

ment does reassemble, the same spirit of co-operation will be manifested as has prevailed in this Chamber tonight.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.44 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 28th September, 1943.

	PAGE
Question: Irrigation, as to Wellington area rating ...	756
Motions: Fremantle Harbour Trust, to disallow bagged-wheat charges regulation, point of order	756
Gold production, as to proposed Federal subsidy	762
Meat, as to supplies and rationing of mutton, point of order	773
Bills: Mine Workers' Relief Act Amendment, 1R.	762
Road Closure, 1R.	762
Town Planning and Development Act Amendment, 3R., passed	764
Electoral (War Time), 2R., Select Committee appointed	764
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, 1R.	770
Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act Amendment, 2R., Com.	770
Road Districts Act Amendment, 1R.	784
Bulk Handling Act Amendment, 1R.	784

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

QUESTION—IRRIGATION.

As to Wellington Area Rating.

Hon. L. CRAIG asked the Chief Secretary.

(i) Is it a fact that the basis of rating for irrigation purposes in the Wellington irrigation area has been changed from one-third of the irrigable area of a property to one-third of the whole property if that one-third is irrigable?

(ii) If so, why, and under what authority?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied—

(i) Yes. The rating has been altered periodically as follows:—First year—No rating. Second, third, fourth, and fifth years—One-third of irrigable area with a maximum of 33 acres. Sixth year—One-third of irrigable area with a maximum of 40 acres. Seventh year—One-third of irrigable area with a maximum of 45 acres. Eighth year (1940-41)—One-third of irrigable area with a maximum of 50 acres. 1941-42 onwards—Rate of 1940-41 increased by 10 acres or 10 per cent. of one-third of the holding, whichever is the greater, with a maximum of

one-third of the holding if the one-third is irrigable.

(ii) To obtain a revenue return somewhat more appropriate to the benefits conferred on irrigationists and to bring the district into conformity with Harvey District No. 2 and proposed Harvey extension. In the Waroona District the rating is 1 in 3½ acres because of the limited quantity of water available. The Rights in Water and Irrigation Act, 1914-1941, empowers the Minister to rate all irrigable land within an irrigation district.

MOTION—FREMANTLE HARBOUR TRUST.

To Disallow Bagged-Wheat Charges Regulation.

Debate resumed from the 21st September on the following motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter:—

That new Regulation No. 148 made under the Fremantle Harbour Trust Act, 1902, as published in the "Government Gazette" on the 4th June, 1943, and laid on the Table of the House on the 10th August, 1943, be and is hereby disallowed.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [4.37]: In moving this motion for the disallowance of a regulation covering handling charges for bagged-wheat at Fremantle the hon. member spent very little time on the actual facts of the case. He certainly outlined many of the difficulties of the wheatgrowers and, on the wrong argument that the wheatgrowers should not have to meet any increased charges, asked this House to disallow the regulation. One would have thought the hon. member would have inquired as to the reasons for the increase in the charge made by the Fremantle Harbour Trust for the handling of bagged-wheat. I want members to understand that these are handling charges. They are not the ordinary charges of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. They represent money which has to be paid out by the Trust for labour to handle the bagged-wheat. Consequently there is a big difference between charges of this kind and harbour dues, tonnage rates and so on. The handling of bagged-wheat has always been subject to a special charge. The first rate was fixed in 1912 at which period all the wheat exported from Fremantle was despatched in bags. Obviously there was no bulkhandling system in operation then.

In 1921 the charge was amended, and then in the depression year of 1932 a rebate was allowed by the Fremantle Harbour Trust in order to meet the special conditions then existing. The charge continued from then until the promulgation of the regulation which is now sought to be disallowed. The wages paid now are 3s. 7½d. per hour compared with a wage rate of 2s. 4½d. when the earlier rate was fixed. That in itself indicates an increase of 67 per cent. Then again the question of bagged-wheat which is handled by the Trust also comes into the picture. For 1930-31 the quantity of bagged-wheat handled by the Fremantle Harbour Trust was 30,000,000 bushels—a tremendous quantity. Subsequently the bulkhandling system was introduced with a consequent decline in the quantity of bagged-wheat handled at Fremantle and elsewhere. So much was this so that for the last seven years the average quantity of bagged-wheat handled at the port has ranged between 1,000,000 and 1,500,000 bushels, compared with the 30,000,000 bushels handled by the Fremantle Harbour Trust alone when the previous alteration in the rate was effected. During the years from 1931-32 onwards there has been a loss each year on the bagged-wheat handling charges levied by the Trust. I shall quote a few figures to indicate how serious the position became for the Trust, which had continued conditions in order not to embarrass the wheatgrowers. The figures showing the quantity of bagged-wheat handled per year and the losses sustained are as follows:—

Year.	Bagged-wheat exported bushels.	Loss on handling services. £
1934 ..	7,300,629	1,493
1935 ..	4,044,645	1,033
1936 ..	1,293,555	701
1937 ..	1,611,858	1,263
1938 ..	1,726,425	1,213
1939 ..	1,161,312	1,799
1940 ..	456,327	781
1941 ..	1,086,753	1,191
1942 ..	4,027,125	6,169

It will be seen that the total bagged-wheat exported in 1940 constituted an all-time low for the Fremantle Harbour Trust, yet in 1942 there was a tremendous increase. The Trust had previously adopted the policy of paying the charges on the declining quantity, feeling that the time would shortly come when there would be no bagged-wheat

exported at all. While those conditions continued the Trust was willing to stand the loss incurred. But in 1942, when the quantity exported jumped to over 4,000,000 bushels and involved the Trust in a loss of £6,169, it became necessary for the Commissioners to take notice of the changed conditions. They decided that the time had arrived when there should be some variation in the rates charged for handling bagged-wheat in order that some return at least should be received for the expenditure incurred.

Now I come to what appeals to me as a most interesting aspect of the bagged-wheat position. Members are fully aware that the whole of the wheat grown throughout Australia and including, of course, that grown in Western Australia, is handled by the Australian Wheat Board. The Fremantle Harbour Trust has the arrangement with the board to handle all bulk wheat at Fremantle on the cost basis. That is a definite arrangement. I have already mentioned that very little bagged-wheat had been exported from Fremantle, but unfortunately, owing principally, I assume, to war conditions, the vessels arriving at Fremantle for the purpose of loading export wheat could not take the wheat in bulk but only in bags. Therefore influencing factor was that the ports for which the boats were bound could not handle wheat in bulk but only in bags. Therefore the Australian Wheat Board had to set about bagging the wheat. It used the bulk wheat at the port, bagged it and loaded it into the ships.

Hon. A. Thomson: Who paid for the bags and for putting the wheat into the bags?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I suppose that would be a charge against the Australian Wheat Board; that is not the responsibility of the Fremantle Harbour Trust, which merely handles the wheat. In consequence of the changed position the Trust approached the Australian Wheat Board and said, "We did not mind continuing handling the wheat at the old rate, but if this increase is to continue we must have a variation in the rates." As a matter of fact, the Trust actually offered to handle the bagged-wheat at cost. I do not think any member will complain of that. After negotiations had proceeded for a while the Australian Wheat Board replied in effect, "We agree that the Trust

is entitled to increased payments, but we do not quite like the proposed arrangement to handle it at cost. We would rather that you prepared a special schedule, so that we may know where we stand. So long as that new schedule only takes into consideration the increased cost of the handling of wheat, that will be satisfactory to us." And that is what has been done. Now we have an hon. member desiring that the Harbour Trust shall be mulct in this increased loss. The position arises from no fault of the Trust. The Trust says, "We are quite prepared to handle the wheat at cost. We are handling the greater proportion of the harvest at cost because it is bulk wheat. If you are going to put this bulk wheat into bags, we request that we shall receive at least the increased cost of handling." Had that wheat been exported in bulk, there would have been no loss. Handled in bags, however, it cost the Harbour Trust no less than £6,169.

Some mention was made during the debate of the fact that the Trust might advance the excuse, "We are charging no more for bagged-wheat." I intend to use that argument, but I shall not put it forward as an excuse. I shall tell the House now what I have told it on many occasions that, so far as agricultural products are concerned, in this State there is no wharfage whatever charged on those products when they are exported from Fremantle. Imports pay wharfage. If imports did not pay wharfage upon arrival in this country, how could all the exports go over the Fremantle wharf free of wharfage? The question of railrage relates to the proportion of harbour dues to be paid by vessels loading bagged-wheat at Fremantle. I am informed by the Harbour Trust that the proportion of harbour dues paid by vessels coming into Fremantle would amount to less than $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. That is the amount paid by ships which call at Fremantle for the purpose of taking away the wheat. The amount received from them is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. So there is no argument in that contention at all. The amount is not worth bothering about.

Another point, raised I think by Mr. Piesse when he referred to wharfage charges on inward cargo, was that a very big proportion of the Harbour Trust's revenue must be derived from that source. In point of fact, from the information supplied to me,

the revenue derived from that source amounts to less than 1 per cent. Further, it is true to say that there are no wharfage charges on wheat or other agricultural products exported from Fremantle. The handling charges at Fremantle are really out-of-pocket expenses, expenses which are actually incurred in the handling of this commodity. Further, Fremantle is the only port in the Commonwealth where bulk wheat is handled by the port authorities. At all other ports of the Commonwealth bulk and bagged-wheat are handled privately. The actual charges at Fremantle for bagged-wheat are apparently less than the charges elsewhere, and it is the Fremantle charges to which this motion raises objection. I would like to quote figures applying to Sydney and the corresponding figures applying to Fremantle in this connection—

	Fremantle.	Sydney.
Handling direct from railway wagons along-side vessels	1.25d. per bag (1/8 per ton)	2.310d. per bag (2/4.0 per ton)
Handling from railway wagons into stacks	2.5d. per bag (2/6 per ton)	2.025d. per bag (2/1.2 per ton)
Handling from stacks to vessels per ganties	1.75d. per bag (1/9 per ton)	2.382d. per bag (2/5.6 per ton)

I consider it only right that that comparison should be made, more especially as the present rates for handling bagged-wheat have been arrived at with an eye to making neither profit nor loss. When it is remembered that this wheat would not be shipped in bagged form were it not for war conditions, and that if shipped in bulk form the actual cost would be paid by the Australian Wheat Board, there can be no argument, in my opinion, for the disallowance of the regulation. The Fremantle Harbour Trust has always shown itself anxious to meet the requirements of the situation in regard to export of our agricultural products. The special schedule, moreover, was drawn up at the request of the Australian Wheat Board.

Hon. T. Moore: That schedule was the agreement between the two parties?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. However, it is not the Australian Wheat Board that is raising the question. In view of those facts, if we want to do the fair and right thing, it is not for this House to disallow the regulation, saying in effect that the Fremantle Harbour Trust shall be mulct in a loss of anything from £6,000 to £10,000, or even £12,000, in a single season. It must be recognised that owing to prevailing conditions there will perhaps be a continued

increase for a little while in the quantity of bagged-wheat handled at Fremantle. This arises from the reasons I have previously mentioned. So long as those conditions prevail, I think it is a responsibility of the Australian Wheat Board to meet these increased charges, and not the responsibility of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. Since it provides the service, and this costs the amount of money I have mentioned, surely it is only fair that the Australian Wheat Board should be prepared to meet those charges.

A great deal more could be said by me on the subject, but I do hope this House will take a reasonable view and not assume that because the wheatgrower has, admittedly, many difficulties to contend with, the Fremantle Harbour Trust should be placed in the position of making an actual loss of money, paid out for wages, in the handling of bagged wheat, a loss amounting in one season to £12,000. That would be most unfair, and I sincerely hope the House will not agree to the motion.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East): I hope the House will pass the motion. I regret the necessity for Mr. Baxter's moving for the disallowance of this regulation. As members know, for many years I have strenuously objected to the Fremantle Harbour Trust being made a taxing machine.

