always continue. I hope the experiments being conducted into the growing of dates and peanuts at Wiluna will be successful and that that area will ultimately carry a much larger population than it does at present. I support the Bill.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Metropolitan-suburban) [5.5]: I feel it is quite correct for members of Parliament to express their satisfaction at the Government having concluded the arrangement to end what must for some years have been considered a very unsatisfactory contract. I agree with Mr. Thomson that that contract gave the present Government a great deal of concern, and it should have given previous Governments equal concern. In expressing satisfaction at the conclusion of this arrangement I would pay tribute to the generous attitude adopted by the Municipality of Perth in agreeing to forgo such an advantageous contract which still had 15 years to run. It is true that the arrangement concluded is satisfactory to both parties to the agreement, but it would have been easy to imagine the City Council sitting tight on its very favourable contract.

From the experience of the last 35 years we should learn the extreme unwisdom of entering into contracts for long periods, taking into consideration only the costs involved at the time of contracting. I cannot imagine any private concern entering into a contract of 50 years' duration without taking into account the inevitable alterations in the costs involved, be it for electricity or anything else, that must occur during a period of so many years. I hope future Governments will heed the warning and will not repeat the mistakes of their predecessors. I was glad to have the assurance of the Minister that the Electricity Commission will not treat these two undertakings—the electricity and gas undertakings—as a taxing machine.

Fears in that direction have been in the minds of users of both gas and electricity. Such fears have been expressed to me several times in the last few weeks. We have had one outstanding experience in the shape of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, which for many years has been used to produce large amounts of revenue for the coffers of the Government. It is pleasing to have from the Minister a definite assurance that the intention of the Government is that the Electricity Commission will meet its own costs and will not seek to make a profit out of the supplying of these essential services to the people who use them.

Hon. A. Thomson: To make the Commission pay its own way?

Hon. J. A. DIMMITT: Yes. Some concern has been expressed to me by members of local governing bodies in relation to the contracts that they have for some time enjoyed with the City of Perth Electricity and Gas Department. It appears that some of

them have had contracts for the purchase of electricity for street lighting purposes, and they assume that the taking over of these undertakings will automatically end those contracts. They are anxious to know whether it will be possible for them to enter into negotiations with the Electricity Commission for the purpose of buying, at a reasonable figure, electricity for street lighting. I would like the Minister to give the local governing bodies an assurance that provision will be made to that end. I am sure that every member of this House is glad that this Bill has been brought down, and will support the second reading. I have pleasure in indicating my attitude in that regard.

HON. A. L. LOTON (South-East) [5.10]: I support the remarks of Mr. Thomson, who has explained fully the wish of many country people for a flat rate to be charged for electricity in country areas. Now that the Government has agreed that an increase in the charge for electricity is necessary, in order to avoid losses, it should be possible, by making that increase a little greater, to supply electricity to country consumers at a rate equal to that charged in the metropolitan area. Mr. Thomson went fully into the facts and figures.

In my opinion, no-one could gainsay his argument that if we are to maintain production and encourage the establishment of further industries in rural centres we must charge a flat rate for electricity and other essential services, in both the metropolitan and country areas. Mr. Thomson mentioned the proposal to transfer part of the Albany Woollen Mills to Fremantle. The only reason advanced for that transfer was that, current being so much cheaper at Fremantle than at Albany, production would be on a much better footing at Fremantle. I am pleased the Government saw its way clear to compensate the Albany Woollen Mills for the difference between the price paid for current at Albany and that paid in the metropolitan area. That arrangement was only a makeshift, and I do not know for how long the subsidy will be continued. I endorse fully the remarks of Mr. Thomson, and I support the second reading.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.12]: I support the second reading of the Bill, but desire to criticise the remarks of Mr. Thomson, who endeavoured to make politi capital out of the measure. We must t to visualise the arguments raised when t original contract was entered into, and t information available to the City Council that time. Now, after the passing of t years, everyone realises that the contr was a mistake, and it is wrong at this sta to endeavour to make political capital o of it.

The Government is to be congratulat on having implemented one of the most i portant planks of Labour's platform. W believe in taking over public utilities su as this when that course is in the interes of the people. The present Governme apparently believes in the same thing a has arrived at an agreement that has ma this measure possible. It takes two parti to come to an agreement, and there is doubt that the formation of the State El tricity Commission by the previous Gover ment was the first move in this big deal.

Hon. A. Thomson: I was not maki political capital out of it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I can remember wh the agreement was entered into and t Press controversy that took place at th time. There is no doubt that the then may and council showed great business acume

Hon. A. Thomson: Do you mean th they put it over the Crown Law Depa ment?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: We must look to t future and forget the mistakes of the pa I would like to see Mr. Thomson's ideas r garding a flat rate for electricity throug out the country come true. I want to s the country populated and country tow made larger. Everyone who knows anythi about it must realise the difficulties of d centralising industries because of the hi cost of water and electricity in the countr All thinking men will try to arrange f those difficulties to be overcome through the State. The Government is to be co gratulated on the successful manner in whi it has finalised the negotiations with t Perth City Council. No doubt it will me that the charges will go up. Even the Ci Council, with all the favourable position was in, would have been obliged to raise t rates. This is a definite step forward, a I have pleasure in supporting the seco reading.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [5.16]: I would not have risen but for the remarks of Mr. Gray. The Bill has my strong support. The taxpayers of the State have for a long time been suffering under this particular agreement, and the arrangements that have now been made are long overdue. A tremendous loss has been sustained all down the years as a result of an unbusinesslike arrangement entered into by the Scaddan Government in 1913, just prior to my becoming a member of this House. In those days we had nationalised fish shops, butchers' shops and other undertakings of the kind. These cost the country a lot of money without being of any service to the taxpayers.

The agreement which has now been terminated with the Perth City Council has stood for 35 years. It could not have been allowed to continue much longer. All my life I have been opposed to the breaking of agreements, but I would, in all the circumstances, have been quite prepared to break this one. The arrangement with the Perth City Council meant that the taxpayers had to find a great deal of money for the benefit of the city and its ratepayers. The agreement provided that current should be supplied at ¾d. per unit throughout a period of 50 years. No man of any commercial standing would have agreed to that sort of thing. The arrangement did not stop there, for there was also a provision made that if the current supplied to the City Council could be produced at less than ¾d. per unit, the council was to get the benefit of the reduction.

The Perth City Council was made up of businessmen. The city was to get the benefit of a reduction in price but, if there was an increase in cost, no provision was made for that to be passed on. The only thing left to do was to cancel the agreement by Act of Parliament. There is no doubt a lot of money has been lost to the State during all these years. It has remained for the present Government to tackle the position as no previous Administration had done so. I congratulate the Government on its purchase and on the satisfactory terms—at all events, satisfactory to the Perth City Council—of the arrangement that has been made. It should now be possible to effect considerable savings in the cost of the undertaking. No doubt, rates will be increased, but all down the years the taxpayers of the State were paying for the cheaper current supplied in the metropolitan area at the expense of the taxpayers.

Hon. G. Fraser: Did you say you would agree to cancellation of the old agreement?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is not my principle to agree to the cancellation of agreements, but I would have been prepared to support such a thing in this case. The agreement was too one-sided. It was entered into by a stupid Government, with no commercial experience. It was all in favour of the Perth City Council, and not at all in favour of the taxpayers.

Hon. G. Fraser: You would have cancelled the agreement?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Yes. It would have been the first time in my life that I would have agreed to such a thing. It is with pleasure that I support the second reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [5.20]: I think Mr. Dimmitt misunderstood my remarks. The agreements with the local governing bodies are automatically cancelled, but they will be continued until fresh arrangements are entered. There will be no difficulty about that. I was pleased to hear the remarks of Mr. Gray, which indicated that a plank in the platform of the Labour Party was the looking after of the people. It is gratifying to know that we have done this in 18 months.

Hon. G. Fraser: You like copying us.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We did it in 18 months, and I think Labour was 14 years in office without doing anything in this regard. I am pleased to receive the compliment from Mr. Gray. It is gratifying to know that after very difficult negotiations the outcome has met with the approval of members.

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 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Amendment of State Electricity Commission Act:

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Is the Perth City Council Superannuation Scheme affected by the transfer of the undertaking to the Electricity Commission?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The officers will be taken over. The superannuation scheme of the City Council is better than that of the Government, but it is proposed to have a new one exactly on the same lines for the men concerned.

Clause put and passed.

Schedules, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and *passed.*

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Government Employees' Pensions.

2, Purchasers' Protection Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

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

BILL—WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [5.29]: I am going to support this Bill. As already pointed out by the Minister, it is the State's contribution to the wheat stabilisation plan. With the Minister, I regret that Western Australia did not stand on its own because, as far as its wheatgrowers are concerned, it would have had a considerably better financial return than it will under this proposed legislation. This State is a large exporter in comparison with the Eastern States with regard to wheat products. The result is that there would have been a much greater return to wheat producers from that point of view. But today, with our export of wheat, we will have to share with the Eastern States, and so the State will be that much worse off financially.

In the wheat stabilisation fund, as soo as the price of wheat reaches the amou fixed—that is, 6s. 8d. a bushel at prese for home consumption—a percentage of t balance, amounting to a maximum of 2s. 2 will be paid into a pool for adjustmen later on when the price recedes belo 6s. 8d., or on such home consumption pri as is fixed from time to time. I point o to the farmers that that money, exceptin the repayments made from time to tin to maintain the price at 6s. 8d., will locked up for the full five years durin which the plan is to operate. If a man co tinues his farming for only three yea his money will remain in the pool, and at the end of the period there is nothin left, he will get nothing out. This is o of the disadvantages arising from joinin up with the rest of Australia in the Co monwealth plan.

I do not know what is ahead of us regards prices. The Press is trying make out that there is going to be a fa in prices. There may be some drop. I a in agreement with most members that t price of wheat today is too high. Whea growers do not want an unreasonably hig price. On the other hand, the price wheat in comparison with the price of oth commodities is not much higher than ought to be.

Hon. A. L. Loton: You are referring the oversea price?

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Yes, what is known as the international pla Whether the price will be fixed at le than 12s. is a matter to be determine The situation in regard to the internation plan, to which we are now committed, that there are more buying countries tha selling countries. I understand that t only selling countries are Canada, t United States of America and Australi Those are the only three countries tha agreed to sell wheat at the contract pric The other large producing countries a Russia and Argentine. Whether they wi come into the scheme in future is, of cours in the lap of the gods.

The most extraordinary thing is that t 33 purchasing countries may at any tim retire from the contract if they can g cheaper wheat from some other source. Th contracting countries, the United States America, Canada and Australia, are boun

by the contract to supply, and will have to do so as long as they have the wheat. If the wheat is not available in Australia, the other two countries must make up the deficiency; if it is not available in the United States, Canada and Australia must make up the deficiency if they can. I do not like contracts of that sort. Of course, all the exporting countries should have been parties to the scheme, but two would not participate. Consequently it was unwise to try to come to an international agreement to fix the price of a commodity like wheat.

I feel sure that nobody wants to see the price of wheat fall as low as it was from 1930 onwards. Prices during those years were calamitous. Nobody would have ever expected them to fall so low. Whether the present scheme is likely to improve the stability of the farmers is very doubtful indeed. I believe that in the next five years the Commonwealth will not be called upon to pay anything towards the export price.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I do not think the Commonwealth expects to do so, either.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: No; the agreement is quite a good one from the point of view of the Commonwealth.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Of course it is.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I understand that a considerable amount of money has already been paid into a pool and will now be refunded to the farmers and, commencing with the current harvest, they will make contributions over the period of five years until the capital amount reaches about £12,500,000.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Mr. Pollard would never say how much the maximum would be.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I understood that the maximum was to be £12,50,000. So many statements have been published that it is realy difficult to ascertain the true position. In view of the decision of the farmers of Australia and of Western Australia particularly, there is no alternative to giving effect to this legislation. The Minister has produced a Bill that must commend itself to the House. It certainly gives effect to the decision of the farmers, who wanted a Commonwealth scheme, and the Minister has honoured his promise that their decision would receive the full support of the Government and of himself. The Bill must be passed. We cannot stand out now because we are more or less committed to the Commonwealth plan. Once the wheat has been acquired on behalf of the Commonwealth, I presume the responsibility for payment will rest entirely with the Commonwealth. I support the second reading.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.36]: I support the second reading and am pleased that my opinion of the scheme has been accepted. I advocated Commonwealth control because the Commonwealth is the only authority that can enter into negotiations for an international plan. Sir Charles Latham referred to the action of the Argentine and Russia in standing out of the international agreement. They are doing so because they do not care a tinker's curse what happens to the starving people in Europe and other countries. It would have been calamitous had Australia followed the example set by those two countries. So far from doing so, it adopted the right attitude by agreeing with the United States and Canada to participate in the scheme.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: There is nothing in this Bill dealing with the international wheat scheme.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I consider that the farmers of Australia did the wise thing, not only in their own interests, but also in the interests of the purchasing countries, by agreeing to the Commonwealth scheme. With regard to the need for farmers' preparing for the future, anyone who has read about wheat sales will have noticed that a tremendous quantity of low-grade wheat has been sold to Japan. The price paid for it has not been disclosed.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Yes, it has—12s. 6d. a bushel.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Then I feel sorry for Japan.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That gives you an idea of the value of good wheat. It was pretty crook stuff that was sold to Japan.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I consider that Japan has been taken down badly. I should say that that wheat was not worth 1s. 6d. a bushel.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: You are wrong there.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It would be hardly fit for stock feed. At every opportunity I have stressed the need for farmers to prepare for a drop in prices. The price cannot remain at the present level for five years, but it might remain at a reasonable figure. However, the time will come when our position as a wheat growing country will be changed, and it is the duty of progressive farmers to try to persuade their comrades to grow a better class of wheat. I was impressed by a photograph published in "The West Australian" of the harvesting on a big farm in the Mingenew district.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Was not that on Tootra Station?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: That is right. The farmer harvested 2,000 acres of wheat, and it was fine to see the picture of the harvesters stripping the crop. That farmer started in a small way at share farming and has been wonderfully successful as a wheat grower, but he has spoiled it all by growing a breed of wheat that is practically worthless for making good bread. I would expect such a farmer to grow a class of wheat that could compete in the world market. A crop of 2,000 acres is a big one, and his wheat will be dumped into the pool and would naturally reduce the f.a.q. standard. Members must excuse me for indulging in a little preaching to farmers, but I realise that there is much to be done, and that unless they start by growing wheat of good milling quality, there will be trouble when the market price begins to drop.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: The millers will not pay the premium for it. You get the bakers to pay a decent price for it!

