Act of 1923 and New South Wales Act is that New South Wales includes one more drug.

Mr. Davy: You cannot work up a scrap with us about this Bill.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Perhaps I had better read the list of countries that have subscribed to the second opium conference.

Hon. G. Taylor: It might prejudice us against the measure.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The countries are—Albania, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, British Empire (including Canada, Australia, Union of South Africa, New Zealand, India and Irish Free State), Bulgaria, Chile, Cuba, Zecho-Slovakia, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Latvia, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Persia, Poland, Portugal, Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Siam, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland and Uruguay.

The Premier: We are in step with all the world.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: All those countries have signed the protocol which has practically put them under a moral obligation to do something, and most of the countries have already introduced legislation. Australia should not lag behind other countries, and seeing that Bills have been passed in two States of the Commonwealth, introduced in three other States, and now in Western Australia, and as the same measure must be passed by all the States before the Commonwealth can fulfil its obligation to the conference, I commend the Bill to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Davy, debate adjourned.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £1,250,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 9.26 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 13th September, 1928.

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

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Industries Assistance Act Continuance.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

2, Bunbury Electric Lighting Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. Withers.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

Resumed from the 11th September; Mr. Lutey in the Chair, the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clause 5—Application of this part (partly considered) [an amendment had been moved to strike out "4" from line 4]:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have had circulated in typed form amongst members, an amendment which I think will meet the wishes of the Leader of the Opposition in regard to the time given for objections to be taken to the enrolment of electors. The Federal Act provides that all names on claims lodged up to 6 p.m. on the date of the issue of the writ shall immediately go on the roll. Under our Act it is provided that 14 days must elapse prior to the issue of the writ before those names can be placed on the roll.

Mr. Teesdale: That is the time allowed for testing those names.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. Our Act also provides that no name may be struck off the roll after the issue of the writ up to the time of the election. The object of the amendment is to allow sufficient time to elapse so that objections may be made to any claim, and that people

against whom objections have been sustained may not have their names put upon the roll. It is desired to preserve the 14-day period provided in our Act. This Bill provides that people may object to any name on the roll, but we think sufficient time should be allowed for a claim to mature so that in the interim people may scrutinise the names of those who may not be entitled to be enrolled and lodge objections against them. If the objection is sustained, the name will appear on the Federal roll, but will be marked so that the person will not be entitled to vote at the Assembly elections. We cannot prevent ineligible people from being put on the Federal roll, but we can see that they do not vote at the Assembly elections.

Hon. G. Taylor: We are acting on the Federal rolls but for this provision.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes.

The Premier: We want to retain our own Act in this respect. It is only a question of 14 days' notice.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: And our existing right to object to people who should not be on the roll. We must have the 14 days, because we say that no name can be taken off the roll after the issue of the writ. This period will give sufficient time in which to lodge objections. I have given careful consideration to this matter, and have been in close consultation with the Parliamentary Draftsman concerning it. The conclusion arrived at is that this method is entirely practicable and makes the Federal rolls a success from our point of view. I have known of people to save up their claim cards until they number several hundreds, and lodge them at the last moment, too late for any objections to be taken.

Mr. Mann: Suppose an extraordinary election occurred within a month after the general elections these people could still vote.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They would be all right provided the objections were not sustained. Afterwards they would have to make fresh claims, which would also be subject to objection. The result of carrying the amendment will be to remove the objection of the Leader of the Opposition to the excision of Division (4).

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That in line 4, after the word "Act," there be inserted "and Subdivision (i) of Division (4) thereof."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Now the Minister proposes merely to strike out the part referring to objection to claims. One way of objecting is to object to a claim, and another way is to object to enrolment. I do not disguise the fact that with joint rolls the matter will be difficult, because the Federal officials will not only receive the claims but will also make up the rolls. There is always a last moment for receiving claims, even though it be 14 days or 28 days before the issue of the writ. I do not know that we ought not to make it an offence to hold back claims to the last moment. It is never done in a spirit of fairness, and any person who does it ought to be punished. It is not cricket. It amounts to a fraud upon the people. The rolls that bring us here ought to be absolutely clean and above-board, and we should have no thought whatever of ourselves in framing legislation of this kind. We are now dealing with enrolment alone, but there are many other electoral matters that could be dealt with. I have heard of claim cards being destroyed after they have been signed.

The Minister for Justice: Even that is not an offence at present.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No, but it ought to be. Very few people know any Act of Parliament closely, and I daresay many persons wrongly sign claim cards without knowing that they are committing an offence. The Minister courteously showed me his amendment before coming into the House, and I have had an opportunity of comparing it with the Act. At present a claim must be in the hands of the registrar 14 days before enrolment in order to allow an opportunity to object. The candidate can see from day to day the applications for enrolment, and he can raise objection, whereupon naturally and properly the registrar will cause inquiries to be made. Under the amendment, claims can be objected to as well as enrolments. The registrar will be able to inquire before enrolling a name, and that is a good thing. I should say that without exception the registrars are perfectly fair men. As regards the fee to be lodged with an objection, the Minister referred to 500 or 600 claims be-

ing put in at the last moment; and to put up 500 or 600 times 5s. in order to object to 500 or 600 names would be somewhat onerous. The man who objects to a name appearing on the roll when it is not entitled to be on the roll is doing a public service.

The Premier: But if he maliciously or frivolously objects, he should be punished. The man objected to may not be there to defend his claim, and then his name may go off the roll although the claim is perfectly sound.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: As regards the amount to be lodged with an objection, if the Minister's amendment becomes law, that amount will be increased to 5s. I consider that it might have been made less. Otherwise it should have been let alone.

The Minister for Justice: We are endeavouring to make our law uniform with the Federal system. What usually happens is that if a man provides the electoral registrar with a valid reason, he usually takes action without waiting for the man to pay the deposit of half a crown. On the other hand, if the registrar does not think the reason valid, he requires a deposit of 5s.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And there is where the advantage of the 14 days comes in. The peculiar part about it is that as an elector for the Upper House, the Minister for Mines could be objected to with a deposit of half a crown, whereas the same Minister, as an elector of the Legislative Assembly could only be objected to with the payment of 5s. The Minister has asked us to agree to two proposals, the first of which is of the utmost importance, and the second will make the procedure more complicated.

The Minister for Justice: I do not think it will be any more complicated to object to a claim than to an enrolment under the provisions of the Bill.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There is a decided difference. It is the duty of the State Electoral Registrar to see that he does everything possible to satisfy himself that a person is entitled to be enrolled and he has to do that within 14 days of the claim card being received. Once a man is enrolled, there will not be the same opportunity for the registrar, and that will be a retrograde step. It is proposed that, under the joint roll system, a man not entitled to vote shall have a mark against his name.

The Minister for Justice: It will indicate that although the man's name is on the Federal roll, that man will not be entitled to vote at a State election.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: A man who applies for enrolment within 14 days of the issue of a writ, will have his name enrolled.

The Minister for Justice: That roll will be printed on the day the writ is issued.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the roll will contain all the names received up to the day of the issue of the writ, but the names that appear on claim cards received twelve days before the issue of it will also be on the roll.

The Minister for Justice: Every Electoral Department prints the rolls up to that date, and the names that do not mature by that date will not be on the roll.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know the difficulty that confronts the Minister, because the names will be on the Federal roll although they will have marks against them indicating that those people are not entitled to vote, but the fact also remains that the roll will contain names that have been objected to and the registrar will have to strike them off subsequently. There was an instance at Southern Cross regarding 17 electors whose names were struck off.

The Minister for Lands: There has been only one instance in which two men voted twice. That related to some commercial travellers at the Menzies election when Mr. Buzzacot was elected.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At that election they took the votes of people outside the electorate.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This discussion must cease! Hon. members must confine their attention to the amendment.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Any man who commits an offence against the electoral law should be prosecuted.

Mr. Teesdale: Why did they not prosecute Padbury?

The Minister for Justice: They did.

Mr. Teesdale: They did! That was a nice prosecution!

Hon. G. Taylor: He did nothing malicious.

The Minister for Justice: He was fined £50.

Mr. Teesdale: What is £50 to him?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: While the names of those who are not entitled to vote at State elections will be marked, there

will be no mark against the names of electors who have been successfully objected to in the meantime. The only completely marked rolls will be the ones used by the returning officers. In such circumstances should a man desire to cast his vote, he must sign a declaration before he is permitted to do so. I do not understand how postal vote officers will be able to know that they must take that declaration.

The Minister for Justice: If a man enters a polling booth and the roll, by means of the marking, shows that he is not entitled to vote, he will be sent away.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If that be the position, I do not think much harm will result from this. But I do not think it is the position. If the name of an elector appears on the roll, that person will have the right to record a vote, and take the consequences. But his vote will be counted.

