The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In districts where agreements exist, that cannot be done, and it is for that reason power was sought to go up to 1s. In some cases it would not be necessary to charge 1s. if every person in districts, where agreements do not operate, had joined with the others. Once rating power is given, all can be brought within the scheme, but that is not the case where water is supplied under agreement. As things are, some people are able to reap the benefit that others are paying for. It was therefore, necessary to bring in a Bill giving power to make a rate that would apply generally for the benefit of the whole district. The Bill will not be rushed through the Committee stage. Every member will be afforded an opportunity to deal with the question, and to obtain the views of the various associations concerning it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 27th October, 1925.

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

QUESTION—STATE HOTELS.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND asked the Honorary Minister: 1, What are—(a) the gross receipts, and (b) the net profits from each of the State Hotels, including the Caves House Hotel, for the year ended 30th June, 1925? 2, What clerical or office assistance is provided at each of these hotels or hostels, and at what cost? 3, What is the number of staff attached to each hotel or hostel? 4, What salary is paid to—(a) each manager, (b) each manager's wife; and what concessions are granted to such manager, or wife? 5, Does any of these managers receive any bonus pro rata to profits made? 6, If not, is there any objection to the bonus system being adopted; if so, why?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied: 1, (a) The gross receipts from State hotels, including Cave House, for the year ended 30th June, 1925, amounted to £86,060 0s. 7d. (b) The net profits for the same period amounted to £8,069 16s. 2d. It is not considered advisable, for trade reasons, to disclose the gross receipts or nett profits of any particular hotel or hotels. 2, Clerical and general assistance is provided at Cave House during the busy period of the year. Last year's expenditure was £69 9s. 3d. No clerical assistance is provided at any State hotel, excepting at Bruce Rock, where partial clerical services are given in return for board and lodging. 3, Number of staff attached to each hotel or hostel, exclusive of manager and wife:—Bolgart, 5; Bruce Rock, 16; Corrigin, 9; Dwellingup, 8; Gwalia, 6; Kwolyin, 4; Wongan Hills, 7; Cave House, 13. 4, (a) All managers receive £7 per week; (b) manager's wife at Bruce Rock receives an allowance of £1 per week, and Caves House £1 10s. per week. All managers receive free maintenance for their families; three weeks annual holiday; and free transport to Perth for themselves and families. 5, No. 6, Yes. 7, It might conduce to practices which should be foreign to the trading of State hotels.

QUESTION—POLICE CONSTABLE LAMBERT.

Hon. G. POTTER asked the Chief Secretary: Will he lay on the Table the file relating to the dismissal of Constable Lambert?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: Yes. File laid on the Table herewith.

QUESTION—ESPLANADE FAIR GROUNDS.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Who are the present lessees of the Esplanade Fair grounds, known as the "White City"? 2, When does the existing lease expire? 3, At the expiration of the

existing lease, will the present lessees be granted a renewal or will public tenders be called?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, The grounds are let for six months of the year to the Ugly Men's Association, the Silver Chain, and Mr. D. M. Martin. 2, The present arrangement terminates at the end of next March. 3, This point has not yet been considered.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Harris, leave of absence for six consecutive sittings granted to the Hon. H. Seddon (North-East) on the ground of urgent private business.

BILL—DIVORCE AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st October.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J M. Drew—Central) [4.37]: I wish it to be understood that any opinions I may express in the course of this debate are my individual opinions and may or may not be in agreement with the views of other members of the Cabinet. On reading the Bill one is tempted to ask a pertinent question—"Who is the lady in the case?"

Members: Oh!

Hon. J. R. Brown: It is always a lady!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That query can be put without any reflection on Mr. Lovekin, who has no unworthy end to serve in sponsoning the Bill. He has been asked to pilot the measure, and with his usual courtesy he has agreed to do so. From time to time we have had experience of legislation coming here in which it was evident that some particular gentleman was vitally interested. A law clerk wants to become a solicitor. He thinks he has all the qualifications for the position, and that the law which creates legal practitioners is not sufficiently elastic to enable him to creep through and enjoy the distinction and emoluments of a barrister of the Supreme Court. Then he excites the sympathy of some kind-hearted politician, and it is not long before the whole machinery of Parliament is set in motion with the object of planing down existing legislation so as to make it fit his particular case.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is rather an extraordinary statement in view of the number of similar Bills in other directions.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A similar suspicion attaches to some attempts successfully made in the past to amend the law relating to divorce. Whether or no that remark applies in the present case I am unable to say. To judge, however, from Mr. Lovekin's speech in introducing the Bill, he has been led to believe that its purpose is of a different character. He tells us that the object of the measure is to relieve the State of the annual expenditure of a large amount of money; that husbands desert their wives and children, and that the wives and children have to be supported by the State. He says that the husband goes away for three or four years, and perhaps lives with another woman, and that it seems quite wrong that the deserted wife should be tied to such a man. He informs us that she is so tied, that she cannot get a divorce if there is a maintenance order against the husband, even if that order is not complied with, as in such circumstances there is no desertion in law. In the first place, if the husband is living with a strange woman, his wife can get a divorce on the ground of adultery under the existing law. If the case is purely one of desertion, and if the wife is obliged to seek relief from the Charities Department, it is difficult to see how Mr. Lovekin's Bill is going to assist. There are about 274 women concerned, Mr. Lovekin says, and only about 25 per cent. of them obtain maintenance from their husbands through the court. That leaves over 200 women destitute and forced to obtain relief from the Government for themselves and their children. Mr. Lovekin proposes by means of this Bill to enable those women to re-marry and live happily ever after.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: Has he any guarantee that they will re-marry?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know how Mr. Lovekin is going to guarantee that, and I do not know how he proposes to get these penniless women through the Divorce Court. My experience of litigation is very limited, but quite sufficient to justify me in concluding that the expenses connected with a divorce case would be anything up to £50.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Perhaps the prospective husband will foot the bill!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. Probably there are 200 prospective husbands sufficiently philanthropic and courageous to find the money to enable these ladies to enter the Divorce Court, and afterwards prepared to bear the burden of clothing and feeding the ladies and their children.

