

**BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.**

- 1, Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment.
- 2, Death Duties (Taxing) Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

*House adjourned at 1.23 p.m.*

**Legislative Assembly,**

*Thursday, 26th November, 1912.*

	PAGE
Personal explanation: Minister for Industrial Development and Lake Campion Alunite Memorandum	1592
Questions: Phosphate supplies	1592
Tramways, Inglewood extension and fares	1592
Footwear supplies	1593
Export lamb season, South Fremantle killings	1593
Bills: Medical Act Amendment, 3r.	1593
National Emergency (Stocks of Goods), 2r.	1593
Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 2r.	1594
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, 2r.	1596
Fire Brigades, 2r.	1596
Constitution Acts Amendment, 2r.	1598
Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment, 2r., remaining stages	1600
Death Duties (Taxing) Act Amendment, 2r., remaining stages	1604
Income and Entertainments Tax (War Time Suspension) 2r., remaining stages	1619
Annual Estimates: Com. of Supply, Votes and items discussed	1604

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

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION.**

*Minister for Industrial Development and Lake Campion Alunite Memorandum.*

**THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT:**

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, and with the indulgence of the House, I wish to make a personal explanation regarding a point raised by the member for Avon and the member for Greenough during the second reading debate on the State (Western Australian) Alunite Industry Partnership Bill. Both those members referred to a statement appearing in the memorandum submitted in connection with the Bill and questioned the claim in that memorandum to the effect that the first unit of the plant to be erected at Lake Campion would produce 130 tons of potash a day, and that when the three-unit plant was installed there would be an output of 390 tons of potash per day. They both suggested that that particular information

should have referred to the quantity of alunite to be treated, and not to the quantity of potash to be produced.

I had the matter checked up in the department and find that the suggestion made by those members was correct. The mistake occurred in the dictation to the typist, although she, of course, is not in any way to blame for it. As to the memorandum which has been placed before members of this House, I accept full responsibility. The correct position is that the one-unit plant will treat 130 tons of alunite per day producing 13 tons of potash. When the additional plant is erected each extra unit will treat a further 130 tons of alunite per day, and thus each produce an extra 13 tons of potash daily. I shall be pleased if members will make the necessary correction in their copies of the memorandum.

**QUESTIONS (4).****PHOSPHATE SUPPLIES.**

Mr. WITHERS asked the Minister for Agriculture: 1, Owing to the acute shortage of and urgent need for supplies of rock phosphate, has the Department of Agriculture investigated the possibilities of obtaining same from the islands adjacent to Western Australia, such as the Abrolhos and the islands of the Recherche Archipelago? 2, If so, with what result, and if not, will he give early consideration to such an investigation in an endeavour to have an assured supply?

The MINISTER replied: 1 and 2, Reports of investigations made during 1900-1905 indicate that useful phosphatic deposits may exist in the Recherche Archipelago. The possibility of these islands, which are near the Great Australian Bight, and other deposits along the west and north-west coast were reported to the Commonwealth Government recently. The British Phosphate Commission is interested and arrangements are being made for an early survey to give reliable information regarding the value of these deposits.

**TRAMWAYS.***Inglewood Extension and Fares.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Railways: 1, Is he aware that as a result of the Tramway Department's action in increasing the fares to be paid by patrons living be-

tween Dundas-road and Salisbury-street, Inglewood, considerable dissatisfaction and resentment exist? 2, Is he aware that as a consequence of the elimination of alternate stopping places, the short extension recently opened will now only benefit the people living at Grand-parade and beyond, and for that benefit all the people between Dundas-road and Roseberry-street are now called on to pay a 33½ per cent. increase in fares in the case of adults and 100 per cent. increase in the case of children? 3, Seeing that substantial development and progress have been made in the area and the department's revenue has progressively increased during the past ten years, will he give further consideration to the matter with a view to restoring the fares from the area mentioned to the city to the rates that previously applied?

The MINISTER replied: 1, No. 2, The extension serves people living beyond Roseberry-street. The fare sections were adjusted to bring them into line with fares charged for similar distances on other routes. The children's fare has reverted to 1d. for the whole distance. 3, The matter is under consideration.

### FOOTWEAR SUPPLIES.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Industrial Development: 1, Is he aware that manufacturers of footwear in the Eastern States have notified their Western Australian customers that no further shipments of boots and shoes to this State can be made? 2, As supplies of footwear in sufficient quantities to supply local requirements cannot be made in this State, will he take action to secure the lifting of the regulations so that supplies of footwear may be assured for our civilian population?

The MINISTER replied: 1, It is understood that manufacturers of footwear in New South Wales have acted as stated in the question. As far as is known, manufacturers in Melbourne and Adelaide will continue to send footwear to this State. 2, Action was recently taken in this State to have local military contracts for boots reduced by 50 per cent. in order that local factories might be in a position to increase their production for civilian requirements. It is not considered necessary to make any attempt at this stage to have footwear shipped from Sydney to Perth.

### EXPORT LAMB SEASON.

#### *South Fremantle Killings.*

Mr. FOX (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture: How is the lamb season progressing and how many lambs have been slaughtered at South Fremantle to date?

The MINISTER replied: In spite of serious labour difficulties the lamb season for export has progressed satisfactorily. So far the total kill in the State exceeds 248,000, which is in excess of the figure for last year. The quantity killed at South Fremantle up to yesterday was over 142,000 for the season, a total in excess of the number treated last year.

### BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

### BILL—NATIONAL EMERGENCY (STOCKS OF GOODS).

#### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR** [2.23] in moving the second reading said: Under the National Security Emergency Supplies Regulation the States were empowered to make rules and to appoint an authority to control the supply of emergency reserve stocks in their different territories. In Western Australia we appointed an Emergency Reserve Stocks Committee and charged it with the responsibility of advising and putting into operation a plan which would ensure the establishment in various parts of the State of emergency reserve stocks of essential foodstuffs. The memorandum recently presented by the Minister for Agriculture sets out in detail the work carried out by that committee during the time it has been in operation; which makes it unnecessary for me to go into that phase of the question. The goods which make up the stocks at the emergency depots in the country are supplied mainly by wholesalers, but to some extent by others; and they remain the property of the suppliers so long as they are held as emergency reserve stocks. They can be released to retailers, for sales to the public, only when the Emergency Reserve Stocks Committee gives the necessary permission for that to be done.

It will be realised by members that wholesalers and others who accept the responsibility of purchasing these emergency reserve stocks have to involve themselves in a quite large financial liability. They have to finance the purchase of the goods from the manufacturers, and despatch them to the various depots in the country. In order that the wholesalers and other suppliers should not have placed upon them the burden of any loss involved in what is, after all, a national scheme to protect the interests of the civilian population, the Commonwealth Government and the State Government made an agreement under which suppliers would be protected against any loss which might occur because of deterioration of the goods and consequent inability to sell them, or ability to sell them only at reduced prices. Members will realise that it would be most unjust to compel the suppliers to bear any financial loss which would be incurred in that manner. Further, it was considered that the suppliers, by having to finance the purchases of these emergency reserve stocks from manufacturers, would lie out of their money for long periods, and thus would have to meet the interest charge in connection with the financial accommodation they would have to obtain in order to enable the purchases to be made.

Therefore the Commonwealth Government empowered the Commonwealth Bank in each State to make an arrangement with the State Government for the purpose of ensuring that the interest would be paid jointly by the Commonwealth and the State concerned. The proportion of payment of interest by the Commonwealth is two-thirds, and by the State one-third, of the total. Thus it will be seen that the Commonwealth and State Governments have arrived at an understanding in respect of the protection of suppliers against loss, and also in respect of the payment of interest to a maximum of four per cent. on the additional money which the suppliers have to find to purchase the additional goods for emergency reserve purposes. In accordance with the arrangement and understanding arrived at between the State Government and the Commonwealth Government, the State Treasurer, Hon. J. C. Willcock, and the manager of the Commonwealth Bank in Western Australia signed an agreement which is an appendix to the Bill now before the House. There was an idea that this agreement would be

sufficiently binding on both parties not to require the ratification of Parliament; but the local manager of the Commonwealth Bank stated that the branches of the Commonwealth Bank in all the Australian States were asking for the agreement in each instance to be ratified by the State Parliament concerned; and the Treasurer agreed to seek Parliamentary ratification for the agreement if the Commonwealth Bank would go ahead without any delay or postponement to finance the suppliers in order that they might purchase these emergency reserve stocks, and make them available to the committee for distribution to the various depots in Western Australia.