Mr. Teesdale: If his name is marked?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course.

The Minister for Justice: No. If that man's name is starred, he will not be allowed to vote; his vote will not be allowed to go into the ballot box.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We know what has happened in the past, and this sort of thing may mean references to the Court of Disputed Returns with consequent expense. If a person, whose name has been successfully objected to, should present himself at the polling booth and he elects to sign the declaration, his vote will be counted and therein will be the trouble that I anticipate.

Mr. Teesdale: That will not happen if his name is starred.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, it will. That was done the other day at Southern Cross.

The Minister for Justice: If you read the last few lines of the amendment to include a new Division (5A), you will see that the name will be marked on the roll in the prescribed manner, but for the purpose of any Assembly election the name of that elector is to be deemed as having been struck off the roll.

The CHAIRMAN: I presume that the amendments relate to all these matters that are being raised.

The Minister for Justice: Yes, the amendments cover the ground.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the name of an elector cannot be struck off the roll.

The Minister for Justice: No, because it is a Federal roll, but the names are to be marked in the prescribed manner.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Some of the electors may reside in an area just over the boundary and yet be entitled to vote, and to have their names included on the Federal roll.

The Minister for Justice: That is why we will have to print some of the rolls at our own expense in order to make the position clear.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The whole business of joint rolls seems to be loaded up with possibilities of confusion and difficulty.

The Minister for Justice: It is easy to imagine lots of difficulties, but in practice it works out in the other States.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know that the position is so satisfactory in South Australia. However, we are dealing with the question now and as we proceed to consider it, we can foresee difficulties. But it ought to be quite simple, and it ought to save money. The suggestion by the member for Katanning that we ought to have a duplicate card, would have achieved all we need to do. Most of us know the confusion caused by an elector having to sign so many claim cards. There are so many complications in respect to this joint roll that it seems utterly impossible to bring it about.

The Minister for Justice: No, that is not so. There are complications, but they are not insuperable.

The Premier: And it will give a better roll.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, one claim card alone will certainly give a better roll.

The Premier: It is most confusing to people who have signed one card to find they are not on both rolls.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is so. Still, I do not see why the Minister cannot leave Division 4 as it is in our Act. I suppose it would mean that, under it, some persons, while objected to on our roll, would be allowed to remain on the Federal roll.

Mr. CHESSON: The amendment means that our rolls will close 14 days before the issue of the writs. It means also there will be a supplementary roll, as at present. I am sorry we could not fall in with the Com-

monwealth provision and that people could not be allowed to enrol right up to the issue of the writs. The joint rolls will be prepared by the Commonwealth electoral officers, and if any person 21 years of age has been six months in Australia and one month in a given district, he shall be entitled to be enrolled and to vote at elections. So long as he fills the qualifications, such a person cannot be objected to. What happens now in respect of the Commonwealth roll is that the officials, in going around, find that some electors have removed from one district and gone to another. Then, if those electors do not get their names added to the roll for the district to which they have gone, proceedings are instituted against them. I am sure that, as a result of the amalgamation, we shall have cleaner rolls than at present.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Still, I gather that you do not support this amendment.

Mr. CHESSON: No, I do not.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have listened to the arguments of those supporting the amendment, but I fear I have not gained anything.

The Premier: Why reflect on the speakers?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am not. It may be that my understanding is at fault. Apparently, if an application for enrolment is made 12 days before the issue of the writ, the applicant's name will be placed on the Federal roll. Also, if a man has his name on the Federal roll, he does not need to make application to get on the State roll.

The Minister for Justice: No, because there will be only the one roll.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If the time is only 12 days, they will put him on the roll, but will star his name; meaning that he is not eligible to vote at a State election.

The Minister for Justice: That is right.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: And if such a man were to lodge a postal vote the returning officer, looking at the counterfoil, would say, "This is a postal vote in the name of so-and-so, but his name is starred." Consequently that postal vote would be dealt with exactly as if the name on it were not on the roll at all.

The Premier: Apparently the explanations made by previous speakers were not so bad after all.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If I seem to understand the amendment, perhaps it is because I know what the Bill means. It is idle for us to say there has not been roll-stuffing anywhere in Australia. I know Queensland, New South Wales and this State, and I know there has been roll-stuffing by all parties in each of those States. Only at the last elections the member for Yilgarn had to confess before the magistrate in court that certain names had been wrongfully added to the roll.

Mr. Corboy: That is quite untrue, and you know it to be untrue. It has been denied by me half-a-dozen times.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask members to deal with the amendment.

Mr. Corboy: Well, make him tell the truth.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But the hon. member stated in court that certain names——

Mr. Corboy: I never said anything of the sort.

The CHAIRMAN: Members must keep order. I have called on the member for Mt. Margaret half-a-dozen times to keep order.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am sorry, Sir. There was so much noise that I could not hear you. I have seen newspaper reports in which the hon. member is made to say that certain names had been improperly added to the roll.

Mr. Corboy: Speak the truth!

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: On a point of order. The member for Yilgarn just now remarked to the Chair, "Make him," meaning the member for Mt. Margaret, "speak the truth." Surely that is unparliamentary.

The CHAIRMAN: This discussion should not have taken place at all. I cannot say whether the hon. member was speaking the truth.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the member for Yilgarn appealed to you to make the member for Mt. Margaret speak the truth. Surely that is unparliamentary.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know whether it was truth or not. That is not a point of order. The whole discussion is out of order.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: With all due respect to the Chair, we are considering the Electoral Bill, and considering how people get their names on the roll, and when they are eligible and when ineligible; and I am endeavouring to prove that, according to the Press, a set of persons, although ineligible, succeeded in getting on the roll.

The CHAIRMAN: The right time to debate such things is on the second reading.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: No, when in Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Several members have endeavoured to get off the track and bring up irrelevant matters. I have called them

to order and in the same way I call you to order.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: We are considering to-day something that was not in the Bill and was not referred to on the second reading, and this is the only opportunity we have to discuss it. Even if it had been in the Bill, the Speaker would not have allowed us to discuss detail on the second reading. The Committee stage is for that purpose.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to deal with the question before the Chair.

Mr. Panton: Show some respect for the Chair.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I have respect for the Chair and I think the Chair should have respect for members.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Some people who were not eligible had their names put on the roll and according to the newspaper, the member for Yilgarn said——

Mr. Corboy: Shelter behind the newspaper now.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That is right; fire a shot and flee from the Chamber.

Mr. Heron: The member for Yilgarn has been called to the telephone. That is why he is leaving the Chamber.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: This is a new clause and I am told it should be debated on the second reading. Roll stuffing seems to be rather a touchy question with members opposite.

Mr. Panton: There has been roll stuffing wherever you have been.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The hon. member cannot bring anything like that home to me.

Mr. Panton: You must have introduced it from Queensland.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: With all this roll stuffing and Bullcocking and Willcocking——

The Minister for Justice: On a point of order, I do not know whether the hon. member is endeavouring to couple my name with roll stuffing. If he is, I ask that the remark be withdrawn.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: If the Minister takes offence at anything I have said, I withdraw it, but I maintain that roll stuffing has been going on all over Australia.

The Minister for Mines: Of course you have been an expert at it.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is our duty to stop it.

The Minister for Mines: An expert in three States and you admit it.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I know a little about it. If I read the "Hansard" report of what happened in another place two years ago, it would bring a blush to the hon. member's cheek. I want to see the law tightened up so that we can prevent roll stuffing in future.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to deal with the amendment.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: What can I do with so many dingoes howling at me?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must refrain from making disorderly remarks.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Then what is one to do?

The CHAIRMAN: Proceed with the question.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am proceeding.

The CHAIRMAN: You are defying the Chair.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I would not attempt to do that. We want to make the measure perfect. Under this proposal, an application for enrolment in future will not be dealt with as it has been in the past, and there will be greater possibility of irregularities occurring.

The Premier: I do not think the position in that respect will be changed.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I think it will be. At present 14 days are allowed for lodging objections to claims, but under this proposal the names will be put on the roll and will merely be starred. What if the star is not big enough to be seen?

The Premier: Or if it gets alongside the wrong name?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Quite so. That procedure is not so safe as objecting to a claim, for then the name cannot be put on the roll. Under this proposal, a name will be put on the roll, but a star against it will indicate that the person is not eligible to vote at the State election. At present, if objection is successfully made to a claim, the name is not registered on the roll and, as it does not appear on the roll, the person cannot vote. If a man is on the roll, even though it is starred, there is always a possibility of the person voting.