Hon. J. Duffell: Experience does not support that view at all.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Whether the action is defended or not, the petitioner must prove a case; and then there are the fees of a lawyer for appearing for the wife, the court fees, and all the other expenses connected with the preparation of the petition and its lodgment in the Supreme Court. A Royal Commission which sat in England in 1910 reported that the cost of an undefended divorce case was approximately £70, and that the cost of a defended case ran up to about £500 in many instances.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The costs are much heavier there than here.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am pleased to hear it. However, fairly heavy expenditure would be incurred; and let us not forget that this expenditure would have to be faced by a woman who is in such a helpless state of poverty that she is forced to obtain relief from the Charities Department. In my opinion there are already enough facilities for securing a divorce without providing more, even if there is only a faint hope of their ever being availed of. Among the grounds upon which a divorce may be granted are, adultery; desertion for three years; habitual drunkenness for four years with cruelty in the case of the man and neglect of domestic duties in the case of the woman; imprisonment for seven years and upwards; or unsound mind for five years. These are sufficient grounds for the severance of the nuptial knot. Thus we have habitual drunkenness, of which there are thousands of cases in the State among rich and poor, as a ground for divorce. I know the word "cruelty" is attached to it, but the term "habitual drunkenness" itself, without anything else, would be interpreted as cruelty to the woman who had to endure it in her husband. Many brilliant men who were perfect gentlemen when sober, have been habitual drunkards for over four years; have reformed, and brought sunshine back to their homes. Lunacy is classed as a ground for divorce. A wife, perhaps through worry or something connected with child-birth, loses her mental balance, goes to Claremont and is there five years—for it is much easier to get into one of these institutions than it is to get out. At the end of five years, the husband secures a divorce, and re-marries. The wife may recover—to find that another woman is the head of her household, in charge of her daughters. I can recall one instance in which a woman, with a family, obtained a divorce from her husband on the grounds of insanity. He had been in the Claremont Hospital for the Insane for some years. She had been talking about approaching the Divorce Court for a long period before the time was ripe for her to do so. The patient was sufficiently intelligent to resent her action. This created a feeling of apprehension among the hospital authorities whenever the question of his release came up for consideration. In the end he became resigned to his fate; he improved mentally; was released from the institution, and is now pursuing his normal occupation in one of the towns of this State. His wife and family are under the control of another man. This Bill gives further opportunities to gain divorce, figures show that the means already existing for the severance of the marriage tie are being largely availed of. Divorce cases are rapidly increasing in this State. In 1914 there were 2,660 marriages and 21 divorces; in 1915 there were 2,581 marriages and 31 divorces; in 1916 the figures were, 2,365 marriages and 13 divorces, and in 1917 there were 1,621 marriages and 24 divorces; in 1918 there were 1,612 marriages and 23 divorces; in 1919 there were 2,194 marriages and 45 divorces; in 1920 there were 2,932 marriages and 22 divorces; in 1921 there were 2,656 marriages and 22 divorces; in 1922 there were 2,446 marriages and 109 divorces, and in 1923 there were 2,376 marriages and 101 divorces. In 1914 there was one divorce for every 126 marriages, while in 1922 there was one in 22, and in 1923 one for every 23. We hear much about the great increase in divorce in America, and no wonder. In 1923 there was one divorce for 7.5 marriages. But in 1890, when the United States had already attained world-wide notoriety for divorce, there was only one divorce for every 16 marriages. And remember that we were one in 23 for 1923 and one in 22 for 1922.

Many of the matrimonial cases are due to hasty and ill-considered divorce laws. If it were known that marriage was a life contract, it would be entered into with more caution. But there is reason to suspect that in not a few instances the parties say to themselves, "What does it matter? If he, or she, doesn't suit me, I can soon find a remedy." About three years ago I saw what I considered an interesting item in a South Australian journal. It was a copy of a letter forwarded by an English girl to the Minister for Immigration. She asked him to interest himself in securing her a husband in Australia. She had met some Aussies during the war period and was charmed with them. She stated her age and address and said she would like to work on a sheep-station or farm. The girl then mentioned a few of the qualifications she would like to see in her future husband. I copied the item into my paper, and about a week afterwards a huge, unkempt, unwashed, bow-legged, shaggy-bearded, sheepish-looking denizen of the backblocks sprawled into my office. He said "a schoolmaster bloke" out his way had told him all about the English girl who wanted a husband, and he had come to let me know that he would take her. I assured him that the girl was not on the premises, and I explained the origin of the paragraph. He then implored me to write to the girl on his behalf. I expressed the opinion that it was a very unwise step for him to take, that he was buying a pig in a poke, that she might turn out a bad lot, and that he might fall in the soup. But I soon discovered that he was not as green as he was cabbage-looking, for he immediately answered back, "I won't fall in no soup. If she ain't the clean pertater, and comes any of her funny business with me, I'll see Wilson, the lawyer, and get a divorce. If the worst comes to the worst, I have always a way out." That is the sort of sentiment that prevails now among a certain section of society when the question of matrimony comes up for consideration. There is one eye on the marriage, and the other eye on the Divorce Court. Is it not time to cry a halt?

Hon. A. Lovekin: But there is nothing of this in the Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is apropos of the Bill. The Bill proposes to increase divorces. I say divorce is an evil, and that there is no necessity for increasing that evil. Rather is there necessity for decreasing it. Is it not time to cry a halt? Influential sections of the Press seem to think so. In the "West Australian" of 22nd October appears the following editorial on the question:—

> Very significant, with a significance transcending sectarian or sectional interests, is that phase of the report of a committee of the Protestant Episcopal Church Convention of America which deals with home life and divorce. Caustically referring to promiscuous divorce as "consecutive polygamy," the report proceeds to trace lawlessness, immodesty, and juvenile depravity to the fact that "the home in America has ceased to function." If that statement be true, there can be no question of the gravity of the situation, and it may be that future historians may trace much of the social unease of the present day, not only in America but elsewhere, to this one factor. The home is a microcosm of civilised society, the foundation upon which the entire structure of the civilised State is built. When it disintegrates the whole fabric must crumble. Neither is this complaint peculiar to America; echoes of the complaint are heard from many countries, and only a week ago the annual report of the Justices' Association of Western Australia contained comment of a similar nature. If civilisation as we know it is to persist, the integrity and the sanctity of that unit upon which it is based—the home—must be preserved. Anything tending in that direction should be sedulously fostered, and anything making for the disruption of the home should be made an object of attack by all who have at heart the interests of civilisation.

That is the commonsense view taken by a journal of such weight as the "West Australian." And the assertion in the report of the Protestant Episcopal Church Convention that promiscuous divorce is "consecutive polygamy" is one that all thinking people will endorse. It is safe to say that, in a great number of divorce cases heard in Perth, there is collusion. In most instances the whole thing appears to have been rehearsed. There are professional pimps in the business, and if the detectives of Australia were half as proficient in their work as are these pimps, there would be a rapid diminution of crime, although we might have to build larger gaols at the onset. By a mutual understanding between the parties as to tactics, it would be possible in Western Australia for a man to have a new wife, and a woman may have a new husband, every year, thus bringing about, not only consecutive polygamy, but consecutive polyandry. I contend that Mr. Lovekin has said nothing to justify the introduction of a Bill interfering with what is