The agreement between the Treasurer and the local manager of the Commonwealth Bank was signed on the 5th March this year. If the agreement had had to await ratification by Parliament, the scheme for the storage of these emergency stocks in the country would not have been put into operation. Stocks would not have been obtained, and would not have been stored, and consequently would not have been available for the civilian population had an emergency arisen. In order that the possible risk and danger might be avoided, the local manager of the Commonwealth Bank, as I have mentioned, undertook to put the agreement into operation immediately so far as he was concerned; and the agreement has been operating from the day it was signed, the 5th March of this year, right through to the present moment. The Bill, in addition to asking Parliament to ratify the agreement already made, seeks power from Parliament to authorise the Treasurer to enter into any further agreement which might be required in the future under these particular regulations dealing with the storage of emergency reserve stocks in Western Australia. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Patrick, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT CONTINUANCE.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** [2.33] in moving the second reading said: This is a continuance Bill which it is necessary to have re-enacted from year to year in order to enable relief to continue to be given to farmers. When the original Bill, which subsequently became an Act, was introduced,

it was considered, I believe, that assistance to industries under this kind of legislation would take a very different form from that into which it has subsequently drifted; because now the main part of the operation of the Industries Assistance Act is to permit advances to be made to farmers, and the subsequent collection of these advances. It is necessary to continue the authority for the protection of advances previously made, and to enable collections where possible to be made. The proportions to which financial operations have developed under this legislation are certainly very considerable. From 1935 to 1942, inclusive, approximately  $1\frac{1}{4}$  million pounds have been advanced under the Act to farmers, and repayments have been made possible under the sections permitting the collection of the advances; and thus not quite £788,000 has been collected. Therefore there has been an accumulation of uncollectable moneys, or bad debts, approaching £250,000 since the original Industries Assistance Act was passed in 1915.

Mr. Boyle: That would include accrued interest?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: To some extent only. In this Chamber it has been suggested from time to time that it would be better for the provisions of the Industries Assistance Act to be included in the Agricultural Bank Act. Another suggestion has been that the Industries Assistance Act should be implemented and managed outside of Agricultural Bank control. There is no doubt that, for the purpose of advances, no other authority could handle the affairs of farmers and the extensive consideration given to them better than the Agricultural Bank. I think there is a very strong case against any incorporation of the provisions of the Industries Assistance Act in the Agricultural Bank Act. It was realised very early when advances were made under this Act that there would be considerable losses. During the financial year 1941-42, £137,761 has been written off this account. A big proportion of that money was loaned in recent years, when farmers passed through very trying times. There has been much criticism. I think I have heard some members in this Chamber say they would work against the re-enactment of this legislation to the utmost extent of their authority and ability. I would like to point out to those holding such views that, if the Act is not continued, terrific hardship will be imposed on many

people who are unable, because of the instability of their personal financial circumstances, to obtain finance seasonally or continuously, from season to season, in any other way than this.

Mr. Doney: What is the number now still receiving assistance under the Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have not that figure, but it amounts to thousands and, if the Act were not continued, very great hardship would be placed on many people whom financial institutions would not back at all, particularly in regard to the important parts of their seasonal activities, including advances to super firms, and the guarantees necessary.

Mr. Boyle: Why is it an annual Act?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Because I think we hoped that the millennium would be reached when the difficult cases that make it necessary for the Government to render assistance would cease to be. Unfortunately, Western Australia has never enjoyed a run of good seasons all over the State, and, with those good seasons, good prices.

Mr. Doney: It is rather amazing to reflect that we have had the legislation for nearly 30 years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. It seems to indicate that the average is not a good season and that the average is not the best price. It must be admitted that the future holds very small prospects for many people on the borderline. When the days after the war are prepared for, the utmost consideration must be given in any reconstruction scheme to economic circumstances and the ability to have in our internal economy successful farmers, whose prospects, even under good circumstances, are not very good. All these things must be taken into consideration. Even though the days approaching the millennium might be reached when all had good prospects, that would be the time to make this Act a permanent one. That perhaps would be the time to continue its operations permanently or, alternatively, to discontinue its operations altogether. With regard to superphosphate supplies, where farmers' credit has deteriorated to such an extent that agents will not handle them at all, we have had cases in individual years when 42,000 tons of super have been supplied under the provisions of the Industries Assistance Act.

Last year nearly 13,000 tons were supplied under the Act to people who otherwise

would not have been able to receive it. Of course, restriction of planting and labour difficulties have this year reduced considerably the amount of super being despatched, but it is expected that farmers will be financed this year for super alone to the extent of approximately 8,000 tons. Although the outlook for this year is so obscure, it is hoped that by the continuance of this measure farmers will have a better prospect of remaining on their properties, in spite of the insecurity of marketing. Almost all the people assisted under this Act are wheat-belt farmers. It seems without doubt that the continuance of the measure is absolutely necessary. I hope that the outstanding amounts that appear uncollectable will not render the way more difficult for farmers owing those sums. The continuance of this measure is necessary to enable some of the amounts to be collected in the future, and to permit of further advances being made.

There is a close alliance between this Bill and the one I will subsequently introduce, and earnest consideration should be given to any plans formulated for better farming and better circumstances in rural industry in the post-war period. Very much of this sort of legislation will disappear under more comprehensive and intensive planning for the betterment of agriculture. The subject bristles with difficulties. It is a subject of which it is difficult to begin to seek a solution, in these uncertain days. There is tremendous scope for inquiry if that inquiry is merely concentrated on the experiences of the past, which will determine many pitfalls to be avoided in the future. For the time being, pending the formulation of an intensive examination of all these serious matters, it is necessary to continue the operations of the Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Boyle, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** [2.45] in moving the second reading said: Very little comment is necessary in introducing this Bill which has become, more or less, a hardy annual. It is a measure to continue the operation of the Financial Emergency Act, 1934, insofar as interest is concerned.

The Financial Emergency Act, passed in 1931 and re-enacted in 1934, originally provided for 22½ per cent. reduction in salaries, and also the control of mortgage interest. The former portion, namely, that relating to salaries and other matters, was repealed in 1935. The portion dealing with interest control is the only one remaining for which it is found necessary to introduce legislation in these difficult times. It applies only to mortgages in existence before the 31st December, 1931, which had their interest rates reduced by 22½ per cent., or to 5 per cent., whichever was the greater. It is unlikely that anyone would impose an interest rate greater than the legal rate of 5 per cent., but to protect, legally, the mortgagors, a continuance of this Act is necessary for the time being.

A mortgagee has the right to go before a commissioner appointed under the Act to apply for the original interest rate to be paid. After inquiry into all the circumstances, if the mortgagee tested the matter in that way, the commissioner would make his decision. It is likely that very little effect is felt by the continuance of this measure because of war-time restrictions and National Security Regulations. At the same time, however, it is possible that many cases would be detrimentally affected unless this remaining part of the 1931 Act was continued at this stage. As I mentioned, it applies only to interest, and that is the sole part of the old Financial Emergency Act retained. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. McLarty, debate adjourned.

### **BILL—FIRE BRIGADES.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. N. KEENAN** (Nedlands) [2.48] I am in the unfortunate position of not having devoted sufficient attention to this Bill. It was intended that the member for West Perth would speak on the second reading. There are a few matters that, without any deep investigation, one appreciates. In the first place I understand that this Bill is largely the result of the joint efforts of and conferences between the board and the Minister, and also to some extent with the Fire Brigades Employees' Union. It therefore, represents almost a consensus of

opinion, but there are some matters in it to which I wish to draw the attention of the House and also to ask that consideration be given them by the Minister. Before doing that I would like to say that there are some members much better acquainted with the subject matter of this measure than I, and who are, therefore, in a better position to express an opinion. The member for Canning made a speech which, apparently was a well-informed one, although I regret to say I did not hear a single word of it. But that does not matter. It will be in "Hansard" and I will have the pleasure of reading it.

There is a matter on which the board and the Minister did not see eye to eye, and which I hope he may reconsider when this Bill is going through the House. The board recommended that this Bill, which brings into existence an entirely new Act—it completely wipes out the principal Act and amending Acts—should include a provision empowering the Chief Officer to prevent the erection of non-fire-proof buildings, particularly in the city block. The reason for asking that that power be given to the Chief Officer is that some buildings constitute danger spots, and as the law stands today there is no authority to control them. The law would be improved if it were altered in the direction sought, unanimously, by the board, namely, to give the Chief Officer power to reject any proposed new buildings which did not contain fire-proof provisions. The Minister, unfortunately, did not feel that it was wise to include that provision, but it is obvious that it has a lot of merit.

The fire risk is not only the risk of an outbreak in one's own property, but that in someone else's, which will spread to one's own place. If one takes every precaution known to minimise the risk of fire and one's neighbour only takes the bare minimum which the law requires then one's place is at a considerable disadvantage. That state of affairs would, to some extent, if not fully, be remedied by empowering the Chief Officer, under this Bill to prevent the erection of non-fire-proof buildings within, at any rate, the very closely settled area known as the city block which extends, roughly from Barrack-street to William-street and from Murray-street to St. George's-terrace. I hope the Minister will turn his attention to that matter and allow

it to be discussed and settled in this Chamber.

There is a further matter in the Bill to which I wish to draw attention, and that is the omission of a provision which appeared in the 1941 amendment to the principal Act whereby the annual estimated expenditure, which has to be provided in certain proportions by certain contributories, would not include any moneys expended or proposed to be expended in relation to or arising from either directly or indirectly war or war-like operations. That provision is the existing law. It was thought right and proper that it should be so. In other words it was thought right and proper that where a large amount of plant had to be acquired, mainly on trust from the Civil Defence Council, for the purpose of having at hand means to deal with a special outbreak of fire, the result of enemy action, to load the additional cost on to the ordinary expenditure of the board would be grossly unfair, and that the board should not have to bear that cost.