The Chief Secretary: It is not a taxing machine.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I think I can prove to the satisfaction of members that it is actually being used as a taxing machine. According to the Auditor General's report and the balance sheet of the Trust the total cost of the Fremantle harbour is £3,032,794. If we add £484,349, which has been written off for depreciation, and £120,844 which has been written off the assets purchased by the Harbour Trust out of revenue, we find that the total cost of the harbour is £3,638,017. If the statement made in another place is correct, that since the inception of the Harbour Trust no less than £3,250,000 has been paid into Consolidated Revenue by the Trust, then the actual net cost of the harbour to the State is £388,017. I want members to note these figures. If we take into account the amount that has been paid into Consolidated Revenue and the other amounts I have mentioned the total cost of the harbour stands on the books of the Government at £388,017.

The Chief Secretary: That will not bear examination.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I expected the Chief Secretary would say that. I am basing my case on the figures shown in the Auditor General's report of last year.

Hon. L. Craig: Have you taken into account all interest payments?

Hon. A. THOMSON: All those items have been allowed for. If members will turn to page 89 of the Auditor General's report they will find the figures I have given. We are told that the charge has been imposed by the Harbour Trust because of war conditions and the increase in wages. While the Chief Secretary was speaking I made a rough calculation. If we take the quantity of bagged-wheat handled at 1,500,000 bushels we find that the increased charge would place an additional burden on the backs of the producers of £4,166 13s.

The Chief Secretary: Do you think that the Trust should do the work at less than cost?

Hon. A. THOMSON: The Chief Secretary said there was an agreement between the Australian Wheat Board and the Fremantle Harbour Trust. If the board found the money I would have no objection, or if the farming community were in a position to pass on the additional cost I would not object to the regulation. I find, however, that one of the most profitable financial concerns in this State is the Fremantle Harbour Trust seeing that last year it paid into Consolidated Revenue £66,156, after meeting interest charges of £145,617, sinking fund £22,101, surplus £17,572, reserve for renewals £2,000, and expenditure on capital assets £4,586. These are correct figures. When I asked the Chief Secretary who paid for the bags and bagging of the wheat he replied that the Australian Wheat Board met the charge for the bags. Because of war conditions and because of the transport conditions as applied to wheat going to South Africa where the ports cannot handle bulk wheat, our shipments had to go away in bags.

I admit that if conditions were normal the farmers could expect to meet the charge. Because, however, we are at war and facing abnormal conditions it seems to me only right that the Fremantle Harbour Trust should carry the extra cost, especially as it is in such a sound financial position it-

self. Farmers cannot pass on the increased charge, because they have to accept the price that is fixed. The Chief Secretary said that the Fremantle Harbour Trust anticipated that wheat would be shipped in bulk, but when it found that the wheat had to be shipped in bags it had to impose this extra charge. When we consider the financial position of the Trust we can only assume that it is being used as a taxing machine; otherwise how is it that it has been able to pay £66,000 into Consolidated Revenue? If that is not a taxing machine I do not know of one. We heard a great deal about the public being exploited by private business and about undue profits being made. Surely it can be said with justification that the Fremantle Harbour Trust is now making an undue profit. I hope the Minister in another place was not correctly reported in "The West Australian" newspaper when a particular statement was attributed to him. I am not making any personal attack on the Chief Secretary, who has supplied to members the reason why the Trust deemed it necessary to impose the charge in question. We know the work is being done cheaper in this State than it is in New South Wales or South Australia; and I also think the average haulage of wheat to port in this State is considerably greater than it is in those other States. So far as that is concerned, therefore, we have a slight additional cost to meet.

The Minister in another place, according to the newspaper report, said that of late years the Trust had lost money on the handling of bagged-wheat. It had anticipated that bagged-wheat would be eliminated in favour of bulk wheat but that had not come about. The war conditions, the Minister said, had resulted in an increase in the quantity of bagged-wheat, and there had also been a considerable increase in wages and other costs. The Price Fixing Commission was also referred to. The Minister further stated that if the motion in another place were carried there would be no regulation governing the charges which were being imposed, and that the Trust would then have to fall back upon the general cargo rate which would be greater than that imposed under the regulation. That reads like a threat to me, and I therefore hope the Minister was not correctly reported. Parliament has the right to reject regulations that are

submitted to it, and I should be sorry to think that the Fremantle Harbour Trust or any other Government institution could side-step a motion that had been carried by either House.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The Trust would have to get the approval of the Minister.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not think he would be likely to give his approval.

The Chief Secretary: If this regulation is disallowed there will be no special charge for handling bagged-wheat. No regulation will be left to govern the situation.

Hon. A. THOMSON: The Chief Secretary now says there would be no regulation in force, and I presume the Trust would then fall back upon the general cargo rates.

The Chief Secretary: If the regulation is disallowed there will be no special regulation in existence. There will be no regulation except that of a general character which will then apply automatically to the handling of bagged-wheat until some new regulation is brought into operation.

Hon. A. THOMSON: That will not be so if we are dealing with a sensible body of men. That might be all right from the Government point of view, but I cannot imagine the Government agreeing to any such charges being levied as would come under the general rate. It would be fatal for it to do so. According to the Government the war is the only reason for this increased charge. Seeing that the Fremantle Harbour Trust is in such a sound financial position it can well afford to bear the increased charge itself. I admit that the Trust provides opportunity for the employment of a number of men. I hope the Chief Secretary will take a reasonable view of this matter, and will see that for the duration of the war and for 12 months afterwards this charge upon the producers is remitted. Let us apply the same principle to the handling of wheat. The Fremantle Harbour Trust will not go broke, and this will at least be one way to assist a section of our community which is unable to pass on additional costs. I support the motion.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East): I have not come prepared with a lot of figures, and am willing to accept those put forward by Mr. Baxter; but we know that the Fremantle Harbour Trust has been making large pro-

fits, particularly out of the primary producer.

The Chief Secretary: That is not true.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Any firm should be prepared to make a loss on one article provided it is making profits on others. That principle is followed out by the big emporiums. In view of the fact that the Fremantle Harbour Trust is making large profits, as shown by Mr. Thomson, it should be prepared to make losses on wheat. For that reason only I support the motion.

HON. J. CORNELL (South): My vote is usually cast, on a motion for the disallowance of a regulation, for the disallowance, but we must always remember that—as has happened more than once before—if the regulation is disallowed there is no guarantee that the extra impost being charged will not reappear in some other form.

Hon. A. Thomson: That would be wrong.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It has happened several times to my knowledge. The Chief Secretary would do a service to the House generally, in view of the fact that within six weeks another place will be dissolved, if he will give an assurance that the imposition, or any part of it, will not be reimposed should the motion be agreed to. If it is to be reimposed, it will be futile to vote to disallow the regulation.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East—in reply): A side issue, that I did not expect, has arisen, namely, that if the motion is carried there is something more than a threat that some extra cost beyond what this regulation provides will be imposed.

Point of Order.

The Chief Secretary: I take exception to the remarks of Mr. Baxter.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I am not referring to the Chief Secretary's statement.

The Chief Secretary: I take exception to Mr. Baxter's suggestion that some threat is being held over the House in regard to what will happen if this regulation is disallowed. He is not doing the right thing. I have not made any threat at all. I simply explained to the House, or to Mr. Thomson, what would be the position if the regulation were disallowed.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I was not referring to the Chief Secretary. He did not say any-

thing bordering on a threat. I had in mind the general trend of the debate.

The President: I am quite sure that Mr. Baxter did not mean any reflection on the Chief Secretary.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Not the slightest, because there was no warranty for it.

Hon. T. Moore: He was the only speaker.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is a nasty remark.

Debate Resumed.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: As an ex-Minister I say that the Fremantle Harbour Trust is under Ministerial control and it is not likely that any Minister, or the Cabinet, would allow it to reimpose a heavy charge on an already over-burdened industry. The Fremantle Harbour Trust picked out a most unfortunate time in which to frame this regulation. Costs have risen in every industry, but most industries are able to pass them on. The small farmers have received 3s. 10d. per bushel which, after all, does not show a large profit because of the tremendous increase in the cost of production during the war years, but it is of some benefit to them. But how does the farmer who produces more than 1,000 bags of wheat stand? He is operating at a loss! He cannot pass on any of the increased costs. As I said previously the whole of this bagged-wheat will be sent to ports at world parity prices over which there is no control.

In his speech the Chief Secretary supported my statement that there would be a large increase in the amount of bagged-wheat exported, not because the ships' bottoms would not be able to take bulk wheat, but because of the ports to which the wheat will be sent. I doubt whether more than two ports in the whole of the Mediterranean are able to accept any but bagged-wheat. Africa cannot take bulk wheat. It uses the few silos it has for maize. We must look at this point: Costs have been heaped on the wheatgrower at a tremendous rate. His outlook is black. Some time ago acreage was restricted to one-third of the previous figure, and since then it has been further reduced because of the shortage of superphosphate. That position may be remedied next season. The ships coming out to Australia for wheat and flour will eventually bring back-loading from the Nile, where 100,000 tons of phosphatic rock are lying ready for shipment. Yet, recently a ship

arrived in port here with limestone and salt, and wanted to sell the cargo. Fancy trying to sell those commodities in Western Australia!

Hon. G. B. Wood: Did it come from the Eastern States?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It came from the Mediterranean.

The Chief Secretary: There was an excellent reason.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: It came out as ballast. That cargo could be purchased locally at 25 per cent. of what it would cost to bring it here.

Hon. G. B. Wood: There would be 25 per cent. duty on it.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: The shipping company was under the impression that it could realise something on those commodities. Those in authority should be informed that phosphatic rock is badly wanted in Western Australia.

The Chief Secretary: What would you say if that cargo were dumped in the sea?

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I do not know what was done with it, but the company could not dispose of it. I ask the House to object to the regulation which seeks to impose extra costs on an industry already suffering so much.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	15
Noes	..	..	..	9
Majority for	..	..	6	

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch
Hon. J. Corneli
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt
Hon. E. H. H. Hall
Hon. V. Hamersley
Hon. J. G. Hislop
Hon. G. W. Miles

Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. W. J. Mann

(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. L. Craig
Hon. J. M. Drew
Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. W. R. Hall

Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. W. H. Kitson
Hon. T. Moore
Hon. C. B. Williams

(Teller.)

Motion thus passed.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Mine Workers' Relief Act Amendment.
- 2, Road Closure.

Received from the Assembly.

MOTION—GOLD PRODUCTION.

As to Proposed Federal Subsidy.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East)
[5.33]: I move—

That this House urges the Commonwealth Government to give early consideration to the increase by subsidy of the price of gold produced within Australian territory so as to encourage production, increase employment and assist post-war reconstruction.

I am moving this motion at the risk of being accused of trying to steal somebody else's thunder, but I should like to explain that it is substantially on the lines of one I submitted to the annual conference of the Primary Producers' Association which was held in Perth on the 20th July last. That motion was carried by a large majority. Further, plank 24 in the platform of the Country Party provides—

The encouragement by every possible means of the goldmining industry of Western Australia.

I mention those facts as my warrant for having the temerity to submit to the House a motion dealing with goldmining. The P.P.A. realises that a successful goldmining population means greater consumption of home products. This State began to live when its gold was first discovered, the gold having proved the lure and incentive for people to pour into Western Australia in their thousands. In effect, it can be said to be the first real, progressive step which naturally increased our population without any Government effort.

In these days of managed currencies, despite the dreams of many idealists who say that exchange of goods is all that is necessary, I am one of those who think that the country having a gold backing to its currency is the one that will stand the test of time. There is no shadow of doubt that, owing to the great demand on our people for money to finance the war, the purchasing power of the Australian pound has greatly depreciated. In other words, our currency is very greatly inflated. Most of us can cast our minds back to the years following the 1914-18 war when the German mark soared to untold heights in a monetary sense, whereas in real purchasing power it was of very little value. I am not suggesting that we in Australia have reached a similar stage, but I do say that we are fast approaching the danger zone.