considered to be an important law. That it has been regarded as an important law is proved by the fact that up to the date of Responsible Government all Bills relating to divorce had to be reserved for the Royal assent. In addition to that, we are tinkering with legislation that comes under the Commonwealth Constitution, and which at no distant date will be the concern of the Federal authorities alone. This measure will do nothing to help the deserted woman who are living on public charity, unless someone is generous enough to finance them through the Divorce Court. A tightening up of the Married Women's Protection Act would seem to be the remedy. It is farcical that a defaulting husband should be able to discharge his accumulated financial obligations to his family by serving a short sentence in gaol. Mr. Lovekin is anxious to appease the appetites of impoverished women who are hungering for means by which they can maintain themselves and their children. But I am very much afraid that, despite his worthy intentions, he is simply providing them with nothing more nutritious than a Barmecide's Feast.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) [5.0]: I regret that I was not present when Mr. Lovekin moved the second reading of the Bill, but what I did hear of his remarks towards the close of his speech, and what I have read since, impress upon me this fact, that he pointed out that he was not seeking in any way to enlarge the grounds of divorce, but was endeavouring to relieve what is obviously an inequality in one of the grounds, namely, that of desertion on the part of the husband. I appreciate very fully everything that the Leader of the House has said, and I would be the last person to call into question any one of his words, or cavil at what he has said regarding the sanctity of the marriage tie. Every member will agree that it is right and proper that we should maintain that tie as sacred and binding as it is possible for us to do. But whilst I appreciate all that the Leader has said, I think he has overlooked a very important point in connection with the Bill. We have to regard the Bill, not as a Bill merely seeking to enlarge the grounds of divorce. There is the right for everyone to apply to the court for divorce on the ground of three years' desertion, but there is this inequality and unfairness—and I say unfairness advisedly—that if a poor woman should be deserted by her husband, and he remains away for three years and fails to support her, that woman can apply to the court and get a divorce. It is quite possible that the husband, as happens in many instances, leaves the State, but if the act of desertion takes place in this State, then the court has jurisdiction and can award a decree in favour of the wife, so long as she proves the desertion. Now here is where the inequality exists. Assume that that woman in the place of being deserted says to her husband, "We cannot get on," and the husband admits that it is impossible for them to live together, and they agree to separate and enter into a deed of separation, which is a common thing; or assume that the husband has left his wife without support, and she applies to the police court and gets a decree of separation with an order for maintenance. In either of these cases, where the husband fails to pay maintenance, the woman cannot claim the remedy of divorce, which would be free to her if she had not entered into that deed of separation or obtained an order of separation. She cannot do so because she is not a deserted wife. She has a right under the deed of separation to sue the husband, but in the majority of these cases the husband has levanted; he has gone out of the State. Then the woman may not be able to enforce her remedy. The result is that the State is left with that woman and perhaps her children, and the State may probably have to support her and her family for the time being; that is, of course, if they have no means of their own. But I should like to draw a picture different from that set out by the Leader of the House. There are cases of separation where the parties may not be in that extreme condition of poverty to which the Minister referred. There are cases where the wife may have some means of her own, and the husband and she may have entered into a deed of separation, perhaps for one thing or perhaps for another, perhaps incompatibility of temper, or perhaps something even more serious, and they may have agreed to separate rather than to take their grievances before the court. If the wife should happen to have some means of her own, she then is not in that condition of poverty to which the Leader of the House referred. I admit that there are cases such as those referred to by the Leader of the House, but there are others as well. Whilst

I believe in seeking to maintain as sacred as possible the marriage tie, I must have regard for the fact that the law allows divorce on the ground of desertion for three years. Therefore, there seems to me no reason why a woman, if deserted by her husband, as is contemplated by the Bill, should not be able to obtain a divorce. If a woman had not been unfortunate enough to enter into a deed of separation, or obtained an order such as that to which I have referred, she would have been able to go to the court and apply for a divorce after a desertion of three years. Some 18 months ago this matter of the marriage laws came very prominently before the Parliament in the Old Land. It was a very keenly debated subject, and I think that last year—I speak from memory—a measure was passed widening very largely the grounds of divorce in England. It has been recognised there for many years that reasonable grounds of divorce should be afforded to the people. If the Bill now before us sought to create some new ground for divorce, I would consider very seriously the wisdom of passing it into law. The Bill, however, only proposes to give that measure of relief which a deserted wife, in the circumstances that I have related, is entitled to receive.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It is only to remedy a legal technicality.

Hon. J. NICHOLSON: That is all; it is purely a technicality, as Mr. Lovekin states. The court cannot recognise desertion where the parties have been separated either under a deed of covenant or by an order of the police court. I should like to draw members' attention to the Bill. It states clearly that three things must coincide—

On the ground that the respondent, being the petitioner's husband

That is intended to apply to the woman.

is separated from the petitioner under a decree or order of a competent court . . .

and so on. That paragraph is joined up with another reading—

And has been during the period aforesaid liable by virtue of a decree or order of the said court or of a covenant in the said deed to make periodical payments to the petitioner,

Then it goes on again—

and has during the period aforesaid failed to make such payments periodically as required by the decree, order or covenant, either entirely or repeatedly or habitually.

Unless all of these things are proved, then the woman who goes before the court will not be afforded the remedy she seeks, namely, divorce. I ask members, of what good is it for a woman to have a husband who is away in some other part of the world, and who has failed to support her, a husband who is a delinquent and fails to carry out the obligations he undertook to do when he went before the altar? Do you, Mr. President, think that we should extend consideration to the husband under those conditions? I say, undoubtedly no. As I have already remarked, if we were seeking by the Bill to introduce a new ground whereby divorce might be secured, then I would consider the reasons advanced by the Minister very seriously indeed before I offered my support to the Bill. In the circumstances I feel constrained to add that it is merely giving a right measure of relief and it is my intention to support the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. J. W. Kirwan debate adjourned.

BILL—PRIMARY PRODUCTS MARKETING.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd October.

HON. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (South-West) [5.15]: I am afraid I shall have to address the House at some length because the Bill is an extremely important measure to the people in the South-West. I admit at once that the Bill, as it is before us, is infinitely better than the Queensland Act, but at the same time I hope to prove to you, Mr. President, and to hon. members generally, that it is a danger and a menace to all industries that may come within its operations. I will refer more particularly to the fruit industry. Let hon. members ask themselves this question: Is the Bill necessary for the fruit industry? Is that industry in such a parlous condition that we must have legislation of this kind to enable it to live? If hon. members go down to the fruit districts in the South-West, they will find that the people there are in a fairly prosperous condition. There are smiling orchardists to be seen; there are nice homes and healthy children and on Saturday afternoons and Sundays hundreds of motor cars may be seen taking the orchardists

about on business or on various pleasures bent. In these circumstances, I contend the industry cannot be in the parlous condition that we might be led to believe from certain statements that have been made. The Leader of the House said that similar legislation had proved of great benefit to the people of Queensland. I wish to prove that the position of the fruitgrowers in Queensland and of those in Western Australia is so entirely different that what may be good for Queensland, may not be good for Western Australia. Are the conditions similar?

Hon. J. Cornell: No.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Queensland produces bananas and pineapples.

Hon. J. Cornell: And paw-paws.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: They produce paw-paws in small quantities. Bananas are protected to the extent of 10s. a case and pineapples are also protected because the bulk of the pines go to the canning factories and the resultant product is helped by a protective duty.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Do we grow those products here?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: We do not grow either pineapples or bananas for commercial purposes.

Hon. A. Burvill: What about tomatoes?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: We find that the committee of direction in Queensland have lived on the profits of bananas and pineapples. We find also that there is only one part of Queensland where a few apples are grown and that part has been a seething hotbed of discontent. The growers there have been fighting the committee of direction from the moment the committee started to operate. The grapes that are grown in Queensland are of a very medium quality and are so small in quantity that we have one man growing grapes in Western Australia who grows more than all the people in Queensland put together. We have one orchardist that produces considerably more apples than are produced in the whole State of Queensland. That being so, does it not make one ponder and say, "Well, evidently the conditions in Western Australia are so entirely different from those in Queensland that we must judge this Bill from the standpoint as to how it will affect Western Australia." An attempt was made in Queensland to pool tomatoes, but with disastrous results. The members of the committee of direction burnt their fingers to such an extent that they immediately declared the pool off, after having lost some hundreds of pounds for the growers. I want the House to grasp this fact that the committee of direction in Queensland have not attempted to pool any soft fruits because, although they may have made plunges, they are not fools enough to attempt the impossible after having seen what happened regarding tomatoes. Anyone who tries to pool our soft fruits will invite disaster. It cannot be done. Do hon. members realise that a grower could upset the metropolitan market by putting in 200 extra cases of soft fruits in one day? Such a procedure would knock the bottom right out of the market. In such circumstances, what would any hon. member or any committee of direction that may be appointed, do to avoid that position? Pulp it? Jam it? I claim that the great bulk of our plums—that is the fruit that causes the biggest gluts here——