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Experts throughout the world, including the British Commonwealth and this State, are advocating a change along these lines. No doubt a lot of persuading will be necessary to get farmers to agree to it, but it must be done if we are going to make secure our place in the world market.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: What breed of wheat do you suggest the farmers should grow?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am not going to enter into a long explanation of that, but there are varieties being produced in New South Wales and South Australia as well as in this State that are suitable and the farmers could grow them to much better advantage. I challenge the Minister or any farmer in this Chamber to say that the f.a.q. standard is satisfactory. Let us bring about this alteration as quickly as possible

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Central) [5.41]: The wheat farmers of Australia have surely voted in no uncertain manner in favour of a Commonwealth pool. However, there are certain provisions which in my opinion should have been included in the Bill and which the farmers were hoping would be included. I hope it will not be a forlorn hope to trust that some of them will be inserted. One of the biggest drawbacks is the lack of provision for payment of the equity to a farmer who has been contributing to the export fund. Unless he remains in the industry, he will not know what his equity is until such time as the fund is called upon to maintain the stabilised price of 6s. 8d. a bushel, as it is today

Taking my own case, I can continue growing only till the end of the year, and the money that I put into the pool will be a gift to the fund. I shall get nothing out of it. Such a principle is definitely wrong. A stabilisation plan, in my opinion, should cover not only any rise in costs but also the equity that any farmer has in the fund. Consider a man whose crop has been a total failure through drought or the depredations of grasshoppers. Such a man should be able to draw on the fund for 12 months. This is a concession that has been asked for but has been refused.

Another bad feature of the arrangement is that the power is still left with the Federal Minister to do as he likes with the wheat. He may sell it to any country he chooses and at whatever price he likes without referring in any way to the growers. A Wheat Board is being set up with growers representatives from each State. Unfortunately, Western Australia is to have only one representative on the board. I consider that the record of this State over past years justifies the appointment of two representatives, especially as this State definitely kept the Eastern States supplied with wheat when they were sorely in need of it. Nearly the whole of our surplus wheat was sent to

the Eastern States for the benefit of starving stock. We were fortunate in having such a large quantity for export in that year and they were fortunate in being able to get it from us.

A further bad feature of the arrangement is that the Federal Minister will have the right to disagree to a certain extent with the findings of the costs committee. The Minister said, in effect, that although the costs committee would inquire into the cost of production, it was not necessary for him to accept its findings. I consider that if a committee inquires into the cost of production, the Minister should be bound by its decision. Fortunately the Minister has agreed to accept this year's findings: but next year the committee may say that costs are up 2s., and the Minister may say he will only allow 6d. A further bad feature is that an international agreement can be signed without reference of the particulars to the farming community. During the course of his remarks, Mr. Gray seemed to think that we should have entered into the international agreement last year. I would like to remind him that if we had done so, the amount of wheat that would have been available for export from Australia this year would have been 35,000,000 to 40,000,000 bushels; the rest we could not have exported unless we found other markets. The agreement would have taken effect from the 1st August. At that date we had 45,000,000 to 50,000,000 bushels and the export quota of Australia was 85,000,000 bushels. Any Minister for Commerce who enters into an agreement for Australian wheatgrowers and gets down to 85,000,000 bushels is not right in the head.

The production of this country must expand; and if we hold ourselves back to 85,000,000 bushels, we will decline instead of expand. Mr. Gray also touched on the quality of wheat. He wants farmers to grow a certain type in order to produce better bread. I can assure him that if he wishes to see a departure from the existing principle along the lines he has suggested, he must be prepared for the working man and everybody else to pay 1s. for a loaf of bread. If people are willing to do that, the farmers may be ready to grow the wheat.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That is the point; they are not prepared to pay any more for the bread.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I think this State can be congratulated on being the only one that gave the growers an alternative scheme. The Government can be proud of the fact that it was the first to provide for a poll for growers, giving them an alternative scheme. The growers turned down a State scheme because they were a little afraid that Western Australia could not finance it. That was the main reason for their disagreement. They were afraid that if the export price dropped, the State could not finance the proposition. They also hoped to get stabilisation as the result of a Commonwealth scheme. It should be on record that this Government did give the growers an alternative scheme. In the other States they merely had to say whether or not they were in favour of the Commonwealth scheme. As I have the future of the wheatgrowers of this State at heart, I hope this Bill will enable them to carry on and that eventually they will secure the remainder of the 15 points they have been chasing over the last few years. If they do, I will be the first to congratulate the Commonwealth Government on this measure.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.50]: I cannot let the occasion go by without reminding the Minister of the difference between the constitution of this board and the one that was discussed last evening. I have been hoping that this measure is a sign of penitence on the part of the Minister and an indication that he has seen the error of his ways as demonstrated in the other measure. I think that the proposed board is a good one, and I hope that the Government will follow the same line in the appointment of future boards.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Why have you suddenly become a friend of the farmers?

Hon. G. FRASER: I have never been a friend of any particular group, but I have always been in favour of legislation which sets out to do justice to anybody. This measure would be improved if the Farmers' Union were given an opportunity to nominate its representative. However, the next best thing has been done and the measure provides that some of the members of the board shall be members of that union. Moreover, the representation covers every interest possible—the growers, the licensed receivers, flour-milling interests, and the

railways. I hope we can take this measure as a pattern of future Bills dealing with the constitution of boards.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: This is not a marketing Bill.

Hon. G. FRASER: It does not matter what the Bill is for. Any board constituted on these lines will receive my approval. I am hoping that the departure made by the Minister in relation to the board we dealt with last night is only temporary; and that the constitution of boards in the future will be similar to that of this board, except perhaps that, in addition, the organisations concerned will be given the right to elect their own representatives.

There is one point upon which I would like enlightenment. Clause 9 deals with the delivery of wheat. Is it the intention that the whole of the wheat shall be brought into the stabilisation scheme? If that is the intention, I cannot understand the language of this clause. The wording is that the wheat may be delivered to the board, and then it is stated that deliveries shall be made on demand. If it is a compulsory stabilisation scheme there is no need for the use of the word "may." I support the second reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. C. B. Wood—East—in reply) [5.54]: I am pleased at the reception of the Bill. In reply to Mr. Fraser's remark, I had a long look at Clause 9, and all I can do is to refer him to Mr. Pollard who framed most of the clauses. We were given a uniform Bill, complementary legislation to that of the Commonwealth. This clause was included in it. I think the idea is to kid the farmer that he can do what he likes! He is given an opportunity to submit his wheat voluntarily; but if he does not do so, the Wheat Board will say, "You shall do it." I do not like that, but I did not remove the provision because I did not want to have a controversy with the Federal Minister. There are, however, other things that have been altered. We have provided safeguards for the State in case there is any legal action later on concerning the compulsory acquisition of wheat at a lower price than might have been obtained had a man been free to do what he liked.

The substance of the measure is in line with legislation introduced by the other States. I cannot give Mr. Fraser a proper answer to his question because the matter is entirely in the hands of his colleague in the Commonwealth Parliament. He, or the people who advise him, framed the Bill on those lines. I hope there will not be any amendments to the Bill because I want it to be as far as possible in conformity with the legislation of other States. I was impressed with the remarks of Mr. Logan about an equity in the stabilisation fund. I have fought that matter for a long time—two years at least. At Canberra and everywhere else, I have said that a man who puts his wheat into the pool and goes out of wheatgrowing should have a certain right to that wheat. It does not matter whether he goes out voluntarily or is forced out; it is his money. But we could not shift the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What are the arguments against it?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Commonwealth Government does not appear to have any arguments against it. I never seemed to get much support from other Ministers.

Hon. L. A. Logan: They reckoned they would not be able to work it out.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There have been arguments against it, but they have never convinced me. Whether anything will be done later on and men leaving the industry, like Mr. Logan, will get anything, I do not know. It has been maintained that when a man is selling his property, value is added to it on account of his contribution to the fund. There are men like Mr. Logan, however, who leave but do not sell. But it is maintained, that there is still an added value. I think, however, that a man should have the right to take his money out and chance what he gets for his property. Mr. Gray raised the old question that he brings up every time. Why should the farmer grow wheat of better quality if he is not going to be paid for it? There was a time when we had wheat of the Ranee variety for which we got a certain amount extra from the millers. I do not blame Mr. Smart if he can grow the Comeback variety and get a high yield, but why should farmers grow good quality wheat for the sake of Mr. Gray and others in the baking industry if they are not going to be paid for it?

Hon. E. H. Gray: You will have a job to sell your wheat in years to come.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think we need worry about that. We sold damaged wheat to Japan at 12s. 6d. I do not mind what Japan pays for our damaged wheat so long as we derive some benefit out of it. I believe the 12s. 6d. was rather high, but why should we worry about that? Did the Japanese worry when they starved our people? I have no sympathy with that viewpoint at all. If they paid that amount for our wheat they must have thought the product worth it. What I was concerned about was that our soldier friends in Japan might have to eat some of it.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They have not had to do so, have they?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know. I hope not.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is the first time Japan has bought B grade wheat.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think they like that type of thing. Anyway they got it at a much lower price than they would have had to pay for good wheat. That illustrates the value of wheat today; we can get rid of wheat which is a drag on our own market in Australia. The damage was caused because New South Wales did not know how to handle its wheat.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Which meant a loss to Western Australian growers.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Unfortunately that was so. They have not got the facilities for handling wheat in New South Wales that we have in this State although that State has been operating a bulk handling plant longer than we have. There are one or two amendments to be made to the Bill but I will explain them during the Committee stage, as they are not very contentious. One amendment is to be inserted at the request of the associated banks. This morning that organisation asked me to insert something which would safeguard its interests with regard to mortgages. That will be done. There is also a proposed amendment to safeguard the only handling authority in Western Australia.

Provision is made in the Bill for the disqualification of a member of the State board who does not turn up to one meeting during the month. It is intended to delete that provision in the Bill because some of the members may have other important engagements. For instance, the representative on the Australian Wheat Board will have to attend the meetings of that board in Canberra and Melbourne and under the provision in the Bill he would be automatically disqualified if he did not attend one meeting of the State board during the month. It must be realised that there will not be too many meetings of the State board and this would be a severe penalty.

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

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

That in line 1 of paragraph (c) of Subclause (3), the word "Minister" be struck out and the words "W.A. Flour Millowners' Association" inserted in lieu.

I think the nomination should be made by the millowners' association in the same way as in the Workers' Compensation Bill a representative is to be appointed by the Employers' Federation.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I hope the Minister will not agree to the amendment, because if he does we will have to go back and give authority to the farmers to choose their representatives. I consider the mill owners would be glad to make suggestions to the Minister and no doubt he would agree to the right appointment.

Hon. G. FRASER: I hope the Minister will agree to the amendment because it will put the whole clause into conformity.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: The selection of the growers' representatives will be from a panel of names.

Hon. G. FRASER: And that is what this amendment proposes.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: To bring it into conformity I would be quite prepared to say that one shall be the chairman of the Flour

millers' association. That would bring it into line with the paragraph concerning the Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. Either that, or we could insert an amendment to have a panel of names submitted by the Association.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I think if we said that one shall be nominated by the Millers' Association that would safeguard the position because there is only a limited number of millers in the State.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Paragraph (a) states that two representatives will be selected from six persons who comprise the board and I have asked the Farmers' Union to submit a panel of names to me in order that their representatives can be selected. In the case of the flour millers I think it would be a good idea if we had a panel of three names submitted.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I suggest that we defer this clause until all the other clauses have been dealt with. That will give us time to draft something suitable.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I would suggest that the amendment should be that a panel of names be submitted to the Minister and he can then make a choice. The panel can be submitted by the W.A. Flour Millers' Association.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: In view of the Minister's explanation, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (c) of Subclause (3) be struck out with a view to inserting a new paragraph.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I suggest that the Honorary Minister eliminate the word "three" from his amendment.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I think there should be a stated number.