From time to time excellent speeches have been delivered in both Houses by members

representing goldfields districts. Mr. W. R. Hall recently referred to many of the towns on the Goldfields as ghost towns. I should like to quote some statistics that appeared in the journal of the Western Australian Chamber of Mines showing how the industry has declined. The figures for 1942 are as follows:—

Ore treated, 3,225,704 tons.
Yield, 845,772 fine ozs.
Value, £3,592,611.
Average recovery, 5.24 dwts. per ton.
Men employed, 8,033.
Dividends paid, £423,712.

As compared with the previous year these figures showed a substantial fall of 985,070 tons in the ore treated, while the yield dropped by 259,705 fine ozs., the value of the decline being £1,103,156. The average recovery was a decimal point lower, but the men employed showed a decrease of 4,896 and the dividends a drop of £406,320. The figures for 1943 are expected to exhibit a further all-round downslide. According to the State Statistician the goldfields population in 1941 numbered 43,085. All these people were directly carried on the shoulders of the 8,033 persons employed in mining during 1942. A little more than five persons obtained sustenance for each miner employed. If we add the railway employees, business houses, manufacturers and primary producers, we can visualise how important the goldmining industry is and has been.

I should like to show what we, with our pegged exchange, actually received in 1939 for two of our main primary products—

	Australian currency.	Sterling.	Gold.
Wheat per bushel	32d.	25d.	12d.
Wool per lb. . .	13d.	10d.	5d.

If we can increase our gold production by granting a substantial bonus or subsidy, we can at least help to maintain a decent price for our commodities and also benefit greatly by paying in gold any surplus debt for goods purchased. Most of us have endeavoured to visualise the future, and as members we have received many pamphlets dealing with post-war reconstruction. One pamphlet entitled "The Golden Key" was written by Leslie Rubinsten, a Polish gentleman who suffered grievously in his country during the 1914-18 war. After carefully studying his pamphlet, I confess that his views appeal to me. His book seemed to show in a measure a way to stability provided a gold standard of some sort was ad-

hered to with natural increases in gold prices to stabilise industry. At the same time I am aware that his views have been a fruitful source of argument. Let me quote a statement made by the late British Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Kingsley Wood. He was reported as follows:—

Chancellor of the Exchequer Kingsley Wood's declaration in the House of Commons regarding international trade and gold: "It would be foolish and useless to attempt to ignore the centuries-old belief in the value of gold. All major trading countries have an instinctive respect for it. The greatest producer country in the world has acquired a very large stock. The British Commonwealth of Nations is the largest producer of gold, and Russia has an increasing output, which she uses for monetary purposes." He added: "We should be very foolish if we attempted to separate the unit of international trading account from gold. Each country would have a definite gold content for its currency, which would be its official buying price for gold, above which it must not pay." He said that the position of producers and holders of gold was improved because they were provided with a secure outlet for any gold they wished to dispose of.

Let me now quote from "The West Australian" of the 20th September—

Future of Gold.

Post-war Currency Plans.

London, September 18.—After earlier hesitation the stock markets ended the week firm with Kaffirs conspicuously active. Gold prices gained under the stimulus of China's intended purchase of 200,000,000 dollars worth (about £50,000,000 sterling) of precious metals to combat internal inflation dangers. Gold standards adherents heartily welcome this news as disproving the view that modern monetary technique has killed the so-called gold myth but another influential school of thought regards the Chinese decision as a reversion to an outmoded doctrine that, in the absence of free convertibility, the reserve behind any currency has a bearing on the value of that currency.

The final outcome of this conflict of opinion will clearly have important reactions on the future prosperity of gold producers and post-war currency plans. London financial circles give credence to a report that the visit to Washington of the noted British economist, Lord Keynes, has produced an agreement on the establishment of a world capital bank in the form of an international organisation to finance the reconstruction of war-devastated areas and meet various credit requirements outside the scope of private capital. A subsidiary organisation would apparently be entrusted with the financing of reserve or buffer stocks of essential raw materials with a view to preventing undue price fluctuations.

If we take into consideration those statements, first by Sir Kingsley Wood, and then

by China as to its purchase of £50,000,000 sterling of gold, we must be convinced that gold will be a determining factor in international trade, on what basis only financial experts can decide. China evidently realises that a gold unit will be the best method by which it can stabilise its currency. There is sufficient in that idea to give this House cause to examine the position closely. I agree with the Premier in a statement which he made in another place when delivering his Budget speech, from which I propose to quote. The Commonwealth Government has had many schemes submitted for its consideration in its post-war reconstruction programme. Raising the price of gold by subsidy will practically cost the nation very little. If 4,300 men employed in mining can in effect carry a population of 43,000—

Hon. T. Moore: Eight thousand men.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I thank the hon. member for his correction. If 8,033 men employed in mining can in effect carry a population of 43,000 on ore that averages 5.24 dwts. per ton and produce gold to the value of £3,592,611, surely with a decent subsidy per ounce for gold produced in Australia, ore less than 5.24 dwts. per ton could be worked at a profit. I can visualise a population of at least 100,000 persons living in comfort on our goldfields alone. Most of the social amenities have already been provided by our State Government, such as railways, water supplies, hospitals, schools, etc. Possibly some comparatively small sums of money would be needed for belated repairs.

Provided the Commonwealth Government will give encouragement by subsidising the production of gold, I feel sure private citizens would find the money to open up and develop our auriferous areas and thus provide an easy and cheap method of rehabilitating our men when the war is over and they return to civilian life. Mining machinery of all kinds will be required. Metallurgists, machinemen, miners—in fact, all classes of workers—will be in demand and will require homes. The following is the Premier's statement on post-war demand for gold:—

I also have confidence that after the war there will be a continued demand for gold and that we shall see marked activity in the gold-mining industry in this State. Gold will be used as a world-wide means of exchange. I have read a good deal about the proposals for

financial reconstruction in America, Canada and Great Britain. It seems that there must be a medium of exchange, and I have not read one competent authority who has expressed any serious doubt about the necessity for the production of gold as a means to stabilise world currency. We have a big potential gold production, and for a few years after the war all the gold that we can produce—and it is a big amount—will be assured of a ready market. In the meantime, though we may be dependent for a few years on the export of primary products to help our economic stability, I feel that the Government must not lose any opportunity of developing secondary industries for the purpose of utilising our raw products and to meet to a much greater extent our own requirements.

The Premier also said that we must have industrial development in Western Australia. I heartily endorse what he said. Of course, we shall require to establish secondary industries, and I am certain the Goldfields will carry a much greater population quickly if substantial encouragement is given to the goldmining industry. By passing this motion, we shall in effect be supporting the Premier in his desire to encourage the gold-mining industry. I know of no better way to do this than by granting a subsidy for the production of gold.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: We want men and machines.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Mr. Heenan will agree that if the financial assistance which I suggest can be given, probably a number of shows which today are not looked upon as being profitable could absorb a considerable number of men, as well as additional machinery. I sincerely trust that my motion will commend itself to the favourable consideration of the House.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—TOWN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—ELECTORAL (WAR TIME).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 23rd September.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (in reply) [5.53]: Members have freely exercised their right to speak to this measure and criticise it. To me it appears from the debate that there are two outstanding points as to which members are not in agreement. The first

is whether soldiers under 21 years of age should be entitled to vote; and the second is whether the methods proposed are satisfactory in the circumstances, or perhaps as to whether they are the best that can be adopted. More than one member has suggested that it might be desirable to refer the measure to a Select Committee. It was Sir Hal Colebatch who informed the House that the idea underlying the proposal for a Select Committee was not to deal with the question of principle, as to whether or not a soldier under 21 years should have a vote, but was solely for the purpose of considering the methods which are proposed in the Bill by which soldiers shall be entitled to vote. I am assuming that the statement made by Sir Hal Colebatch is correct. He said that the question of principle—whether the soldier under 21 years should have a vote or not—was one for members individually to decide; it was not a question to be decided by a Select Committee.

When dealing with the measure Mr. Baxter was indeed critical. He inferred quite a number of things in regard to certain of its provisions that I am afraid he would not have done had he carefully read the Bill and understood its provisions. Other members were critical in a different way. One or two even went so far as to ridicule some of the provisions of the measure. One member said it would be farcical and might degenerate into something worse. Such criticism, I think, is quite uncalled for and altogether unjustified.

So far as concerns the principle of giving soldiers under 21 years a vote, I reiterate what I said when introducing the measure, that if the various members of the Forces of the Commonwealth are old enough to play their part in this world-war, they surely are old enough to be trusted with a vote. I realise there is a difference of opinion on that score, but that is my viewpoint. The fact that the scope of the Bill is limited to the South-West Pacific area is a matter which has been forced upon us, because it would not be practicable to extend the area in which a vote could be taken for the forthcoming election. We have endeavoured in this Bill to provide the most satisfactory method possible for taking the votes of those soldiers who desire to exercise the franchise. While on

that point, I may say that voting by soldiers will not be compulsory. They may vote if they so desire; if they do not desire, no pressure will be brought to bear upon them.

There is a difference between this Bill and the Electoral Act. Voting is compulsory under ordinary conditions and will be compulsory for civilians in the forthcoming election. In order to support the contention put forward by him when suggesting that a Select Committee should be appointed, Mr. Baxter enumerated seven points which he thought should be inquired into by the Committee. I propose to deal with those points, as I believe I shall be able to show that a Select Committee would find it difficult to get more information as a result of its inquiries than I could supply on the present occasion. The first point with which Mr. Baxter suggested the Select Committee should deal with was—

Soldiers voting under postal vote facilities and the position under the Act.

In the first place, it would be impossible to supply postal vote facilities for soldiers who are outside Western Australia and more particularly for those outside Australia.

Hon. J. Cornell: It is not possible to get a vote outside Australia.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No. Section 89 of the Electoral Act contains the postal voting provisions. From that section it will be seen that a rather complicated procedure has to be followed and it cannot be adopted until after nominations have been declared. At that time, any elector who has reason to believe that he will be more than seven miles from the polling place at which he is entitled to vote may, if he attends before a magistrate or a postal vote officer, vote by post. I think that makes it quite clear that so far as the great majority of soldiers are concerned it would not be possible to comply with the postal voting provisions. Even if it were possible, that would only apply to those who were enrolled, whereas this Bill deals with soldiers whether they are enrolled or not. So we can rule out the present provisions of the Electoral Act in regard to postal voting in relation to the great majority of the soldiers. Members may have forgotten, and it is just as well to remind them, that we have no absentee voting provisions in our Electoral Act, so that under that Act postal voting is the only al-

ternative to personal voting at a polling booth.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is outside the electorate in which a man is enrolled.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. If this House were to say that soldiers should have a right to utilise only the postal voting provisions of the Electoral Act there are not many Western Australians in the Forces who would have an opportunity to record their votes. The second point raised by Mr. Baxter was—

(2) Enrolling of members of the Forces from the Eastern States, and how this will affect the Act.

First of all I would reply that if this Bill is accepted, there is no question that soldiers from the Eastern States would be absolutely debarred from registering a vote.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Not as the Bill stands at present.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes!

Hon. C. F. Baxter: No!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As a matter of fact the Bill gives a vote only to an elector of a district in Western Australia. He must have been resident in Western Australia immediately prior to enlistment and he must make a declaration to that effect.

Hon. J. Cornell: What is the check against the declaration?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A declaration made by a man before a commanding officer or a returning officer, as the case may be, is a legal document and if it could be shown that a man had made a false declaration he would suffer a penalty under the Act.

Hon. J. Cornell: What would become of his vote?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If a declaration is accepted, a man's vote will be counted. That is the only condition that could prevail and I do not see any weakness in it.