Hon. J. Duffell: What about apricots?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: —are not suitable varieties for jam making or pulping. I grow a large number myself and market from 1,000 to 1,500 cases of plums. When I find that the price to be obtained is not payable, I do not send the plums forward. It must be remembered that when we planted our orchards with plums and other soft fruits, we were in a very different position from that in which we find ourselves today. In those times the metropolitan area was badly infested with fruit fly. The result was that the inspectors condemned the fruit as it came in from the suburban orchards adjacent to Perth. Our fruit, being clean, found a ready market at good prices. Those times, however, have changed. Growers have awakened to the fact that they must clean up their orchards if they desire to keep the trade. The result is that from Spearwood to-day, for instance, prime stone fruit comes forward in perfect order and is put on the market fresh as against our fruit, which has been anything from 13 to 26 hours on a truck and has been picked from 48 to 60 hours. What is the consequence? The suburban growers secure the cream of the market and we have to take what is left. As a result, the greater proportion of the growers in the South-West have ceased to produce that class of fruit altogether. I have grubbed up large areas of peaches because we could not compete with the suburban growers. When we grub up the stone fruit trees, we replace them with apples and pears, because we can

more than hold our own with those types of fruit. The question of finance is an all important one. The Leader of the House stated that money was raised in Queensland by the transportation costs being reduced. I wish to make it clear that the committee have put one over the growers of Queensland that the growers in this State would never take lying down. It must be remembered that in Queensland they have the large cities of Sydney and Melbourne to supply with pineapples and bananas. Where is our Sydney or our Melbourne? Where are our great markets? We have no such markets. Queensland being the only country growing those two fruits—pineapples and bananas—and having such good markets at its door, is in a splendid position. We find, however, that in Queensland the committee of direction charge the growers so much a case to send the fruit to Melbourne or Sydney, and the committee make a profit out of it. In Western Australia, should the Bill be passed, which I hope it will not, can any profit or saving be made regarding transport? I say emphatically that it cannot, and I speak as an orchardist having experience for 20 years.

Hon. J. Cornell: The only way would be by a reduction of railway freights.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: We are in a unique position in Western Australia. The Commissioner of Railways allows us to send our fruit forward in truck lots or in train loads, thus allowing us to have every possible freight advantage. He does not say that one man only must send a truck lot or a train load, but allows any number of growers to forward their fruit so long as it is consigned to one man at the other end. No committee of direction could secure any further reduction. I would like to see a further cut in our rates, but in all honesty I have to say, with regret but in justice to the Commissioner of Railways, that we have the lowest freights in Australia today. It would not be fair to go to the Commissioner with a request for a further reduction. We can now send it forward in the way I have indicated, without the necessity for any such Bill as that before us now or even a pool, and we get every possible advantage. Any saving that may be made, in Queensland, cannot, therefore, be made here. Moreover, the Queensland growers have paid more by way of freight under the regime of the committee of direction than they did before because the committee are making a profit out of freights. In Western Australia we have very reliable up-to-date agents who have made a lifelong study of the business. Some have been born on orchards and others have worked on orchards until they embarked upon the agency business. They know the trade from A to Z. We have reputable firms handling our products here, such firms as the Westralian Farmers, Patterson's, Simper, Wills and Co. and many others. These firms play a most important part in the industry. Their representatives go around to the orchardists and offer to buy the whole or portion of the crops. Under the Bill that would be disallowed. It is an excellent thing for the orchardists, because it enables them to be sure of a price for portion of the crop. The balance, if they think fit, they can gamble with and send to England, or wherever they like. To do this has been found most advantageous by the growers. Some of them prefer to sell the whole of their crops; others sell only a portion, but in any case it has proved a decided advantage to the growers. In Queensland this business was taken out of the hands of the agents, who were not allowed to operate, with the result that there was an uproar. An appeal was made to the law and the agents won the case. This is what happened. When the decision was given—I am quoting the "Fruit World of Australasia" of the 1st May, 1925—the following was recorded——

> When the news was received at the fruit sales of the winning of the legal actions by the agents and growers against the C.O.D., there were loud cheers. The sales were stopped and, bare-headed, all assembled sang "Rule Britannia. Britons Never Shall Be Slaves."

I am pleased that those people had the opportunity to sing the song in such circumstances. Within three weeks of that decision having been given, 75 per cent. of the stuff was sold through agents, showing that the growers knew who obtained for them the best results. I do not want to delve into ancient history, but we have had a few pools in fresh fruit, with disastrous results to the growers. Some of us remember the Sunshine scheme which turned out a moonshine scheme, and there were other schemes started, none of which was successful. The growers know their agents who, to keep their clients, hunt the world for markets. As I said on the Address-in-reply, we have increased our export trade enor-

mously. We are feeling out in all directions overseas, and wherever we can place a few hundred or a few thousand cases of fruit, we do so. Now I ask members where are we likely to get the best results—from these men who have made a life study of the business and have proved themselves to be men of integrity, or from a couple of orchardists, who may be excellent orchardists but lack the experience and the necessary knowledge to run the business end of the concern? Every time we have put up orchardists to run our business, we have suffered. This is no new thing. We tried it ourselves, and I lost hundreds of pounds through putting growers off their jobs on to the job of a dealer or agent. They do not know the business; they have had no experience of it; they fool about and we lose our fruit and our money, after which those people return to their orchards. We do not want that sort of thing. It has proved disastrous everywhere it has been tried. Queensland, under the most favourable conditions, having a monopoly in Australia of two commodities and with conditions entirely different from ours, has proved that outside of those two articles its efforts have been unsuccessful. The Leader of the House said the growers of Western Australia insisted on the Bill. I know where the Minister got his information, and I am sorry to say it was entirely incorrect. For months past the question of fruit marketing has ben a burning one with the orchardists. Mr. Sampson, for some good reason known to himself, went to Queensland and interested himself in the business. Instead of going to the growers —and surely they are the people he should have studied—he went to Mr. McGregor. Mr. McGregor started the scheme.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Did not he go to any of the growers?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: He made two visits to Queensland; I am referring to his first trip.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: I was with him, and he did go to the growers.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: He returned to Western Australia, the mouthpiece of Mr. McGregor, and quoted him on every possible occasion. The growers here thought there might be something in the proposal. We are always open to hear of anything that will benefit us, and so we asked Mr. Sampson to go down to Bridgetown and give us his views. He did so. We decided to get Mr. McGregor over and hear his views. Mr. McGregor came and gave his views to the Fruit Advisory Board. With his silvery tongue Mr. McGregor made out such a splendid case that the Fruit Advisory Board said, "We can see nothing inimical to the fruitgrowers in the scheme as stated by Mr. McGregor." But when the board went into the question quietly afterwards and found out exactly the nigger in the woodpile, they wrote to the Minister asking to be given time to reconsider the whole matter as they had found that they had heard only one side of the case. Members are well aware that there are two sides to every case. Mr. Sparkes, the chairman of the Advisory Board, speaking at Bridgetown on the 23rd October, 1925, said—

> The advisory board never had the opportunity to discuss the Bill. After listening to Mr. McGregor before the Bill was introduced, they carried a resolution that they could see nothing inimical in the Bill, but it was incorrect to state that the board passed a motion in favour of the Bill.