The Premier: The first proof of the roll is always carefully checked and examined.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I take it all such names will appear on a supplementary roll, and if no star is shown against them, the persons concerned will be eligible to vote.

The Premier: The general roll will have the stars.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It is usual to issue supplementary rolls just before an election.

The Minister for Justice: That is so. All the rolls for the State could not be compiled in the time.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I daresay it would take six months to prepare the whole of the rolls for an election. I do not think this provision will tighten up the law.

The Minister for Justice: We have to sacrifice something in order to get uniformity.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not wish to sacrifie too much that affects the State merely that we may fall into line with the Federal authorities. Still, I do not see how we can remedy the proposal here.

The Premier: I do not see how you could improve it.

Mr. TEESDALE: I think the Minister has met the Leader of the Opposition as well as is possible. At the same time, I foresee a little danger in connection with the starring of names. If we were sure that men of the calibre of the Chief Electoral Officer would be dealing with the rolls, there would be no room for doubt, but there are people engaged on electoral work, particularly in the bush, who would pay no attention to a star in the margin. They would think it was a fly. I know one man so engaged who allowed seven claims for Assembly enrolments to be registered on Federal papers.

The Premier: What notice would be taken of a star?

Mr. TEESDALE: I am sure he would think it was a full stop in the wrong place. Could not we use something more pronounced than a star?

Mr. Withers: A broad arrow?

Mr. TEESDALE: Something more pronounced to bring the officials up with a round turn and make them read the footnote.

The Premier: I think we had better have the footnote at the top!

Mr. TEESDALE: I should like something more arresting than a star.

The Premier: We could get the member for Avon to advise us about inks of various colours.

Mr. TEESDALE: I should like to see such names printed in red ink, but it seems we shall have to take the risk. One comfort is that it will apply to all of us.

Amendment put and passed.

New clause 22 (a)—Names of persons enrolled within 14 days prior to issue of writ for Assembly election to be marked:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 22a:—"The name of all persons enrolled on the roll for any district pursuant to claims for enrolment or transfer of enrolment received within 14 days prior to the date of the issue of a writ shall be marked on the roll for the district in the prescribed manner, and for the purpose of the election such persons shall be deemed not to be enrolled."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not suppose there will be much difficulty with the first joint roll, because we shall be guided by the names on our own roll. But after that, there will be divisions and subdivisions and consequently some trouble. Against such trouble the Minister should guard.

Hon. G. Taylor: After a redistribution you must go through all the rolls.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am referring to one of our electorates being divided by two Federal divisions. That is where the confusion may arise. If we have approved of the joint rolls, we must make some sacrifice, as the Minister says. The utmost care will have to be taken by the returning officers under this complicated system. It came as a shock to me when the Minister said that application cards had been held up and put in at the last minute. If that was possible in the past, it was wrong and should be provided against.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am still of the opinion that starring a name will not be as effective as our old system. When a name was objected to, it was not placed on the roll, and if it was not on the roll, the individual could not vote. In the case of a star, unless it was conspicuous, there would always be difficulty.

Mr. Griffiths: How about the Premier's sugestion that the star should be in red ink?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not mind what the colour is so long as it is sufficiently clear that it will not be overlooked. But there is bound to be confusion by reason of the star not being readily seen, and it will not be as good a safeguard as the old system. I do not know that we are justified in sacrificing so much so as to swing into line with the Federal system. This is new matter altogether and the only thing we can do is to accept the Minister's assurance that

every care will be taken, and that he will instruct the Chief Electoral Officer to be very careful with his registrars in the outback districts.

The Minister for Justice: You have been very well served in the past.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am hopeful that the new arrangement will not work out as I imagined.

Mr. MANN: The registration of names within 14 days of the issue of the writ cannot affect the general rolls, which at that time are already in print. A better arrangement would have been to register the name for Federal voting purposes, and keep it off the supplementary roll. There would never be any fear of a State and Federal election taking place simultaneously. After a State election the names on the supplementary roll could then be transferred to the general roll. It would not affect the elector whose name was on the supplementary roll if the name was entered in a register for subsequent enrolment on the general roll.

New clause put and passed.

New Division:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Division 5 (a) 36 (a):—"Subject as hereinafter provided an objection to any name on a roll may be made under the provisions of Subdivisions (ii) and (iii) of Division (4) of Part III. of this Act: Provided that if an objection is so made and sustained, the name of the elector shall not be struck off the roll, but the name shall be marked on the roll in the prescribed manner, and for the purpose of any Assembly election the name of the election shall be deemed to have been struck off the roll."

New Division put and passed.

Bill again reported with further amendments.

BILL—DRIED FRUITS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 30th August, Mr. Panton in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Amendment of principal Act Section 3 (partly considered):

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The discussion on this clause was of a general character. It affects the definition of "dealer," and also other definitions. I will explain what takes place in the organisation that has been set up for the treatment of dried fruits. The Act provides that all such fruits shall go to certain packing sheds, of which there are seven in number. Six of these are operated by private persons, and one by a co-operative company. One agent only at each shed deals with all the fruit that goes through it. When the fruit arrives at a shed it is weighed and graded and goes into the general pool for processing. It thus loses its identity with the original grower, who is paid for it in accordance with its grade and weight. The agent keeps a record of the fruit that is put in by the various growers. The Act next provides for registered dealers, of whom there are 18. These people buy from the agents, and sell to the storekeepers and others. An endeavour was made to arrange that storekeepers should buy direct from the agents, but they were not prepared to sell the fruit in this way. They insisted on dealing with the registered dealers. The agent is also responsible for seeing that the State's export quota is exported, and that the balance is used for local consumption. This clause proposes to amend the definition of "dealer," and to provide that "dealer" means any person who buys or sells. There should be no objection to that, because a grower may be entitled to registration as a dealer. It is not proposed to restrict the business to other than growers. The question of control has already been settled.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell.: We are dealing with an important principle, and you propose to change it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This clause merely deals with certain interpretations.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why should a storekeeper who buys more than one ton be called a dealer?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A storekeeper can buy as much as he can dispose of. The board endeavoured to induce agents to sell direct to storekeepers, but they refused to do so. That cannot be altered.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is not being provided for.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You are including both buyer and seller.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There has a been a difficulty about proving sales. Attempts have been made to dodge this legislation.

Hon. G. Taylor: That shows it is very objectionable.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Some people are always prepared to take advantage of a controlled article. If they can deal in it without being registered, they have an advantage over other people.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out that the Minister is not at the moment dealing with the subject before the Chair, namely, the definitions.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The agents have to keep an exact record of the quantity and grade of the fruit they handle on behalf of every grower.

Mr. Davy: I suppose they put up the price as far as they dare.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will explain that later. It is essential that both buyer and seller should be covered by this Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Does that mean that both shall be considered sellers?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A grower would not be prevented from being a dealer.

Mr. Davy: You make him a dealer.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You should encourage the people who buy and distribute the fruit.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Attempts are being made to evade the law.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You do not administer it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is administered by a board which, within reason, has been given charge free from political control.

Mr. Davy: It would be a small grower who would not produce and sell more than a ton, so that every grower would become a dealer.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Is it desired that a grower should not be debarred from becoming a dealer? If so, that is the purport of the clause.

Mr. Davy: You insist upon his being a dealer.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The grower has to deliver his fruit to the processing sheds whether he likes it or not.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The existing law does not permit a grower to be a dealer. The clause proposes to remove that disability. Whereas the grower has fruit and delivers it to the packing shed, he will not necessarily deal in the finished product. The removal of the disability represents an improvement of the law from the grower's point of view. As regards the seller, there is difficulty in sheeting the charge home where illegitimate traffic is indulged in. The inclusion of buyer and seller gives a better prospect of discovering those who are dealing outside the regulations. The maximum quantity that may be disposed of outside the Act is reduced from 2 tons to 1 ton. The reason is that in the past a man having 2 tons has split the parcel into two, and thus avoided the necessity for registration. There was a case where a youth stole a quantity of dried fruit and was convicted, but the dealer to whom he disposed of the fruit could not be proceeded against because the quantity was less than 2 tons.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: A storekeeper would be a dealer if he bought more than 1 ton, and would have to register under this measure.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. A storekeeper can sell as much fruit as he is able to dispose of, but at present he can get supplies only through a registered dealer. The principle of control has been agreed to by the House and the country, and I am not going to argue it now. The clause also proposes to add to the definition of dried fruits "and such fruits shall be deemed to be 'dried' within the meaning of this definition if they are either completely dried or in the process of drying." The definition will therefore include dried fruit in its finished state or in process of drying. The object is to prevent a recurrence of what happened in the James case, which I have quoted, where fruit was sold before being processed. In fact, fruit could otherwise be sold off the tree. There is also an amendment in the definition of "packing shed." The existing definition reads "any building, erection, or other place whatsoever in which dried fruits are stemmed, processed, graded, sorted, or packed for the purposes of sale," and it is proposed to add at that point the words "or trade or otherwise." The object is to prevent operations, which have come under the notice of the board and in respect of which there was no redress, where fruit was traded away for some other commodity by way of barter.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The amendment would include a store.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes, because it says "trade or otherwise."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It would not be in conformity with the existing law if a grower were to sell straight out to a storekeeper, instead of through a packing shed. The words "or trade or otherwise"—