Hon. T. Moore: Is it not ridiculous to imagine that a Victorian would want to vote at a Western Australian election?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is the point I was going to make. I refuse to assume that even one individual from the Eastern States is going to make a false declaration in order that he might have a vote at the forthcoming State election.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: It is no more likely than at a normal election.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot understand the reason for this kind of statement. If the provisions of the Electoral Act are availed of, persons from the Eastern States—whether they are soldiers or not—can, provided they have been resident or living in Western Australia for six months, claim enrolment. There is no question of that. But this Bill does not deal with enrolment at all. It has nothing to do with enrolment. I am in a position to know that very few people—that is, very few members of the Forces—have applied for enrolment in this State on the ground that they have been here for six months. We must not forget, either, that the rolls close this week, so that if there is any desire on the part of any soldiers from the Eastern States to be enrolled for the purpose of voting at the next election, the time available to them to do so expires this week. So there can be no question of Eastern States soldiers becoming enrolled after this week for the purpose of voting at the election. The next point Mr. Baxter suggested should be considered by the Select Committee is—

(3) The period for which the amending Bill shall remain in force.

I want to emphasise that this is a Bill to give Western Australian soldiers the right to vote. So it seems to me that whatever we agree to in this Bill should apply so long as the war lasts and for a certain period after its termination. I do not see anything wrong with that at all, but apparently Mr. Baxter does. I think his argument was that the Bill should apply to this election or for a period of 12 months or something like that. I do not see why, if we agree to give soldiers a vote, the period during which this legislation should remain in force should not be the period of the war and a limited time afterwards.

Hon. T. Moore: A Select Committee would not be needed to deal with that question!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That was one of the points that Mr. Baxter suggested should be dealt with by a Select Committee. If the hon. member had some idea that because the Bill deals with the question of discharged soldiers there will be some danger involved, I would point out that when a soldier is discharged he becomes a civilian.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I did not mention that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have tried to find some reason why the hon. member raised the point at all. We make provision in this Bill for discharged soldiers, who have not been enrolled, to exercise their privilege at this election but there is a limitation so far as discharged soldiers are concerned. The fourth point raised by Mr. Baxter was—

(4) The advisability of the provision for those 18 years of age in uniform being enrolled and why munition workers should be excluded.

Therein is a difference between the views of Sir Hal Colebatch and Mr. Baxter. We claim that those who have enlisted or who have been appointed to the Forces should have the right to vote and there is a material difference between those in the Forces and those in munition works. People in the Navy, Army or Air Force have no control over where they will be located at any time. They may be in Perth today, in Darwin next week and in New Guinea the week after. We all know there have been and will continue to be many quite unexpected movements of troops and therefore we say that those people, whether they happen to be located here for the time being or not, should be entitled to have their vote. Another point which Mr. Baxter considered a Select Committee should inquire into is—

(5) Consideration of methods to be adopted by the Electoral Department in order to avoid long delays in counting.

Consideration has been given to the question of method. It may be information to the hon. member to know that this Bill was not drafted by a Minister or even by our Crown Law Department, but by the State Electoral Department in consultation with the Commonwealth Electoral Department. It was the electoral authorities who told the Government that this is the method by which we could best ensure that soldiers were able to record their votes. It is to be regretted that the Commonwealth Government notified us that while it was prepared to allow commanding officers to act in regard to the taking of the vote, those officers could not accept responsibility in regard to the counting. In the circumstances, it is futile for us to think that we can devise some other method whereby the counting can take place elsewhere.

Hon. J. Cornell: The only point at issue is the return of the writ.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That need not worry us much at the present time. What we need to worry about is whether the method provided in the Bill is one that our electoral officers are prepared to certify will do what is required. They are the people who have drafted this Bill and they have said that this is the only method whereby Western Australian soldiers may be given the right to vote. Mr. Baxter's next item for inquiry was—

(6) The necessity to safeguard against canvassing soldiers.

I do not know how anything of that kind is going to be accomplished. The Commonwealth did not include any prohibition of that sort in its Act and I doubt whether any prohibition would be effective because, if I understand what is meant by canvassing, it is one person approaching another with a view to persuading him to record a vote in a particular way. If politics are under discussion by a group of soldiers somebody will be found in the party anxious to see that votes are recorded, and such advocates will not all speak on behalf of one individual candidate or party. Such canvassing will be done by people associated with different parties involved in the election. Consequently there will be no particular advantage to any individual or party. I wish to say a few words on the final point raised by Mr. Baxter—

(7) Regarding what took place in the recent Federal election as to extending the franchise to those 18 years of age and upwards.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In the recent Federal elections and in accordance with the provisions of the Commonwealth Electoral Act, only those soldiers under 21 years of age who have actually been in a battle area or had been more than three miles outside Australia, were entitled to vote. Consequently the position arose that quite a number of men who had travelled from Albany to Fremantle by boat, or had been in an aeroplane more than three miles away from the coast of Australia, were entitled to exercise the franchise while many thousands of others were not so entitled. Under the method outlined in the Bill all those soldiers in Western Australia will be entitled to vote if they desire to do so. Members will agree that it is hard to draw a

distinction between the soldiers under 21 years of age who had been in a certain area, and others who have not yet been there but undoubtedly will be there very shortly. In the circumstances it seems to me much fairer to agree that if we are to accept the principle that members of the Armed Forces who are under 21 years of age should be entitled to exercise the franchise, then all should be given that opportunity.

The main point to remember in regard to the Bill is that it provides the means by which all members of the Armed Forces may exercise the franchise. That is the basis of the measure. The exercise of the franchise is not made compulsory, but the Bill provides the opportunity for soldiers to exercise the franchise if they desire to do so. Naturally those members of the Armed Forces who desire to vote in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Act, who possess the necessary qualifications and are already enrolled can do so; there is nothing whatever to prevent them from exercising the franchise in the ordinary way. On the other hand, the Bill will give every member of the Armed Forces who is 18 years of age an opportunity to vote if he or she desires to do so without there being any compulsion about it at all. The suggestion for referring the Bill to a Select Committee has no merit whatever in view of the explanation I have given to the House. I reiterate that the Bill has nothing whatever to do with enrolment and its provisions can apply only to soldiers who were resident in Western Australia before they enlisted. If such soldiers wish to exercise the right to record their votes, we are making the best possible provision to enable that to be done. It is unfortunate that the Commonwealth Government could not see its way clear to assist in the direction I indicated earlier, and consequently it became necessary to provide some method whereby the votes of the soldiers when recorded could be forwarded to the Chief Electoral Officer without delay, hence the provision in the Bill dealing with that phase.

If the Bill is regarded as practicable I do not see any reason for objection to the legislation. I repeat that it was drafted by the State Chief Electoral Officer in consultation with the Commonwealth Electoral Officer, and any minor amendments made did not affect in any shape or form the

draft Bill of the Chief Electoral Officer—apart from the amendments inserted in another place. Speaking broadly, the Bill is the product of our own Chief Electoral Officer, and I am advised that it is regarded as the most practicable and best method by which we can give the soldiers of Western Australia a vote at the forthcoming elections. In all the circumstances I emphasise it is desirable that the consideration of the Bill should be completed at an early date, and I certainly hope no time will be lost by referring it to a Select Committee. If members desire to move amendments I trust they will do so in the ordinary way, and have them placed on the notice paper so that we may all know what is involved.

The PRESIDENT: This Bill must be carried by a constitutional majority and it will be necessary to take a division.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	25
Noes	..	..	..	..	0
					—
Majority for	..	..	..	..	25
					—

AYES.

Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. W. H. Kilson
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. J. Cornhill	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. V. Plesse
Hon. Q. Fraser	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. F. B. Gibson	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. G. R. Wood
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. J. G. Hislop	(Teller.)

The PRESIDENT: I have assured myself that the question is passed by an absolute majority of members present. I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

To Refer to Select Committee.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [7.38]: I move—

That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee.

The House is placed in a very difficult position. I cannot understand why such haste should be displayed regarding the Bill. At a time when the measure was being considered by this Chamber the Premier announced that polling day would be the 20th November. On two occasions the elections have been postponed, and now all at once

there is this undue haste to go to the people. This Bill should have most mature consideration. I cannot agree that its provisions are either safe or sound. I regard them as being far from that, and I do not care who drafted the measure. Take the postal vote provisions! They will apply not to a few soldiers but to many thousands who are in Western Australia at present. Many of them are from the Eastern States, and many of those men are enrolled for the places whence they came.

If the Bill is passed in its present form those soldiers could be enrolled here and could exercise the franchise, and then probably two days later would be transferred out of the State and have no interest whatever in Western Australia. Then again the canvassing of soldiers is not at all desirable. I do not think we want election speeches in military camps wherever they may be. There are some phases about which members will require some information, such as the extension of the franchise to those in uniform and those who are not but are engaged in war industries. Soldiers from the Eastern States are not domiciled here, but are merely here temporarily. Under the principal Act, if such men are here for six months and in any one place for a month, they can be enrolled. I defy the Chief Secretary to indicate where the Bill says otherwise. I urge the House to refer the measure to a Select Committee. I can see no reason why we should not get to work straight away and report to the House next week. The reference of the Bill to a Select Committee will not retard the work of Parliament in the slightest degree for there is plenty to occupy the attention of members. The business can go on irrespective of this Bill, which can be finalised later.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I have already indicated that I see no need whatever for a Select Committee. I find it difficult to notice any undue haste in connection with the Bill.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why should this Bill head other important Bills on the notice paper?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The fears expressed by Mr. Baxter should be regarded as non-existent. If an Eastern States soldier who has been here for six months cares to enrol, he can do so under our electoral law, and can vote on polling day provided

he is in a position to do so. It is not reasonable to believe that numerous Eastern States soldiers will endeavour to enrol during the few days remaining. The Bill is intended to give soldiers, whether enrolled or otherwise, the right to vote if they have been resident in Western Australia prior to enlistment. Under the voting conditions prescribed by our electoral law very few soldiers will be able to record their vote in the absence of this measure. The passage of the Bill is urgently required in order that we may be able to communicate with far-distant localities.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why not give more time as regards election day?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The Government has decided upon the date when a general election shall be held, and there is ample time available. The proposed Select Committee could only deal with the electoral portions of the Bill, which could be disposed of in 24 hours. The Bill was drafted by the responsible officers of the Electoral Department. If we desire to give our soldiers a vote, we should pass the Bill promptly.

HON. J. CORNELL (South): The Chief Secretary has used the argument of pressure of time. It is a month now from closing of nominations to polling day. In the case of the Federal elections there was three weeks' notice of the date of polling. So we have a week longer than the Federal officers had. Will the Bill achieve its purpose? What is the understanding between the Commonwealth authorities and the State authorities as to how the vote will be taken?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The Bill sets that out.

HON. J. CORNELL: The Minister has stated that the reason for returning the votes to the Chief Electoral Officer here is that the Commonwealth authorities have declared that they will not accept the responsibility of counting the votes. All that the Commonwealth authorities are indicating to commanding officers is that the authorities will be obliged if the commanding officers will provide the necessary facilities for the taking of votes. The Commonwealth authorities have not stated that the commanding officers will take the votes. Will a soldier who wants to vote have the opportunity to vote? That is a point which has not yet been made clear. No check whatever is speci-

fied in regard to counting of votes as to whether the individual voter is a Western Australian soldier or not.

The Chief Secretary: What more could you have in any event?

Hon. J. CORNELL: What did the Commonwealth authorities say? How did the commanding officers count the Federal votes? Is there any safeguard to prevent the admission of votes which should not be admitted? There are many ringtails on one side and the other. The Commonwealth gave the vote to all members of the Armed Forces under the age of 21 years who had served or were serving in combat areas only. This Bill should be so amended and should retain the clause reserving the voting for the Pacific zone only. The Chief Electoral Officer would be able to explain matters to the Select Committee.

Question put and passed.

Select Committee Appointed.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: If there is to be a committee, I ask for a ballot. Am I in order in making the request?

The PRESIDENT: If the hon. member calls for a ballot there must be a ballot.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East): I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed consisting of four members—Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, Hon. C. B. Williams, Hon. J. Cornell, and the mover.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I ask that a ballot be taken.