As soon as the Bill came to hand, the advisory board studied it in conjunction with the Queensland Act, and they then changed their minds entirely. Mr. Sampson is not an orchardist. If I stood up in this House and asked for leave to introduce a Bill to provide that all the medical profession, the clever men and the duds, must pool their fees, I should not get much support from the members of the medical profession who count. If I suggested that all the lawyers should pool their fees, I think I should experience a good deal of opposition from certain members of the legal profession.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I am sure of it.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Therefore I ask such members, when dealing with this measure, to put themselves in our position and say that as these people do not want the Bill, we are not going to compel them to do something that we certainly would not like to have done to us. Remember, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you." I ask members to bear that in mind when they are voting on this Bill. Mr. Gillies, who was Minister for Agriculture and afterwards Premier of Queensland——

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: What is he now?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: At present I am not dealing with politics. Mr. Gillies was asked what he would recommend West-

ern Australia to do as regards the marketing of fruit, and his reply was, "The best counsel I can give the fruitgrowers in your State is to go slowly, go very slowly, in fact." I hope we shall go very slowly. When Mr. Gillies, who was the Minister for Agriculture, gives us advice like that, are we such condemned fools that we shall refuse to take it? When he says "Go very slowly," it shows that he is not enamoured of the measure. He sees that it is not working out quite in the way Mr. McGregor would have us believe it is.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Was not he responsible for the measure?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Yes, because it was put up to him by his officers, who painted everything in the colours of the rainbow. But all is not gold that glitters; Mr. Gillies found there was a good deal of gilt about the Bill instead of gold. The Minister for Agriculture (Hon. M. F. Troy) made a statement in another place to which I must take the gravest exception. He said that the growers of Mt. Barker and Bridgetown were very selfish; they sent the bulk of their crops overseas and sent to the metropolitan area only their culls. That statement is entirely incorrect. Why, there are only certain varieties that we export; there are splendid varieties of apples that we grow, the whole of which are sent to the metropolitan area, to Kalgoorlie, or wherever a market exists. Do members think that the growers of Mt. Barker and Bridgetown are such fools as to send only culls to this market and thereby lose their good names as growers? Take the Northern Spy, a beautiful variety; we do not export it; the whole of that variety comes to the metropolitan area, which also receives the early season fruit and various other varieties that we find are not suitable for export. To say that the metropolitan area gets only the culls from those two districts is a statement that should never have been made, and I am sure that the Minister, after thinking it over, can come to no other conclusion than that he was misinformed. The growers of Bridgetown heard of this, and did not like it. The Minister said that the Mt. Barker and Bridgetown growers who exported most of their fruit placed their culls on the local market. The growers took exception to this, and decided that the statement should not go unchallenged. A letter was written to the Minister to the effect that a big body of growers in Bridgetown repudiated the statement. I visited the centres where the fruit is grown. I have not found one place where the growers are in favour of this Bill. On the contrary, I have here bundles of petitions from various organisations begging me to do all I can to prevent this measure from becoming law. I have not had one communication in favour of the Bill.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Not from the dried fruits section?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: No. They want a Bill of their own. I have here the report of a meeting—

> At a public meeting held last night at Bridgetown, of the growers in the Manjimup and Bridgetown districts, they unanimously agreed to support a resolution forwarded to the Minister for Agriculture by the Fruitgrowers' Association of Mt. Barker, namely, "That we, the Mt. Barker fruitgrowers, having considered the Fruit Marketing Bill as submitted by the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture, do hereby publicly protest that such a Bill should have been introduced, we failing to see one single clause or part of it that would be anything but a danger to the industry."

I have visited Boyanup and been presented with a petition begging that the Bill might not become law. It was signed by a huge number of growers, by two-acre men up to 80-acre men. The same thing happened at Donnybrook and Manjimup. Wherever fruit is grown it has been the same. Even was it so from the hills district, Mr. Sampson's electorate. Growers there have written to me saying that 90 per cent. are against the Bill, and that from what they can gather the other 10 per cent. did not understand it or they would be against it. That was combated. In another place Mr. Sampson moved an amendment to allow the whole of the growers to bring their produce into the kerbstone markets. It was pointed out to him that this would absolutely upset the whole applecart. Clause 7 says—

> No person shall sell or deliver any of their products to or buy or receive any of the commodity from any person other than the board. Penalty: £500.

This is the clause that does the damage. If we burst up that clause, we burst up the whole Bill. And yet, Mr. Sampson, when the Bill was being considered in Committee, wanted to burst up that clause, which is the life of the measure. At the eleventh hour he repented of having

placed his constituents in such a horrible mess, of having got them into such a position that a sword was dangling over their heads, threatening to kill their very industry. His amendment was defeated. Let us take the meaning of this clause. There are growers who for years past have sold all their crops privately. There is a grower at Boyanup with a 30-acre orchard, who never sells a case of fruit to anyone but the consumer. Under this Bill that would be impossible. After a man has worked for many years in building up his business, picking his clients from those he knows will pay, and the consumers have sifted out the orchards until they get hold of those who will send them only prime fruit, at one fell swoop this Bill comes along to knock out the whole of the business.

Hon. E. H. Harris: What about the middleman?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: The middleman performs a useful purpose. Does not the Westralian Farmers take the place of a middleman? Why do we pay the salaries of hundreds of clerks in that huge building if not to act as middlemen? We cannot do without the middleman. We must have him.

Hon. A. Burvill: We want the middleman under our control.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Under this Bill we are going to smash all these people who have worked up this line of business. It will defeat the very purpose set out by the Leader of the House, that of bringing the producer and consumer into closer touch. How do the wool growers take this measure? Are the wool growers so delighted with the Bill that they will say, "We will wipe out Dalgety & Co., Wills & Co. and the other agents with whom we have done our business so satisfactorily in the past; we will have our own pool and will elect Government pastoralists to run the job for us." I cannot see these people doing such a thing. They know how valuable these agents have been to them. They, and the orchardists also, know that these agents have kept them going. When these producers have had financial ruin staring them in the face, the agents have helped them to keep going until they have become prosperous again.

Hon. H. A. Stephenson: That is so, not only in regard to fruit, but other things.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Yes. And now there are people who are going to teach us to run our own business. Mr. Rose, when last in England, visited Covent Garden and other places to look into the fruit business and see how he could help his constituents. He asked various agents what they thought of our packing, grading and general style of Western Australian fruit that was sent there. In every case the agents stated that the packing and grading were good, that the fruit was good, and that it compared more than favourably with the Eastern States fruit. How can this board or committee of direction teach us? A man cannot teach his grandmother to suck eggs. When we were boys we were told it was waste of time to endeavour to do that. If these people think they can teach us anything they are greatly mistaken. Many of us have spent all our lives at the business. Our aim and ambition has been to get our fruit on the market in such a condition that we can get the best possible price for it. From the day Western Australia entered the export trade, she has received better prices for her fruit than any other of the States. I do not see how we can be taught, especially by growers who will be on the board. The question of agents is a burning one in Queensland. I have told members how pleased they were when they were given their freedom again in that direction. Our agents are men of integrity. They can be trusted. They are men who will get a decent price, if it is possible, for any decent article. It is in their interests to do so. What would be the position if we said, "We will allow only two agents to operate"? Would they have the same keenness about the business? Would they not say, "We will allow the boy to run the business while we go out and have a drink; they have sent the fruit to us, but we need not worry any more." Unless people have to strive for a thing they do not put their best into it. If we are going to give a monopoly to two agents, are we going to get the same results? Would they try to get us an overseas market or get our fruit into the inland country? There would be no incentive for them to do so. If the board does come to anything I hope it will not attempt to interfere with the agents. What we need is central markets. In years gone by a party spent a large sum of money in purchasing land for central