Hon. G. Taylor: Cover barter.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, with the view of preventing such transactions. These various amendments are necessary to make the law operative and effective.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The clause deals with all the conditions of the dried fruit industry other than the growing of the fruit. I am not desirous of arguing the principle of control, but we must be at perfect liberty to discuss a clause like this. I presume that the fruit is dried fruit when the grower lands it in the packing shed to go through the processes of grading, cleaning, stemming and packing; or does the fruit become dried fruit only after going through all the processes and being packed? I understand there are only six or seven agents in Western Australia who can deal with dried fruits, and I gather from the Minister that they try to have as nearly as possible one agent for each shed, so that there may be no confusion in the records of fruit brought in and disposed of. The Bill really aims at giving the board greater power to handle the dried fruit industry. The board have been operating for some time under the parent Act, and have discovered these various anomalies and faults, which render the Act unworkable. The worst feature of the situation is overproduction. More dried fruit is produced in Australia than the board can really handle. The board are put to the pin of the collar to conduct the business so that the growers can even exist. If it were not for that position, I would oppose the Bill at every stage.

The Premier: The Bill is wholly in the interests of the growers.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The board are there to protect the interests of the growers, and the Bill is put forward in the interests of the board handling the fruit. Numerous growers are handicapped relatively to the board, because they have no grading sheds and all the fruit must go through the sheds. We know the reason for the tightening up. In a Press interview recently, Major Radcliffe, a returned soldier who was on a visit here from the Eastern States, put the position clearly and showed how the returned soldiers had been encouraged to embark in the industry, and produce large quantities of dried fruits owing to the high prices prevailing at that time. The result of the increased production was that prices dropped until they were very low. The object of the Dried Fruits Board is to maintain prices that will enable growers to remain in the industry, but we must see that they do not go too far. The proposal that no one can buy fruit except through an agent, seems to be rather in restraint of trade. However, the difficult circumstances surrounding the industry and the large number of growers necessitate action being taken to tighten up the control, otherwise many of the growers must leave the industry. The local market is insufficient and, therefore, it is necessary to impose a high price upon local consumers, because the growers can rely on the overseas market parity only for their exports.

Mr. Mann: The high price of currants has doubled the importations of dates, produced by coloured people.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: People who have to study economy will naturally buy the cheaper article.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member should get back to the definition clause.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am giving reasons why it should not be altered.

The Premier: You are making a second reading speech.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What about the Minister's speech.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The grower can become a dealer under certain circumstances.

The Minister for Agriculture: If he sells more than a ton, he must be registered as a dealer.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I want to be satisfied that the Minister, in his statement regarding the effect of the amended interpretation clause, correctly set out the position. The more we look into the Bill, the more we can discern the desire to give the board greater powers, with not too much consideration for local consumers.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you object to a grower being a dealer?

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I am not too pleased about that. There is only one person who can be a seller and he is the agent.

The Minister for Agriculture: But the agent will not make undue profits, because he merely sells for the original grower.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: But the board will set the price. It would not be necessary for the board to have all the records that are indicated if they were not for that purpose. They want to know what the crop will be, what will be available for local consumption, and the rest will have to take its chance on the world's markets. I am not opposing the Bill, but I want to make it a workable measure in the interests of the consumer and of the producer.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister proposes to tighten up the original Act at the request of the board as representing the growers. The Government are not concerned with the administration of the board to the slightest extent. Owing to existing circumstances, local buyers must pay a higher price for local dried fruits on account of the export parity. That is necessary in order that the industry may continue. If we had to do that to many industries, it would be warmly resented by the consumers. Under the Minister's proposed definition clause, any person, including a shopkeeper, who sells more than a ton of dried fruits, must register as a dealer.

The Minister for Agriculture: The interpretation section in the Act sets out distinctly that shopkeepers are excluded.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It refers only to a shopkeeper who buys from a registered dealer. If that man buys and sells, he must register as a dealer.

Mr. Ferguson: No, not if he is a shopkeeper.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If the hon. member reads the section in the parent Act, he will see that is not so. All we have a right to do is to provide for control over the industry as we have in the parent Act, with such amendments as are necessary. We have no right to include these fantastic conditions in the Bill, and to make it impossible for our local people to become buyers of our dried fruits. It is possible to put up the price of dried fruit to such an extent as to reduce the consumption. I do not know what the price was last year, but I know it was altogether too high, with the result that consumption was restricted. It is the man who buys that ought to be encouraged. All dried fruits are covered by this measure, whether short-produced or not. I do not know whether we are drying sufficient apricots and peaches. The Minister could declare any dried fruit within the meaning of the Bill, but he would be foolish if he included anything but dried grapes. Already the Minister has a definition that is pretty complete, yet he is going to add the words "for the purpose of sale or trade or otherwise." If we are going to give the users of dried fruit unnecessary trouble, we shall be doing harm. Legislation to prevent the passing of dried fruits from one State to another will not hold water.

Mr. Ferguson: The Federal Act prevents that until each grower has exported his quota.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What a ridiculous business it is!

The Minister for Agriculture: Not too ridiculous.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, it is. I object to the selling of our own currants at a low price for export and then having to buy currants from Victoria. We should see to it that our own growers get the advantage of the local market.

Mr. Ferguson: They did last year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I object to this class of legislation, and I feel that when we have to pass it we ought not to go further than is necessary to give complete control. We do not want control so fixed as to make difficult the buying of these things in our own State. I hope the Minister will see to it that the man who buys is encouraged, and that the grower is made to stand up to his obligations.

Mr. FERGUSON: I cannot understand why some members should be doing their utmost to wreck the Bill.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Show why it is required.

Mr. FERGUSON: I would have attempted to do so before, but I thought I would be ruled out of order. It has surprised me that others should have been allowed to discuss the matter at this stage.

The CHAIRMAN: I have repeatedly called upon members to get back to the clause. I hope the hon. member will not be added to the offenders.

Mr. FERGUSON: Having for years heard the Leader of the Opposition prate about his interest in the primary producers

and enlarge upon his concern for their welfare, I am surprised that when an opportunity presents itself for him to do something in the interests of a section of the primary producers right up against it, he should be putting every difficulty in their way.

Mr. Davy: Now you are begging the question.

Mr. FERGUSON: This interpretation clause seems to me perfectly clear. There are in the parent Act definitions of "dealer" and "grower." Under those definitions "grower" means any person who produces dried fruits for sale or barter; while "dealer" means any person not being a grower within the meaning of the Act who sells in any one year, whether on his own behalf or as agent for some other person more than two tons of dried fruits, but does not include a shopkeeper who sells only such dried fruits as he buys from registered dealers. That is quite clear, and the amendment is to strike out the words "not being a grower within the meaning of the Act." Under that, a grower can be a dealer if he so wishes. Then, later, we are to have the two tons altered to one ton. The Leader of the Opposition suggested that the board might possibly inflate the price of dried fruit so as to make it prohibitive to the consumer. That is not likely. The board is elected by the growers in the interests of the growers, and so it is their duty to do all they can to increase the consumption of fruit. If they were to fix the price at a prohibitive figure they would be lessening the consumption of the locally-grown dried fruit.

Mr. Davy: They are there to charge the highest possible price they can without killing the sale.

Mr. FERGUSON: A price that will increase consumption instead of decreasing it; a price that will enable the grower as nearly as possible to make a living out of the industry.

Mr. Davy: And sell his surplus abroad.

Mr. FERGUSON: He has to sell his surplus abroad. It is because of that he has difficulty in making a living. Members of the Opposition should not endeavour to put obstacles in the way of the Bill. We must have control over the industry or the industry will go right out, in which event the consumer will have to pay twice as much for his fruit as he is paying now.

Mr. Davy: Why?

Mr. FERGUSON: Because little or no dried fruit will then be produced in Western Australia.

Mr. Davy: What about the imported stuff?