The Minister for Mines: The board has that plant.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Some of it. In the financial year just recently concluded, £2,751 worth of plant, which does not constitute any of the requirements in the ordinary sense of the word, had to be obtained in order to have the necessary equipment to deal with any exceptional outbreak of fire due to enemy action.

Mr. Cross: The board was short of equipment prior to that.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If it is short it must make up the shortage from the proper estimates and annual expenditure. This is not a question of shortage of equipment, but lack of special equipment. It was obtained simply because of the danger—relatively small at present—from being bombed by an enemy air force and fires consequently occurring. This House in 1941 thought fit to provide that that expenditure should not be included in the annual estimates of the expenditure. The exact wording of it as it appears in the law in force today is contained in Section 41 of the principal Act. It would appear in Clause 37 of the new Bill. It is as follows:—

Provided that for the purposes of this subsection the term "Annual estimated expenditure" shall not include any moneys ex-

pended or proposed to be expended in relation to or arising from either directly or indirectly war or warlike operations.

There were many reasons for the inclusion of that paragraph, and the outstanding one was that all such expenditure should be borne by the Commonwealth, and, of course distributed, by reason of Commonwealth taxation, over the whole of Australia. That appears to be a just method of providing for war expenditure, but here we are settling that expenditure on a single locality. That is a departure from the proper rule and one for which I see no justification. I do not see why this House, which is constituted much the same as it was in 1941 should depart from the opinion it formed then. This is a matter for Commonwealth expenditure, and is not a proper charge against the annual estimates of the expenditure of the Fire Brigades Board of Western Australia.

There is only one other matter to which I wish to call attention and that is the constitution of the board. The number of members on it will, if this Bill becomes law, be increased to ten. I understand that the board arrived at that figure in consultation with the Minister. At the same time it expressed the view that such a board is unwieldy. The idea was that the same proportion should be maintained, but with lesser numbers. I do not know if the Minister recalls that argument being addressed to him by the board. Subject to that, there is no objection, disagreement or criticism offered by the board to the proposals contained in the Bill in this regard. I did not have the opportunity, as I said, to hear the member for Canning, who has a much more intimate knowledge of this subject than I could possibly have. I am only making these observations as an outsider.

Mr. Thorn: You should be very careful.

Hon. N. KEENAN: An outsider is always careful. I offer that apology for the paucity of my remarks. Subject to what I have said, I commend the Bill.

On motion by Mr. North, debate adjourned.

## BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [3.0]: The Minister, in moving the second reading, made as his first point that it was the desire of

the Government to place this matter beyond all doubt. That desire will be appreciated by every member. It is essential that the point should be cleared up. Several members from both Houses of this Parliament are serving in the Forces, and in my opinion they should be left in no doubt as to their position from a constitutional point of view. The Minister told us that under a very old Act the members of the Air Force were not covered. Members from both Chambers are serving in the Air Force and they should be protected. Members on both sides of this House have expressed a desire to serve in any capacity in furtherance of the war effort, and I think they should be encouraged to do so. When they do, they should be able to feel quite at ease as to their position.

The member for East Perth seemed doubtful as to the scope of the provision for full retrospective effect. I have read the Bill and listened to the Minister's speech and I think the position is covered thoroughly. As a layman I have no doubt that the Minister has made full provision for retrospective effect.

The Minister for Mines: The novice has no doubt.

Mr. THORN: Often a layman has as much commonsense on his side as has a member of the legal profession. We have debated many constitutional matters and a desire has been expressed that points of this kind should be couched in plain language so that the purport will be intelligible to everybody. Regarding one constitutional matter, we feel that the issue has been confused, and that is a defect we wish to avoid in this legislation. As the Bill will clarify the position and meet the situation, I shall support the second reading.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands): This is a Bill having two different purposes. The first, as I understand it, is to clear up the position under our Constitution Act in relation to members of the Fighting Forces which, of course, include members of the Air Force. The other is a very different one, namely, to give protection to people who accept employment from the Crown under any circumstances, notwithstanding that they may be receiving salaries for their services. I am strongly in favour of the first amendment. The present law is a very ancient one. At the time it was passed, there was no possible prospect of anyone,

except an officer, becoming a member of Parliament or vice versa. Therefore it was not contemplated that the necessity would arise to protect other ranks. Only an officer in the Armed Forces as then confined to the Army or Navy was protected from a penalty under the Constitution Act by reason of his acceptance of pay for his services. But it was right and proper to increase this protection by making it apply to every man, whether serving as a private, a corporal, a sergeant, or in any other rank. Whatever their rank might be, these men are deserving of being included in this protection and exemption. Of course we must include members of the Air Force—the new Fighting Force that was unknown when the statute was passed. I presume that the term “Defence Force of the Commonwealth” includes the Army, Navy and Air Force.

The Minister for Mines: I understand that is so.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Has not the Minister made certain?

The Minister for Mines: Yes, as far as the Crown Law Department can make certain.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister ought to know.

The Minister for Mines: I do know.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not pretend to have looked up the definition of “Defence Force.”

The Minister for Mines: Well, you should have done so.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Now I come to the part to which I take exception, and that is the reference to civil employment. This embraces employment of any kind “connected with the defence of the Commonwealth or the efficient prosecution of the war.” It may extend to anything and include officers of the highest rank. Everyone will agree that we should grant this protection to the Fighting Forces, and the only question is whether the words employed are sufficiently clear to express the intention. That is why I asked whether the “Defence Force of the Commonwealth” includes the Air Force.

The Minister for Mines: It does.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister might contend, though I think it would be hopeless to do so, that the paragraph “any office or place in the Defence Forces of the Commonwealth or in the Naval, Military, or Air Forces of the United Kingdom or of any

other part of His Majesty’s dominions” would include the Air Force.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It does not.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Now I have authority for it.

The Minister for Mines: Read the first part of that provision.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will have the right of reply later.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Well, the point is, does the Defence Force of the Commonwealth include the Air Force? There is no definition in this Bill, so there we are with the matter somewhat in doubt. I do not hesitate to say that the Minister would be the last man to allow any doubt to prevail. He would clear it up, especially as every member wishes to give protection to every member of the Armed Forces, whether of the Army, Navy or Air Force.

I mentioned that there is a portion of the Bill to which I take exception. It is the part proposing to give the same protection to civilians who occupy positions that have nothing whatever to do with fighting. I have no doubt that when the first exemption was granted, the object was to encourage men to enlist in the Fighting Forces. At no stage in the history of England or of the British Empire has the man in the ranks received any reward except the scantiest, and so it is considered right and proper that he should receive some favour of this kind. But when we come to civilians, who have big fat jobs paid for at extraordinarily high wages and designated war workers—to some extent they are, but we are all indulging in war work to some extent or other—they are to be exempt without any limitation whatever. There is no question of their receiving the minimum of reward such as the sailor, airman and soldier receives. They can get anything they can possibly command for their services. I wonder what salary Mr. Essington Lewis is enjoying today?

The Minister for Mines: He is not a member.

Hon. N. KEENAN: But he could be elected. If any other part of Australia was prepared to enact this provision, he could become a member of Parliament. Fortunately for the Commonwealth the company that was so bitterly and stupidly attacked is paying his salary. He is getting £10,000 a year, because of the generosity of the company.



The Minister for Mines: He could do the work in an honorary capacity. If he were in a paid position he would still be up against the provisions of this Bill.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am pointing out that a man occupying a position such as Mr. Essington Lewis occupies, and drawing the same salary, could still come in and be a member of Parliament under this Bill, notwithstanding that he was devoting all his time to duties other than Parliamentary duties. I repeat that the reason for this favour to the sailor, the soldier and the airman is that they are lowly paid, miserably paid, and they are giving the highest service to the State. They are offering their lives. Yet these people can walk into comfortable, well-paid jobs without taking as much risk as the member for Bunbury takes.

Mr. Marshall: You do not know what risks he takes.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. N. KEENAN: I do not approve of paragraph (1) (b) on page 2.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in quoting clauses of the Bill on the second reading.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I apologise! I do not apologise, however, for saying that I have a strong objection to some of the provisions contained in this Bill, and to which I cannot refer now. When the Bill reaches the Committee stage I shall take the opportunity to voice that objection in specific terms. I desire to add, although it really has nothing to do with the measure itself, that it is badly drawn. Unquestionably, it is meant to be retrospective to the 3rd September, 1939, but there is a possibility of some member being challenged for a breach of the Constitution Act. That may be doubtful, but in my opinion this very general and loose reference completely covers the point. That is a hasty opinion and one I should not care to put in writing.