Hon. A. Thomson: There are about seven or eight mills only in the State.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think there should be some selection and that three is a suitable number.

Hon. A. Thomson: Any one of the managers of the mills would be a desirable person.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.45 p.m.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not altogether sure that there is such an organisation as the Flour Millers' Association of Western Australia.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I can inform the Honorary Minister that the name of the organisation is the W.A. Flour Millowners' Association.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment:—

That in lieu of the words struck out a new paragraph be inserted as follows:—

(c) One shall be selected by the Minister from a panel of three names submitted to him by the W.A. Flour Millowners' Association.

Hon. G. FRASER: During the second reading debate I stated I thought it would be more satisfactory if the representatives of the growers were to be elected by them. Since then I have perused Federal "Hansard" and I noticed that the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce and Agriculture, Mr. Pollard, stated in the House of Representatives—

In the discussion with the States it was agreed also—

(1) That the States, where they desire to do so, will constitute State wheat boards composed of a majority of growers' representatives elected by a ballot conducted by the State.

(2) That each State board shall nominate growers' representatives, who are growers, to the central authority in accordance with the present grower-representation on the Australian Wheat Board.

There is an indication that it is desired that the people elected shall be chosen by the growers themselves. On the board to be constituted under the Bill two of the six are to be representatives of the growers but they are not to be elected by the farmers but selected by the Minister from a panel. That is an entirely different proposition. We should be given the reason for the alteration.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The names of the two wheatgrower representatives were submitted to me by the Farmers' Union of Western Australia. If anyone wanted to raise an objection, surely it should be that union. Mr. Pollard will probably not care whether these representatives are elected or are nominated by the Farmers' Union. After all, an

election is expensive, and the people concerned are happy about the matter. Surely, Parliament should be the authority to say whether we should accept the nominations of the Farmers' Union, or whether the representatives should be elected.

Hon. L. Craig: It would be a bad position if that were not so.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am prepared to accept full responsibility in the matter.

Hon. G. FRASER: It was not Mr. Pollard who made the agreement. I emphasised the words "in discussion with the States, it was agreed." As the Bill now stands, the growers' representatives are only one-third of the personnel of the board.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: No. Tell the whole story. What about the chairman of Co-operative Bulk Handling, Ltd., who is a wheatgrower?

Hon. G. FRASER: He is not on this board as a growers' representative.

Hon. L. A. Logan: But he is a wheatgrower.

Hon. G. FRASER: He is representing a different interest. As there will be only two growers' representatives on the board, it is possible that a member of the board attending the Commonwealth Wheat Board may not be a grower. The Bill needs further consideration.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have many safeguards. The first is that I, as Minister, will take full responsibility.

Hon. H. L. Roche: It is all right as long as you are Minister.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Another place rejected a proposal to have four wheatgrower representatives. If we select four growers' representatives, we shall have every reason to believe that another place will turn the proposal down. Victoria and South Australia have no boards at all.

Hon. H. K. Watson: They have not got motor control boards, either.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is quite irrelevant to what we are discussing. It is our prerogative to say how the board shall be constituted. According to Mr. Fraser, there must be a board.

Hon. G. Fraser: No, I did not say that.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the Committee likes to say that I shall appoint another producer, I shall be agreeable.

Hon. G. FRASER: Federal "Hansard" has this to say, "The States, where they desire to do so, may form a board." Evidently it was foreseen that some States would not. Apparently the representatives of this State must have agreed to a certain proposal, and then introduced an entirely different one here. That does not seem straight acting to me.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There may have been a committee in existence in this State prior to the passage of the Wheat Stabilisation Act. I had in mind the appointing of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., as a State board under that Act, but I did not do so because Mr. Teasdale was not on it. There is an advisory committee, of which Mr. Thomas of the Agricultural Department is a member, and one or two others. I could have picked up that committee, according to the Commonwealth. We were supposed to have agreed to many things at the conference to which we did not agree.

Hon. G. Fraser: Who was the representative of this State there?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I was.

Hon. G. Fraser: Would you say that you did not agree to that proposal?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will be quite candid and say I do not remember, but I have the safeguard in the Commonwealth stabilisation Act. What does the hon. member suggest?

Hon. G. Fraser: I suggest you stand up to the agreement made at the conference.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not remember whether we made an agreement. The minutes state very definitely that I did not agree to certain things, but certain people say I did.

Hon. G. FRASER: The Act evidently provides that where a board is established, it can carry on, but there was no board in this State at the time.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: There was.

Hon. G. FRASER: The board can only be created on the lines of the agreement arrived at. It is remarkable that a person can go to a conference and not know what he agreed to.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will say definitely that I did not agree to that. I did not agree to anything when I was there. I was very guarded about what I would agree to. I have proof in the minutes that I would not agree to anything without submitting it to the people of Western Australia.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am quite satisfied now. I wanted to know who was right and who was wrong.

Amendment (to insert words) put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6:

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That in lines 4 and 5 of Subclause (2) the words "be entitled to a license pursuant to the provisions of this section" be struck out and the following words inserted in lieu:—"by force of this subsection be regarded as licensed by the Board as a licensed receiver with the powers and subject to the duties conferred and imposed by these provisions."

These are much more appropriate than the original words. They are contained in the 1946 Act and appear in the Victorian and New South Wales legislation.

The CHAIRMAN: In the copies provided to the Clerks there appear the words "these provisions" and in my copy there appear the words "those provisions." Which is correct?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think it should read, "Those provisions".

The CHAIRMAN: Very well; it will be altered accordingly.

Amendment (as altered) put and passed.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That a new subclause (c) be inserted as follows:—

"When the licensed receiver receives from a grower wheat in new cornsacks the licensed receiver shall—

(a) credit the grower with the net weight of that wheat;

(b) pay the grower an amount equal to the market price of the new cornsacks when received."

The amendment will ensure that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. will receive the wheat in new bags. Under the law, all wheat for shipment oversea must be in new cornsacks.

Hon. G. Bennetts: I support the amendment, which has been recommended to me by the farmers in the mallee district.

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

Clauses 7 and 8—agreed to.

Clause 9—Delivery of wheat:

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move an amendment—

That at the end of Subclause (2), the following words be added:—"and, subject to the provisions of subsection (3) of section 12 of this Act, the rights and interests of every person in and to the wheat shall be converted into a claim against the board."

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

Clauses 10 to 20, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

Recommittal.

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

In Committee.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt 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 paragraph (a) of Subclause (6) be struck out.

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

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

BILL—MATRIMONIAL CAUSES AND PERSONAL STATUS CODE.

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to amendments Nos. 2 to 32 inclusive made by the Council, and had disagreed to No. 1.

In Committee.

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

No. 1. Clause 4, page 2—Insert after the word "rape" in line 36 the words "or attempted rape."

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

The amendment represents an extension of this ground of divorce which is not desirable having regard to the nature of the evidence required to establish the ground of adultery.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

This is an amendment to the definition of "adultery" inserted by Mr. Heenan. The term also includes rape on the part of a married person against some person of the opposite sex.

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

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

BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th November.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West) [8.35]: Over a number of years there has been quite a demand amongst those associated with coalmining for something in the shape of more direct control of the industry in the interests of the State. This Bill does, to a large extent, meet some of the desires of those people. I do not agree with all of the proposals but the Bill contains certain amendments—and this is particularly important—that should be consistently implemented, because I heard a whispering campaign recently in the coalmining areas to the effect that this Government is bringing down this measure as a kind of gesture and it was not likely to see it implemented.

I hope that when the Bill becomes an Act, the Government will see that its provisions are carried out because there are certain conditions laid down in it, which are somewhat overdue, for the conduct of the industry. I am satisfied that if this Bill is given effect to and the owners and the men concerned who are working in the mines accept it in the way it must be received, then it will make for a happier state of affairs, smoother working and higher production. It is fair to say that coalmining is almost entirely different from any other industry and it is not altogether a pleasant occupation. There is no glamour about it. There is not the charm of being immaculately dressed and manicured, like a lot of young men are in other avocations.

It is a dirty, grimy business performed underground under artificial conditions, and as such it deserves the best regulation that can be instituted. I do not think there is any member of this House who would care to become a coalminer. The position today is that it is very difficult to obtain workers of that description. In years gone by when unemployment was common, men were more or less forced into coalmines, but now, when there is plenty of employment everywhere they will not take on that work if they can find anything else. It is not unusual for one to hear in the coalmining districts a parent saying, "Well, my son shall never go into a coalmine. My boy is never going into the pit." It is an avocation that is, to an extent, looked down upon. There is no reason why it should be, but that unfortunately is the view some take of it. So when we talk about the conditions the men should work under—I believe there are none so bad in any other industry—we should do something to improve them. Metalliferous mining is a clean job compared with that of coal mining.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Coalmining is not so dangerous.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Mr. Gray says it is not so dangerous. Fortunately, we have taken steps in Collie in the working of the mines to obviate accidents as far as possible and there have never been many major ones. However, there are elements of danger that do not exist in other mines. We need not go into that now except to repeat that although it may not be equally as dangerous as metalliferous mining, there are quite sufficient accidents occurring even under the best of care and conditions. One often wonders whether the average citizen really apprehends the difficulties associated with coalmines. With unskilled manpower, inability to secure working essentials, high costs in every direction and industrial unrest, it is remarkable how the industry is carried on.

Here I want to say that unfortunately all those things apply in most coalfields elsewhere in Australia. These difficulties combine to give owners something of a perpetual headache. Every industry today is suffering from similar disabilities, but I believe in coalmining they are a little more accentuated that in any other direction. At the same time, there were periods when profits in coalmines were high. Lately, on perusing some reports and statistics, I have been surprised to find how little money there is for those that desire to invest their savings in the coal industry.

Let me illustrate it this way: Some few years ago the coalmines were paying quite desirable dividends. One of our companies has two types of shareholders, the ordinary shareholder and the preference shareholder. When the companies were floated, the preference shares carried eight per cent. interest, but that rate has been whittled down, and while the preference shareholders have received a dividend of a little over five per cent. instead of eight per cent., the ordinary shareholders have not received any dividends during the last eight years. This should be taken into consideration when dealing with a Bill of this sort. We ought to be fair to those charged with the responsibility of conducting the industry, and not do anything to increase the burden on them.

Members may be interested to know that this state of affairs is not confined to Western Australia. The position of the coalmines in the Eastern States is even less satisfactory. At the 30th June last, only 12 of the coal companies were listed on the Stock Exchange of New South Wales and the average profit for the year of all those mines was only 3.84 per cent. Quite a number of the mines are not paying dividends at all. The number of pits in that State is about 144, and quite a number of them have not paid dividends for a long time. Under existing conditions, it seems very doubtful whether they ever will.

The Bill seeks to bring about a new set of conditions in the industry at Collie. It proposes to establish a coalmining advisory board consisting of a chief coalmining engineer as head and two other persons. This is one of the points on which I disagree with the Bill. The chief coalmining engineer himself should be sufficient to carry out the duties proposed for the board. According to the Bill, his duties will be fairly onerous. He must be a man of considerable training and experience, while the other two members of the board will not be men of similar qualifications. As one of them would represent the owners and the other the miners, I do not think that in this instance there is any necessity for appointing those two members to the board.

Provided the right man is secured for the top position, he would be able to effect a very considerable improvement in the working of the mines. His duties would be wrapped up practically in Clause 5 which, I take it, is really the kernel of the Bill. These duties will include the prescribing of labour, development, working and other conditions. Development is one of the things that ought to receive considerable attention. A man of very high qualifications will be needed to set up a scheme of considered development for the mines. I am given to understand that this is a phase of the industry that has been much neglected. There is no control in this direction; the owners have been able to proceed as they chose. We have to bear in mind that these coal deposits, though leased to certain people, are really a national asset, and as such should be conserved and worked in such a manner that there shall be no waste and the needs of those who come after us will not be lost sight of.

The man who will have to undertake these duties will be one highly skilled. We have some highly skilled men in the field today. I do not know whether the Government has anyone in mind, but if applicants are to be called for the position, I hope that the claims of local men possessed of the requisite qualifications will be considered. The proposed new Section 9A contains a definition of "the chief coal mining engineer," which means the person for the time being appointed by the Governor to the office and, until a person is so appointed, or during the sickness, absence or other incapacity of the person appointed or during a vacancy in the office, includes any mining engineer employed in the department and for the time being appointed by the Minister to act temporarily.