Mr. FERGUSON: It has been said we should not maintain our market for our own growers. Control will not do that; indeed it will have the opposite effect and will benefit the growers to a greater extent than it will benefit the growers in the Eastern States. The position is that production in the Eastern States is so much greater in proportion to population than is our production, that the benefit to be derived from the control is more in favour of Western Australia than of any other State.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I object to the remarks of the hon member. I merely pointed out that the amendment seemed unnecessary, and the hon. member declares it is not for the Committee to consider whether the amendment will do good or do harm. We might considerably injure the growers if we were to put into the Bill everything that has been asked for.

The Minister for Agriculture: The growers' representatives and the growers want it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course. I am as keen as is any member to help them, and I claim to have devoted more of my life to assisting those and other producers than has the hon. member who came to the House only about five minutes ago.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 16:

Mr. DAVY: Under this clause it is proposed to hand over to the Commonwealth Parliament our rights to legislate with regard to dried fruit. It is one of the most remarkable provisions that any Government has attempted to put on the statute-book.

The Premier: It will obviate our having to bring down legislation to conform, and will save time.

Mr. DAVY: Of course. Why not pass a nice little measure of about three clauses stating that all laws of the Commonwealth shall be deemed to be the laws of Western Australia and that this Parliament shall pass no further laws? It is an astonishing proposition to ask us to commit ourselves to any law the Commonwealth may pass regarding dried fruit. I have been hos-

tile to the whole scheme of this legislation since it was apologetically introduced in 1926. The only virtue of the original Act was that it did not entirely achieve the purpose at which it aimed. This Bill is intended to make more effective the scheme whereby the producer of dried fruit may squeeze out of the local consumer a sufficient price to cover his loss on all fruit exported. Not the least astonishing portion of it is in paragraph (h) of Clause 4. I move an amendment--

That paragraph (4) be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: There is nothing very astonishing about the clause. The difficulty was that instead of growers getting advantage of the control, certain unscrupulous persons took advantage of the local price for which control was responsible and defeated the intention of the Act. For that reason the Commonwealth was asked to step in. The James case cost the growers a considerable sum of money. James reaped the advantage that the Act sought to confer on the whole of the growers.

Mr. Davy: He committed the horrible crime of trying to fulfil a legally-made contract.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If we are to have control with all its drawbacks, we want to ensure that the right people get the benefit of it. But for the amending legislation of the Commonwealth, such sales as those made by James would have become wholesale. Unless we have this power, the whole scheme will break down and control will go by the board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Does not the parent Act provide for administration by our own board?

Mr. Davy: Why not exercise the power without giving our power to the Commonwealth?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Board has not only to administer the local Act, but has to take advantage of the Federal power.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The best way to shut out Eastern States stuff would be to impose a wharfage of about £20 per ton on it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Neither the Federal nor the State Act makes control so effective as some people imagine. We cannot prevent fruit being moved from the Eastern States to Western Australia.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I hope we send some of ours over there.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Some of ours has been sent there. The question of price has been raised and it has been suggested that the board is using its power to charge extortionate prices.

Mr. Davy: Not extortionate prices, but higher prices than would be charged if the board did not have this power.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the power were not given, the measure would be useless. The question is whether the board has charged more than a fair and reasonable price. The average production per acre of currants is 1 ton, 2 cwts., of sultanas, 1 ton 7 cwt., and of lexias, 1 ton 15cwt. The average price per ton of currants, including overseas and local sales, is £29 10s., of sultanas—all sold in this State—£65, and of lexias £29.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the price that people pay is more than the grower gets.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We are trying to get a fair return for the producers.

Mr. Ferguson: Those figures work out at less than 3d. per lb. for the fruit.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: After all the protection we give the growers, that is the best they can get.

Hon. G. Taylor: And the consumer pays 9d. per lb.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The average cost of producing and marketing currants is £46 per acre, and they are sold for £29 10s. per ton.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Then it is of no use trying to keep it going.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Those figures show that the board has not used its powers unduly.

Mr. Davy: Do you quote those figures to prove that the sooner we get the growers out of a hopeless job the better it will be?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is not my job to do that.

Mr. Davy: Better repatriate them in some industry where they can make a living.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We are doing our best for the producers. There is an impression abroad that they are doing well.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Such an impression is not abroad.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is suggested that the prices charged have been unduly high.

Mr. Davy: No, but they want to make the local consumers pay the whole of the loss.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The cost per acre of producing and marketing lexias is £40, and sultanas £44 10s. On those figures the profit on lexias is £7 and the loss on currants is £14 2s. per acre. On sultanas, which are sold only in this State, there is fair profit. Those figures should effectively answer the question whether undue profit has been made. As to whether the industry should go out of existence, last year the position was slightly better owing to a failure in the Eastern States.

Mr. Davy: Can you predict that the growers will be making good in the next 50 years?

The Premier: Yes, in 49 years.

Mr. Davy: How long is this performance of keeping the growers in a hopeless position to continue?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is one of the industries with which the State is saddled.

Mr. Davy: Let us get those men out of it quickly.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Our growers are better off than are those in the Eastern States.

The Premier: This has been a subject of discussion at the Imperial Conference—the question of Great Britain giving preference. The southern European countries are our competitors.

Mr. Davy: What is the use of keeping these poor wretches in a show out of which they can make no profit? It would be better that they should take up some more useful occupation.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Fully 75 per cent. of the product in Australia must be exported. With all this control, the producer is in a bad way, but this is an attempt to help him. The board have not power to impose extortionate prices, and are not using their authority with that object.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: This clause will give certain powers to the Federal Government for practically all time, and this State will be helpless in the matter. Mr. Chappell, a well-known authority on this industry, says there are 1,000 growers in Victoria, and 1,600 in the Commonwealth. The properties were capitalised to the extent of over £2,500 each, and the settlers were up against it. For every £2,000 spent on those properties, about £1,000 represented Commonwealth money, so that it was a matter of serious concern to the whole of the taxpayers of Australia. I do not know whether that position influenced the bringing down of this Bill. In all the circumstances we should be foolish to give the powers contained in this clause. The Minister may be able to enlighten us as to whether the Federal Government have asked for this Bill because they are so much involved in the industry.

The Premier: A great mistake was made in embarking so many returned soldiers in the business and in spending such huge sums of money on irrigation schemes in the other States. There are settlers in hundreds along the Murray River.

Mr. Davy: Let us get them into something useful.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Mr. Chappell points out that the Federal Government have been responsible for this position because of the money they have sunk in the industry. We should hesitate before giving the Commonwealth these powers. I am not prepared to give them any power that will nullify the actions of this Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The board is confronted with a difficult task.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Why are you giving the Commonwealth these powers?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Federal Government passed this legislation at the instance of the States, which found themselves powerless.

Mr. Ferguson: There is a Commonwealth board as well as State boards.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have not handed ourselves over body and soul to the board, which is still under Ministerial control. It is, however, desired that the board should be able to take advantage of any powers that are given by Commonwealth legislation. We are not giving these powers for all time, because the Act limits the life of the board to 1930. If this clause is passed, the board will have power to take advantage of any useful provision that is contained in Federal Acts. I refer particularly to interstate trade, with which this State cannot deal.

Mr DAVY: I misunderstood the meaning of the clause, and now propose to withdraw my amendment.

The Premier: I read the clause in the way you did in the first place.

Mr. DAVY: The portion I objected to is at any rate in the wrong place.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5, 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Power to require returns from growers:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Will the Minister explain why in Subclause 2 power is given to enforce a penalty up to £500 for the non-supply within the specified time of certain particulars?

Mr. Teesdale: It may be a misprint for £5.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I hope the Minister has some satisfactory explanation to offer. If it is deemed necessary to impose a penalty like this, the Minister might add some provision for a term of imprisonment.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Is the return to refer to the fruit produced at the last harvest?

The Minister for Agriculture: Fruit produced in any year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: May the board go back several years?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes; otherwise there cannot be records. The object is to enable the board to ascertain the fruit produced by any given grower.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I should not think it was any use going into ancient history.

The Minister for Agriculture: If the returns were for only one year, the record might be falsified by reason of carry-over.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Does the Minister think growers keep old currants for ever? If the growers do not trust each other, we cannot do much for them. The fine of £500 is ridiculous and stupid. Such a thing should not appear in an Act of Parliament. I move an amendment—

That in Subclause 2, line 4, the word "hundred" be struck out.

That will reduce the fine to £5.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The penalty seems excessive, but the difficulty is that some growers will not furnish returns at all and simply ignore the notification to do so. Therefore the penalty should be substantial. There is nothing absurd about the necessity for furnishing returns. The majority of growers do furnish returns. In the absence of returns some growers will endeavour to sell outside the board.