It is a pity, as I think some member interjected, that we do not apply commonsense to the drafting of our Bills. There would not be the slightest difficulty in inserting a clause in the Bill which would deprive any person of the right to bring an action under our Constitution Act. As members are no doubt aware, any private person filled with greed could bring an action against a member of Parliament who sat and voted as a member, but who was disqualified. The member could be fined and half the penalty

would go to the person bringing the action. We do not want to leave any door open for a person to shoot at a member of Parliament in that way. A provision that would entirely shut the door to anything of that kind would be simple to draw. It should not be placed at the tail-end of a sentence, as it is in the Bill. It should be a simple independent clause debarring any proceedings by any person under the section of the Constitution Act which gives the right to bring an action in respect of any specific case. Such a provision would put the matter beyond doubt; but still, in my opinion for what it is worth, I think it is clear even now that the Bill is retrospective.

Question put and the House divided.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and assured myself there is an absolute majority of members present. There being no dissentient voice, I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

# **BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.**

## *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 19th November.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [3.23]: I have no objection to this measure, which contains three proposals to alter the existing law. The first proposal is that any tenancy created after the 31st August, 1939, can now be referred to a court for adjustment, even if the application was made after the first three months from the date of the tenancy. As the law stands at present, the rents of any premises let after the outbreak of hostilities can be adjusted within three months; but it is now possible to adjust rents of premises let after that period has elapsed. I am sure that this proposal will receive support.

The second proposal is that tenants with children shall not be precluded from obtaining premises if they are available. That proposal, generally speaking, is a reasonable one and, as the Minister said, it is an instalment towards the new order. Nevertheless, I think it would create many cases of hardship, especially as regards the letting of premises not suitable for occupation by children. Perhaps it is looking ahead, but I feel sure the Minister would

be prepared, when the measure reaches the Committee stage, to agree to some alteration of this provision by which premises not suitable for occupation by children may be excluded from this provision. I refer to what are known as bijou flats and bachelor flats. In such cases the landlord should have the right to refuse to let the premises to people with children. On the other hand, one does not want to be unfair to people with children, especially in view of the difficulty in obtaining accommodation. As this is purely a war measure, it will probably pass with this provision as it stands, but I should like some further provision made as to premises unsuitable for occupation by children.

The third proposal deals with the record of rents. If the Bill is carried, then records of tenancies must be kept for the purpose of inquiry by officers who will be detailed to see that rents are not adjusted maliciously or unfairly. I am loath to place any further burden on the people if it can be avoided. I wonder whether the Minister would agree to the taxation returns of a landlord being made available for this purpose. After all, the Taxation Department has most knowledge of people's affairs, and the taxation returns, together with the receipts for rents, should constitute a sufficient record. Against that, it may be argued that there are cases where landlords collect rents so small as not to render them liable to file taxation returns. That possible exception might overrule my suggestion. It may, therefore, be necessary to agree to the third proposal in its entirety. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading. Like the member for Nedlands, I would rather see this measure passed than depend upon National Security Regulations.

**MR. NEEDHAM** (Perth): The Bill is a move in the right direction and will confer a great benefit on many people in the community. I regret the necessity for the measure, but unfortunately instances have occurred proving that necessity. The Bill deals with three phases. The first deals with the adjustment of rents of premises let after the outbreak of hostilities, and to my mind the proposed amendment is a considerable improvement to the principal Act. The real and vital feature of the measure, however, is the proposal to prevent people who have houses to let from refusing to let them to

people because they have children. It is regrettable that we should have to make provision for something of that kind, so as to make sure that a tenant with children can obtain a proper house to live in. It is still more regrettable to find that in a number of cases the wives of men in the Fighting Forces have been refused tenancies of houses because of the fact that they have children. I am a member of the Executive of the Soldiers Dependants Committee, and several instances have come under our notice where wives of men in the Fighting Forces have been refused houses because they have children.

**Mr. J. Hegney:** Is that matter not covered by the National Security Regulations?

**Mr. NEEDHAM:** It is said that an effort was made by the Government, through the Minister for Labour, to secure the promulgation of a National Security regulation providing for such instances, but I understand the advice of the Commonwealth Crown Law Department was that the regulations as a whole had to be proclaimed. The Minister, therefore, thought it better to include in this Bill what is, after all, a replica of the National Security Regulations affected. The wording of proposed new Section 11A is pretty well the wording of the National Security Regulations in regard to the letting of houses and the taking in of children. We know of wives of members of the Fighting Forces having secured a house and then being told, when the discovery was made that there were children in the family, that they could not have it. It is bad enough to refuse the occupancy of a house when the proposed tenant has children, but that is very much worse in the case of children whose fathers are fighting to defend Australia. Those children in particular should receive consideration, and that is one of the reasons why I welcome this legislation. Fortunately there are very few instances of the kind in question, but there should not be any. I hope the Bill will cover all such cases. Unlike the member for Claremont, I would not like to alter the Bill in the direction suggested by him. I would rather see it tightened up in connection with standard rents. I am afraid this Bill will not meet the whole position in that regard. I can recall the case of a man who was living in his own house for a considerable time before

and after the war and who then moved out and let the place to a tenant.

Mr. North: I support that part of the Bill.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I should like that part of the Bill improved so as to provide that the 1939 standard rent should go right on. Another phase might be included in the measure in that the landlord should be compelled to make a statutory declaration to the tenant as to previous rental. It is frequently difficult to find out what the real rent of premises may be. The owner may be away.

Hon. N. Keenan: You said the owner had left the house.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am now referring to a case of the owner having gone away and left his business to an agent. In such a case it would be difficult to ascertain what the rental really was, and what had been charged to the previous tenant. Perhaps later on these features may be considered and the legislation improved in that direction. I support the second reading.

MR. SHEARN (Maylands): The two previous speakers have stated that the circumstances which exist in the metropolitan area are such that it would simply be ignoring the obvious position for any member to say that this Bill was not necessary. I do not suppose any member of this House knows better than I what the position has been in relation to the demand for houses by the families of men who have joined the Fighting Services. It is considered that the situation is largely due to the exodus of families from the country consequent upon the menfolk having joined the Fighting Forces. I have no alternative but to support the Bill. What I rose to do was to direct the attention of the House to the critical position that exists concerning the shortage of dwellings in the metropolitan area for the ordinary basic wage workers and others. That shortage has been going on for many years past, but the position has developed until it has reached the critical stage at which it stands today. I have frequently referred to this matter before from my place in the House. I also recall a very excellent and informative speech delivered by the member for North-East Fremantle last session, when he drew a picture of the position so far as his own electorate was concerned. I know from my own experience that what he said was correct. The position is really Australia-wide,

and will have to be seriously tackled. It is particularly bad in this State where we have had the spectacle of unemployed tradesmen and an abundance of all the materials requisite for their work.

Mr. Marshall: The new order is coming.

Mr. SHEARN: Some members will say the position is due to the fact that certain local authorities failed to recognise the cheaper type of house that could be constructed by the use of local timbers, and would not permit such dwellings to be erected. For some time past, most local authorities have looked upon that matter in a different light. In the main, those in the metropolitan area have long since realised that dwellings of a suitable type could be constructed that would be eminently suitable from the point of the occupier and from the aesthetic aspect. I hope that, instead of hedging with regard to the position—that is what is taking place for the most part—the Parliaments of Australia will face the problem that exists.

Mr. J. Hegney: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in discussing the shortage of houses and the housing problem in connection with this Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in discussing the shortage of houses in general, but he may make comparisons.

Mr. SHEARN: In explanation I would say that I appreciate the point raised by the member for Middle Swan, but suggest to him that if one has to deal with a matter of this kind—which is one of supply and demand—it is necessary to make comparisons between the position as it exists today, and advanced as justification for the introduction of the Bill, and that which existed previously. I do not, however, desire to trespass upon your good offices, Mr. Speaker, or to offend against the rules of debate. I will conclude by expressing the hope that it will be possible to face up to what is a very difficult and acute position. I support the second reading.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands): This Bill can only be justified as a war measure. It is a most haphazard arrangement for the purpose of arriving at an equitable deal between the landlord and his tenant. In many instances landlords, on the outbreak of war, were not extortionate in their demands, and were not asking rentals except those which were properly warranted by the accommoda-

tion provided. There were, however, others who asked for every penny they could get. Of course, as often happens, the very fact of men or women having acted decently and failed to take advantage of their opportunities has operated to their disadvantage. On the other hand, exceptionally harsh landlords have derived an advantage from their past ill-deeds. Whilst no doubt we are bound to see that rents are not raised, it should be recognised that every single landlord has suffered a reduction of 20 per cent. in his rental income since war began. A rent is only of value to the extent of its purchasing power. If a man has a house and lets it to a tenant, and it was let some years ago at a rental of £1 a week, that £1 is worth only so much in goods. That is what happens in the case of people who have to rely solely upon the rentals they receive. My point is that the purchasing value of money since the outbreak of war has fallen 20 per cent. I am told that is so, and cannot vouch for the correctness of the figure. The statement has so often been made that there must be something in it, that the depreciated value of currency has amounted to 20 per cent. since the war began.

Mr. Patrick: One pound is now worth only about 16s.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That is to say, 16s. compared with what it would have been worth in purchasing power at the outbreak of the war.