Ballot taken.

The PRESIDENT: A ballot has been taken and as a result the following four members have been elected:—

Hon. C. F. Baxter, Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, Hon. J. Cornell, and Hon. C. B. Williams.

Question put and passed.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Can we know how the votes were cast?

The PRESIDENT: I have announced the result of the ballot.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter resolved: That the Select Committee have power to call for persons, papers and records, and to adjourn from place to place, that three members form a quorum, and that the Committee sit on days over which the House stands adjourned; to report on Tuesday, the 5th October.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—FREMANTLE MUNICIPAL TRAMWAYS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER [8.16] in moving the second reading said: By this Bill it is proposed to amend the Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Act, 1903-1937, which is an Act to empower the municipalities of Fremantle and East Fremantle to construct, maintain and work the tramways within the boundaries of the municipalities mentioned, and to construct and maintain works for the generation and supply of electricity for motor and lighting purposes. The Bill is necessary in order to remove doubts which have arisen in respect to the legal standing of the Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Board. Under the Act the two municipalities concerned are empowered, amongst other things, to enter into agreements with adjoining municipalities or road boards for the supply of electricity within their districts. Section 15 of the Act authorises the constitution of a board known as the Fremantle Municipal Tramways and Electric Lighting Board, and states that within nine months after the commencement of the Act the construction, carrying out, control and management of undertakings authorised are to be vested in the board. Here let me say that the board has done excellent work.

In a general way the provisions of this section have been interpreted to mean that the board would have the right to exercise the powers which the Act confers on the municipalities of Fremantle and East Fremantle in respect to the supply of electric current, and as a consequence the board, with the concurrence of the two municipalities, has undertaken a great deal of work and removed a great deal of responsibility from the shoulders of the municipalities. Everyone has looked to the board and dealt with it as if the full statutory powers were properly exercised by it. During recent discussions between the Government and the board regarding certain agreements for the supply of electricity, doubts were expressed as to the legal right of the board to enter

into any agreement on behalf of the municipalities. Because of the many transactions which have been entered into by the board much concern was expressed by the municipalities regarding their position. It will be of interest to note that the Mayor of Fremantle and the Mayor of East Fremantle are both members of the board, so that it can be readily understood that the parties have acted in complete harmony.

In these circumstances, and as a result of representations made, the Government has decided by the amendments in this Bill to remove the legal doubts which exist, and to legalise the practice and procedure which has been followed for about 40 years and which has suited everybody concerned. Another matter which requires clarification deals with the supply of electricity to adjoining municipalities or road boards. For a considerable period the board has supplied electricity to the North Fremantle municipality. The Act restricts the supply to adjoining local authorities. As the Swan River separates Fremantle and East Fremantle from the North Fremantle district, there is a doubt as to whether they can be deemed to be adjoining. The Government is quite satisfied for the board to carry on with the existing arrangement. It therefore proposes by the amendment in the Bill to clarify the matter by providing that North Fremantle is to be deemed an adjoining municipality, but that the board shall be confined in its transactions to those local authorities as they are at present constituted. If, for instance, Cottesloe or Peppermint Grove became amalgamated with North Fremantle, then the board would not be able to supply electricity to Cottesloe or Peppermint Grove where the Government is at present operating.

The only other matter dealt with refers to the supply of electricity to the Rockingham Road Board, authority for which was given by an amendment to the Act in 1934. To supply current to Rockingham, lines had to be laid through the territories of intervening local authorities. The amendment, however, did not say that the municipality could take its supply lines through those intervening districts, although it is obvious that it would be impossible for Fremantle to supply Rockingham without conveying current through them. The Bill therefore gives the statutory authority in this connection. In short, it validates the board's ac-

tions in the matters mentioned, ratifies its contracts and agreements, and at the same time authorises the expenditure of funds by the board on work performed for the municipality. As the Bill has the approval of all parties concerned I trust that the House will have no objection to its proposals. Mr. Gibson, who as Mayor of Fremantle is one of the members of the board, has indicated that he has an amendment to move in Committee to Clause 3. This amendment meets with the approval of all parties and will be an improvement. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. F. E. GIBSON (Metropolitan-Suburban): I second the motion and commend the Bill to the House. The Honorary Minister has explained the need for the measure; it is necessary so that there will be no doubt as to the powers of the board. Doubt was raised by the Government during certain conversations, and it is necessary to have the position clarified. The measure has been submitted to the councils concerned and also to the board, and all are in accord with the provisions of the Bill. In Committee I shall move an amendment to one of the clauses. The Minister has been good enough to say that the board has carried out its duties in a very satisfactory manner. I would like to tell members something of what it has actually done. In 1905 the two municipalities decided to undertake the generation of electric current for the purpose of supplying the industries in Fremantle and also providing power for transport purposes. One particularly well-known member of Parliament, Mr. Angwin, will be remembered for the work he did on the board. In 1905 the two municipalities raised a sum of £120,000 for the purpose of establishing the works. At a later stage the capital sum was increased to £190,000. The whole of that borrowed money has been repaid and, in addition, a further sum of £170,000 has been spent, so that the asset of the board is today assessed at a value of about £375,000. The whole concern, as I have indicated, is out of debt.

Since the inception of the scheme a sum of £80,000 has been paid in relative proportions to the Fremantle and East Fremantle Councils, and this year the profit made has enabled the board to pay East Fremantle £2,700 and Fremantle £16,700. So members will understand we have reason to feel a

fair amount of pride in the work we are doing. Some years ago the electrical supply was extended to the Fremantle Road Board. This has been of great advantage to the local authority, because the supply of electricity has enabled the settlers to develop their market gardens and the rateable values of the district have practically doubled. The power was conveyed to Rockingham at a cost of about £10,000 and that has proved a profitable undertaking. Members who are acquainted with the district are aware of the increased settlement that has occurred in that area during the last few years.

The Fremantle Tramways last year carried 7,000,000 passengers, which seems to be a huge number for a comparatively small place like Fremantle. Since the inception of the scheme the transport operations have been financially successful. In a small measure some of the success is due to restrictions on motorcars causing more people to use the trams. However, this undertaking shows what can be done by proper management. We are proud of the achievements at Fremantle, and I hope members will support the Bill.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East): Mr. Gibson has painted us a very glowing picture of what has been achieved at Fremantle, and yet the Bill asks us to correct illegalities that have been committed. I agree that very good work has been done by the board and no doubt the transgression was one—

Hon. F. E. Gibson: There was no transgression.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I cannot agree with the hon. member. Perhaps he regards it as only a suspected transgression. Anyhow, the illegality was sufficiently serious to move the Government to put up a Bill to remedy it. If my memory serves me aright the Government, by this Bill, is amending legislation that was originally introduced by a private member. However, if some transgression has been committed, we have to remember that we are dealing with bodies of men who are working in an honorary capacity. They are doing excellent work in controlling affairs for the rate-payers, and we must give them all possible assistance. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill and would approve of authority being given to extend this very successful venture.

HON. G. FRASER (West): I, too, consider that the board has done very good work, though a little friction did occur between one municipality and the board quite recently.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: Why bring that up?

Hon. G. FRASER: The agreement with that municipality contained a clause that I hope will not find a place in any future agreement. The original agreement gave the board power to supply electricity within a distance of five or six miles of Fremantle, and by so doing the tramway board was given a monopoly of supply over areas whose local governing bodies had no say in the resultant agreement.

Hon. F. E. Gibson: They could have come into it.

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not discussing that point. Only one municipality could have come into the arrangement and that was the North Fremantle Municipality. There are, however, other bodies, both municipal and road board, within the five mile area covered by the agreement. They had no say in the agreement. However, matters worked out satisfactorily.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: What Government was responsible for that?

Hon. G. FRASER: The Scaddan Government, in 1915 or 1916.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are right.

Hon. G. W. Miles: It is a wonder that Government did not make provision for the surplus moneys to be paid into Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. G. FRASER: The hon. member interjecting was a member of Parliament at about that time, and was therefore lacking in his duty from that point of view. Although this agreement did work out satisfactorily, a similar agreement in the future may not do so. We should not give rights to one body which can control other bodies that have no say in the matter. I support the second reading.

Question: put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—New sections:

Hon. F. E. GIBSON: I wish to move to strike out Subclause (4) of proposed new Section 2A. This subclause deals with the appointment of arbitrators.

The HONORARY MINISTER: I think it would be preferable if the hon. member placed his amendment on the notice paper. It could be dealt with tomorrow.

Progress reported.

MOTION—MEAT.

As to Supplies and Rationing of Mutton.

Debate resumed from the 23rd September on the following motion by Hon. G. B. Wood:—

That, in the opinion of this House, the rationing of mutton in Western Australia is unnecessary for the following reasons:—

- (a) There is a surplus of mutton in this State;
- (b) Owing to the deplorable mismanagement of manpower the treatment of mutton for export to the United Kingdom is impossible.
- (c) Rationing has lowered the price obtained by the producer.

This Parliament urges the Commonwealth Government to exempt Western Australia from the provisions of the regulations until satisfactory arrangements have been made to handle the surplus supply. This resolution to be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly for its concurrence, to which Hon. T. Moore had moved an amendment as follows:—

That paragraph (b) be struck out.

HON. C. B. WILLIAMS (South—on amendment) [8.43]: I support the motion. I have just returned from the Goldfields, where the butchers are very perturbed about this matter.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Will the hon. member resume his seat? An amendment to the motion is before the Chair and I must ask the hon. member to speak to it.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: My remarks will certainly relate to deplorable mismanagement, so I shall be speaking to the amendment. Butchers in Kalgoorlie are idle one or two days a week on account of the shortage of mutton and meat.

Hon. J. Cornell: Meat is mutton.

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: When I have pointed out the position to the House, I am sure Mr. Moore will be only too pleased to withdraw his amendment. There is a butchering firm in Kalgoorlie called the Co-operative Butchers. He is better acquainted with

them than I am. He is older than I and has had experience of the meat trade, whereas I belong to the working class. The Boulder Co-operative Butchers had 11 pigs trucked to Boulder and the edict went forth that no more pork was to be sold. Under some regulation, the number of which I do not know, offal—whatever that is—cannot be removed from the abattoirs; it has to be buried. I understand that the sale of offal yields a profit to the butcher. The Co-operative Butchers cannot remove their 11 pigs. The man appointed by the Government to control this matter, Mr. Farrell, told the Boulder Co-operative Butchers that they could kill the 11 pigs, but that the carcasses must be sent to the nearest bacon factory, 370 miles away, at Bellevue. Mr. Farrell should be indicted. The firm has to feed those pigs on wheat and the farmer has to be paid a reasonable price for his wheat, even when it is fed to pigs. The State Government has given instructions that offal in Boulder and Kalgoorlie must be buried, so it cannot be fed to the 11 pigs in question. I cannot for a moment support the amendment. I have now to link up pork with mutton. I happen to be one of the few people who are not responsible for producing so much as a goat, let alone a sheep!

In this country we have a surplus of mutton going to waste, and I have pointed out the position as I see it. I have mentioned the name of the manager of the Co-operative Butchers, Mr. Percy Gilbert, who is a very good citizen of this country. After one month's delay and after feeding those porkers which should long since have gone where they were intended to go, he received permission, not to kill them and send them to the nearest bacon factory 370 miles away, but to kill them and turn them into mince-meat or small goods. Mr. Moore knows that I cannot support his amendment. I understand that all producers have had a hard battle. We are very isolated in Western Australia, and people in control of these matters are mostly appointed from the Eastern States. Even trade union circles in the East do not think much of Western Australia, and they rarely appoint people from Western Australia to the different bodies that are set up. The result is that we suffer. We have a Government operating from Canberra. True, Mr. Curtin is the member for Fremantle, but it is not to be expected that he should bother about all the little things

that occur in Western Australia. He must be guided by the people who advise him. I oppose the amendment because of what I found in Kalgoorlie, where 11 pigs were fed for a month and could not be killed unless they were sent 370 miles to Bellevue to be turned into bacon. After that sort of thing Mr. Farrell ought to resign his job as Meat Controller!