Mr. Davy: But a grower may be fined £500 for being late with his return.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Control will break down unless there is a substantial penalty.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you do not propose a fine of £500?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment by leave withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That consideration of Clause 7 be postponed.

Motion put and passed: the clause postponed.

Clause 8—Re-enactment of Section 20:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister will no doubt postpone this clause also. I would draw his attention to Subclause 4, which reads—

The board may in its discretion grant or refuse any application for registration.

If, as I believe, any place holding more than a ton of currants will have to be licensed under this measure, and if the board have the right to refuse a license, what will be the position? Retailers must buy suitable quantities of currants and raisins. There ought to be a right of appeal from the board to the Minister.

The Minister for Agriculture: There is no difficulty in that respect.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Is there a right of appeal to the Minister?

The Minister for Agriculture: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This clause also provides a penalty of £500.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That consideration of Clause 8 be postponed.

Motion put and passed: the clause postponed.

Clause 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Amendment of Section 22:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This clause seems to me to do more than cover packing sheds. It is so broad that it may include places of trade.

The Minister for Agriculture: No. The clause refers to packing sheds. It amends Section 22, which deals with registration of packing sheds.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope we shall not get into a tangle by attempting to do too much. The penalty for non-registration here, too, is pretty stiff, £2 per day. The Minister might look into the clause.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Federal regulation provides that all establishments used for the receipt, processing and packing of dried fruits shall be registered.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I am not referring to packing sheds, but to other buildings. I do not want the clause to cover retailers' premises.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Even where the Western Australian board have granted a permit for a packing shed, the shed when erected must conform to the Commonwealth regulations, because the fruit is packed for export. The clause merely makes additional provision in respect of packing sheds.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: I do not quite follow the Minister. I take it that dried fruits packing sheds are really indicated in the clause, but it says—

> No person shall use or occupy any building, erection, or other place whatsoever for the purpose of stemming, processing, grading, sorting, or packing any dried fruits for trade or sale or otherwise, unless such building, erection, or other place is for the time being registered under this Act as a packing shed.

Unless they do that, the growers will be fined £2 for every day they continue that business. There are small growers a hundred or more miles away from the nearest packing shed. If they dry their fruits at their vineyards and keep the dried fruits in a small shed until they can send them to a registered packing shed, will they be liable to a fine?

Mr. Ferguson: The clause makes no reference to drying!

Hon. G. TAYLOR: What constitutes a packing shed? If a man carries out one of the activities mentioned, will that mean that he must register the little bit of a shed that he uses for that purpose?

Mr. TEESDALE: The clause does not refer to drying at all. I do not think the Minister intends to bring growers in outlying districts within the scope of the clause at all.

Mr. FERGUSON: The clause is quite clear and does not impose a hardship upon anyone. It costs a lot of money to instal the necessary machinery in a packing shed, and growers who are carrying on in a small way hundreds of miles away from a packing shed, would find that the most economical way of dealing with their product would be to send it to the nearest packing shed to be processed there. As the control is invested in what amounts to an Australian pool, it is necessary to grade and keep uniform the fruit for export. One of the difficulties of the past has arisen from the faulty condition of the dried fruits that have been exported, and our trade has been damaged. With the advent of control and a few registered processing sheds, the quality of our exported dried fruits has been made more uniform, and the fruit has been graded more correctly under the supervision of Commonwealth experts. As a result, the industry has benefited.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The member for Katanning informed us that difficulty had been experienced in his electorate. They endeavoured to have a processing shed established there, but the board found that it would not pay. As long as we are satisfied that the men dealing with small quantities of fruit in the outback districts will not be penalised under this clause, it is all right. We know what inspectors are. Some are extremely officious and we should consider what we are doing.

Mr. TEESDALE: I feel very sympathetically inclined towards the Bill. Some time ago I had an opportunity to accompany the Agent-General for Western Australia (Hon. W. C. Angwin) over one of the largest dried fruits establishments in the Old Country. The proprietor told us of the extraordinary difference there was between the Australian dried fruits and those imported from other countries. When he showed them to us we came to the conclusion that we should be well ashamed of ourselves. He told us that he would undertake to dispose of between 800 and 1,000 tons of sultanas and would guarantee to sell them to advantage if they were supplied in a proper condition. He showed us the uniform grading and colouring of the dried fruits from other countries, and then displayed to us the Australian commodity. The colours included all those of the rainbow; some of the fruit was as big as mosquitoes while others were as big as

blowflies! I asked the head of the firm how he could possibly dispose of the Australian dried fruits. He told me that they had customers for the lot—cheap cake manufacturers, who could take them at their own prices. Our dried fruits were used in cake that was retailed at about 8d. a lb., stuff that the poor people like to get with plenty of fruit in it. As long as the Minister cuts out the huge penalties that are provided, I shall support the Bill. Something must be done to prevent the export of the class of stuff I saw.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The substitution of the proposed new subsection will be an improvement on the existing sub-section in the parent Act. I have explained that it is impossible to control the industry in Western Australia except by means of the packing sheds. Regarding the Katanning incident referred to by the member for Mount Margaret, those concerned were allowed to process for one year on the undertaking they gave that they would erect a packing shed the following year. They were not prepared to do that. It was too expensive. It must not be thought that the erection of new packing sheds here there and everywhere will help the control of the industry, for in proportion with the harvest, we have more packing sheds in Australia than are to be found in California. We do not assist the industry by spreading control all over the country. This is not taking any power additional to that in the parent Act, but it makes the law clearer. The State board has not refused permission to the Katanning people to erect a packing shed.

Hon. G. Taylor: No, but they could not find the capital.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Permission has been given for a packing shed, but of course that shed must be constructed in accordance with the Commonwealth regulations.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: It seems to me the object is to penalise a man if, because he is some distance from a packing shed, he endeavours to grade his currants or raisins before sending them along to the shed. Surely he may in some way grade them at his own place. At Harvey, before the packing company came along, every orchardist used to grade his own oranges. Eventually the grading was done in the packing shed. Surely it is not intended to penalise a man if he chooses to sort out his grades at his own place and then send them all along to the packing shed to be finally dealt with. The woolgrower sorts out his various classes of wool before sending it along to the wool sales, where, probably, it is reclassified. The dried fruit grower, of course, will do the same.

Mr. Ferguson: Not one grower in the State does it.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: If I were growing dried fruits, I should want some idea of what the fruit was worth before I sent it to the packing sheds.

Mr. Ferguson: No, you wouldn't.

Hon. W. J. GEORGE: To punish a man for attempting to sort out his fruit at his own place before sending it to the packing shed is to curtail the industry, and eventually to kill it. Do not let us put such a silly thing on the statute-book.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 11 to 15—agreed to.

Clause 16—Time for commencing summary proceedings:

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The Minister ought to explain the necessity for this clause. Offences under this Act seem to be the most serious we have been dealing with for years.

Mr. Davy: Twice as serious as any other offences that can be committed.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Will the Minister give some reason why 12 months should be allowed to elapse before proceedings are taken for an offence?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The board have the utmost difficulty in administering the existing Act. It may happen that they have a general idea that somebody is evading the law.

Hon. G. Taylor: But they would not require 12 months in which to determine it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It may be that the offence is not discovered until six months afterwards, and so without this provision the board could not proceed. In the main, the growers observe the conditions laid down, but the board are under an obligation to enforce the law. Unless it is desired that there shall still be evasion of the law, the clause is quite necessary.

Mr. DAVY: I am going to move that "12" be struck out and "6" inserted in lieu thereof. We should preserve our senses

of humour and proportion. It is here proposed to make an offence against this piece of legislation, a breach of which could not possibly affect the moral conscience of any human being, a more serious offence than any offence that can be tried summarily in a court of justice in Western Australia. It has been provided that all the offences for which a man can be proceeded against at the police court shall be taken within six months of the offence. But here it is proposed that this class of offence, the heinous offence of being late with a return, shall be punished with a fine of £500, and that it shall be competent to proceed against the offender at any time within 12 months of the offence. In order to force people to do something that their consciences dictate they should not do, we have to put this fearful penalty upon them. The object of this legislation is to preserve the industry. The mistake is that we are personifying the industry and regarding it as something worth preserving, instead of considering the individuals in it. Some of the finest men in Western Australia are engaged in the dried fruit industry. They were put into it by mistake. The greatest encouragement we have had to-night has been an interjection or two to the effect that it has not yet been proved that the industry is no good. We are asked to pass this extraordinary legislation, with extraordinary powers, making an offence against this Act more serious than any ordinary crime because, possibly, the industry in Western Australia is not so hopeless as it is said to be. On further thoughts, instead of moving the amendment, I will vote against the clause.