Mr. Patrick: That is so.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Although this Bill will impose perhaps a certain measure of hardship on that class of landlord, it is unfortunately unavoidable in the days of war through which we are passing. It is just as unavoidable as it is when the price of certain goods which the producer has to sell is fixed at such a figure that he can make no profit out of them. I should like the Minister, when replying, to clarify the word "dwelling-house." What does it mean? Does it mean a flat or a separate building? Ordinarily, the expression would mean a separate building, in which case it would, of course, be a very much less stringent course to deprive a landlord of the right to take any exception to children being brought into it. Legislation to overcome that difficulty would be just and proper even in a peacetime measure for the protection of family rights. If the expression means a flat, I

draw attention to the fact that there are many dwellings known as bachelor flats. They have been allowed to be built in a small space. There are no proper sound proof walls in such buildings, and the neighbours in the respective flats can hear all that goes on in the adjoining rooms. In such circumstances it would be impossible to imagine that children would not be a nuisance. Another question then arises.

I have been told—and no doubt properly told—that the health inspector will refuse to allow a family to go into a place that is not large enough to accommodate it. He does not do that now, of course, as it is almost impossible at present to get any accommodation at all. If a person is lucky enough to secure any accommodation, however crowded it may be, he is permitted to do so. If, however, we are going to make laws, we should not make those that would countenance the overcrowding of rooms because a landlord could not refuse a tenant on the ground of there being children—and the presence of children may lead to overcrowding. I need not point out that children do need a proper place in which to live. Again, we have to deal with matters in a rough and ready manner on account of the pressure of war. It may be that what was right and proper in times of peace would not be equally proper in these days, so I do not propose in any way further to question what the Government seeks to do. Nevertheless, I would like to know more on one point because it seems to me that there will be a probability of legal proceedings. I would like the Minister to answer the question: Does the term "dwelling house"—which is not defined in the Bill and which, I presume, is not defined in the regulations on which the Bill is built—cover such a structure as a bachelor-flat? If it does, I think we should take steps to prevent that.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Labour in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—New sections to be inserted; Refusal to let a house to applicant with a family prohibited:

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The advice I have in respect of the point raised by the member for Nedlands is that the term

"dwelling house" would not cover bachelor-flats. In view of what the hon. member has said on the point, I will discuss the matter further with the officers of the Crown Law Department, and if it is found after reconsideration that some alteration is required, even to the extent of defining what is actually meant by the term, I shall arrange for the necessary amendment to be inserted when the Bill reaches another place.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 4, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### *Third Reading.*

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## **BILL—DEATH DUTIES (TAXING) ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. PATRICK** (Greenough) [3.50]: I have few comments to make on the Bill, the principles underlying which we have already endorsed in another Bill passed this session. All it seeks to do is to amend an Act that was passed last year. Events change very rapidly in these days of war. Last year the Premier was asked if it was intended that the benefits included in a measure then under discussion applied only to men serving oversea. His reply at that time was, "Unless the war comes here." Since then Japan has entered the war which has actually extended to Australian territory. Last year there was much argument as to what was the actual meaning of the term "active service," and it was finally defined as meaning service outside Australia. Conditions have changed entirely, and men are now being killed on Australian soil, hence the necessity to widen the scope of the legislation. We now provide that concessions regarding probate duty and court fees shall be extended to include all the members of the various Fighting Forces whose death is the result of active service in connection with any war waged between the Commonwealth of Australia and any other power. This objective is effected by removing the definition of "active service" from the provisos in the First, Second and Third Schedules of the 1941 Act. This Bill is really a taxing measure complementary to the Administration

Act. The other amendments included in it have already been dealt with in that Act and so the three provisos in the Schedules I have referred to are amended by also extending probate concessions to the Allied Forces fighting in Australian territory. With that provision I agree. I support the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of First Schedule:

**Hon. N. KEENAN**: I have no desire to delay the passage of the Bill, but I would like an assurance regarding the effect of the removal of the definition of "active service" from the provisos in the three schedules to the 1941 Act, as referred to by the member for Greenough.

**Mr. Patrick**: I read the actual wording of the Act.

**Hon. N. KEENAN**: If that is so, then I have no objection to raise.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### *Third Reading.*

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1942-43.**

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Debate resumed from the previous day; Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

*Vote—Agriculture, £94,370* (partly considered):

**MR. BOYLE** (Avon) [3.55]: The present is the one year in which the Agricultural Estimates have had a really good airing. I have been very much impressed by the speeches delivered, as I naturally would be, but I appreciated most of all the interest evinced in the Estimates by members from metropolitan districts. However, the member for Nelson, I regret to say, was a veritable Jeremiah in his outlook regarding the agricultural position.

The Minister for Agriculture: He needed some soothing syrup!

**Mr. BOYLE:** The member for Nelson referred in terms of commiseration to the Minister for Agriculture, but I do not think the Minister needs soothing syrup from that standpoint because, in my opinion, there is now more hope for the future of the industry in Australia than at any other time since the beginning of the war.

**The Minister for Agriculture:** The member for Nelson said that there was not a ray of hope in any avenue of agriculture.

**Mr. BOYLE:** Yes, he was a veritable Jeremiah. Nevertheless I am forced to admit that some of the arguments he deduced were of a serious nature, such as his reference to the marketing of tobacco. I have always contended that the first consideration should be extended to the agriculturist, or grower, himself. I agree with the member for Nelson that those people are being exploited. Let us turn to the wheat position. For many years I have devoted close study to wheat and its problems, and I contend that the outlook regarding that commodity is decidedly good in Western Australia. I shall quote figures that will, or should, put to rest many of the qualms or nightmares experienced by people when they give consideration to the wheat industry of Australia and to that of Western Australia in particular. Since the inception of the war the Australian Wheat Acquisition Board, which was appointed under the National Security Act in September, 1939, has handled 404,000,000 bushels of Australian wheat, plus 17,000,000 bushels from the 1938-39 crop. Out of that huge aggregation of wheat, during a period of war there remain unsold or unshipped today less than 100,000,000 bushels. The British Government has about 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 bushels in Australia.

I desire to pay a tribute to Great Britain in that regard. A little while ago it appeared to be the fashion to decry what Britain was doing for us. It must be borne in mind that the Imperial Government and the authorities generally in the Old Country for many years assisted us on many occasions to market our primary products. I suppose quite 50 per cent. of our wheat was purchased by Great Britain, and 96 per cent. of our butter went to the same country. Our wool was mainly sold there, and today Britain has measured up to her class. She has bought our products in Australia even if they could not be shipped to her. The

Commonwealth Government and the Australian Wheat Board are today faced only with the disposal of less than 100,000,000 bushels of wheat. We have also to bear in mind that as regards cheese we simply cannot produce enough. Moreover, our butter production needs acceleration. I agree with the Minister that the South-West of Western Australia today offers one of the most hopeful propositions for development in Australia. We need go no further than realise that there is in being today a 20-years agreement amongst the Allied Powers—the chief of them being Russia, Britain, China and the United States—with France now coming into the scheme of things—on lease-lend lines. The agreement provides for what is known as a lease-lend programme. To us it means that for 20 years after the conclusion of the war we are going to have little or no trouble in the disposal of our surplus agricultural produce, because the matter of exchange or payment will be abrogated to the needs of the country requiring the products. An agreement similar to the lease-lend agreement will then be in vogue. We must also recollect that there are 500,000,000 more people in the world today than there were in 1914.

We are told of a new era, but if that new era does not include better standards of living for the people of the world, then this war will have been fought in vain. We shall have lost the peace if that is the outlook we have to adopt. But I visualise the release of thousands of steamships. We are told that it took 500 ships to transport the American and British Expeditionary Forces to North Africa, and that these ships were escorted by hundreds of war ships. Let us realise the release of the transports into the commercial shipping of the world. We are told the production of shipping has caught up to and exceeded our losses. Nearly every day we see in the papers reports of the wonderful achievements of an American named Kaiser, who is building ships at the rate of one every 4½ days. If I recollect aright, a steamer was actually turned out complete in three days and 15 hours. Therefore the existing transport problem will not be a problem after the war.

**The Minister for Agriculture:** There will be air transport.

**Mr. BOYLE:** In my opinion air transport will be all right for passenger traffic, but

when it comes to shipping millions of tons steamships will be required. If we have a 37,000,000 bushel crop of wheat in Western Australia, that means a transport problem of 1,000,000 tons. The solution of the post-war transport problem lies in the release of commercial shipping taken over for war purposes, and that release will be effected. There will be no further requisitioning of transport ships and so forth. I consider we can well look forward with a great deal of restrained optimism—to quote the phrase of a former Premier of Western Australia—to the conclusion of the war and to a new era for the agricultural industries of this State, including even tobacco.

I recall that in 1931 Western Australia was faced with a crop of 53,000,000 bushels on a depressed market. I attended some meetings of authorities in this State, at which it was stated that to sell the wheat would not be possible, and that probably we would be faced with a carry-over of more than half the crop. But when the year did finish, we had sold the whole of the 53,000,000 bushels of wheat. We exported 46,000,000 bushels of wheat to China and Japan in that year. Apparently it was a "price" market. We imagine that Chinese live on rice alone—an utterly mistaken idea. Rice is a staple food for millions in China; but we should bear in mind that China ranks as one of the largest wheat-producing countries of the world, with a production of between 900,000,000 and 1,000,000,000 bushels annually. Around Shanghai there are numbers of flour mills engaged in milling flour for the Chinese.