I hope that that provision will be amended. While there are mining engineers employed by the department, they are not coalmining engineers. I have no criticism

to offer of those gentlemen because I believe that, in their respective spheres, they are fully competent and are rendering good service; but I submit that they are not coalmining engineers and that they would be somewhat out of their latitude in dealing with coal mines. I hope members will approve of an amendment to provide that this shall include any qualified coalmining engineer. Then if the appointee should fall ill or for any other reason be unable to carry out his duties, some other person with similar qualifications may be brought in to act in his stead.

The other night we were told that one of the companies had quite recently secured the services of a very competent gentleman to act as assistant superintendent of the mines. His qualifications were recited, and I believe and hope that that gentleman will be able to bring about a betterment of conditions on the lines required so that there will be more scientific development and better working of the mines and the extension of such mechanisation as is lacking. We already have a man with qualifications equal to those of the gentleman referred to. Let me record the qualifications of one man so that, should it be necessary at any time to obtain the services of a man to undertake the duties of chief coalmining engineer, his claims may not be overlooked. This man has qualifications almost as high as those of any man in the State.

Hon. G. Bennetts: Is the one that is now in charge a qualified engineer?

Hon. W. J. MANN: The man I refer to is the senior inspector. He holds a diploma in mining engineering, Glasgow Royal Technical College; first-class colliery manager's certificate, United Kingdom, New South Wales and Western Australia; member of the Coalmining Institute of Scotland, member of the Institution of Mining Engineers, London; and member of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers (Coal Division) New York. Practically all of those diplomas and certificates had to be gained by examination. So we are fortunate in having a man of Mr. Gillespie's attainments working in our mines. Whether the Government has any idea of appointing him to the position under this Bill, I do not know. Probably it would be a good thing if he were given a trial. This man has never done any work apart from that in coal mines.

He commenced work underground at the age of 14, and I have been informed that he filled practically all underground positions as a coal miner until 1916, when he enlisted in the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders and was given commissioned rank. Subsequently he transferred to the 51st Division of Engineers. After the war he became under-manager of Polnaise Collieries at Stirling, Scotland; in May, 1921, he was transferred and promoted to the position of manager of the Fernigare Collieries, Hamilton. He was subsequently promoted to the over-all management of larger collieries at Stirling. While with the Polnaise Collieries, he erected and assisted in the management of a coal briquetting plant with an output of 400 tons per day. So far, we have done nothing in the direction of briquetting coal at Collie.

I am not in a position to say how far Collie coal will stand up to briquetting, but there we have a man who has had experience in that line. Further, Mr. Gillespie was manager of the Griffin mine, and in the Wyvern mine, the most highly mechanised in the field, he spent a considerable time. So, from every point of view, we have at least one man in the industry and in Government employ that can be relied upon, because of his qualifications, experience and ability to render this service. The trouble about the position of senior inspector of coal mines is that he has had no authority, and it is useless to appoint a man to such a position, empower him to issue instructions and give him no authority to ensure that they are carried out. Under this measure, I believe that that situation will no longer arise. The chief coalmining engineer will have authority and, by exercising it, we hope that he will be able to ensure that his instructions for the benefit of the industry are carried out.

The position at Collie is one of which we might be reasonably proud. We have had no major disabilities, no major stoppages; and that has been brought about by reason of the fact that we have there a set of men who are very level-headed and reasonable; and so long as they receive reasonable treatment they can be trusted to do a fair thing. If one had time one could quote

figures showing the performances of the men on our Western Australian coalfields as compared with those of men in the Eastern States. If I quoted from an extensive report that I have before me, I could demonstrate that the output of our coalminers is equal to that of men in any part of Australia. As a matter of fact, in some cases it is considerably higher. The men work hard and are doing a good job. I welcome this Bill.

There are one or two small amendments needed which can be made in Committee, but I do not intend to pursue the matter further at the moment beyond congratulating the Government on bringing down the measure. I hope it will be carried and that it will usher in a new era for this most important industry. We have to remember that once coalmining stops, all other industries stop. It is a key industry which we have to foster. Sometimes there are those who complain that the conditions under which the men work are such that they are better than those in other industries. Such people only need to go into the mines and see the conditions under which the men have to work to be compelled to agree that they are entitled to the very best that can be given them. I support the second reading.

HON. H. TUCKEY (South-West) [9.4]: I support the second reading of the Bill, but I do not know that it will bring about the improvement the Government would like to see. The Bill has been introduced to improve the coal industry at Collie. It has no doubt been the result of many complaints and difficulties that have been experienced in Collie, including the lack of production at times. When we go back to years gone by when there was plenty of coal produced at 6s. a ton and find that today, with all the improved conditions, the cost of production is 25s. a ton and we cannot get all that is required, it seems to me that there is something wrong that will not be easily adjusted.

I am a believer in having an arbitrator or someone on the job who knows the work and is able to foresee trouble and do something to prevent it. At the same time I believe that the engineer that Mr. Mann has been speaking about is not going to do all that might be desired. It is a very difficult job to tell workers what they should do and employers how to run a mine.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Someone has to tell them.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: It is one thing to give orders and another to compel people to obey them. It is rather tragic to know that we have such an abundance of coal in the South-West, which in some cases is easily mined, and yet we are short of supplies and on some occasions have our factories idle because of lack of coal. My opinion is that we have a small element down there that we did not have in the early days and I do not think they are very helpful to the coal industry. But as a result of this legislation, and possibly other efforts on the part of the Government, some check may be made on them to keep the wheels of the coal industry turning.

I think sometimes that coalmining companies could do a little more in the way of treating their workers generously. I know they have done quite a lot and that they might mean well; but I have found that if one can see trouble ahead and can do something about it, that is better than letting unfavourable conditions continue until one is forced to take action. I saw some of the dressing rooms at Collie recently concerning which complaints have been made. The excuse offered for lack of extensions was shortage of building materials; but I do not know that this State has ever been so short of such materials as to be unable to put in hand work of that description. I do not think it should be left to the Housing Commission to say what can be done in matters of this kind.

It is of sufficient urgency for the Government to step in and say that, whatever the cost, the work is necessary and must be done; because without a sufficient supply of coal, every branch of industry in the State must suffer, and it is necessary that these coalminers should be made content. Some of them have been very patient. I went into one of the rooms and was surprised at the congestion. I do not know how they sorted out their clothes. They were very patient because of the circumstances; but we have never been in such a position that it has been impossible to carry out improvements of this kind. All that is required is timber, as a rule; and we have thousands of tons of sawn timber in our mills all the year round.

Whatever the circumstances, it would have been a good thing for work of that kind to have been done and for these men to have been given all the facilities they required. It seems strange to me that years ago, when mines were not very well developed and there was not much machinery for mining coal—it was grubbed out with a mattock or a pick at 6s. a ton—we had plenty of it and it could not be sold. For years the Griffin Co. could not dispose of its coal and had people running all over the State trying to sell a few trucks of it. That is not so long ago, either. Yet although we have up-to-date plant for mining purposes and better wages are paid today, we are in a desperate position for lack of coal.

Our trains are held up and transport everywhere is retarded, with the result that the State is put in an impossible position. The Leader of the House knows quite well the condition of the industry. He has been down there and has a firsthand knowledge of the position. He knows as much about it as I do. I think the Government will have to realise that this legislation is not sufficient to overcome existing difficulties, and it will have to make it a first call on its time to do something to put the industry on a sound businesslike basis.

HON. G. BENNETTS (South) [9.10]: I support the second reading. I hope that with a suitable man in charge, our Railway Department will receive better coal for locomotives. A good deal of trouble and loss of time is caused by coal being taken from open cuts. It is exposed to the weather for some time and then sent to the department. When it is used on the engines it is found to be nothing but dirt, with the goodness gone from it. Coal used on locomotives should be mined. It is a good thing that the man in charge should be a coal expert, but we must see that he is also a man who can handle men.

It is most essential that those in charge of men should learn to treat workers with civility. We had an experience which demonstrated the need for this a little while ago, when there was trouble about a horse being kept in the mine. A round table conference would have saved the State a lot of money. It would have been better to put the horse to the lions at the zoo in the first instance. I hope the Bill will be passed and will serve a good purpose. I heard Mr. Mann say we had had good work done by our coalminers. There is no doubt about that, and all through the State our workers have shown better results for their labours than has been the case with workers in other States. I am proud that we have such men in Western Australia.

HON. H. HEARN (Metropolitan) [9.13]: I support the Bill, with certain reservations. I believe that the introduction of this measure fulfils a promise made by the Government to the miners' union some time ago. When that promise was made—by letter—a communication was also sent to the companies. I was glad to hear Mr. Mann spend a little while in discussing the question of the returns to shareholders. I have no particular brief for Amalgamated Collieries, but as one goes around the town one hears criticism of this particular concern. But there is no doubt that the shareholders must have been disappointed with the financial returns for a good many years.

In 1941 Mr. Justice Davidson, sitting as an independent arbitrator, considered, after going into the facts of the case, that a reasonable profit for this company would be £18,625 per annum. That was the profit allowed by the Commissioner to Amalgamated Collieries. I have the latest statistics available from 1942 to 1945. It will be noted that no later figures can be given owing to the fact that accounts over a long period have not been finalised. The actual profits made were—

	£
1942	16,248
1943	16,039
1944	16,029
1945	12,021

Further figures are not available because the price of coal has not been finalised for the period ended the 30th June, 1946. I know, too, that the question of service to the community and fair dealing to the worker is not altogether bound up with company profits. I believe that Western Australia is facing in the coal industry, in common with other parts of the Commonwealth, a most difficult problem. We must not lose sight of the fact that one of the chief reasons why we find ourselves in that situation, not only in Western Australia but also throughout the Commonwealth, is because coal is a No. 1 priority. For every ton of coal we can produce, we need two tons.

Our attitude towards that industry is coloured, and must be coloured, by the fact that whatever we do, we are not producing enough coal. An illustration of that fact is that we do not hear very much about what they are going to do for the goldminers. Why? Because gold is not wanted at the moment, and coal is our No. 1 priority. I believe this Bill is essentially one which should be dealt with in Committee, and I am pleased to see on the notice paper some amendments which will make the Bill a workable one in the interests not only of the State and the workers, but also in fairness to the people who have invested money in the industry. Amalgamated Collieries has 300 shareholders and Mr. Mann gave details of the returns that those shareholders have received during the last few years on the capital invested in that company.

At this stage I think it would be just as well to mention something about the contribution of the company towards the pension fund. I am not criticising the wisdom of that decision and it was made of necessity. I believe the present Government contemplates the bringing down of a measure to remove an anomaly that has acted as a brake upon coal production. So much was deducted for every ton of coal produced in Collie, and we had the spectacle of a company producing a record tonnage and yet being forced to pay an increased amount into this pension fund. The time might have arrived when there would have been no net profit at all. For the information of the House, the following are the amounts paid in during the four years from 1945 to 1948—

	£
1945	3,978
1946	4,007
1947	4,700
1948	4,729

If that anomaly were not removed, private enterprise would feel that such an arrangement was a considerable brake upon its endeavours to produce coal. This Bill is a revolutionary one and the main provisions seem to be the setting up of three boards, one of which is an advisory board with a coal commissioner. I appreciate what Mr. Mann has said upon the importance of the selection of the right man as chief coalmining engineer, but I rather deprecate turning a second reading speech into a testimonial for any particular person. I consider that the man to be selected should be the most capable one available and that his selection should be left to the Government.

I agree with Mr. Mann that the question of union and employer-representation should not be associated with the setting up of the advisory board. The revolutionary part of the Bill is from an industrial point of view. I have already stated that our attitude towards coalmining has been coloured by the desperate need for coal, and, in view of the developments in the Commonwealth, we can see why the Government is proposing this industrial tribunal. A few days ago this House passed an amendment to the Arbitration Act to allow of the appointment of a conciliation commissioner.

Notwithstanding this fact, it is the intention of the Government, by this Bill, if Commonwealth control does peter out, to take over that control and for the first time in the industrial history of the State we will have a separate tribunal to deal with coal. That is because of the extraordinary conditions that prevail in the coal industry. However, I consider that is a dangerous precedent because it seems to me that any particular section of industry has only to make itself a complete nuisance, and its goods only need to be in short supply, and it can reasonably and fairly, command a separate conciliation and industrial board to deal exclusively with its grievances.

Hon. W. J. Mann: You say that the people at Collie have made themselves a nuisance?

Hon. H. HEARN: This Bill provides for the establishment of three more boards. The coal committee is to do a very important job, and I believe that its functions are very necessary when we bear in mind the fact that the Collie coalfields are to be developed not only by Amalgamated Collieries Ltd., but by other companies as well. The committee is to arrange for the distribution and complete control of coal as it is produced. When we realise that the Government purchases at least 90 per cent of the coal, it is only reasonable that it should want to have something to say concerning the distribution, because coal is the life blood of the State.

The amendments on the notice paper will make the Bill workable. I sympathise with

the Government in the problems that face it, and I compliment it on standing up to them and attempting to solve some of the difficulties. I hope that as a result, there will be an increased production of coal, complete justice and fairness done to the workers in the industry, and consideration given to the people who have been enterprising enough to become shareholders in certain companies by the investment of their money so that we might secure coal sufficient for the requirements of this State. There is no need to go into the question of what is happening in the way of suggested schemes of mechanisation or of the valuable officer that this company has secured for the position of assistant superintendent for the complete mechanisation of its mines.