Point of Order.

Hon. G. B. Wood: On a point of order! I respectfully submit that the amendment on the notice paper is not that moved by Mr. Moore on Thursday. Mr. Moore did move an amendment to delete paragraph (b) with a view to inserting other words. He did make some vague suggestions what he proposed to insert, but he did not move along those lines.

The President: I remember that Sir Hal Colebatch seconded the amendment. I am informed by the Clerk that Mr. Moore put the amendment in writing. However, the question before the Chair is not as to what words will be inserted but merely that certain words should be deleted. Mr. Moore suggested words which I take it he thought should be inserted if these other words were deleted. It would be competent for the hon. member to amend or vote against the words it is proposed to insert later on.

Debate Resumed.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East—on amendment): If the amendment is agreed to it will render the motion pointless. The motion would then read—

That in the opinion of this House the rationing of mutton in Western Australia is unnecessary for the following reasons:—

(a) There is a surplus of mutton—

Hon. T. Moore: If that stood alone it would be a good case.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I wish the hon. member would allow me to finish! The reasons given in the motion as to why rationing is unnecessary would be that

- (a) there is a surplus of mutton in the State;
- (b) facilities for the export of the surplus to the United Kingdom are not available;
- (c) rationing has lowered the price obtained by the producer.

Mr. Wood had justification for including the paragraph it is proposed should be struck out, namely—

“(b) Owing to the deplorable mismanagement of manpower the treatment of mutton for export to the United Kingdom is impossible.”

I point out that 20 slaughtermen were released from service, but they did not go into the avenue for which they were freed. They did not slaughter at all. Before they could reach their destination, an edict went out ordering them on to more important work—whatever that might be. I would like to be told what more important work there can be than feeding the Forces. I am of opinion that we are on the verge of meat rationing, which will probably be imposed in a few weeks, though Canberra claims that it will not. Probably it would be a good thing, because it would prevent the scrounging around by some people for meat and other people who cannot get out being precluded from obtaining it. I have pointed out that when these slaughtermen were released they did not go into the avenue for which they were freed. Consequently paragraph (b) of the motion is justified, and I oppose the amendment.

Hon. T. Moore: You are mixing things up.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, I am not!

HON. J. CORNELL (South—on amendment): Mr. Moore is to be commended for pointing out to the House an obvious blot on the motion.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Why?

Hon. J. CORNELL: The motion not only gives reasons for the shortage of mutton but also censures a section of the community responsible for our war effort. It speaks of deplorable mismanagement.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Is not that true?

Hon. J. CORNELL: No.

Hon. G. B. Wood: It is, definitely.

Hon. J. CORNELL: That may be the hon. member's opinion, but it is very one-eyed.

Hon. V. Hamersley: It is the opinion of the whole community.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The motion says, “owing to the deplorable mismanagement of manpower the treatment of mutton for export to the United Kingdom is impossible.”

Does not the amendment by Mr. Moore express the position in a more gentlemanly way?

Hon. T. Moore: If we are going to ask for something, let us ask for it in the proper way.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Mr. Moore suggests that we should state that facilities for the export of the surplus to the United Kingdom are not available.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: But they are there!

Hon. J. CORNELL: I could get up here, and so could Mr. Moore, Mr. Drew, Mr. Miles, and Mr. E. H. H. Hall, and condemn right and left—using horse, foot and artillery—the mismanagement of manpower as applied to the goldmining industry, but we accept the inevitable and what the powers-that-be say is necessary. I hope the House will agree to the amendment. As I said earlier when speaking on the motion, rationing is very hard to apply satisfactorily.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You spoke in favour of the motion.

Hon. J. CORNELL: To a certain extent.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Why have you changed your mind?

Hon. J. CORNELL: A man who never changed his mind never made a good decision.

Hon. T. Moore: It is an obvious error.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Yes, and Mr. Wood is only injuring his own case. I have heard from an authoritative quarter that the day is not far distant when we shall be able to get rid of all the meat we can supply. I say, "Do not put a blot on what is a good intention." There is a road to hell paved with good intentions, but there is a bad intention in this motion, and I hope it will be left out. I trust the House will agree to the amendment and address itself to the subject in respectable language that covers the whole gamut of the situation.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East—on amendment): When I saw the amendment on the notice paper I felt that that was not what paragraph (b) had been intended to convey. I am confident the amendment does not tell the truth. It says that facilities for the export of the surplus to the United Kingdom are not available. But those facilities exist.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The question before the Chair is that certain words be struck out. If that is done, members can afterwards discuss what words can be inserted in lieu.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I understood that when we had this matter before us previously it was proposed these words should be struck out with the idea of some reference to a shortage of manpower being inserted.

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Moore indicated the words he would move in the event of these words being struck out. In the meantime the question is that the words be struck out.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It was proposed to strike out two words, "deplorable mismanagement."

Hon. T. Moore: We do not want to condemn.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I was quite prepared to accept that.

Hon. T. Moore: What is the good of condemning? That gets us nowhere.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I do not agree with the idea that facilities are not available. That is quite wrong. If the word "shortage" appears in paragraph (b) it will be quite sufficient. We want to convey to those in authority who are dealing with this matter that the people of Western Australia do not see any necessity for this humbug in restricting the supply of mutton when there is a surplus. That humbug has already occurred and has created chaos in the market. An enormous number of people desire to sell sheep. There is any amount of mutton available but the prices are not profitable because of mismanagement. I cannot see what difficulty is in the way. To delete paragraph (b) would be one of the worst moves this House could make. I would be sorry to see the paragraph deleted.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East—on amendment): We seem to be taking up a lot of time over something that should be disposed of very quickly. From what I have read and heard, I think Mr. Wood was on good ground in submitting a motion, but he should be grateful to Mr. Moore for advising him to delete paragraph (b). He stated a fact when he said there is a surplus of mutton in this State, and he voiced another truth when he said that rationing has lowered the

price obtained by the producer. I think the merit of his motion is tarnished by the rather extravagant language he has used.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Where have you been for the last two years?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Mr. Wood refers to the deplorable mismanagement of manpower, but it is very easy to say that. In these days there is a type of individual that embraces every opportunity to criticise. He may criticise the railways, the manpower officials or the Army authorities. It is quite an easy thing to do, particularly in view of the fact that the majority of those criticised cannot hit back, while credit is not always given for jobs well carried out. I might be inclined to support Mr. Wood were it not for the inclusion of paragraph (b). He would be well advised to accept the deletion of that paragraph and the substitution of words more along the lines suggested by Mr. Moore.

HON. W. J. MANN (South-West—on amendment): If paragraph (b) were deleted from the motion, Mr. Wood's point might well go by the board. If I understand his intention correctly, Mr. Wood wishes to enter an emphatic protest against certain interference with the efforts made to slaughter meat at the abattoirs. I confess I do not like the use of the words "deplorable mismanagement."

Hon. V. Hamersley: Strike them out.

Hon. W. J. MANN: But Mr. Wood is certainly justified in making a protest in such a matter. If paragraph (b) were struck out and the words suggested by Mr. Moore inserted in lieu, they might meet the case but would not constitute the protest that Mr. Wood seeks to lodge. They would convert the motion into a sort of pious resolution. While I agree that the language may not be of the type mostly used in this Chamber, we must remember that the motion is one of protest.

Hon. J. Cornell: Why not make it read "owing to the shortage of manpower and other facilities"?

Hon. W. J. MANN: But that would not constitute a protest such as Mr. Wood desires to make. I understand there was an instance in which a certain number of men were called up, but only one turned up for the job. I shall support Mr. Wood's motion although I shall do so with a certain amount

of diffidence. I think it important that this House should lodge a protest.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (on amendment): I think we are unnecessarily spending a lot of time on this matter. At the risk of criticism I merely point out that I do not agree with paragraph (b) in its original form. I do not agree that it represents a true statement of fact. I am sure that the statement it embodies cannot be proved and, as for Mr. Moore's suggestion for an alternative, the words mean nothing.

Hon. T. Moore: I admit that.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The facilities required are there and will be there.

Hon. T. Moore: I am prepared to leave the paragraph out altogether.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There are always two sides to a question, and according to the information supplied to me, the assertions in paragraph (b) are most unfair.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	8
Noes	..	..	..	..	11
Majority against					3

AYES.	
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. W. H. Kilson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
(Teller.)	

NOES.	
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. E. H. Hall	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. H. V. Piesse	(Teller.)

AYN.	PAU.	NO.
Hon. G. Fraser		Hon. F. R. Welsh

Amendment thus negatived.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: I desire to oppose the motion as strongly as I possibly can. In view of information supplied to me, I am sure that Mr. Wood will find it very hard indeed to justify the terms of his motion, and I am certain he will find it exceedingly hard to secure in another place the support he desires for his motion, which starts with the words—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the rationing of mutton in Western Australia is unnecessary for the following reasons—(a) There is a surplus of mutton in this State." No-one can quarrel with that statement, which is one of fact. There is a surplus of

mutton in this State. That surplus is being dealt with as I shall indicate later on. Then the motion reads—

Owing to the deplorable mismanagement of manpower, the treatment of mutton for export to the United Kingdom is impossible."

This House, if it agrees to the motion, will say, in effect, that the manpower authorities in Western Australia have mismanaged the position to an extent that has detrimentally affected the producers of mutton. I believe that this House, and certainly Mr. Wood, cannot blame the manpower authorities for anything that has happened. As a matter of fact, the authorities made satisfactory arrangements for manpower to deal with the same quantity of meat as was required 12 months ago. While it is a fact that the Commonwealth Government determined that there should be a cut of 15 per cent. in the supply of meat—this included beef as well as mutton—on the basic month of May in this year, I am advised and have been supplied with figures in support of the statement, that, instead of there having been a cut of 15 per cent. in mutton there was a considerable increase in the quantity supplied to retail butchers.

And so, while it is admitted that a day or two ago there were not sufficient men available to deal with the quantities of stock being sent to the markets, we cannot blame the manpower authorities for that position. What has happened there is that the growers have sent in large quantities of mutton; and mainly arising from the fact that there has been a great increase in the purchasing power of the public, who have been buying lamb whereas usually they bought mutton, there has been a larger supply of mutton than could be satisfactorily dealt with by the trade. Such, very briefly, is the position. So, if we are going to blame the manpower authorities for what the growers are really responsible for, we shall look foolish. I shall give the figures presently. The third point was that rationing has lowered the price obtained by the producers. I am inclined to think that that allegation, too, will take a lot of proving. What has lowered the price in accordance with the comparisons made by Mr. Wood, is the same factor as I have just mentioned—the purchasing power of the public, having increased, has enabled them to buy a different class of meat. They have been buying lamb and have been prepared to pay a higher

price for it than growers could get for export lamb. The result has been to lessen the possibility of the public purchasing mutton.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Do the public buy more lamb than usual?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: A great deal more.

Hon. G. B. Wood: So the 15 per cent. does not apply in that case!

Hon. A. Thomson: The people have been complaining that they cannot buy meat.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This is where we get to. Somebody makes a statement, and somebody else supports it from hearsay, and the actual facts are against them. Statements made by the man in the street without authority, are accepted, and a motion is moved in this House.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Greater rubbish, was never talked in this House!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The basic period was for four weeks ending on the 29th May, 1943. The average consumption of mutton and lamb during that period was 484,500 lbs., while the quota allotted to the various wholesalers at Midland Junction and Robb's Jetty, who supply retail shops, was 505,490 lbs. of mutton and lamb; approximately 21,000 lbs. in excess of the basic period. That was increased because of the fact that the whole cut of 15 per cent. on meat which was brought into operation by the Commonwealth Government was taken off the supplies of beef. As a result of that, we had a larger supply of mutton and lamb for retailers than we did have in the basic May period.