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

Ayes	20
Noes	10
Majority for	10

AYES.

Mr. Collier	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Coverley	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Millington
Mr. Griffiths	Mr. Rowe
Miss Holman	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Troy
Mr. Kennedy	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Lamond	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Withers
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Chesson
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. Mann
Mr. Barnard	Sir James Mitchell
Mr. Brown	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Davy	Mr. Taylor
Mr. George	Mr. North
	(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	*NOES.*
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Teesdale
Mr. W. D. Johnson	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Wilson	Mr. Maley

Clause thus passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 11th September.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [9.32]: This Bill is somewhat similar to measures we have passed during the last two or three years. Previously, however, it was provided that £5,000 out of the royalty money, which is approaching £50,000 per annum, should be devoted to the reforestation of sandalwood. The Premier pointed out clearly that though the department had been operating for at least three years, and had been planting as much sandalwood as was possible, there was just over £7,000 left in the fund, and that would be sufficient to carry on for another two years, allowing for the average expenditure of the last three years. The reforestation of sandalwood has not been tried to any extent in any part of the world. The work is only in its experimental stages, but the department is moving as fast as possible, and there will be ample money to carry on the operations, even if we pass this Bill allowing the whole of the royalty for the present year to go into Consolidated Revenue. So long as the Conservator of Forests is satisfied that he is getting what he needs for the purpose——

The Premier: The average expenditure has been a little over £3,000 a year for the last four years.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes, and there is sufficient money in the fund to permit of two years' work at the same rate. The Conservator is a very enthusiastic forester and is reforesting all the timbers possible, and the funds he requires are available for the next couple of years. I shall not deal with the question of sandalwood while speaking on

this Bill; to do so would be out of place, but when the Estimates come before us I shall have something to say. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—GROUP SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. M. F. Troy—Mt. Magnet) [9.40] in moving the second reading said: The Bill under consideration is a small one but it contains an important principle. Subsection 2 of Section 3 of the Group Settlement Act of 1925 provides—

> The amount of such expenditure on the area chargeable to the group settlers and the part thereof to be apportioned to each parcel of land intended to be granted shall be assessed and determined by the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank.

The time has arrived when the capitalisation of the locations must be determined, particularly of those locations on which the improvements are considerable, and which will soon be capable of carrying a fair number of stock. The Government, after giving the question consideration, came to the conclusion that the Managing Trustee of the Agricultural Bank, being so absorbed with his other duties, ought not to be saddled with the responsibility of determining the capitalisation of group locations. When the responsibility was placed upon Mr. McLarty in 1925 it was thought probable that the development would be an easy matter, but such difficulties have been experienced and the expenditure has been so great that a very close investigation will be necessary in order to fix the capitalisation of group holdings. The Government, therefore, have decided to approach Parliament for its consent to the appointment of a board to determine the capitalisation. The board will probably comprise three members, one member of which—the chairman, I take it—will be an officer of the Agricultural Bank. The Bank ought to be represented inasmuch as that institution will be taking over the whole of the debts. The board should be constituted of persons having a knowledge of the country as far as possible, as well as the experience and capacity to arrive at a sound judgment. The development of the holdings has approached the stage when the fixing of the capitalisation is absolutely imperative. It is proposed to put the settlers off the scheme when they have reached the 10-cow stage. I do not think I have any personal objection to settlers going off the scheme before they reach the 10-cow stage. I am quite prepared to consider any application by any settler who desires to take that step. Quite a number of settlers should be arriving at the 10-cow stage in the next twelve months, and before they embark upon their farming enterprise, it is essential that they should know their capitalisation. I am convinced that this step will be welcomed by a great number of settlers. I have had quite a lot of communications from settlers since the announcement was made and a great many of them welcome the proposal. They will know just how they stand; they will be fully acquainted with the responsibilities they are assuming, and they will have the security of tenure that I am given to understand is so necessary for their contentment. I do not want to say anything here that might be regarded as giving a lead to the board to be appointed as to how the capitalisation shall be determined. I think it is agreed that in a great many instances the capitalisation has reached a sum upon which the settler could not possibly pay interest, and at the same time maintain himself and family. Having due regard for the interests of the State, the capitalisation must be so fixed that the settler will have an opportunity of winning through, ultimately becoming released from his liabilities, and being able to maintain himself and family. There will, of course, have to be some writing down. I think the House will agree that those persons who are to determine the capitalisation, and who will be competent to arrive at a sound judgment, ought to have an opportunity to get as closely into contact as they can with the position, and be able to estimate the possibilities of the country and its production. When I last addressed the House on the question, I gave a great amount of information with regard to the progress and cost of the scheme to date. I do not anticipate

the House will require that information again, and will therefore content myself this evening with giving to members a few instances showing the expenditure upon a number of holdings, the average per holding, the acreage cleared, the pastures sown, and the quantity of stock carried. The figures I shall give will have particular reference to the locations on the Peel Estate, Busselton, Manjimup and Denmark. Northcliffe has been omitted as it is not sufficiently advanced to afford a proper comparison. The groups chosen are the most advanced, and least affected by reconstruction, but the Peel Estate groups are so affected, as are some of the Denmark and Manjimup groups to a lesser degree. The group expenditure shown includes interest, but no land purchased or drainage charges as they affect the Peel Estate and the Busselton groups. These will be additional, but have not yet been fixed. The expenditure figures are on retained holdings only as at the 30th April of this year. With regard to the average number of cows on holdings, many of the blocks are now ready for more stock, and the districts are asking for cows. The department has been able to purchase locally this spring 200 cows, but the scheme of local purchasing unhappily did not meet with big results. Since the buyer started, we have, as I have said, been able to purchase only 200 cows. It may be necessary again to send a man to the Eastern States in order to purchase cattle there, although I cannot say that our last experience in that regard was too satisfactory. If, however, we are to meet the demand for stock, we may again have to go abroad in order to do so. I will now give the House a few instances showing the expenditure on a number of holdings in the settlements I have mentioned, the average cost per holding, the acreage cleared, the pastures sown and the quantity of stock carried. On Group 29 on the Peel Estate there are ten holdings. The average expenditure per holding amounts to £3,411, the average per holding for stock and advances for plants is £277, the total average expenditure on these ten holdings being £3,688. The average area cleared per holding amounts to 130 acres, and the average acreage sown amounts to 118 acres. I should like members to appreciate the fact that the acreage sown is not an indication that the pastures are there. In quite a number of instances the country has not responded as quickly as was expected, and in some cases the pastures have had to be sown over and over again. All these holdings are equipped with houses and dairy buildings. The stock carried averages 14 cows per holding. On Group 30 there are 15 holdings. The average expenditure per holding, including stock and equipment, is £2,899. The average acreage cleared is 97 acres, the average acreage sown is 91, and the average number of cows per holding is 13. On Group 33 there are 13 holdings. The average expenditure, including stock and equipment, is £3,459. The average area cleared is 102 acres, and the average acreage sown is 78. The average number of cows per holding is 10. On Group 54 there are 17 holdings. The average expenditure, including stock and equipment, amounts to £2,654. The area cleared averages 73 acres per holding, the acreage sown amounts to 67 per holding, and the average number of cows carried is seven per holding. These are groups least affected by the reconstruction. At Busselton there are several groups not affected at all by the reconstruction, such as No. 4 and No. 6. On No. 3 there are 20 holdings retained. The average expenditure, including stock and equipment, is £3,016. The average acreage cleared amounts to 52 acres, the average acreage sown is 40, and the average number of cows carried is 5. On group No. 4 there are 16 holdings. The average expenditure, including stock and equipment, is £3,192. The average acreage cleared is 74 acres, the average acreage sown is 59, and the average number of cows carried is 7 per holding. This group is not affected by the reconstruction, because no alteration has been made there whatever. On group No. 6 there are 22 holdings. The average expenditure, including stock and equipment, is £3,211. The average acreage cleared is 50 acres, the average acreage sown is 42, and the number of cows carried averages four per holding. On group 12 there are 20 holdings retained. The average expenditure, including stock and equipment, is £2,671. The average acreage cleared is 47 acres, the average acreage sown is 50, and the cows average 3 per holding. At Manjimup, on group No. 1, there are 20 retained holdings. The average expenditure per holding, including stock and equipment, is £3,071. The average acreage cleared is 50 acres, the average acreage sown is 46, and the holdings are carrying an average of five cows. On Group No. 5 there are 20 holdings retained. The average expenditure per hold-