Mr. J. Hegney: If that is so, why did Japan import a good deal of flour from us rather than draw it from China?

The Minister for Agriculture: China was never an exporting country for wheat, and Russia was in the same position.

Mr. J. Hegney: Did not Russia export to Britain?

Mr. BOYLE: Only on a dumping market in the early thirties, in order to procure credits which she could not obtain otherwise. She had to dump; and she did dump into Britain—150,000,000 bushels of wheat in one year! I do not blame the Russians for that. They were then ostracised by the world. They were placed outside any means of exchanging. Their credit was finished,

and they had to supply goods in order to obtain the heavy machinery they needed. Their actions today have justified whatever was done by them in that particular year. I wish to impress upon the Committee that we here are now at a stage when we shall be more than ever driven back on our primary industries. They are the only industries which will have a lasting value. We are told that this year £8,000,000 will be spent in Western Australia on the manufacture of war munitions and so forth. It is hard to see it. I will not accept the figures implicitly; but Senator Fraser, the Federal Minister, gave them to us quite recently.

My wish is to impress on this Committee that with the conclusion of the war we must ask ourselves how many of the industries established in Western Australia will be on a permanent footing. My reply is, very few if any! To give a local instance, in Merredin town we have a munitions plant employing a few men. In my efforts to keep that plant there I was actuated partly by a desire to foster the production of munitions. I also wished to keep within the district the machines that were in the plant, and also the machines that were being made the subject of requisition orders by the military authorities. In order to keep the machinery there we had to secure contracts from the Commonwealth Government. Those contracts were given willingly, and our object today is to preserve in the district those particular machines. I do not for a moment contend that they are going to be of any use in competition with Eastern States establishments. I have a profound respect for Eastern States ability to clean us up in secondary industries any time those States choose. I have seen the process in action. That is why I feel a great deal of sympathy for the Minister for Industrial Development. That gentleman has a seven-days-a-week job in protecting our industries. Immediately the Eastern States want to wipe out any local secondary industry here, they can do it; but they cannot adopt that course with our great primary industries. Therefore, those are the industries that we must keep alive.

Next I wish to deal with the unfortunate state of affairs connected with the matter of drought relief and droughts. We in Western Australia at one time used to boast

that we were practically a drought-proof State. But we are not, and when drought affects Western Australia it does so good and well. We have in our land development policy gone out beyond what is known as the 15-inch line of rainfall. When we go over that line, we must accept the attendant risk. However, that is not the point I wish to make. I have in mind that when we brought up the subject of the loan funds granted by the Commonwealth Government to the State to be repaid by the State, a good deal of debate took place in this Chamber. Today—and I say this regretfully—our statements of that period are justified by the report of the Auditor General of Western Australia. That officer's fifty-second report abundantly justifies the attitude we then adopted. We contended that there should be a special Act for the purpose in view. The then Premier of Western Australia, in the absence of the Minister for Agriculture, who I believe was in his electorate, made a statement here on the 27th November, 1940. In that statement the Premier was very fair. He largely disarmed our fears, but I am sorry to say that the hon. gentleman's forecast of that time was not carried into effect by the Government.

I admit the then Premier said there would have to be an amendment of the Industries Assistance Act, but he stated that that would not penalise the farmer. Well, the farmer has been penalised, as with the aid of the Auditor General I am prepared to prove. On the 27th November, 1940, the Premier said that there were special Acts for the purpose in South Australia, Victoria and Queensland, and that New South Wales had a Rural Relief Act, which handled the funds. In point of fact, New South Wales has no Rural Relief Act funds. There is a Farmers' Relief Act, and the Rural Reconstruction Act of 1940 handles the funds. We in Western Australia were put off with an amendment of the Industries Assistance Act, and our worst forebodings about the subject were translated into facts, and today the farmer is suffering as the result. South Australia, on the other hand, passed a very simple Act dealing with the matter; and why an Act of this kind could not be passed here I do not understand. The South Australian Act is called an Act to enable the Treasurer to grant assistance to farmers affected by

the drought prevailing in the year 1940. From that Act I quote Sections 3 and 6—

3. (1) The Treasurer may appoint an advisory board of three persons to assist him in the administration of this Act. (2) The functions of the board shall be to furnish the Treasurer with information and advice relating to matters arising under this Act.

6. For the purpose of giving security for any loan made under this Act, or for the price of any commodities sold or supplied under this Act, a farmer may, by bill of sale, assign to the Treasurer any crops to be grown by him or on his behalf on any land within the State within any period not exceeding five years after the execution of the bill of sale; and any such bill of sale shall be a bill of sale within the meaning of the Bills of Sale Act, 1886-1935, and shall operate to assign the ownership at law as well as in equity of the said crops, but without prejudice to the rights of a bona fide purchaser or mortgagee of the land on which the crops grow, under any contract of sale or mortgage entered into before the registration of the bill of sale. Any such crops shall be personal chattels within the meaning of the Bills of Sale Act, 1886-1935.

My point in quoting the Act is that the South Australian Government reserved its advances to a Chattels Act. It wanted only crops as a security. Under the Industries Assistance Act the Western Australian Government has taken over the whole of the farmer's property as part of the security. On page 2,280 of "Hansard" of 1940 the Premier is reported as stating—

Therefore we propose to amend the Industries Assistance Act so that we may make regulations and pass on the benefits of this drought relief money to the farmers. What will happen under this measure is that it will not be of any advantage to repay the money.

I want the Committee to remember those words.

While the proceeds can be taken, we do not want to make the farmer repay the amount being advanced because this money represents a very considerable concession.

That was quite right too. On page 2,281 the Premier said—

The methods governing the administration of the Act by the Agricultural Bank Commissioners are so well known that everyone understands how they and the Government will act, and the manner in which the whole thing will be done.

On page 2,282 he said—

We propose to make regulations enabling us to pass on the benefits of the drought-relief money to the farmers on terms less burdensome than the terms prescribed by the Industries Assistance Act.



In that regard there has been a distinct breach of agreement. In his last report, the Auditor General states—

The moneys loaned to the State are governed by special conditions set out in Sections 4 and 5 of the Act as follows:—

“The principal of moneys loaned to any State in accordance with this Act shall be repaid by that State to the Commonwealth by four equal annual payments, the first to be made not later than four years after the making of the loans.

“A State to which moneys are loaned in accordance with this Act shall pay interest thereon to the Commonwealth at a rate equal to that payable by the Commonwealth on moneys borrowed by the Commonwealth for the purposes of this Act.

“During the first year after the making to any State of a loan in accordance with this Act, the Treasurer may pay to that State a sum not exceeding the interest on the loan payable by that State to the Commonwealth in respect of that year, and during each of the next following six years the Treasurer may pay to that State a sum not exceeding one-half of the interest on the loan payable by that State to the Commonwealth in respect of that year.”

That is the Act under which the money was advanced. The State of Western Australia received from the Commonwealth in 1940, 1941 and 1942 the sum of £497,000. The principal repaid in 1940-41 was £60,828 15s. and in 1941-42, £366,870 9s. 3d. So that instead of the farmer having the benefit of that money for seven years, his crops were sold and the money was paid into the Treasury, or the Agricultural Bank took the proceeds to the extent of £427,000. As the Auditor General points out, the whole of the principal and interest outstanding at the end of the second year is £116,622 0s. 10d. which means that the farmer has had forcibly taken from him in defiance of the Premier's promise to this House, in two years, 75 per cent. of the whole of the money advanced under drought relief conditions, and the farmer is not going to receive any interest concessions because he does not owe any interest. The Auditor General indicates that the Government of Western Australia has to the credit of the account the sum of £345,029 6s. 11d. That was at the 30th June, 1942. The extraordinary feature of it is that the benefits to be passed on to the farmer include charges for commissions totalling £5,985 4s. 9d. The Agricultural Bank took that as commission. Perhaps that can be explained, but for a Government to take commission out of drought re-

lief money, for a State institution to take commission amounting to within £15 of £6,000, seems to me to be a very hard thing to explain. The Auditor General goes further. He says—

As it is still considered that State legislation is necessary to place this matter upon a proper basis—

Those are the Auditor General's words, not mine. He says, “on a proper basis.”

—the following extract from a memorandum addressed by the Auditor General to the Under Treasurer on the 4th March, 1941, is again published:—

“Section 3 of the Act contemplates the completion of an agreement between the Commonwealth and State setting out the terms under which the moneys provided by the Commonwealth will be loaned to primary producers.

“The loan to the State does not appear to be a borrowing within the terms of the Financial Agreement, but the State is called upon to assume liability for amounts loaned or advanced to primary producers and not recovered, including a share of the interest on such loans or advances.

“As to the Commonwealth Act visualises a liability extending over seven years, I suggest that the procedure which the State proposes to adopt, and the agreement to be entered into with the Commonwealth, should be ratified by Parliament. Such legislation should, I consider, provide for all financial transactions being recorded through accounts somewhat similar to the procedure adopted in connection with Commonwealth advances for wire and wire netting.”