Hon. W. J. Mann: What does that mean?

Hon. H. HEARN: I believe we will have brighter and better days ahead for the State from a coal point of view, and that there will be practical development of a valuable asset we possess in the Collie coalfields.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban—in reply) [9.25]: It is not my intention to take up much time of the House in replying to the debate because many of the arguments will be raised in Committee. Apparently the principal objection, if objection there is to the Bill, is to the appointment of a board including the chief coalmining engineer. I would like to inform members of the history of this matter.

I became Minister for Mines in April of last year. Within a few days a deputation from the coalminers' union waited upon me, and one of their requests was the appointment of a coalmining engineer. Shortly afterwards the Amalgamated Collieries also came to me and asked for the appointment of a coalmining engineer. Efforts have been made to obtain such a man, and Mr. Foote, an eminent man in the coalmining world in England, was out here, and I asked him to go to Collie and let me have a report. I also asked him to look out for a coalmining engineer. We have also inquired from the Agent-General, and made inquiries in the Eastern States; but in the meantime Amalgamated Collieries were able to obtain their own engineer.

I was somewhat surprised to hear Mr. Baxter holding forth as to the qualifications this man possesses. No-one is suggesting anything about that particular man. He is already employed, and I am surprised to find that Amalgamated Collieries have been able to get him. I do not know what the position is, but Mr. Baxter said he was employed—

Hon. W. J. Mann: He is the assistant superintendent.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Mr. Baxter said—

> For some considerable time Amalgamated Collieries of W.A. Ltd. have been endeavouring to secure the services of a competent mining engineer capable of laying out and installing the machinery for an up-to-date and fully mechanised mine, and they have only recently been successful.

I am very pleased that they have. All that this Bill asks is that we appoint a coalmining engineer on a board together with representatives of the workers and of the employers. There is no reason why the gentleman referred to by Mr. Baxter should not be the representative of the employers on that board. On referring to the Bill we find this—

> It shall be the duty of the Board from time to time to tender advice to the Minister as to any matter upon which the Minister desires advice and upon which the Board thinks it is proper to advise the Minister, and—
>
> (a) which affect or may affect the efficient and economical development or working of all or any of the coalmines in the State, or the safety and health of the persons employed therein.

What objection can there be to that? Surely there cannot be any. When the Government first assumed office, Amalgamated Collieries requested, and demanded, that we obtain the services of a coalmining engineer from whom they could seek advice. We have not yet made any appointment, and we must obviously wait until the Bill becomes law. Apparently a wrong impression has arisen in the minds of those associated with Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. that the person we appoint is going to manage their mines. He will do nothing of the sort.

Hon. W. J. Mann: That is not right.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Of course, it is not right.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They have no such idea. There are other companies as well as the Amalgamated Collieries and there will be more shortly.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am only talking about what Mr. Baxter said and what was conveyed to me by his remarks —as well as from something else. They have an idea this board is going to rush around and say, "You do this, and you do that." It is going to do nothing of the sort. It will be there to advise not only Amalgamated Collieries but also any other collieries that require advice. It will also advise the Minister regarding what is happening. It would interest members to know that representations have been made to me that certain things are not being done for the production of coal that is urgently needed at present. The position is such that an eminent coalmining engineer is going to Collie tomorrow morning to report to me on the position regarding the Black Diamond open cut.

Members may have heard various rumours as to whether the work there is being carried out correctly and whether the mine is being started on the right spot. We want to know what are the facts. I know that we have a very eminent mining man in our own service, but differences of opinion have arisen as to whether things are going properly. In view of that, we have secured an independent man to give us some advice. Why should we not do that? The amendment in the Bill that seeks to enable the Government to promulgate regulations dealing with work, labour and other conditions has been objected to very strongly. If members peruse the Act, they will see that we are merely adding the words "development, working and methods by which" to the powers already available in that respect. That is the extent to which additional powers are sought.

It must be borne in mind that all the coal in Western Australia belongs to the State, which grants leases to people to work the deposits. For the purposes of the State, something like 85 per cent. of that coal is required. Is it not right that the Minister should have someone to assist him? Not all Ministers are fully conversant with the intricacies of coalmining, and I certainly am one of them. Is it not proper that I should have a competent, capable coalmining engineer to advise me? I was very pleased to hear today an excellent report regarding the technical staff of the Mines Department from a man who is in a position to express an opinion. Apropos of the amendment embodied in the Bill that sets out that the engineer shall be required to have certain qualifications, I asked him what he thought about it. He said the proposal was indeed excellent, but, after thinking a while, he said, "But that might debar some of the very able staff you already have in the Mines Department, from participating. They require only a certain amount of tuition in coalmining methods. You are extraordinarily fortunate in having those men."

I certainly regard it as the duty of the Government to retain control over its coal supplies, particularly as it is the user of 85 per cent. of the coal produced. In the past we have not had a coalmining engineer, with the result that only a few weeks ago we were in the unfortunate position of learning that a number of miners had been notified that they would have to cease work on the face because they were getting too close to some old workings. In other words, development had not proceeded as it should have. In the Griffin Mine, men were put off because not sufficient development work had been carried out. The explanation offered was probably correct. I am not in a position to say whether it was correct or not. I certainly think the explanation advanced was reasonable. I may add that the men who were put off are not unemployed but have merely been taken away from the face and given other work. It is a significant fact that only when we decided to secure the services of a thoroughly efficient coalmining engineer, did Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. decide to get one itself.

It was only after other coalmining leases were granted as prospecting areas, with the intention of establishing a new mine very soon, that the company decided to get busy. I am pleased that it has done so, and has secured a coalmining engineer. The board that is to be established will not interfere in any shape or form with development that takes place there, but it will advise the Minister regarding what is happening. It may be that the advice tendered will be that we are not making the best use of our coal deposits. The duty will devolve upon the Minister to see that full use is made of the coal deposits, in the interests of the future, not so much concerning the present.

I thank members for the way they have received the Bill, and trust they will assist me in dealing with the amendments as they are proposed.

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 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—New Part IIA inserted:

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I have an amendment on the notice paper, but I do not propose to proceed with it, as I cannot achieve my objective in that way because it would still leave the proposed new section deficient. I want to ensure that only a qualified coalmining engineer shall be appointed either to the full position or in an acting capacity. The Minister has informed the Committee that the engineer to be appointed will report to him, but it goes further than that, and the engineer will deal with the working of the mines, and so on. It could be that he would interfere with output. I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of the definition of "Chief Coal Mining Engineer," the words "until a person is so appointed or" be struck out.

I shall later on move to strike out the words "or during a vacancy in the office" and also to insert before the word "engineer" in line 8 the words "qualified coalmining." I want to make sure that even the person appointed in an acting capacity possesses the qualifications necessary to enable him to fill the position adequafely.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Actually, there is a gentleman at Collie who has infinitely higher qualifications than has the one mentioned by Mr. Baxter. No Government would appoint a person to this difficult position unless he were qualified to fill it. I ask the Committee not to agree to the amendment.

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

Ayes	8
Noes	13
Majority against	5

AYES.	
Hon. Sir F. Gibson	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. C. H. Simpson	Hon. C. F. Baxter (*Teller.*)

NOES.	
Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. Sir C. G. Latham
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. J. G. Hislop (*Teller.*)
Hon. E. H. Gray	

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That in line 8 of the definition of "the Chief Coal Mining Engineer" before the word "mining" the words "qualified coal" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: What is the definition of "qualified coalmining engineer?"

Hon. H. Hearn: A person who would hold the qualifications outlined by Mr. Mann.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Besides the Chief Inspector, there are other engineers employed by the Mines Department who, I believe, possess the necessary qualifications but who have spent most of their time in metaliferous mines. Our object is to prevent strife at Collie. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I support the amendment. There are coal mining engineers holding the necessary qualifications. I cannot understand why the Minister opposes the amendment. It is really a safeguard.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: Suppose the Chief Mining Engineer happened to be away on sick leave for a month, would it be necessary to put in his place another qualified coalmining engineer?

Hon. W. J. Mann: There are others on the field.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: As the definition stands, it would be possible to appoint a metalliferous engineer from the Department of Mines. That might be dangerous.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the definition "the Chief Coal Mining Engineer" the following words be added:—"A person shall not

be eligible for appointment to the office of the Chief Coal Mining Engineer unless he is the holder of a first class colliery manager's certificate of a standard equal to that of New South Wales or the United Kingdom, and has had practical experience in the administration, organisation, development, mechanisation and superintending of a colliery, or group of collieries, producing not less than 100,000 tons of coal per annum."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The only objection I see to the amendment is the last portion which deals with collieries producing not less than 100,000 tons of coal per annum. We might have an excellent young man as manager of one of our collieries, but it would not produce that quantity. The main concern is the ability of the individual.

Hon. G. Fraser: What would the Proprietary Mine produce?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is a group of collieries at Collie, which produces about 500,000 tons altogether. This would debar any mine manager trained in Western Australia.

Hon. H. HEARN: I commend to Mr. Baxter the words of the Chief Secretary. The amendment would not lose any of its importance if we struck out all reference to the number of tons to be produced.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I am inclined to agree with the Chief Secretary. If we insisted on the tonnage, as originally suggested by Mr. Baxter, there would, according to information I have, be only two men in Australia entitled to apply for the job. I think it would be better to cut out altogether the question of production.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: In deference to the wishes of the Committee, I ask leave to alter my amendment by striking out in the last two lines the words "or group of collieries producing not less than 100,000 tons of coal per annum."

Leave given.

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

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—New Part XIII.:

Hon. H. K. WATSON: Most of my amendments to this clause relate to the one principle which is that, inasmuch as the tribunal is to be an industrial tribunal, it is necessary to see that the matters with which it is to be concerned are confined to industrial matters. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of the definition of "industrial matter" after the word "any" the word "industrial" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I see no objection.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: In connection with my next amendment, I am not unmindful of the fact that the two employee representatives may always be on the one side and the two employer representatives on the other. I think, however, what I suggest will make for a more even balance. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subsection (11) of proposed new Section 314 the words "not unanimous" be struck out and the words "evenly divided" inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: One would be inclined to agree with Mr. Watson in this. In fact, I took the same view when I saw the provision, and I queried it. The Bill has been sent to the miners, the person who is acting now as the tribunal, Mr. Wallwork, and the owners. Mr. Wallwork informed me that they were particularly anxious for this provision. Why, I do not know. There has been no objection from the owners.

Hon. H. HEARN: The proposed new section as it stands means that the commissioner will be the sole judge.

The Minister for Mines: Is not that the position with the Arbitration Court at the present time?

Hon. H. HEARN: Not altogether. This is clumsily worded, and I cannot see how it will work.

The Minister for Mines: Mr. Wallwork wants this, the unions want it, and I have received nothing from the companies, who know all about it because it is in operation now.

Hon. H. HEARN: An organisation with which I am connected, which deals with industrial affairs, is very concerned about this.

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move an amendment—

That a new section be inserted as follows:—

316. (1) Subject to this section, if, at any time after the commencement of the Mining

Act Amendment Act, 1948, the National Security (Coal Mining Industry Employment) Regulations of the Commonwealth shall be repealed, shall expire or shall otherwise cease to have effect within the State, every award, order or decision which—

(a) shall have been made or given under the said Regulations of the Commonwealth by the Central Coal Authority, the Central Reference Board, the Conciliation Commissioner or a Local Reference Board;

(b) shall have related to the coal mining industry in the State; and

(c) shall have been in force immediately prior to such repeal, expiry or cessation of effect as aforesaid, as the case may be,

shall, for the purposes of this Act be deemed to have been made under the authority of this Act and to continue in force and to take effect according to its tenor as if expressly authorised by this Act.

(2) Subject to Subsection (4) of this section, all parties and persons shall, as from such repeal, expiry or cessation of effect as aforesaid, abide by any such award, order or decision as aforesaid unless and until it is altered by the tribunal, and if it be altered, shall then abide by it as so altered.

(3) When an award, order or decision as aforesaid is inconsistent with an award, order or decision of the tribunal, the latter shall prevail, and the former shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be invalid.

(4) Any award, order or decision referred to in this section shall be subject to review and determination by the Court under the provisions of section three hundred and twenty-two of this Act.

(5) (a) This section shall have effect notwithstanding any lapse of time, not exceeding one month, between the date of the repeal, expiry or cessation of effect referred to in Subsection (1) of this section, and the date whereon this section shall be brought into operation by proclamation under section six of the Mining Act Amendment Act, 1948, and this section shall have such retrospective operation as may be necessary to give effect to the provisions hereof.

(b) If the lapse of time referred to in the last preceding paragraph shall exceed one month, this section shall have effect notwithstanding: Provided that no person shall be liable to prosecution or punishment for any contravention of the award, order or decision referred to in Subsection (1) of this section which occurred during such time.