markets, and I regret that the project was dropped. Such markets must be controlled either by the State or the Perth Municipal Council. If we had centralised markets in Perth, it would do more to help the industry than 40 Bills like this. It would lead to more louvred trucks and better facilities on the wharf at Fremantle, so that we could pre-cool our fruit. We do not ask for anything more except to be left alone, to work out our own destiny. I have here a pamphlet from Queensland. It contains these headings: "Growers benefiting by control"; "Progress record." It contains mostly photographs of gentlemen who are drawing nice little sums of money and who handle the business in Queensland. The balance sheet is interesting to anyone who is fond of figures. I am sure members will be pleased to look into it. It may be interesting to members who grow wool, or some other produce of the land, and who may come under this Bill. Committee fees and expenses amount to £1,725, and then committee fees are again charged to the amount of £6,072. Salaries paid amount to £7,548. Legal expenses amount to £3,625. I wonder whether the legal gentlemen pooled those fees. Printing and stationery account for £1,514, travelling expenses for £423, and telephones and telegrams for £604. Those are a few of the expenses. What about the charges? They are really illuminating. License fees amount to £2,212, wages in Sydney to £1,529, wages in Melbourne and Adelaide to £2,167. Then there is "profit on freight"—I want this item to sink right in—£23,323. Who paid that? The grower.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That is nothing to what was made on the abattoirs.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I am not talking about abattoirs. Let us deal with one problem at a time. The charges and the profit together come to £29,231.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What is the gross turnover?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: The committee have the thing in such a muddle that one cannot tell what the turnover is. Even in the additions there is a mistake of £300 in this balance sheet which has been passed and audited. I am not much of a hand at figures, but I would be prepared to bet £100, if I were allowed to bet here, that there is a mistake of £300.

The PRESIDENT: Betting is highly disorderly.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Exactly, Sir; and that is why I would not attempt to bet. The banana committee cost £5,436, and the profit is only £659. They get £5,436 in commissions alone, and then they can only make a profit of £659. There is another point I want the Leader of the House to bear in mind carefully. The committee run retail shops and barrows, and the profit from retail shops and barrows and country trade is £280.

Hon. E. H. Gray: How do the public get on?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: It is admitted in every Queensland paper that the price of fruit to the consumer has not been reduced. Would we run these barrows in Perth on a wages system and make only 280 "quid"?

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member should say "pounds."

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I beg pardon. I thought I should be better understood if I said "quids." The Queensland results remind me of the early days of Coolgardie, when we used to put on men on wages to look after condensors. They would come there without boots on their feet or a rag on their backs, and would go away full-handed. That is exactly what is happening in Queensland; the unfortunate grower is not getting anything. Owing to the mismanagement of the members of the miserable committee of direction there, the whole of the profit made out of the retail trade is a paltry £280. I come now a little nearer to the metropolitan area. I take off my hat to the Spearwood people for the way they run their business and look after it. Speaking at Spearwood the Minister said the growers unanimously accepted the Bill. That is not correct. Out of courtesy to the Minister no vote was taken. Certain questions were asked of the Minister, and the growers said "Very well." They went into the matter afterwards, and with what result? That 99 per cent. of the people there were opposed to the scheme.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They are not altogether opposed to the Bill.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Yes; they are. The hon. member knows that the Spearwood people, having examined the scheme, do not want it. If a pool on the lines of the Bill is instituted, exceptions cannot be made here and there, but all the growers will have to be dragged in. The Spearwood people were the only growers presumably in favour of the measure, and

they have written to me stating exactly what happened at the meeting, and also stating that 90 per cent. of them are dead opposed to the Bill. I think I must have convinced members that the people most interested are entirely against the measure. Those growers have asked me to request hon. members to eliminate them from the Bill. Up to the present I have met only one section of the community in favour of such a measure as this, and they are the growers of dried fruits. I have been in personal touch with them, and they say, "We do not want this Bill, but we have framed a Bill of our own on different lines." The growers generally have not rejected the Government Bill carelessly, but having examined it from every angle they are against it. They are not antipathetic towards it because it has been brought in by a Labour Government. They are against the principle of the Bill, and they ask to be allowed to conduct their own business in their own way, and to sell as they think fit the products they grow, so long as they do not harm the public by so doing. I oppose the second reading of the Bill.

On motion by Hon. A. Burvill, debate adjourned.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly, and on motion by Hon. W. T. Glasheen read a first time.

BILL—NEWCASTLE SUBURBAN LOT S 8.

Received from the Assembly, and read a first time.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

BILL—LABOUR EXCHANGES.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from 22nd October.

HON. H. J. YELLAND (East) [7.30]: The merits and demerits of the Bill have been brought prominently before the House during the debate, and very little remains to be said either for or against it. The greatest objection I raise to the Bill in its present form is that it restricts private enterprise. Any measure that restricts the development of any industry or retards any enterprise, must be looked upon with suspicion. A great deal has been said of the defects of the present system of private bureaus. It is urged that they represent a cost to the employer and to the employee. We have been told that no worker should be charged a fee for being provided with work. In reply to that, I remind the objectors that the worker has no occasion to go to the private bureaus if he does not wish to do so; while if he does go there, he goes knowing that a small charge will be made for services rendered.

Hon. E. H. Gray: A small charge; half a week's wages!

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: After all, that is only a small charge. I do not consider the charges made excessive. At all events, the worker need not go there, since he has a free State Labour Bureau to go to. Therefore, there is nothing in the contention that the private bureaus should be abolished on the score of their making a charge. If the worker insists upon going there, why should we prevent him from doing so, or relieve him from payment for something that he wants? Why do the workers go to the private agencies in preference to the free State Bureau? The whole thing resolves itself into a question of where a man can get the best deal. The employers go there for the best men, while the workers go there to get the best jobs available. More than that, I believe the employers get more consideration from the private agencies than they do from the State Labour Bureau. Let me give an instance: A neighbour of mine had occasion to dismiss one of his men. That man took the first train to Perth, and promptly re-registered at the State Labour Bureau. The employer sent down to the State Labour Bureau, asking for a man to replace the one dismissed. Incredible as it may seem, the very man who had been dismissed was sent back to the old job! The result was that in order to recoup himself for the railway fare advanced to the worker, the employer had to keep him for a week. It could not have happened at any of the private agencies, for there would have been a record showing that the man had already been in that particular job and had proved unsatisfactory. The interest shown by the private agencies in both the employers and the workers is not to be found in the State Labour Bureau.

As for the claim that the charges made by the private agencies are excessive, surely that is for the employers and the employees to determine; it is not for us to put a value on the services rendered. If the charges are excessive there is no necessity whatever to abolish the private bureaus, for they will break down under their excessive charges. The free State bureau should be quite sufficient of a check on the private agencies.

Hon. J. R. Brown: But men get desperate, and then they have to pay the price.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: That brings us back to the fact that men prefer to pay fees at the private agencies than go to the free State bureau. The Honorary Minister, in moving the second reading, quoted instances of exploitation by the private agencies. Unfortunately that sort of thing will happen in almost any business. We cannot condemn the whole system because of that. If there has been exploitation by the private agencies, it must be remembered that there are two sides to every question. It cannot be said of the State Labour Bureau that it has always given satisfaction, either to the employer or to the employee.

The Honorary Minister: That is not claimed for it.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I should think not, for it certainly has not given any better satisfaction than have the private agencies. If those private agencies are to be dispensed with because a few have been guilty of exploitation, then the same principle ought to be applied to the State bureau. It is because the State bureau has not shown any keen interest in either the employer or the employee that the private agencies have been brought into existence and permitted to continue. For a number of years I employed men from the State bureau, and I found it was only rarely that I got entire satisfaction. Sometimes the men did not arrive, although their railway fares had been paid, while others who arrived did not prove satisfactory.