Significantly, the Auditor General—the watch-dog for the people over the Government's accounts—concludes by saying—

No official advice has been received from the Treasury in regard to the suggestions contained in the above memorandum.

That is to say, after 18 months, the Government of Western Australia is defying the Auditor General. It evidently refuses to comply with the request that the Auditor General has put forward. The Government has come to a fine pass when it receives a memorandum in April, 1941, and in November, 1942, has apparently ignored the demand of the Auditor General in that memorandum in which he asks—and properly so—that the tremendous sum of over £500,000 should be placed on a proper footing. The Auditor General knows there is £345,000 of drought relief repayments lying to the credit of the Agricultural Bank, presumably in the Treasury, and that the farmers who were to have seven years' relief granted to them under the loan from the Commonwealth Government had forcibly taken from them under the Industries Assistance Act their

crops in order to satisfy the Government's demands in full.

The worst feature of all is this: Hundreds of those farmers who have had these crop proceeds taken from them were immediately placed on £7 per month sustenance, with 10s. per month for each child under the age of 16 years. The Auditor General does not, of course, comment on that, but he has demanded from the Government that it should place an Act before this Parliament and has demanded from the Government that it shall take heed of a memorandum that is now 18 months old. The Government is defying the Auditor General. I take it that a request from the Auditor General who is appointed by the Government and is above the Government, is a command in the interests of the people.

The Minister for Agriculture: You should use the word "suggestion," not "demand."

Mr. BOYLE: I am quoting the report and commenting on it. I have a right to do that. The Minister may have an answer to the memorandum. I do not say he has not, but why delay that answer for 18 months? The Auditor General refers to the fact that he sent the memorandum to the Under Treasurer on the 4th March, 1941, and he repeats that memorandum.

The Minister for Agriculture: He repeats the word "suggestion." Your word was "demand."

Mr. BOYLE: The Minister cannot get out of it that way.

The Minister for Agriculture: You cannot get out of it. You must stick to the truth.

Mr. BOYLE: Is the Auditor General speaking an untruth?

The Minister for Agriculture: You are using the word "demand." I say you cannot find it in the Auditor General's report.

Mr. BOYLE: That is a little play on words. I say that a suggestion from the Auditor General is a command to the Government. If not, what is the use of the Auditor General? What is he there for? He is there to audit the accounts and, under the Constitution of this country, he is placed on a plane above Parliament. There are only certain reasons for which his services may be dispensed with. On page 23 of his report he repeats what he said 12 months ago. He says—

No official advice has been received from the Treasury in regard to the suggestions contained in the above memorandum.

The Minister for Mines: Your assumption is that a suggestion is a demand. Is that your interpretation? I only want information.

Mr. BOYLE: On a point of information! If a policeman suggested to me that I should move on, I should move on if I did not want to get into trouble. His next remark would not be a suggestion but a command, and it would be one that would lodge me in the lock-up.

The Minister for Mines: That is a very good let-out!

Mr. BOYLE: It is not a let-out. The Auditor General is a kind of policeman and he must be tactful, so he says "Will you kindly move on?" He has asked the Government to place a special Act before Parliament to put this matter in order and that has been ignored. I am not so much concerned about the Auditor General, but I am concerned with a drought-stricken lot of farmers, who, in many cases, had the whole of the proceeds of their first crop taken from them. Their drought relief advances were liquidated and, according to the Auditor General, the State of Western Australia has not paid one penny piece of interest to June, 1941. It is holding £345,000 which it took from the farmers. I have no further comment to make on that except that I do not know whether the Auditor General is satisfied to let suggestions be sufficient, but I am inclined to think that under the circumstances in connection with any other department, there would have been compliance. The Minister recently referred to the reconstruction of marginal areas. Today he said that the agricultural industry bristled with problems of that kind. That is admitted. It is only a fool who would say that those problems are capable of easy solution. They are not, because as one is solved, it immediately uncovers another. But it must be borne in mind that the reconstruction of those marginal areas is being financed by Commonwealth moneys to the extent of £417,000.

Recently a committee from the party of which I am a member visited these areas, not for the first time by any means, but for the first time as a committee. I have been in and out of these districts for 20 years. I have seen them when they were thriving areas; when Mukinbudin, on the edge of the marginal areas, had the credit for producing the biggest output of wheat for itself and

sidings in one year. It is pitiful to go through these areas today and see the monuments to blasted hopes, and to see the sidings practically deserted and places like Lake Brown, with their stores and blacksmith's shops, left vacant. Lake Campion has four settlers remaining. Conditions should never have come to that stage but, now that they have, the Government should have spent this money in consultation with the men concerned. That was the Government's duty. From what we can gather—and we had any amount of witnesses to tell us their personal experience—the people concerned were not even told on what basis their properties were being revalued. They were not told at the time what writing-down they were to receive, but the 1,082 men today, or the great majority of them, from what we could gather, are anything but pleased with their prospects. One of the factors of which we must be sure in any reconstruction scheme of this sort is the goodwill of the farmer concerned.

Mr. J. H. Smith called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. BOYLE: I was dealing with the necessity for the Government, in any scheme of this type of reconstruction, to take into consideration the human factor—the farmer being dealt with. The general impression is that these reconstruction propositions have been set out, and the farmer has been asked simply to accept the position. I wonder if the Minister has ever studied the Eastern States' legislation in regard to reconstruction—particularly the Reconstruction Act of New South Wales? We are endeavouring in this State, from an agricultural point of view, to pull up broken pieces, so to speak. We had no co-ordinated authority, but entrusted to the Agricultural Bank the job, for a start, of reconstructing these marginal areas. When one considers that the Agricultural Bank is now controlling five transfer activities and is the biggest mortgage institution in Western Australia, and then had added to its burdens the marginal areas reconstruction scheme, which involves the spending of close upon £500,000 on the resettlement of 1,082 farmers, we can appreciate the task confronting it. Mr. Donovan, I think, is the only commissioner who has a close knowledge of our wheat and wool belt. The result is, apparently, that the authority is delegated to the outside branches of the Bank and the inspectors.

I am willing to concede this: I think they are doing the best they can, but it is work added to their present jobs, and is not proceeding too well. In New South Wales the Government has brought down a Rural Reconstruction Act providing for a director, and a board. Today they are administering the farmers' relief, and the general reconstruction scheme of New South Wales. The result is that that State is getting somewhere. It has excluded from the board, by law, any official of the Rural Bank of New South Wales. That should have been done in Western Australia. We are asking the trustees of the Agricultural Bank to sit in judgment on their own debts. We ask the trustees, who are charged with the preservation of loan moneys advanced by the Government of Western Australia, to sit in judgment upon their own debts, and in most cases they appear to have adopted a rule-of-thumb method by which they are endeavouring to preserve probably £1,000,000 in that portion of the wheatbelt. The New South Wales Reconstruction Act is available for perusal. It has been in force now for three years, having been passed in 1939. Operations under that Act commenced in 1940. I had the pleasure of sitting in with the director, Mr. Lambert, and can assure members that the work is proceeding on sane, rational lines. Earlier in the proceedings today, the Minister said that the time was hardly ripe, or we would be a little premature in setting up a reconstruction scheme.

The Minister for Agriculture: I did not say that at all.

Mr. BOYLE: If that is so, it is not worth any further comment.

The Minister for Agriculture: Read my speech on the introduction of these Estimates, if you were not here to listen to it. It is entirely different from what you have said.

Mr. BOYLE: I am glad we agree on that. The five points set out by the Minister were worthy of any man's consideration. The whole position is one that should be considered. We have experience to guide us in the marginal areas of our own State. We have the experience of men who settled there, and those men should be taken on to boards of reconstruction. In New South Wales they have what they call "district committees," consisting of two farmers and one representative of the Government. We have nothing of that sort in Western Aus-

tralia. The whole position in regard to marginal areas is one that is causing extreme unrest in those areas. The Attorney General has brought up another subject this year which shows how bad legislation, like other bad things, comes home to roost. We have a Rural Relief Act in Western Australia.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss legislation under the Estimates.

Mr. BOYLE: This is legislation in existence.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot refer to any legislation, either pending or otherwise.

Mr. BOYLE: May I refer to the Auditor General's report on the fund?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will be immediately told when, in my opinion, he is out of order.

Mr. BOYLE: Thank you! The Rural Relief Fund amounts to £1,300,000, granted by the Commonwealth Government. It was a free gift. The State of Western Australia received from the trustees, up to the 30th June, 1941, £1,229,000, and during the year 1941-1942, £30,000, making a total of £1,259,000. Under the terms of the fund debits have been raised against farmers to the extent of £1,253,349. The balance outstanding is £1,237,567 13s. 11d. I raise this point because the effect of the fund today is to transfer the unsecured debts into secured debts. I would strongly favour legislation which would entirely abrogate the farmers' responsibility to repay to the State Government, or to that particular fund in the Treasury, what was originally given from the Commonwealth as a gift. It has now been translated by the State Government into a debt against the farmer for a period of 23 years. The whole of that sum must be repaid, and the difficulty with it is this: Under Section 14 it is a charge against the farmer, and a charge against any further acquired assets. Having accepted relief under the Rural Relief Fund he becomes responsible for the repayment of a debt. He finds himself in the position of having many old debts resurrected against him. I refer particularly to the repayment of advances on stored wheat; debts that were irrecoverable. The money has been repaid by the farmers at the rate of 5s. in the pound. The farmer has now been debited with that 5s. That money was made a gift from the Com-

monwealth Government to the wheatgrowers of Australia. Our share was £1,300,000.