If the Commonwealth ceased to operate in this sphere tomorrow, the Bill, as passed, would automatically come into operation, but there might be interregnum of a few days. This clause would carry on the existing awards as though they were made under this measure. It is a technical matter, simply to cover the legal aspect.

Amendment put and passed

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

That paragraph (c) of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 316 (as it appears in the Bill) be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think this paragraph is necessary, but that if we inserted after the word "other" in line 1 of the paragraph the word "industrial" the position would be covered.

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 of paragraph (c) of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 316 (as it appears in the Bill) after the word "other," the word "industrial" be inserted.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am sorry the Minister suggested the insertion of the word "industrial."

The Minister for Mines: Look at the definition of "industrial matter."

Hon. G. FRASER: Yes, but industrial relations may not be an industrial matter. Paragraph (c) specially covers what is outside industrial matters.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES: In view of the fact that paragraph (b) includes the word "industrial," it seems to be there for some particular reason. There are other matters that may cause an industrial dispute. It would be wise to allow paragraph (c) to remain as it is.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: The whole purport of this provision and that of the industrial tribunal is to deal with industrial matters. This will make it perfectly clear that the board's activities are irrevocably confined to industrial matters.

Hon. G. FRASER: The whole purpose of the board is, as far as possible, to maintain peace in industry. It is possible that on odd occasions the board would deal with something outside of an industrial matter, but are we to hamstring it? It is a safeguard which should be retained.

Hon. H. HEARN: With industrial matters, the provisions of the Act cannot be made too clear. I am sure it would not make for peace in industry if we give to this industrial tribunal any other power. I hope the Committee will accept the amendment.

Hon. H. A. C. DAFFEN: I support the amendment. The industrial matters referred to in paragraph (b) are those that are under an award of the court. Paragraph (c) would cover any matters not provided for by paragraphs (a) or (b). With this amendment, Mr. Watson is following out the scheme of the whole thing.

Hon. G. FRASER: I point out to the Committee that the horse "Red" could not be called an industrial matter. If the board were given this further power, it could deal with such a matter.

Hon. H. Hearn: The dispute over the horse "Red" was an industrial matter referred to the commissioner.

Hon. G. FRASER: Until such time as "industrial matter" was defined, the board would not know whether it could deal with it or not. Members of the Committee do not even know that the dispute over the horse "Red" was an industrial matter. When a problem such as that arises, then the Minister will declare that it is in the public interest for the tribunal to deal with it.

Hon. H. HEARN: The incident over the horse "Red" was an industrial matter. It was referred to the Conciliation Commissioner, was heard as a case in Collie, and, was ultimately referred to Mr. Gallagher.

Hon. W. J. MANN: The more I think about paragraph (c), the more I am inclined to think that we should accept it as it is. It is quite possible that there may be a number of matters that ultimately might culminate in a dispute. If the Minister had the knowledge that trouble was simmering, he could say "somebody has got to deal with this right away," and who could better deal with it than the tribunal?

Hon. H. K. WATSON: A dispute might conceivably arise between the union and the mining company as to the method of working. Surely this industrial tribunal is not going to indulge in an over-all investigation of the whole mine!

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

Ayes	10
Noes	13
Majority against ..	3

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. Sir C. G. Latham
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. Sir F. Gibson	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. L. Craig (*Teller.*)

NOES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. A. L. Loton	Hon. E. H. Gray (*Teller.*)
Hon. W. J. Mann	

Amendment thus negatived.

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

That in proposed new Section 317 the word "or other matter" be struck out.

This applies to the powers of the tribunal

The MINISTER FOR MINES: We have just reached a decision on the same question. The amendment should not be accepted

Amendment put and negatived.

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

That in proposed new Section 318 the word "and notwithstanding that a lock-out or strike may exist" be struck out.

The amendment is self-explanatory.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is immaterial whether the words are retained or not.

Amendment put and passed.

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

That Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 318 be struck out.

The persons who should be summoned before the tribunal in connection with a dispute are those connected with the dispute and not any interfering busybody from some other union.

Hon. G. FRASER: I cannot agree to the amendment. The subsection should be retained.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The preceding subsection empowers the chairman to summon any person to attend. Therefore Subsection (2) is mere verbiage.

Amendment put and passed.

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

That in Subsection (3) of proposed new Section 319, the words "or other matter" be struck out.

The tribunal should confine itself to any industrial dispute or industrial matter. It should not be empowered to deal with any other matter.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The words should be retained in view of the fact that the Committee refused to delete them previously.

Amendment put and negatived.

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

That in Subsection (3) of proposed new Section 319 the words "but no party shall (except by leave of the tribunal or a board of reference, as the case may be) be represented by counsel or solicitor or paid agent" and the words "or an agent" inserted in lieu.

Anyone appearing before the tribunal could then be represented by an employee or an agent.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I oppose the amendment. If an extremely complicated matter arose, the parties, in the interests of all, should be represented by counsel or a paid agent qualified to appear, provided the tribunal deemed this desirable. That is what the parties desire.

Hon. G. FRASER: If the words are deleted, counsel would appear on every occasion, and I do not want that. We could leave it to the good sense of the tribunal to permit counsel to appear if desired.

Hon. H. HEARN: I hope the amendment will be accepted. What Mr. Watson desires is what is happening every day in the Arbitration Court.

Amendment put and negatived.

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

That in proposed new Section 327, after the word "sale" in the definition of "distribution" the words and brackets "(but not including sale price)" be inserted.

The idea is to make sure that this coal committee, which is clothed with extraordinary powers in regard to the distribution of coal, shall not have the further power of including the fixing of the price.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The words are not necessary, and might be dangerous. There is no suggestion that the price shall be fixed. This has to do with distribution.

Amendment put and negatived.

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

That in lines 3 to 5 of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 328 the words "such number of persons as the Minister determines, and may appoint persons to be members of the Committee" be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—

"five members of whom—

(a) one shall be nominated by the Minister;

(b) one shall be a representative of the Western Australian Government Railways Commission;

(c) one shall be a representative of the State Electricity Commission;

(d) two shall be nominated by the Western Australian Chamber of Manufactures."

I feel that a committee charged with such responsibility should be nominated and specified, and I cannot think of a more suitable committee than the five persons I have mentioned.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I oppose the amendment. At present, the Coal Distribution Committee consists of Mr. Wilson, an ex-State Mining Engineer as chairman; a representative of the railways, Mr. Rayner; Mr. Edmondson, of the Electricity Commission, and another gentleman representing shipping interests. They have acted very well in the past, and I think we can rely on any Minister to ensure that the committee will be well qualified to distribute coal. There is no reference in paragraph (d) of the amendment to a representative of shipping interests. If we start to mention representatives in this way, all sorts of people will want representation.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I feel that private consumers of coal should have two members on the committee, and the Chamber of Manufactures is the logical source of nominations.

Hon. H. HEARN: The Chamber of Manufactures is a very comprehensive body, and I think that two members nominated by that organisation would be of inestimable value to the committee.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I notice there is no representative of the coalmine owners.

The Minister for Mines: This relates only to distribution.

Hon. W. J. MANN: They may have some interest in that regard.

The Minister for Mines: This deals with the position after the coal has been sold.

Hon. W. J. MANN: Seeing that it is the coal company's product that is being distributed, I am inclined to think they should be represented. I am satisfied the Chamber of Manufactures would do the fair thing, but I suggest that one member should be nominated by the chamber and the other by the coalmining companies.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Railway Department and the Electricity Commission consume roughly 85 per cent. of the coal, which leaves only 15 per cent., including coal for bunkering. It is important that a shipping man should be on the committee. The Bill does not deal only with Collie coal, but also imported coal, and coal for the gas works. Imported coal often lies at Fremantle for bunkering purposes, and is ordered to be sent to the gas works when there is a shortage of gas coal; so shipping people are vitally interested in the distribution. I ask the Committee to leave the clause elastic so that altered conditions can be met by appointing different representatives, if necessary. It is not intended that this measure shall be everlasting; it is only to meet the period of the coal shortage.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	12
Majority against	2

AYES.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. Sir F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. R. M. Forrest (*Teller.*)

NOES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. Sir C. G. Latham
Hon. R. J. Boylen	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. A. L. Loton (*Teller.*)

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: I do not propose to move any further amendments standing in my name on the notice paper in view of the feeling of the Committee on the matter.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Title—*agreed to.*

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION 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—RAILWAY (MT. MAGNET-BLACK RANGE) DISCONTINUANCE.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

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

Second Reading.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON (Central) [11.22] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to ensure that manufacturers of laying mash for poultry shall guarantee to include an adequate protein content in such laying mash, sufficient to ensure egg production. That protein content is estimated at 16 per cent. of which at least 25 per cent. shall be animal protein. The Bill has already been considered in another place and it comes to us with the support of those members and on the suggestion of the Minister. It is really supplementary to a Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment Bill which was introduced in this House in September by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture.

In order to clear up any misapprehensions that members might have regarding the Bill, I propose briefly to trace its history. The former Bill dealt with poultry mashes, or rather the labelling of poultry mashes prepared by manufacturers and the desirability of stating on the labels the chemical composition of the manufactured mash. The measure was debated in this House and the question of offal shortage arose. The point was also discussed as to whether the Bill should not apply to packages under 28 lbs. in weight. However, the legislation was debated more fully in another place and an amendment was moved embodying the provision that the mash should include so much protein content. The Minister in charge of the Bill pointed out that the Crown Law Department had advised him that the proposed amendment was not applicable on the ground that the

Bill under discussion referred to labels, whereas the proposed amendment referred to the constituent components of the mash itself.

The facts brought before that Chamber aroused the interest of all members and enlisted the sympathy of the Minister himself, with the result that the amendment was carried by a large majority. The Minister ventured the opinion that the Act, as it was amended, was unworkable and suggested that a private Bill be put forward to give effect to the desires of that Chamber and if that were done the measure would have his blessing. The result is this small Bill which contains only one clause. The amendment is desirable and, if passed, it is hoped that the Minister in another place will recommit the first measure and delete the clause that would be then covered by this Bill, and the two of them could work in conjunction.

This Bill would not have been necessary if there had not been a shortage of offal from flour mills, but the shortage of bran and pollard has made it difficult for poultry breeders to secure the amount of foodstuff that they require to make up their own mashes. They would prefer to do this because the mashes they would then use would include all the constituents they considered necessary. In 1939, the production of flour was 137,000 tons, bran 34,000 tons and pollard 23,000 tons. In 1942, during the war years, the amount dropped slightly but was still substantially the same. The bran and pollard then produced were 31,000 and 22,000 tons respectively. In 1946-47, when the mills got back into full production, 176,000 tons of flour, 40,000 tons of bran and 28,000 tons of pollard were produced. That figure is considered by the Flour Millers' Association to be the maximum possible unless more milling units are installed. Despite the fact that there has been, roughly, a 20 to 25 per cent. increase in the amount of mill offal turned out it was still insufficient, and the main draw on this has been from the poultry section of the producers.

In order to give members some idea as to how the demand has increased over the years, I will supply some figures. In 1939, 810,000 dozen eggs in shell were exported and in 1946-47 the number had increased to 2,000,000 dozen which was 2½ times greater. The Bill seeks particularly to secure an adequate protein content in the mashes offered by manufacturers because there is a direct connection between the amount of protein in the food provided and the egg production that can be expected. Some experiments which were conducted by the Muresk Agricultural College in this regard are particularly interesting. I have some figures which were taken from the "Journal of Agriculture" of June, 1948, which set out the tests made at the Muresk Agricultural College with various types of mashes, and they show conclusively the effects of protein deficiency.

Each mash was fed to 12 separate pens, each pen containing 50 birds. In the case of two pens of birds that were fed on bran, pollard, meatmeal, etc., with a protein content of 15.2 per cent., the average egg production was 170 from one pen and 150 from the other. With a protein content of 15 per cent.—which is only 2 per cent. lower than the previous tests—the eggs totalled 166 and 118 respectively. Then of two further pens on a protein content of 13.2 per cent., the eggs dropped from 133 to 96. To the poultry farmer the difference means this: In the first pen quoted, with a protein content of 15.2 per cent. the profit per bird per year over feeding costs was 15s. 9½d. whereas the pen with only 13.2 per cent. protein, the profit was down to 10s. 4¼d. This indicates that with a protein drop of 2 per cent.—from 15.2 per cent. to 13.2 per cent.—the profit per bird dropped by 5s. 6d., which is approximately 40 per cent.

These results clearly prove the necessity for a minimum standard of protein content in laying mashes, but it is equally necessary for the standards as shown on the labels to be maintained. How necessary this is has been proved by figures of analyses of foodstuffs taken under the Feeding Stuffs Act, 1928-46, and published in the "Government Gazette" of the 14th May, 1948. These show that 28 samples were taken, and of these 13 of the mashes were proved to be deficient in protein contents. In one case the registered analysis showed 40 per cent. of crude protein, whereas the sample analysis disclosed a content of 26.2 per cent. crude protein—a deficiency of nearly 14 per cent. Another test showed that the registered analysis was 38 per cent. of crude protein, whereas the sample analysis gave 29.1 per cent.—a deficiency of nearly 9 per cent.