Hon. G. B. Wood: There is no lamb at all in May.

Hon. J. Cornell: There is lamb all the year round.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You had better stick to goldmining!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There can be no denying the fact that there has been no rationing so far as mutton and lamb are concerned. Now I will deal with the matter of Service supplies. It has been known and admitted for some considerable time that there would be a surplus of mutton in Western Australia. I am indeed pleased to say that arrangements have been made which, I am advised, will more than absorb any surplus that can be produced in this State. The

present position is that it is very doubtful whether we shall have sufficient.

Hon. G. B. Wood: That is after you have forced the price down!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I object to statements of that kind. We have not forced prices down. The growers themselves have forced the prices down. The Controller of Meat in this State advises that there are sufficient Service orders being received to indicate that the whole of the surplus mutton in Western Australia will be absorbed in that way. The surplus mutton will be required for the Services, and will not be required for export oversea.

Hon. G. B. Wood: That is a new one!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We must be very careful before we start passing resolutions merely on the statements of some interested person who comes to the conclusion that because something has happened some person or other is taking advantage of the situation. The position is the opposite to that stated by Mr. Wood. During his remarks the hon. member referred to the subject of ewe mutton, saying there was great difficulty in getting rid of ewe mutton and the prices today were not as good as they used to be. That is not strictly in accordance with fact. From my own knowledge I can state that for many years large quantities of ewe mutton have been sold in the metropolitan area at prices lower than those obtaining today. Mr. Wood may be interested to know that arrangements have been made with the various authorities who are to use this surplus mutton that 20 per cent. of ewe mutton is to be accepted in their orders. That is something entirely new, for until quite recently the Admiralty and other buying organisations for the Services have absolutely refused to take any ewe mutton at all. But through the efforts of the Deputy Controller in this State, Mr. Farrell, to whom Mr. Williams referred—

Hon. C. B. Williams: I shall refer to him again.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The authorities have agreed to include 20 per cent. of ewe mutton in their supplies. That will be a great advantage to the growers. In addition to this, I am told, negotiations are taking place, and it is hoped will be finalised favourably, for a further increase in the price paid by the United Kingdom for export mutton.

Hon. G. B. Wood: The present price is very low!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: An effort is being made to have the prices increased. I am told there is every possibility of an agreement being arrived at for an increase in the price of mutton. If that increase comes about, though it will not be very big, it certainly will be a great advantage to the growers. I have already said that up-to-date there has been no rationing of mutton or lamb. Here is another question raised by one or two members; I think Mr. Craig was one. It was to this effect. Here was another case of gross mismanagement, because, knowing that there was going to be a surplus of mutton, there should have been plenty of storage available. As a matter of fact, there is now no shortage of storage accommodation. Mr. Wood says there has been a shortage. He stated, I understand, that at the present moment or two days ago the Navy was running about in an endeavour to find a certain amount of mutton, as there were no freezer facilities at Fremantle to store mutton so that the Navy could get it when it wanted the meat. I do not think there are any big ships coming in, but the Navy wants to know where it can get 20 or 30 tons of meat without having to go to Midland Junction or a wholesale butcher and ask for it. Because of the present position it does not know where it can get the meat. There has been no shortage of freezing accommodation. Space is available not merely for 20 or 30 tons, but for a tonnage running into over four figures. This, of course, is quite different from the statement made by Mr. Wood.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You do not think I made that statement up, do you? I got it from very good authority—authority perhaps just as good as yours.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It cannot be as good as mine, for my authority is the Controller of Meat in this State. He says very definitely that that is a fact. He also says arrangements have been made within the last few days to put a larger number of men on the slaughtering of mutton.

Hon. A. Thomson: There must have been some basis for the statement.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There was no truth in it because there has been and still is freezer accommodation for well over 1,000 tons. How anyone could say that there was

not freezer accommodation for 20 or 30 tons for the Navy I do not know.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Were killing facilities available?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The position is as I have stated, that there has been a surplus of mutton on the market over that which can normally be expected at this time of the year. Of course I am assuming that the facilities for slaughtering at that particular time were not sufficient to deal with the whole of the sheep coming into Midland Junction.

Hon. T. Moore: The drought in my district accounted for many of the additional sheep being on the market.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. Many growers found themselves in difficulties, and they sent their stock to the market in such numbers that it was not possible for them to be absorbed. The same thing has happened every time such a surplus has come about. When the market is flooded the prices drop. When all these factors are taken into consideration it is hard to justify the motion as it is at present worded. Another question was raised, namely, that the facilities were not here to deal with the surplus mutton. The hon. member concerned said that even if the facilities were available to treat the surplus he did not know where the ships were coming from. My information is that practically the whole of the surplus would be absorbed by the Services with the exception of the export lambs which would be sent to the United Kingdom. I am told that ships have always been made available for that purpose.

Hon. J. Cornell: And the run will be a short one.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know about that. I do not want the House to think that there has not been a shortage of manpower, but I am assured that the manpower authorities made arrangements for sufficient labour to deal with the usual quantities of sheep and lambs that are expected at this time of the year. Unfortunately there was a large increase in that number and the men were not available at the particular time to deal with them. Arrangements have been put in hand quite recently—last week as a matter of fact—and a commencement made with the slaughtering of this so-called surplus mutton.

Hon. G. B. Wood: When was it made?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Last week. These things cannot be done in a few hours. The necessary arrangements must be made to provide for the additional men required. I am assured by the Deputy Controller in this State that he anticipates no difficulty with regard to manpower for the treatment of our surplus mutton. About 100 tons have already been prepared. We must accept his word that the surplus about which members are complaining will be absorbed. I do not think I should mention the size of the orders given by the various Services, nor should I go into details as to where it is considered they are going. I accept in good faith the information supplied to me and members should not doubt what I am saying.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Why should they doubt the information I give?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Because the hon. member did not mention his authority. His information apparently came from someone who is not an authority on the actual facts. We should not be called upon to carry such a drastic motion as this which speaks about deplorable mismanagement, when it is not possible for the hon. member to prove that there has been even mismanagement, let alone "deplorable" mismanagement. One or two other matters were mentioned. Mr. E. H. Hall said that Queensland mutton had been sent to Geraldton. I am advised that no Queensland mutton has been sent there. That is the official record.

Hon. E. H. Hall: I was told by one of the leading stockmen in Geraldton that that was the position.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That may be so, but I am told by the authorities that no Queensland mutton has gone to Geraldton. Many of the statements made in regard to the matter were based on hearsay evidence. I hope that we will not carry this motion. I have said that there has been no rationing of mutton and lamb. I have given figures to show that there has been an increase of 4 per cent. in the quantity as compared with the basic month of May. The figures are 484,500 lbs. in the basic month of May, on which there was supposed to be a 15 per cent. cut, and 505,490 lbs. last month.

Hon. G. B. Wood: We will give you figures that will amaze you.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member cannot amaze me any more than he

has done already. It is anticipated that within 12 months over 100,000 sheep will be needed for Service requirements. In view of these figures and the other information I have supplied I hope that the House will not agree to the motion.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South-East): After listening to the Chief Secretary I am more than ever convinced that in the interests of the producers and consumers this House should agree to the motion. The Chief Secretary has made considerable play with the fact that no rationing of mutton has taken place in this State. He has been either grossly misinformed, or there has been merely a play on words which can only result in misleading the people in their consideration of the circumstances surrounding the position that gave rise to the motion. The Press of the 10th September under the heading "Meat Supplies. Cut of 15 per cent. All classes included," contains the following report:—

The Deputy-Director of Meat Supplies (Mr. J. J. Farrell) said yesterday that he desired to draw the attention of the whole of the meat trade and the general public in that portion of the State south of the 28th parallel to an advertisement published under National Security Regulations limiting as from September 13 the sale or purchase of meat—beef, mutton, lamb and veal—intended for civilian use to 85 per cent. by weight of average weekly sales or purchases for the four weeks period ended on May 29, 1943.

As the reduction of 15 per cent. in meat supplies would be automatically passed on to the public, Mr. Farrell continued, the full co-operation of the whole of the wholesale and retail trade was requested in ensuring that an even distribution of the quantity of meat available was made to the civilian community. Housewives, too, should use their reduced supplies in the most economical manner in order to make them go as far as possible.

There is a little more, but I will not read it. I would like to quote from the Public Notices of "The West Australian" of the same date, wherein the following notice headed, "Australian Meat Industry Commission. National Security (Meat Industry Control) Regulations. Statutory Rules, 1943, No. 64. Meat Order No. 27" appears.

Wholesale and Retail Butchers, Hotels, Hostels, Cafeterias, Restaurants, Tearooms, Delicatessens, Grocers, Canteens, etc., are hereby notified that on or after the 13th September, 1943, and until further notice, their total weekly sales or purchases of meat for civilian use must not exceed 85 per cent. by weight of

their average weekly sales or purchases for the 4 weeks' period ended the 29th May, 1943.

The meat to which this Order applies means the flesh of sheep, lambs and cattle (including calves) intended for human consumption in the fresh or preserved form. This Order shall apply to that portion of the State of Western Australia south of the 28th parallel of latitude.

J. J. FARRELL,
Deputy Controller Meat Supplies, W.A.

If that does not mean that meat rationing applies to mutton, I do not know what it does mean. That order was advertised for the information of the trade, its guidance and direction. Yet if we accept what the Chief Secretary has told us, and which I do not doubt that he has told us in the best of good faith from information supplied to him, that does not mean a thing. Well, that does not make sense.

The Chief Secretary: The 15 per cent. was taken off beef, not off mutton.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Then why the regulation?

The Chief Secretary: To meet the position of growers in regard to their mutton.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The Chief Secretary has his information from departmental officers whereas we are handicapped by the fact that our information comes from the people in the trade. However, I am satisfied that the information has been given to me in the best of good faith by people with as great a knowledge of the industry as that possessed by anyone in this House. But we are not in a position to broadcast these names. I hope the Chief Secretary will not defend the present state of affairs on the ground that no names are to be mentioned. His informants would have us believe that there has been no restriction in regard to mutton. According to the best information I could obtain, butchers who operated last Wednesday week at Midland Junction were advised that they had to restrict their operations—their killings and sales of mutton to the public—by 15 per cent. Some of them did not do so. Last Wednesday they were warned that if they did not reduce their operations for that particular week by 30 per cent. in order to make up for the 15 per cent. of the previous week, their licenses would be withdrawn. The Chief Secretary might be able to check that statement. I can also inform the Minister—this is another matter on which he might like to check up because we have to take our information from people in the

trade without being able to quote names—that 1,000 sheep were purchased at Midland last Wednesday week for the Services, and up to last week-end not one had been slaughtered because the facilities were not available.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I made that statement.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: A representative of the Navy went to Midland Junction last Wednesday week and acquired beef that had been purchased by wholesale butchers for distribution in the metropolitan area. There is a definite shortage of beef and pork, although a lot of beef is likely to be available from the South-West presently. If the public is going to be restricted in its purchases of beef, the Services will need to maintain a healthy demand or else surplus conditions will develop in the trade.

Seemingly there has been gross mismanagement in regard to rationing and in what has been foisted on the producer and the consumer by the manpower authorities. Mr. Stitfold's department was somewhat late in awakening to the need for providing adequate manpower for slaughtering at the Fremantle Abattoirs. About the 18th September he made an appeal for labour at Robb's Jetty. A week before that there was only one chain working, a chain consisting of 25 slaughtermen. Although there is provision for four chains, there were thousands of stock that could not be slaughtered because the manpower was not available. The Minister spoke of the market for mutton being swamped. On the 9th September, 8,597 sheep were offered at Midland Junction. On the 16th the number offered was 7,753, and the price dropped 2s. So I do not think it was the fact of the producers sending their stock into the market that brought down the price on that occasion so much as the hopeless uncertainty pervading the whole industry as a result of the announcements by those who are supposed to be in control of the meat supply of Australia.