The Honorary Minister: By whom were the fares paid?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Frequently by me. In one instance a man, without advice from me, asked at the State bureau that his fare be paid in order that he might come up to me. The first I knew of it was when I got an account for his fare.

Hon. J. R. Brown: He could not have got the fare without your authority.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: But he did.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Then you should not have paid it.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: It is because of these things that the employers avoid the State bureau. For want of sympathy shown to them by that bureau the employers have no confidence in it. On the other hand I have gone to a private bureau and with only one exception have I had sent to me an employee who has not been up to the mark. That particular individual was a domestic servant I got for someone else. When I reported the matter, the agency people said they would not again recommend the person to any other employer. There was at once a confidence created between the employer and the agency, a confidence that does not exist between employers and the State bureau. Mr. Gray mentioned that farmers would be better off if the private agencies were abolished, but he did not go on to say why. The instance I have quoted goes to show that farmers are prepared to pay those alleged excessive charges, in preference to taking anyone that might be sent to them through the State bureau. Mr. Gray also said that farm workers should be marshalled so that economic waste might be avoided. If he would show me where that waste was taking place, it might be possible to take some notice of it. He went on to say that he was of opinion that some effort should be made to thrash defaulting farmers up to their duty in respect of the employment of rural workers. From the experience that I have had that statement does not reflect credit on the hon. member's intelligence. He has been a farmer and he knows well that farmers are the very first to respond to any assistance that is given by a good servant. I go further and say, from my own experience, that the man who is the worst employer and who gives the least satisfaction is no doubt the individual who himself was at one time an employee, and who perhaps considered that he did not receive everything that should have been given to him. The man who has been brought up on a farm and who has been amongst those who have employed farm labour since his childhood, is the man who can work side by side with his employees. That is not always the case with a man who has been an employee and who suddenly

finds himself in the position of a boss. I agree with Mr. Gray that it would be well to thrash such defaulting employers who cannot stand side by side with the employees and give the very best, and take from them the very best. I could quote instances that have come under my notice. I will quote one that may be of assistance to the hon. member. A person who was a delegate to one of the Labour conferences and who had acquired a farm, once said, "We as farmers do not pay our men satisfactory wages." The question was immediately asked of him as to what he paid, and his reply was that he paid 35s. a week all the year round and 50s. a week and keep during harvest time. A man who had been brought up as a farmer from his childhood and who knew how to treat his men and who, according to the Labour delegate, was a bloated capitalist who was outside the pale of the Labour unions, declared that he paid 50s. a week all the year round and £3 a week and keep at harvest time, and in addition a bonus to the men.

Hon. E. H. Gray: An exceptional case.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is the rule.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: It is the rule of the employer who himself has been a farmer. I am sorry to say that the rule of the person who, in his earlier days, has been an employee and has got to the position of himself being an employer, is to treat employees as perhaps he himself was treated years before. That same labour delegate went on to say that he had employed a manager at £4 a week and gave him a house free of rent and a cow and some poultry, in order to keep him in the position.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That would be equal to £6 10s. a week.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Then he began to inquire what some of the others did, others who had not been associated with the Labour movement. He found that they were paying £5 a week and giving the manager concessions such as three cows, all the poultry that he wanted, and a few pigs, and on top of all that the meat that he required for himself at 7d. a lb. When the two were put together the man who had been brought up on the farm, and who has been abused by Mr. Gray, was found to be giving his manager £2 a week more than had been given by the representative of the Labour union.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I did not pick any particular class of farmer; I said farmers.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The hon. member said that some farmers were not fit to employ anyone. I have referred to the class of man who perhaps is not fit to employ labour. If we abolish private agencies, we shall be doing something that will give a set-back to the agricultural industry.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I suppose you would like to see all the work done by the private agencies.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: I would rather abolish the institution that was not giving the best results. I want to advance two reasons why private agencies should be retained. The first is that they supply a superior class of employee, one that gives greater satisfaction to the employer.

The Honorary Minister: Is that your experience?

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: Yes.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: And it is the experience of others.

Hon. H. J. YELLAND: The second reason is that the managers of the private agencies display an interest in both employer and employee, and the manner in which both work together has an influence upon the ultimate result of bringing the employer and employee close together to the extent that in very few cases does trouble follow. In nearly every instance one can get a more satisfactory deal from a private agency than from the State bureau. I have given what has been my experience during the 15 years it has been my lot to employ men. That experience goes to show that in every case I have had satisfaction from the private agencies. I do not think that can be said of the State bureau. For that reason I cannot agree to the clause in the Bill which provides for the abolition of the private agencies, and as on that the Bill entirely depends, I shall support the amendment.

On motion by Hon. J. R. Brown, debate adjourned.

BILL—LAND DRAINAGE.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [7.57] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is a recognition of the wisdom of the "produce all we eat" principle, which is endorsed by so many public men. It is undeniable that we could

"produce all we eat" if the obstacles placed in our path by nature were removed. We have succeeded in the wheat-growing belt; we are exporting in large quantities the product of those areas. But we are importing from our friends in the East regular and big shipments of dairy produce which should, and could, be numbered amongst the articles which already contribute to the wealth of the country. The portion of Western Australia best adapted for the dairying industry is burdened with two removable disabilities. It is heavily timbered and it suffers also from an excess of moisture. We have overcome the one, but we have done little in regard to the other. We have cleared, and are clearing land still, and it now behoves us to drain it wherever necessary. Individual effort has not the remotest hope of success. The only method by which the potential wealth of the land may be made an asset to the community is by means of collective action, initiated by statutory authority. In my opinion, the Bill will supply that means, with the aid of money. Through the medium of the boards elected by the owners and occupiers who will benefit, the measure will be able to bring about more profitable production from the rich swamp lands of the State. The Bill has become necessary owing to the absence in the existing Act of the machinery essential for the proper control and management of the works undertaken and carried out by the Government. The effects and shortcomings of the present law have long been recognised, and in view of the large amount of money that has been and will be expended in the South-Western portion of the State, the introduction of a measure to obviate those shortcomings cannot be delayed further. There are at present 13 drainage districts comprising an area of 126,420 acres, and the expenditure on drainage works in those districts alone represents a total of £87,342. Greater expenditure still is contemplated. Several of the boards are not functioning, and it is hoped that this state of affairs will be discontinued shortly after the Bill receives the sanction of Parliament. The Bill will repeal the Land Drainage Act of 1900 and the amending Act of 1902. If hon. members will compare the present Act with the Bill, they will find that the resemblance between the two is very slight. In the first place, under the existing Act a drainage board cannot be constituted unless a petition is lodged by a majority of the ratepayers within the proposed drainage district, and, further, the area of the declared drainage district cannot be added to, or reduced, except by means of a petition from a majority of the ratepayers concerned. In the Bill, the Governor may, by an Order-in-Council, constitute any defined portion of the State a drainage district, and in like manner can add to, or reduce, the area of a drainage district. Under the present Act a drainage district cannot be declared in a municipality, whereas under the Bill a drainage district can be declared in any part of the State. The Bill has been framed closely along the lines of the present Water Boards Act and Road Districts Act. The board's powers to borrow are practically barred under the existing Act, because the rate of interest on the amount borrowed is fixed at four per cent. per annum, and, as hon. members know, money cannot be obtained at that figure at the present time. This disability is removed under the provisions of the Bill.

Hon. A. Burvill: What about the application of the Imperial agreement to the South-West?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The State will benefit.