The two instances mentioned were much the worse cases; but where protein content means so much to the producer, it is only right that he should be protected. It might also be stated that the tests undertaken at Muresk were very closely in conformity with similar tests at the Cornell University in America. Tests at that university showed that 12 per cent. protein gave an average of 140 eggs; 14 per cent. protein an average of 156 eggs; 16 per cent. protein an average of 178 eggs. In the United States of America poultry farmers usually feed 18 to 20 per cent. protein, which is higher than in this State. Some of the farmers there use as much as 30 per cent.

The Bill was amended in another place. Originally it provided that at least 25 per cent. of the protein content in mashes should be of animal origin, the reason being, I believe, that there is naturally a percentage of vegetable protein in them, This measure is submitted in the hope that it will be acceptable to the House and that it will guarantee to the poultry farmers adequate protein strength in mashes. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [11.35]: The statement made by Mr. Simpson regarding increased egg production consequent upon the use of mashes with a protein content of 16 per cent. was quite true, but I am afraid there is one point that has been overlooked. The protein required is not here.

Hon. W. J. Mann: It is not available.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is the difficulty.

Hon. E. H. Gray: The Bill will stop rubbish being sold.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Not necessarily. At present, a 14 per cent. protein content is required and if the Bill is accepted and the supplies are not available, there will not be so much mash for the poultry farmers. As a matter of fact, the supplies are definitely not available. Should the Bill be agreed to, there will be a shortage of mashes and the poultry people will not get what they desire. The increase in the percentage means a lot in round figures. I drew the attention of Dr. Samuel to this matter, and he advised me as follows:—

The demand for a minimum of 16 per cent protein ignores the fact that total proteins whether of vegetable or animal origin, available in this State, are insufficient to support a higher protein content in poultry mashes than the 14 per cent. now in general use, as the following figures confirm. Consumption of dry matter per laying hen per day, 5 oz. recommended by departmental officers—dry matter in mash, 3 oz., grain 2 oz., equalling 5 oz. A 3 oz. mash per day equals in round figures 600 lb. per 100 hens per month. The present ration of meat meal, which contains on an average some 45 per cent. of protein is 30 lb. per 100 hens per month, or 5 per cent of the 600 lb. of mash consumed. The total protein content of the base materials—bran pollard and meat meal—will average about 10.5 per cent. or, say, 11 per cent.

	per cent.
Protein content of base materials	11
Plus 5 per cent. of a meatmeal containing 50 per cent. protein	2.5
Total protein content of mash ..	13.5

This protein content is increased by manufacturers by the addition of whatever vegetable proteins they can procure, but it is doubtful whether the poultry farmer who mixes his own mash averages a better figure than this.

Hon. E. H. Gray: He would do it a lot cheaper.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I think he would. Dr Samuel continues—

Vegetable protein concentrates such as peanut, cocoanut, cotton-seed meals are even scarcer and dearer than meatmeal. If a higher quality mash is demanded, the poultry farmer, under rationing, must buy less, which means that to make up the bulk required, he must purchase additional base materials which will have the effect of diluting the 16 per cent. mash to 14 per cent. or less.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Or cut down his poultry. That is what it means.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, of course. To continue—

To increase the protein content from 14 per cent. to 16 per cent., it would be necessary to double the meatmeal content. This means that the producer would have to purchase half his base materials every month, which is not desired and often not practicable. There are other aspects to the problem. Processors cater for a wide demand and manufacture a number of lines. There is the backyarders' mash which contains no meatmeal; the growers' mash in which the added protein would not be beneficial but might actually be injurious. Furthermore, ration-

ing of meatmeal is at present carried out on a voluntary basis at the instance of the primary producers. To the manufacturer, it is irksome and expensive.

In the face of what he is likely to regard as arbitrary interference with his operations —which are beset with difficulties anyhow— it is quite possible that the processor may elect to withdraw from the rationing scheme and dispose of his imported meatmeal and other products to clients in the sheep and dairying industries who are eager to buy. The lot of poultry farmers, in that case, would be much harder than at present.

It is quite possible that the Bill would work great disservice to the poultry people. In fact, I think they were ill-advised in having it brought before Parliament. Then again there is this point which has been suggested by Dr. Samuel—

The idea behind the amendment may be to force a reduction in the quantity of mash manufactured in the belief that this will have the effect of throwing extra bran and pollard on to the market. This belief is not well grounded.

I have an idea there is something in that contention. We know that some of the poultry farmers do not want these mashes, and the idea behind this Bill may be that in preventing the manufacture of the mashes, extra supplies of bran and pollard will be available on the market. I do not think that will be so. To continue—

Processors only use a proportion of bran and pollard in mashes and, if restricted, will throw over wheatmeal, oats and similar materials and retain their quota of bran and pollard.

Taking all these points into consideration, I cannot give the Bill my blessing. In view of my knowledge of the industry and of what the experts have told me, I oppose the measure.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [11.41]: I support the Bill if only in order to express the feelings of panic that are apparent amongst the poultry men. Increased costs make it impossible for poultry farming to be conducted on a payable basis. Members possibly noticed a statement in the Press a day or two ago that the Welshpool people had to refuse consignments of fowls for slaughter. I think the number stated was 3,000, and many of the fowls were laying.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That has nothing to do with this.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It has something to do with it from the point of view of the standards of protein contents and the unfortunate position regarding the mashes the poultry men are forced to buy. They say there is no shortage of mashes, but bran and pollard are in very short supply. I cannot understand the attitude of the price fixing authorities, because I know from the experience of those associated with my family that it is impossible to run a poultry farm today in view of the excessive price of bran and pollard. They are hampered because they are forced to buy the proprietary mashes. Something should be done to increase the price of eggs.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I have sent a telegram to Mr. Pollard asking him to investigate the possibility of increasing eggs for export because I realise the position of the industry.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It must seriously affect the export of eggs to the Old Country, and that is important. It is in order to assist in that direction that I support the Bill.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: It is a forlorn hope.

HON. SIR CHARLES LATHAM (East) [11.43]: Does this mean that mashes cannot be manufactured unless the protein content is 16 per cent?

Hon. E. H. Gray: Yes, for sale.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Unless they contain 16 per cent. the mashes cannot be sold?

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That is so.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: It means that supplies will be restricted. I would like to support the Bill but it looks as though it might considerably reduce the quantity that is available now. If the increased percentage is insisted upon—

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: Someone will have to go short.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: There will be no alternative. It is difficult to get meatmeal or bonemeal for pigs. I would like Mr. Simpson to give me an assurance that the Bill will not make the position worse than it is.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [11.45]: I feel, with Sir Charles Latham, that the objective of the Bill is splendid; but, in

order to get a 16 per cent. protein, it will be necessary to include animal protein, which I do not think is available. The question is whether it is better to have a quantity of 12 to 14 per cent. mash on the market, or a very restricted quantity of 16 per cent. protein mash. It is possible to have a mash of a lower protein content without animal protein.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It is better to sell the smaller quantity.

Hon. L. CRAIG: That is the question to be decided—whether it is better to give some poultry breeders a 16 per cent. protein mash, or to spread a 14 per cent. protein mash over all the breeders.

HON. C. H. SIMPSON (Central—in reply) [11.47]: One point might have been missed. I think it better to have on the market a mash which is guaranteed to be of a minimum value standard, and then to release the other classes of mill offal which cannot be made up on account of the shortage of meatmeal. The breeders could then make up their own mash knowing, if it was short, exactly how much short it was, and possibly effect a remedy by improvising. There are ways and means of producing protein; I mean, by preserving animal offal, which will give a certain amount of protein that the poultry farmer himself could use in producing mashes. The point now is that manufacturers are selling 120 lb. of mash at 16s. 5d. It has been stated reliably that the breeder himself can make his own mash for 11s. 4d.

I am not saying that there is not the labour to be taken into account, nor am I saying that the manufacturer is making a big profit; but I do say that if only the constituent parts were available, the great majority of poultry breeders would prefer to make up their own mashes and then to vary them according to their particular requirements. It is better to have a standard mash on the market, which is known to be effective in producing eggs and which will help reproduction, as well as the trade, than to have a lower standard which would be of possibly little value. I speak now as one not knowing the technique; but that, to my idea, would release quantities of bran and pollard which would become available to poultry breeders to make up mashes themselves.

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—HIDE AND LEATHER INDUSTRIES.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—East) [11.5] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill which I think will appeal to members, because its object is a good one. It is to keep down the prices of certain leather goods and to equalise prices for home consumption and export.

Hon. L. Craig: Does it reduce the price to the pastoralists?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, but if the export price of hides were increased, it would not be good for the community in general. I believe I shall convince the House that the pastoralists, under the equalisation plan, will nevertheless get a fair price.

Hon. L. Craig: It is not only the pastoralists, but the farmers also.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It means little to the farmer. How often does he sell a hide?

Hon. L. Craig: He sells cattle.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think it will make much difference to the farmer. It probably would make a lot of difference to pastoralists who send cattle to Wyndham or ship them to Fremantle. Mr. Craig is thinking only of the people in his own district. I have to consider the whole State.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Hear, hear!

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That includes all the people in the metropolitan area and thousands of other consumers as well. I shall be very glad to see the pastoralists and the farmers get a fair price, not less than that

which is paid in the Eastern States, but we have to be fair in the matter. In 1939, owing to the outbreak of war, there was a tremendous increase in the demand for our hides oversea, and prices soared. These high prices have been maintained and are still being paid.

During the war, it became necessary to impose some type of control in order to conserve essential supplies both for military and civilian purposes as well as to keep prices at a reasonable level. To achieve this object, a marketing scheme was adopted under the Commonwealth National Security (Hide and Leather Industries) Regulations, which were promulgated in November, 1939. The scheme provided for the compulsory acquisition by the Hide and Leather Industries Board of all hides, yearling and calf skins produced in the Commonwealth at prices specified in the table of limits approved by the Commissioner of Prices. This table of limit prices varied according to grades and to the States in which it operated. For instance, the price of hides varied with quality, and Queensland received a lower price than New South Wales. The table was based on the prices operating in individual States in August, 1939, plus 20 per cent. in the case of hides and 15 per cent. in the case of yearling and calf skins.

Hides and skins have been made available to the tanning industry at such prices since October, 1939, and leather and footwear prices have been based on these figures. To provide for the proper functioning of the scheme, appraisement and allocation committees were appointed in each State, allocations being based on tanners' pre-war orders and on their existing capacity. Tanners were thus enabled to maintain their pre-war output at prices much below those which would have existed if they had had to compete for the local market with oversea buyers. As a matter of fact, it has not been necessary in recent years to conserve the whole of the Australian market for home consumption. The exportable surplus is sold in the following manner:—

1. At world parity prices directly to oversea buyers.
2. At world parity prices to local tanners.
3. At appraised prices to local tanners.

To prevent persons buying locally at appraised prices and exporting at world parity prices, the scheme provides for a system of export licenses. Under this system any person paying the appraised price, and wishing to secure an export license, would have to pay the board the difference between the appraised and world parity prices. The difference is known as deferred payments. The board obtained its revenue from the sales of hides and skins at appraised prices to tanners, the sale of hides and skins at export prices and the collection of deferred payments on leather, footwear and leather goods exported. From this revenue the board pays compensation for the hides and skins which it acquires. The scheme has, in general, succeeded in securing—

(a) An equitable distribution of hides to tanners.

(b) A return to hide suppliers of moneys acquired by the board in the course of its marketing activities.

(c) Stabilised prices for leather and, as a result, of footwear.

(d) The stability of the leather and footwear industry.

The Commonwealth Government has advised that the regulations will end on the 31st of this month. World prices of hides and skins are still high and, unless some form of control is substituted, the prices of hides and skins must rise and, of course, the price of footwear and leather goods. It is considered likely that the cheaper type of shoes would rise by approximately 12s. per pair and the better styles by 20s. per pair. I think it advisable to prevent this, and this method is the only way of doing so. Such a price rise would inevitably be reflected in the cost of living and might cause unemployment in the footwear industry by the resultant drop in the demand for footwear.

All of the States are in accord with this policy and have, with the exception of Western Australia, passed this legislation. The proposal is that complementary legislation be passed by the Commonwealth and the States to set up a hide and leather advisory board with similar objects and powers to those held by the present board under the regulations. The new board will be empowered to acquire all hides produced within the Commonwealth, and appraisement and allocation committees will be set up in each State. There will continue to be a veto on the export, without license, of hides and leather. The Commonwealth Bill was introduced on the 26th November, and it is necessary for each State to pass legislation auth-

orising the board to acquire hides produced in the State, for the appointment of the allocation and appraisement committees, and also to provide the general machinery for operation in each State.