How grossly the producers in Western Australia are being prejudiced at present—and this with very little benefit, if any, to the consumers—can best be illustrated by quoting from the reports of stock sales in Melbourne on the 8th September. The report states—

Heavy sheep were not well represented and the number of well-fattened cross-bred wethers was small. . . . Buyers had a poor selection

generally and had to be content with medium and secondary sheep.

To take some of the lines quoted—

232 merino wethers, big frames, well-fattened, prime to good quality, bare pelts, to 31s. 8d., average 28s. 7d.; weight 52 lbs., pelts 9d.

If anybody works out those figures, he will find that the average price of that mutton on the hoof was 27s. 10d. or 6.4d. per lb. That was mutton, not lamb. Here is another line—

106 merino wethers, medium frames, well-fattened, fair pelts, to 36s. 11d., average 35s. 3d.; weight 53 lbs., pelts 6d.

The average price works out at 34s. 9d. on the hoof or 7.8d. per lb.

Hon. C. B. Williams: What is the pelt?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The skin without the wool.

Hon. C. B. Williams: You had better explain that.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The stock coming to the Midland market is mainly merino, and that is why I am quoting merino prices. Here is another line—

350 merino ewes, medium frames, well-fattened, prime quality, to 35s., average 32s. 3d.; weight 48 lbs., skins 5s.

The average of that line on the hoof was 27s. 3d. or 6.8d. per lb. I could quote more, but I have given enough to indicate the position at the Melbourne market. Let me now quote Midland prices on the 9th September, which was the corresponding sale in this State.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member is endeavouring to show that rationing has lowered the price to the producers.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I am going further than that. I am showing that it has lowered the price to the producers, that a chaotic position has arisen in regard to the disposal of mutton and that the consumer is being restricted to the extent of 15 per cent., whereas there is no need for restriction.

Hon. J. Cornell: We all agree on that.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The prices at the Midland Junction market on the 9th September were—

Lightweight wether mutton, 4d. to 4½d.; heavy weight wether mutton, 3d. to 3½d.; light weight ewe mutton, 2½d. to 3¼d.; heavy weight ewe mutton, 2½d.

Thus we have a price of 2½d. at Midland Junction as compared with 6.8d. in the Melbourne market, so members will realise that

prices here bear no relationship whatever to those ruling in Victoria.

Hon. T. Moore: How do the retail prices compare?

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I suggest that the hon. member should inquire of the Minister.

Hon. C. B. Williams: I will give that information later.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: When Mr. W. A. White was controller of prices in this State, he started off in much the same way as have people in recent times; he merely tried to control the price the producer received. Before he died, I believe he realised the weakness of that procedure and was trying to control the price of meat right from the producer to the consumer. I am of the opinion that before any control of prices by rationing can be fair and effective, that will have to be done. Ceiling prices have been placed on mutton in a period of scarcity, namely in May and June, whereas in a time of flush production there is no floor price; it can sink to the bottom of the ocean and the consumer seems to get very little benefit.

Hon. T. Moore: He does not get any benefit.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Some publicity has been given to the statement that the restriction on mutton is necessary in order to enable us to export to England. I suggest in all seriousness that this is a mere pretence. During the flush of the lamb season there are neither the killing facilities nor the freezing facilities nor the refrigerated cargo space to send a great deal of mutton from here to England in addition to the 400,000 lambs produced. That is not the reason at all. Certainly the Services are showing some interest in Western Australian meat. When we see the prices they have been called upon to pay at Newmarket, Victoria, we can understand their interest.

What I object to in regard to this mismanagement is that the price our producers are receiving for mutton has been forced down, arbitrarily, I maintain, and even if the Services purchase at that price, it prejudices the position of the producer. There are some thousands of fat sheep in this State available for the Midland market, and they will not be submitted for disposal at present prices. The growers prefer to hang on to them during the summer and carry them through to shearing next season. That will be a better proposition for

them than selling at 2d. per lb. For the benefit of members who do not understand, let me explain that a wether cutting 10 or 12 lbs. of wool, which is unexceptional, at 1s. 3d. lb. returns to the producer 12s. 6d. to 15s. If he sent the sheep to Midland today, he would be lucky if he received 15s. net. If he keeps it for twelve months—even if it is not in fat condition, he has only to keep it in reasonably good store condition—the sheep will show him a 100 per cent. return, and that is a better proposition than worrying about the meat market. In all this business I am satisfied that there is a bit of propaganda.

Hon. J. Cornell: It looks like it.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I would commend to the notice of the Minister and the other gentleman who has been interjecting—I do not think he knows much about the subject, but we hope to educate him before we have finished—an article in tonight's "Daily News." It is not the first suggestion of the kind. It begins—

Coupon rationing of meat would be the fairest solution to the scramble created by the 15 per cent. meat cut, according to several city and suburban butchers questioned today.

Even without rationing, there should be ample mutton available to prevent any scramble in the butchers' shops. I have been intrigued to find the reason for these suggestions that there should be coupon rationing for something which is in ample supply. I will not delay the House any longer beyond saying that I shall support the motion.

As to Procedure.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I ask your ruling, Mr. President. The House having decided against the striking out of paragraph (b), would it be competent for me to move that the words in paragraph (b) "deplorable mismanagement" be deleted with a view to inserting the word "shortage"?

The President: It would not be competent for the hon. member to do that because the House has decided that the words "deplorable mismanagement" should remain.

Debate Resumed.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East—in reply): There is not a great deal that calls for reply. First of all I intend to deal with the remarks of Mr. Moore to the effect that he

was not satisfied that manpower had been deplorably mismanaged. I believe that not only in the meat industry, but also in every industry throughout Australia there has been deplorable mismanagement of manpower.

Hon. T. Moore: That is political.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: It is not, and it is time that somebody entered a protest.

Several members interjected:

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. G. B. WOOD: There is nothing new in this. Almost every day we see some reference to the mismanagement of manpower in Australia. I have an extract here from "The West Australian" of this week which I intend to read to the House.

Hon. T. Moore: Does it deal with this subject?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: It deals with the manpower position. I shall not read it all—

Prospective shortages in vegetables, milk and other products to meet the greatly increased requirements of Australian and Allied Services and civilians were indicated at the Agricultural Standing Committee meeting held at Food Control Headquarters in Melbourne today. Lack of sufficient manpower for rural industries was given as the main reason for the acute position reported from practically all States.

On Thursday, the 16th September, 1943—a fortnight ago—24,000 sheep were yarded at Midland Junction. The price fell 1s. to 2s. per head. I shall read from a copy of a report made by the Associated Brokers with regard to that market. The extract reads—

Values fell from 1s. to 2s. a head, the fall being most pronounced on plain sheep, and the market closed weak. One probable cause for the reduced demand was the inability of the Freezing Works to handle the heavier supply of both mutton and lamb.

What a shocking state of affairs—our freezing works and meat handling facilities could not deal with 24,000 sheep!

Hon. T. Moore: What is the usual yarding?

Hon. G. B. WOOD: On many occasions it is 24,000 sheep. Dealing with the Chief Secretary's statement that a greater quantity of mutton had been consumed in the metropolitan area, I point out that on account of the chaotic conditions occasioned by this regulation and the statement made by Mr. Farrell, the market dropped to 17,000 sheep. That drop of 7,000 sheep should not have occurred, because they are

now in the country, will quickly revert to store sheep and so will be lost to the trade. At a rough estimate, 7,000 sheep would give to everybody in Perth about one extra pound of mutton. Those sheep should have gone into the market. I understand that this week the market will be 16,000. I am surprised at the Minister's making such a statement. He throws the blame for these conditions on to the producers.

Hon. A. Thomson: Poor producers!

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Just so. What they have to do with it I do not know.

Hon. J. Cornell: The producer has plenty working for him.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Mr. Roche quoted some prices that were obtained in Midland today. I think he said they were from 3d. to 4½d. per pound.

Hon. H. L. Roche: That was for the best.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: What is the Prices Commissioner doing in regard to the consumers? The Minister accused me of listening to statements made in the street. I reply that I visited butchers' shops and asked what prices they were charging. I was told that they were charging from 6½d. to 1s. 1d. per pound for mutton in the shops. Surely that is a reflection either on the Government or the Prices Commissioner. Producers are being robbed at Midland Junction when they sell their mutton at 4d. a pound while the consumers are paying such a high price for it in the shops. That is no hearsay statement. I remember the time when butchers were satisfied with what they termed "the fifth quarter." That was their profit. Most members know what the fifth quarter means; it has something to do with tongues, tripe, etc. If this motion has no other effect, it will disclose that terrible reflection on the powers-that-be.

I call attention to a statement made by Mr. Stitfold in "The West Australian" in answer to me. He said—

This department was in touch with the management of the abattoirs for a long period—I do not know what he means by "a long period."

—and arrangements were made to flow in labour in accordance with their requirements.

It was only last Saturday week that he made this statement. He continues—

Killing was lagging far behind the supply of animals and the need for extra hands could not be over-stressed.

Mr. Stitfold has the effrontery to say here that this department has been in touch for a long time with the management of the abattoirs and that arrangements were made to handle the stock.

Hon. J. Cornell: He is no more dogmatic than is the hon. member.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I do not twist, at all events, in the twinkling of an eye. Mr. Stitfold forgot he made the statement in the Press last Saturday week that things were in a bit of a mess. As I have said, the Chief Secretary accused me of listening to statements made in the street and then coming to this Chamber with a motion. I got my information from reliable men among the Associated Brokers. I know they got their information from another authority. I also know that Mr. Farrell is worried today. He has gone to the Eastern States—I believe he went today or yesterday—to try to get a clarification of the whole business. He does not know where he stands in the matter.

The Chief Secretary: You cannot say that.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I do say it.

Hon. J. Cornell: The hon. member says anything.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I know Mr. Farrell's opinion is that the manpower authorities have been unable to cope with the position. I do not blame Mr. Stitfold at all. I believe the whole set-up of manpower control in Australia is wrong. Too much control of our industries is being exercised by the military authorities; the statement I read just now proves it. Only the other day I think it was Mr. Williams who mentioned the mining industry. The fruit industry also was mentioned. I believe a protest to the Commonwealth Government at this time would do much good.

Hon. E. M. Heenan: You appear to overlook the fact that we are at war.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: We all know that. Mr. Stitfold said that I was unfair. I made myself very clear in this House. I said that were the enemy at our gates we would all be prepared to go short of meat. I do not think Mr. Stitfold should have made the statement he did. We are safe from invasion today.

Hon. T. Moore: But we have to fight the enemy back.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Many men in the Army today are not doing much of a job.

Hon. J. Cornell: Neither are some in this place.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: There is no argument about the fact that many men are over-trained. I do not altogether blame the department, as I do not believe the matter is in its hands entirely. As I said, a protest now to the Commonwealth Government would do much good. A high official among the Associated Brokers told me today that he believed the stand I had taken had already done some good, and I do not think he wanted to pull my leg. Mr. Stitfold accused me in the Press of stampeding the farmer. I have here a motion sent to me by the P.P.A. meeting which was held before my protest was made in this Chamber. I have also a letter which I sent on behalf of the York-Beverley District Council. Its meeting was held on the 13th September last. I have not stampeded the farmers. They have asked me to bring this motion forward, and I was justified in acceding to their request.

Hon. A. Thomson: You are entitled to do so.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: Do members think that farmers make these protests without justification? I hope the House will agree to the motion.

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

Ayes	13
Noes	5
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Majority for	8
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AYES.	
Hon. C. F. Baxter	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. V. Hamersley	Hon. G. B. Wood
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Hon. J. Cornell	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. W. H. Kitson	(Teller.)

AYES.	NOES.
Hon. F. R. Welsh	Hon. G. Fraser
Hon. H. V. Plesse	Hon. E. H. H. Hall

Motion thus passed.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Road Districts Act Amendment.
 - 2, Bulk Handling Act Amendment.
- Received from the Assembly.

House adjourned at 10.18 p.m.