Hon. A. Burvill: Will not that refer to drainage areas, in the interests of group settlements?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, certainly not, not in connection with drainage. Under the Bill, the rate of interest will be determined by the Treasurer. In the present Act lands outside a drainage district cannot be rated, but in the Bill provision is made for the Minister to levy a rate on lands outside a drainage area, when such lands derive a benefit from the drainage works carried out by him. In addition to that, the Minister can prevent anyone from obstructing any drains excavated by him, as he will have the powers held by a duly constituted board under that heading. The rating under the Bill differs somewhat from the process adopted under the Road Districts Act and the Water Boards Act. In the Bill the rates are limited to 2s. in the pound on the unimproved capital value, and 5s. per acre where the land is rated. To assist, and to save the time of hon. members, I have had statements prepared showing the sections of the Road Districts Act and of the Water Boards Act that are embodied in the Bill. On examination

it will be found that out of the 177 clauses of the Bill, there are only 45 new ones. The numbers of those clauses are given in the summary I have referred to. I will deal principally with the new clauses. Clauses 1 to 5 deal with the necessary repeals and the validation of acts and proceedings under the repealed enactment. They also give the necessary interpretation of terms used in the Bill. Clause 7 places the general administration under the control of the Minister. In Clause 8, provision is made that the Bill shall be deemed to have been mentioned in Part 2 of the schedule of the Water Supply Sewerage and Drainage Act, 1912. This will bring the Bill within the scope of that Act. Under Clause 9 the Minister may exercise the powers and authorities of a board until the constitution of a board for a district. After the dissolution of the board in a district, or if a board should fail to carry out its duties to the satisfaction of the Minister, provision is made under Subclause 3 for the exercise of the powers and authorities of the board by the Minister within areas to be defined by an Order-in-Council. Clause 11 deals with the constitution of drainage districts. The procedure provided for is, generally speaking, similar to that contained in the Water Boards Act. That procedure has been found to give satisfactory results. Under Clause 12, any district may be united with another district; subdivided areas excised therefrom; or added thereto; and for all other purposes necessary to constitute or dissolve a district. Clause 15 provides the necessary authority for the appointment of boards. Clause 16 stipulates that members of a board in office at the time of the passing of the Bill shall so continue until the day fixed for the first annual election under the Bill. Under Clause 17 the boards constituted under this measure will consist of such number of elective members, being three or a multiple of three, as shall be ordered by the Governor. Under Clause 20, a road board or irrigation board may be appointed as the board of a drainage district, where the drainage district is co-terminous with, or is comprised within the irrigation or road district. Clause 21 provides for the disqualification of members. All these provisions are similar to those under the Road Districts Act. Clauses 24 to 36 relate to the election and retirement of members, qualification of members, elections, and ouster from office and are similar to the provisions of the Road Districts Act. Division 5 incorporates the whole of the provisions of the Road Districts Act relating to electoral rolls and elections. Clauses 37 to 38 deal with the proceedings of the board. They make provision for the election of the chairman, the duration in office of the chairman, the appointment of a secretary and such other officers and servants as may be deemed necessary. Under Clause 44 it is provided that the board shall meet for the transaction of business from time to time, but at least once in every three months. The chairman is given authority to call a meeting as often as he may think proper. Clause 45 provides that the quorum of a board shall consist of the major portion of the members for the time being assigned to the board. Under Clauses 46 and 47 it is set out that all members present shall vote. The usual provision is made in regard to members not voting when interested in the matter under discussion. Under Clause 50 the Governor is given power, when he thinks fit, to suspend, amend, or rescind any resolution or order of the board, or prohibit any expenditure of moneys on work that is deemed unnecessary. Under Clauses 51 to 53, power is given to appoint committees for general or special purposes. The provisions in reference to the proceedings of the board in this and other matters follow generally on the lines of the Road Districts Act. Provisions are made in Clauses 54 to 58 regarding office records, the general annual meeting of ratepayers, etc., these being based on the provisions contained in the Road Districts Act. Under Part 6 of the Bill, the construction and maintenance of works are provided for. Under Clause 60 the board is given power to construct and maintain works within its district. Before undertaking the construction of works the board shall prepare plans and descriptions, etc., and insert advertisements in the "Government Gazette" and a newspaper circulating in the district, describing the works. These plans will be open to inspection by any person interested for a period of one month from the date of the publication of the advertisement. These provisions follow on the lines of the Water Boards Act, and the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act. Under Clause 62 it is further provided that notwithstanding the existence of a board, the Minister may construct and maintain any works in any district; but he must comply with the same conditions

as the board, that is, advertise and leave open for inspection for one month. Clause 63 gives power to the Governor-in-Council to place any drainage works, whether constructed by the Crown or not, under the management and control of the board. Such board is charged with the duty of cleansing, repairing and maintaining them in a state of efficiency. Clause 64 provides that branch drains may be constructed by the owner of the land, or the board may do the work on behalf of the owner. To enable this to be done powers are given to advance moneys to owners of land. Where it is considered that the construction of a branch drain is necessary, the board can serve notice on owners to so construct. If the owner defaults, the board may step in and do the necessary work, charging the cost against the owner. Where moneys are due to the board by any owner for drains built, such moneys shall carry interest and be a charge on the land. The owners of land served by branch drains are under an obligation to cleanse and maintain the drains. Moneys due in this way are recoverable in the like manner as rates. Certain powers are granted the occupier of the land in order to construct drains as if he were the owner. Clause 65 gives general powers to the board to enter land, construct and maintain drains. These are subject to the usual proviso in regard to compensation. Clauses 66 to 69 embody the general provisions dealing with the breaking up of roads and the service of notices such as are contained in the Water Boards and Irrigation Acts. Part VII. concerns the revenue, and the provisions generally follow the lines of the Road Districts Act. Clause 72 makes all land ratable except that which, by configuration or other physical causes, is excluded from benefiting from drainage works. If it can be shown that the land will not benefit in any way by the drainage, the owner or occupier will be exempted from rating. Clause 73 provides that valuations may be assessed on the unimproved capital value or the area. Clause 88 stipulates that no drainage rates shall exceed 2s. in the pound when the assessment is on the unimproved value or 5s. per acre when the assessment is on the area. It is also provided that differential rating may be adopted. Part VIII. deals with finance. Clause 115 gives power to the Minister to prepare a statement of any works constructed within a district and to determine the value, and the amount so determined will be a charge against the board, bearing interest and repayable by such instalments as may be determined. Clause 116 provides that all moneys received by the board shall be paid into a drainage fund and be applied to defray the expenditure incurred in the construction, maintenance and management of works, and in payment of interest and sinking fund on all moneys borrowed by the board. The provisions are similar to those in the Road Districts Act. Clause 122 gives power to borrow money for the construction of works, for the payment of the cost of works which have been placed under the control of the board by the Minister, for discharging any loan, or for any other purpose approved by the Governor. Clause 123 deals with the raising of money and the issuing of debentures. The provisions are similar to those contained in the Road Districts Act. Part IX. deals with the accounts and audit. Clauses 138 to 147 are similar to those in the Road Districts Act, except that provision is made for the Auditor General to carry out the audits. Clauses 148 to 151, comprising Part X., provide for by-laws and regulations. Clauses 152 to 179, forming Part XI., deal with offences and miscellaneous, and contain provisions similar to those in the Road Districts Act. The schedule, divided into three parts, is for the purpose of incorporating various sections of the Road Districts Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. Rose, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.21 p.m.