It will be realised that uniform legislation is required throughout the Commonwealth in regard to control, price levels and adjustments. The Federal Act will provide that the table of limits, from which will be assessed the amount of compensation payable to a producer for the acquisition of hides, will be based on the prices for hides fixed by each State's price-fixing authority. The States will, therefore, determine the price of hides produced within their borders. The Commonwealth legislation will authorise the Commonwealth Government to guarantee the board's account at a bank, and this will be the only financial commitment incurred by any of the Governments concerned as the board will defray its administration costs from its own revenue.

The Commonwealth Act provides for the appointment of an Australian hide and leather industry board comprising a chairman and 11 other members appointed by the Minister for Commerce and Agriculture. Each State will nominate a member representative of the cattle raising industry. Each State will appoint an appraisement committee. The latter will consist of six members, all to be appointed by the Minister, three to be actively engaged on and concerned in the tanning of hides and skins, two to be hide brokers and one to be a hide exporter. The committee will be subject to the direction of the board and will appraise all hides subject to the table of limits approved by the State Prices Commissioner under the Prices Control Act, 1948.

The allocation committee, which shall consist of such members as the State Minister may determine, will distribute, on an equitable basis, the hides which may be sold to tanners by auction, and for that purpose may assess the quota of hides to be bought at each sale by any tanner. This committee, too, will operate at the direction of the board. No hides may be sold before being appraised, and all hides will be acquired by the board which will pay the appropriate price specified in the table of limits, or such amount in excess of that price as the board, subject to the Minister's direction, shall determine from time to time. This provision for payment is contained in the Commonwealth Act and reads—

Where hides are acquired by the board in pursuance of this Act, or where, under a State Act relating to the hide and leather industries, the payment to be made by the board in respect of hides acquired by the board in pursuance of the State Act is to be fixed in accordance with the provisions of this Act, the board shall pay for those hides the appropriate price specified in the table of limits or such amount in excess of that price as the board, subject to any direction by the Minister, determines from time to time.

That means that from time to time a reasonable addition to the appraised price will be allowed to cover an equitable share in the moneys received in respect of the export of hides. The hides that are sold for oversea markets contribute a greater price than the appraised price, and when the hides are purchased they are paid for by the board. A proportion of that money will be added to the appraised prices after allowing for the board's expenses and administrative costs and the keeping of a necessary reserve.

All dealers in hides and leather, as in the present scheme, will be licensed. Those are the main provisions of the Bill which has been agreed to by the Commonwealth and the other States. Other amendments are of a machinery nature and, if necessary, can be discussed in Committee. The scheme was approved at the recent conference of price-fixing Ministers, and it is very desirable. We all have to stand up to the matter of equalisation. The wheatgrowers have had to do it.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: The woolgrowers have not.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so. If the Bill is not passed, it will throw a spanner in the works and increase the cost of leather goods to a large degree. A pair of shoes now costing £2 would cost £3.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Shoes have already gone from £1 to £2.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is not right to say that they have gone up 100 per cent. already.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I got this information a good while ago, because we discussed this at the Agricultural Council meeting at Can-

berra. The difference between the export price and the home consumption price is large. When I found I was not going to deal with the matter I devoted my attention to something else. I might otherwise have had more information to give members. I am prepared to believe what I was told, that the difference will be very great. As I said before, a cheap pair of shoes will go up 12s. and dearer types will rise by at least £1.

Hon. H. L. Roche: How many lbs. of leather in a shoe?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not know. There is a big difference in the export price of hides as against the home consumption price. That will be equalised. I do not think anyone will suffer much. There will not be any decrease on what has occurred in the last six or seven years. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [12.8]: This is the most successful control we have had. The Eastern States have passed similar measures. In October, 1939, the board operated under the auction system—a token auction—for about three months. The position was found to be quite impossible. A different scheme altogether, by which all the hides were appraised, was then adopted. The Honorary Minister spoke of the higher value of the Queensland hides compared with those of New South Wales and the other States. The reason for that is the stoutness. It is strange, but in the European countries the stout hides come from the colder places, but here they come from Queensland. Out of 26,000 cattle killed at Wyndham there would not be more than 3,000 stout hides—and they would not be very stout, but just ordinary.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The cattle must be younger, surely.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It is not a matter of age.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Perhaps it is a matter of breed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: Partly, and the climate. While I was in charge of the meatworks I watched the position closely and I found the Herefords travelled better and had better hides. Under the new scheme the hides were classed by the assessing board, and a note was taken of the tanners who purchased certain types of hides. The brokers would have the list in front of them, and the tanners would be sitting around and they would say, "Two hundred hides, Western Australian Tanners," they being the purchasers in the past of that particular class. If the Western Australian Tanners did not take them they would be passed over to someone else. That system has been carried on successfully ever since.

The successful handling of the commodity by the board was due to a Mr. Hooper of Messrs. Braithwaites, Melbourne. He is one of the most competent men in the commercial world that I have ever met. Any hides not required were allowed to go to the exporters. The fixed price was from 6d. to 8d., and they would have to pay a minimum of 1s. per lb. extra for export. The 1s. per lb. went into a fund, the benefits of which the suppliers enjoyed. The other States have passed similar legislation to this, and I hope the measure here will be agreed to and will not be amended to any great extent because it is necessary that it should synchronise with what applies in the other parts of the Commonwealth so that the position can be continued when the Federal authorities leave off on the 31st of this month. If we do not pass the Bill we will cause a calamity in Western Australia. The Minister said that in such an event there would be an increase of 12s. 6d. in the price of workmen's boots. For ordinary shoes, worn for town wear, the increase would be £1 per pair. The half soleing of shoes would rise by 2s. per pair.

Members can see how the cost of living would rise. Fancy leathers would go very high. I got word only today that one particular type of fancy leather, has gone up 4s. a lb. When 6d. a lb. is paid for green hide in the Eastern States, against the export price at which our tanners would purchase, we can realise what the price would be by the time it was turned into leather here. If the Bill were not agreed to the cost of leather from our tanners would be 6s. a lb. on the open market. Members can work that out for themselves. In Western Australia we tan 3,000 hides a week. If we do not approve of the Bill, the tanneries will simply have to close down, which would mean an important industry lost to the State. It will mean that boot factories

here will have to reduce staff greatly or close down. That might seem peculiar, but people in the other States will buy hides at 6d. or 8d. per lb., shipping their leather to this State on that basis. Two days ago leather in Adelaide brought 23½d. a lb., and that price would apply here, so that our tanners could not operate. Not only would our tanners go out of business but our many boot factories would be hard put to it to continue operations.

It has been suggested that shoes had doubled in price. Since the outbreak of the recent war the increase in the cost of leather in Australia has been only 16 per cent. plus 2d. per lb. which is far less than the increase in the cost of almost any other commodity during that period. Of course, the price depends on the quality of the shoes one buys. One cannot go by the weight of the shoe as suggested by a member, because the price depends on the quality of the leather put into it, the size of the shoe and so on. Leather is also used for upholstering furniture, trimming motor cars, saddlery, etc. If the Bill is not passed in a form to synchronise with the measures in the other States, chaos will exist in the leather industry of Western Australia. I have no personal interest in this matter as it will make no difference to my firm. We will still have our normal percentage of profits, as will others in a similar position otherwise business would fail.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: To whom do you refer as "we"?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: We who are engaged in this business. We must keep the balance, so that the price of our supplies will not be increased and our industries will be enabled to continue operating—more particularly the tanning industry. It has been mentioned that we export leather to the Eastern States, and that has been true—particularly during the war period—but it is a very light leather that is used in ladies' light footwear, and is sparsely used in this State. When it is tanned the tanners dispose of it in the East.

During the war my firm was held up through a mistake being made in the Government control. We could not get leather from the East—and particularly from Queensland—in order to supply leather to the Army, because the controller said that, as we were exporting leather from Western Australia to the East, we did not need t import any. That caused a great deal of in convenience to the Army, as well as to m firm. Only a small percentage of that ver light leather is used in factories here. ask the House to pass the Bill in its presen form as it is necessary that our legislatio should conform to that in the Eastern State in order that we may have successful contro of this industry. I have pleasure in sup porting the Bill.

HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [12.20] I will not oppose the Bill, but I think th House should know the real story.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: We do no want the real story at this hour.

Hon. L. CRAIG: If any member under stands the Bill I would like to know wh he is.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture I understand it.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is most complicated with its various provisions. The real stor is that the producer of beef pays fo cheap footwear in Australia. There is n other answer to it.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture We know that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Fat that brings £30 pe ton in Australia is being sold oversea a £100 per ton. In order to keep down th price of leather and footwear in Australi the producer is compelled to sell his hide at far less than half the price he woul receive if the market were uncontrolled. I probably means a difference of £5,000 pe week to the cattlemen of Western Australi I do not object to that, but it should b known to the people.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture It is known.

Hon. L. CRAIG: It is not known.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: How many people d not know it?

Hon. L. CRAIG: About 95 per cent. o the people in this State do not know it.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Those interested i cattle know it.

Hon. L. CRAIG: They sell their cattl on the hoof, and that is all they know abou it. The price of cattle would go up by a least £1 per head if the hides were worth more. Members who are farmers held up

their hands in horror when the wheatfarmers asked for the Commonwealth scheme. This legislation is complementary to the Commonwealth measure, as we are to carry on where the Commonwealth left off. We should let it be known that in order to keep the price of footwear down, the farmers are being asked to accept a lower price for their cattle, owing to the lower price of leather. Mr. Baxter said the tanners would close down, but that would not happen. It would be possible for the leather to be purchased in the Eastern States at the Australian price and manufactured into boots here. If the Bill is not passed, the whole of the leather or hides from this State can be exported oversea, but that would be unfair and undesirable.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: We would not get an export license.

Hon. L. CRAIG: We get an export license for some of it now, but I do not suggest that we should do that. My point is that the producer does carry the burden of cheap footwear in Australia.

On motion by Hon. R. M. Forrest, debate adjourned.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Assembly's Message.

Message from the Assembly notifying that it had disagreed to the amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

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

No. 1—Clause 2: Paragraph (b), page 2—Delete the words "or that he or she is the householder's husband or wife" in lines 1, 2 and 3, and substitute the word "and."

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

It is desirable that a vote should be given to the husband or wife of a householder as the case may be as the responsibility of the family unit is shared equally between the husband and wife and both should share in the privilege of voting. The family unit which is the basis of our community life should be given some direct expression and representation in the Parliament of the country.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the amendment be not insisted on.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move—

That the Bill be laid aside.

The CHAIRMAN: Standing Order No. 225 states—

In case where the Assembly—

(1) disagrees to amendments made by the Council, or

(2) agrees to amendments made by the Council with further amendments thereon, the Council, may, in case (1):—

1. Insist or not insist on its amendments.

2. Make further amendments to the Bill consequent on the rejection of its own amendments.

3. Propose new amendments as alternative to its own amendments to which the Assembly has disagreed.

4. Request a Conference; or

5. Order the Bill to be laid aside,

and in case (2):—

1. Agree to the Assembly's amendments on its own amendments with or without amendment, making consequent amendments to the Bill if necessary.

2. Disagree thereto and insist on its own amendments which the Assembly has amended.

3. Request a Conference; or

4. Order the Bill to be laid aside.

Unless the Bill be laid aside, a Message shall be sent to the Assembly to such effect as the Council has determined.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I trust the Committee will not lay the Bill aside, because there are certain features in it that we require. Perhaps at a conference we might be able to get these amendments through.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: If we take the Bill to a conference, it becomes necessary to arrive at a compromise. Judging by the attitude of this Committee on the amendments made to the Bill, it is quite clear there is no need for a conference, and I agree that the Bill should be laid aside.

Hon. G. FRASER: Possibly, after we have a chance to decide whether we should insist on the amendments or not, it might be the proper time for this motion to be dealt with. If a conference were held and we did not agree to a compromise, we could then agree to this motion.

Hon. H. K. WATSON: It appears to me that the courses open to the Committee under Standing Order 225 are not progressive. It is for the Committee to decide which of the five options available under that Standing Order it shall exercise.

The CHAIRMAN: The position as outlined by Mr. Watson is quite correct. We should decide which course we shall adopt. The motion before the Chair is that the Bill be laid aside.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: If my motion is rejected, then that moved by the Leader of the House will be dealt with and members will be given an opportunity of expressing their views. Knowing the temper of the Committee, I thought the quickest way to deal with the Bill was by this motion.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	9
Majority for	6

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. H. A. C. Daffen	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. Sir C. G. Latham	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. L. A. Logan	(*Teller.*)

NOES.

Hon. G. Bennetts	Hon. W. R. Hall
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. Sir F. E. Gibson	Hon. R. J. Boylen
Hon. E. H. Gray	(*Teller.*)

Motion thus passed.

Bill laid aside.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn until 3 p.m. this afternoon (Thursday).

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 12.39 a.m. (Thursday).

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 8th December, 1948.

CONTENTS.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 3 p.m., and read prayers.

ELECTORAL—SWEARING-IN OF MEMBER.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have received the r turn of a writ for the vacancy in the Bould electorate caused by the death of the Ho P. Collier, showing that Cecil Thomps Oliver has been duly elected. I am prepar to swear in the hon. member.

Mr. Oliver took and subscribed the oa and signed the roll.