ing, including stock and equipment, is £2,887. The average acreage cleared is 48 acres, the average acreage sown is 46, and the blocks are carrying an average of six cows per holding. On Group No. 8 there are 21 retained holdings. The expenditure per holding, including stock and equipment, is £3,117. The average acreage cleared is 55 acres, the average acreage sown is 47, and the holdings are carrying an average of five cows. That shows the capitalisation of these groups and the progress made. I think I can safely say that all these holdings will carry more stock this year. I told the House the other night that our experience in the purchase of stock and putting it on the holdings has not been too satisfactory. We have put stock on holdings in the spring, and have had to repossess them in the autumn. We have had to repossess a considerable number of stock from the Peel Estate. Unhappily the anticipations of the officers of the field were never realised. They have never been able to give a dependable guide to the administration. I am sure that as a result of the progress that is being made, the country that is being cleared and put under pasture and the sowing that has been done on the groups, these areas will carry a great number of stock in the near future. At Denmark on group No. 41 there are 17 holdings. The average expenditure, including stock and equipment, is £2,566. The average acreage cleared per holding is 38 acres, the average acreage sown is 28, and the number of stock averages five per holding. I am not speaking of heifers or horses, but of cows. On Group No. 42 there are 19 holdings. The average expenditure, including stock and equipment, is £2,200. The average acreage cleared is 41 acres, the average acreage sown is 28, and the average number of cows carried is five per holding. That is an indication of the expenditure on the groups least affected by the reconstruction, but I will give the House a few details as to the reconstruction, details which I got out in the Busselton area when I visited it some time ago. On Group 16, where two locations have been linked up the expenditure including stock and plant amounts to £4,063. That is for one holding, now the property of one settler. In another case, where four locations have been linked, the expenditure amounts to £6,821. In an instance where three locations have been linked, the expenditure amounts to £5,016. Then there is a case where two locations have been linked, and the expenditure amounts to £5,166. In most of these cases where two or three locations have been joined up, the expenditure runs from £3,000 to £6,000. On Group 14, three locations have been linked up with a capitalisation of £3,925; three others have been linked up with a capitalisation of £6,748; three others again with a capitalisation of £4,059; five with a capitalisation of £6,753, and two with a capitalisation of £3,785. On Group 15, two locations have been joined up with a capitalisation of £4,361, two with a capitalisation of £4,984, two with a capitalisation of £2,164, two with a capitalisation of £4,438, two with a capitalisation of £4,166, three with a capitalisation of £6,642, two with a capitalisation of £4,473, and three with a capitalisation of £5,000. From these figures the House may realise that the fixing of capitalisations is absolutely essential, that it is not possible for settlers to carry the capitalisations indicated by the figures, that some authority must be appointed to deal with the question, and that such authority must have the qualifications necessary for arriving at what are proper capitalisations in the interests of the State and in the interests of the settlers.

Mr. Lindsay: Are those cases a fair average of the early groups?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I got out six groups in each district, and they are a fair average indicating the general position. I asked the accountant to get me six instances in every district, so that we might have an opportunity of knowing exactly what the expenditure was.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What is the average for the 2,000 holdings?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I cannot say yet, for the reason that there are many abandoned holdings, and that some of the linked holdings on the Peel Estate have not yet been capitalised. But the capitalisation will be very heavy. Of course, the Peel Estate is not by any means fairly representative of the group settlements.

Hon. G. Taylor: But, unfortunately, many people look at it in that light.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: A comparison with the Peel Estate would not apply with regard to Manjimup or Busselton or Denmark.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Have you the details of the expenditure—interest, rent charges, and so on?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As I told the hon. member, the figures include everything.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But you have not got the details?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The figures include everything except, in the case of the Peel Estate, land purchase charges and drainage. Still, they cover everything else chargeable to the groups, including of course interest.

Mr. Mann: And including roads and railways?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: These figures represent the capitalisation of areas in the Abba River and Busselton districts. I got them out when I went to see the settlers there, because I thought they would like to know their capitalisations.

Hon. G. Taylor: The figures include all expenditure?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: All expenditure.

Hon. G. Taylor: Including expenditure for roads?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Oh no!

Hon. G. Taylor: Drainage?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not drainage, and not roads or railways; just expenditure on the holdings, but including interest on the expenditure. What we are mostly concerned with now is the appointing of some competent authority who will be able to determine the fair capitalisation. Hon. members will agree with me that the manager of the Agricultural Bank ought not to be saddled with that responsibility. Mr. McLarty, as hon. members know, is fully absorbed in his own work. Indeed, he has more work than a man of ordinary capacity can carry out satisfactorily.

Hon. G. Taylor: I do not know how he stands up to it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No. Moreover, as hon. members are aware, Mr. McLarty is not in good health.

Mr. Mann: He has a very able lieutenant.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is true that he has an able lieutenant. That able lieutenant may be appointed on this board.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Has the Minister any idea of appointing members of the existing board to the proposed board?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not necessarily. The proposed board will include an officer of the Agricultural Bank, and the Government will pick one of the soundest men there. That officer will probably be the chairman of the board. It may be that some member of the present Group Settlement Board will also be appointed to the proposed board, but I think it desirable to keep the members of the Group Settlement Board as far as possible apart from the question of capitalisation. The present Group Settlement Board are advisory and administrative, and their hands are pretty full, too. They are constantly engaged in the field. Moreover, in the interests of all concerned I consider that the administration ought not to be brought into the question of capitalisation. That question ought to be settled by some competent outside authority able to estimate the possibilities of the country and to determine the capitalisation which will be in the interests of the State while giving the settler a chance also.

Hon. G. Taylor: It would not be a very long job, would it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know. All the figures are available, and these gentlemen would naturally see the locations for themselves and estimate their possibilities. From their experience they would be able to estimate the earning capacity of a holding and its possibilites of future progress. They could not do that in an office.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The present board ought to know a good deal about those matters.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: They do, but the authority doing this work of re-capitalisation ought to be pretty independent. The members of the proposed board ought to be competent, and ought to be men in whom we have confidence. They ought to have a knowledge of the country and its earning capacity.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes; men who have lived there and farmed there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is the important thing. I think hon. members will welcome this proposal.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The members of the present board ought to have acquired some knowledge by now. They have been there a long time.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so, but I do not want the members of the

present board to become mixed up in the question of capitalisation. It might not be desirable for them as an advisory board. I think we shall need to have somebody from the Agricultural Bank on the board, because the bank will take over the properties. Accordingly the bank ought to have representation on the board especially as in the first instance the responsibility was put upon Mr. McLarty to arrange the terms of capitalisation. The other members ought to be gentlemen who are competent to give sound, independent judgment, and I think they can be secured in this State. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir James Mitchell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.12 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 18th September, 1928.

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

BILL—FERTILISERS.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [4.37] in moving the second reading said: The reason for introducing this measure may be gleaned from the memorandum attached to the Bill. This memorandum shows that the decision to amend the existing Fertiliser Act arose in consequence of a resolution passed at the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture in 1923, when the question received deep and earnest consideration. Arising out of thi and due to the fact that any Bill propose would be of a technical character, the agr cultural chemists of the various States wer called together for the purpose of takin the matter in hand, and ultimately they sub mitted a draft Bill which was intended t embody what were considered to be the bes provisions of the Acts already in forc throughout Australia. It was found o examining this draft Bill that it differe very slightly in principle from the Bi which was on the statute book of this State and the measure now submitted to thi House is in the main a reproduction of thi draft Bill as redrafted by the conference o technical advisers. There are some mino variations in order to meet local require ments. In the draft Bill provision was mad for registering dealers or vendors in fer tilisers, as well as the brands of fertilisers This was at variance with the Act now i force, and it has not been adopted, as th experience of the past has shown us that i is sufficient to provide for the registration o fertilisers and that it is not necessary t insist upon the registration of dealers. T insist that every dealer or vendor of fer tilisers, particularly in country towns, shoul be registered would, in the opinion of th Department of Agriculture, impose an un due burden upon the trade and also upon th agricultural community, without any corres ponding advantage. The provision therefor has been deleted. Further, in the draft Bil as prepared by the agricultural chemists it is provided that details of the contents o the fertiliser should be set out on the bag in addition to having these details supplied in the registration and also on the invoic given to the purchaser. In the presen measure the two latter requirements only are insisted upon. To have the details also set out on the bag or on a label would in volve additional expense, which would b passed on to the purchaser. It should be enough if they are stated in the registra tion and on the invoice supplied to the pur chaser. The present Bill differs from the existing Act mainly in two respects. In the first place it provides for an annual regis tration of fertilisers, and also the payment of an annual fee. The present system under the existing Act stipulates for a single re gistration which remains in force until can celled by the vendor. As the result of this the register of fertilisers becomes, in pro cess of time, congested with brands of fer tilisers which are no longer in general use