Today, according to the Auditor General's report, the farmer is responsible for the repayment of that money in its entirety. There are no interest charges, and it certainly cannot be recovered in the courts, but it certainly will and has been recovered on the sale of the property. The difficulties faced today by the farmers, especially in regard to labour, are those engendered by the times. I impress on members that these agricultural industries are now in the balance. Sixteen hundred and fifty-six of these farmers receive drought relief, and 226 have since abandoned their farms. So 15 per cent. of the farmers who received drought relief have left their farms. One of the difficulties confronting the agricultural districts is that these men are not going on to a depressed labour market. There is nothing prevailing like the depression of the thirties. They can get employment in munition works. Labour is needed in all directions. Farmers are about tired of things; they are abandoning their farms and are making £14 or £15 a week with their trucks. I know one man who is making £17 a week for himself and his truck. That man, before receiving his present employment, was a farmer on £7 a month.

The Government would be well advised to remember—apparently it does not want advice from this side of the Chamber—that it is dealing with the human element in the farmers—men and women who are reacting to outside economic factors, men who have spent most of from 15 to 25 years in starvation employment. The member for East Perth yesterday deprecated the drawing of any difference between country and city residents. I agree with him. There is no room for abusing the residents of the city simply because they happen to live there. Ninety-nine per cent. of them do not know the conditions obtaining in the agricultural industry, and I believe that 99 per cent. of them would be in favour of abolishing those conditions if they were only aware of them. But they are not aware of them. That is why at present there are four members on the opposite side of the Chamber listening to this discussion.

Mr. Withers: And three members of the Country Party present.

Mr. BOYLE: I say this more in sorrow than in anger. I am not worrying about my

own side. I have addressed very intelligent audiences numbering only three or four, but when one realises that of the 25 members having seats on the Government side, only four can be present at the discussion of this vote—

The Minister for Mines: We have seven of our own and one we have temporarily adopted.

Mr. BOYLE: There is a tremendous responsibility before all of us. It is our responsibility to discuss the industry on this vote. I say for the Minister for Agriculture that he never slacks on his job, either in the House or outside.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: He is always in his place, but the rest are not.

The Minister for Agriculture: Are you speaking of me?

Mr. BOYLE: No, the Minister is one of the big four who remain in their seats. I am not permitted to comment on the actions of other members, but I am entitled to say that the agricultural industry is the life-blood of this State, and that is not a platitude. Without agriculture where would we be? The secondary industries in Western Australia are struggling, but we have an agricultural industry that has provided the economic means of our existence and subsistence for the last 40 years. Gold is now going; I hope it does not go permanently. But agriculture must remain with us. I will go further and say that if I can convince the Government of the validity of some of the arguments I am using today, no-one will be more willing to co-operate. But in going from district to district I see the population on all sides. Today I see on the land men verging on 60 years of age. Their sons and daughters have enthusiastically quitted the land. Why should not they? If the son of an Agricultural Bank farmer helps on the farm, he gets no wages or very little. There is nothing like a living wage. Now those lads are in the Military Services. And not only the boys are there but the girls as well. In my district scores of women have gone into the Services, and will never come back to conditions on the land. They will assume that present conditions are to be permanent. It is for this Chamber to say that we will put a period to those conditions, that we will devote time and energy and money to the revivification of our agricultural industry.

MR. WARNER (Mt. Marshall): I shall not take up much time of the Committee, for, if I did there might be fewer members present when I finish than there are now. Still, I have a little to say on some subjects connected with the vote. Many views have already been expressed, ranging from the wage of the farm labourer right down to the farmer's standard of living. One of the things I desire to speak on is the grasshopper plague. That subject has been freely discussed here during the current session. The member for Avon moved the adjournment of the House in that connection, and the member for Irwin-Moore also advanced a motion dealing with it. In each instance the cases were well put up, as also were the replies of the Minister for Agriculture. I did not speak on either of these occasions, though my constituents are in part of the grasshopper-infested area. I have been to the Minister on deputations referring to the plague, and have also attended many meetings called to deal with it.

One reason why I refrained from speaking on these occasions was that in 1936 I had moved the adjournment of the House to thrash the matter out. My time in Parliament has coincided with the worst time for grasshoppers that is known to me. When I moved the adjournment, I was listened to attentively, and I received a reasonable reply from the Minister for Agriculture, although the Government was not so prompt as I imagined it might be in dealing with the pest. I must admit, however, that at the time in question I had not studied the grasshopper pest to such a degree as I have since. I took the matter up seriously, and I have kept in touch with the position ever since. The Minister, I am glad to acknowledge, has kept me advised through the Entomologist and his staff of all the departmental activities. I also received from him his decision in regard to a matter that I considered should have been attended to but had not been. I am satisfied with the Minister's reply, and am also convinced that the officials did the same as anybody else would have done at the same time with the same amount of money to spend. I have heard many criticisms of the Agricultural Department. I, too, have criticised that department; but I think the Minister will agree that most of my criticisms have been constructive. I have heard many criticisms which were not so. In fact, some criticisms

have been most destructive. When I have put anything up to the department I have had good reasons for doing so. I have been listened to attentively, and on many occasions have learnt that what I urged had been receiving the department's attention, though I knew it not. I acted thus not for the purpose of propaganda or getting into the limelight, but to secure justice for my constituents.

Another matter I would like to bring before this Committee, though the Minister has mentioned it already, is one that relates to requests and demands put up to the department, whether from a road board or an individual farmer, for assistance to cope with the grasshopper menace. All applications for assistance to cope with the grasshopper menace have been granted—applications for information and applications for supplies of poison alike. In the light of the knowledge that no one has been refused assistance, it is not unlikely that we should ask ourselves who is to blame—the individual who is always complaining or the department? In my opinion much more money should have been spent in combating the grasshopper pest than has been applied to that purpose over the years. I know from letters and reports I have received from the Agricultural Department, and from the report for which I asked and which the Minister has kindly laid on the Table, that a very good job has been done by the department in the circumstances. I have knowledge that in my electorate alone officers of the Agricultural Department have undertaken a 600-miles motor trip to report, on request, concerning an outbreak of grasshoppers stated to have occurred in a certain area. The object of the trip was that the officers might carefully note the locality and keep a close watch on it as a breeding-ground of grasshoppers. When all is said and done, I consider it only right now and again to give credit to the department, which is criticised so much if something is asked for and not granted.

In the course of this debate the member for Pilbara gave us much information regarding wages of farm workers. I do not feel put out with him because of that, as I believe, just as the hon. member does, that every labourer is worthy of his hire. The farm worker should get the highest pay and the best conditions that can be secured for him, but the farmer himself should also

be put in a position to secure a decent living, of the standard as the employee. If a farmer is not able to pay a decent wage, he will not be able to obtain a decent employee. The employee will certainly go to a place where good conditions are obtainable, instead of a low wage worked for in circumstances lacking comfort. I would like to see the formation of a strong union of farm workers. When we get those two unions many of the problems of the farmer will disappear. When the farmer can demand a reasonable price for his products and his employee reasonable payment for his work, those who grow the food of the nation will receive adequate return for their labour.

We have heard a great deal about organising the farmers. I have never been one to blow my own trumpet; but on this occasion I feel I might tell the Committee that I had a great deal to do with the formation of the Wheatgrowers' Union. I was one of the silent workers in the early days of that union—a voluntary worker. I organised the farmers in many districts where strong branches of that union exist today. Those were the days when we were trying to organise the farming community so that benefits would accrue to it, as well as to the rest of the community. Then another class of organiser came along; we termed him the red-ragger. He came in and put across a lot of froth and bubble, or what the digger called "bullfrogs." He came along after the decent organiser had done his best for the farmer, waved the red flag, danced around and put it over the poor "cocky" who wanted something done and who would listen to anything that he thought would be to his advantage. He was led away and put his faith in people who did really very little for the farming community.

I put into the Wheatgrowers' Union about £500 and I did not draw more than 50s. from it. As I said, I was a voluntary worker. Afterwards these other people came along and then the union deteriorated. The member for Avon will bear me out in this: I was the chairman of the constitution committee. I drew up the constitution, as well as the regulations. The member for Avon will, I am sure, agree that it was a good job and, if it is left untouched, it will carry the union through. One of the regulations provided that no member of Parliament—especially a St. George's-terrace farmer—could act as a delegate or sit on the Executive.

At that time this proved a good regulation. It prevented members of Parliament from occupying those positions. I am not referring to the member for Avon, who afterwards followed me to this House. In those days I worked quietly. I interviewed Ministers in their departments and was always courteous. In return, I always received courteous treatment from them. That has been my attitude since I have been a member of Parliament, and I find that it has saved me much time and has even saved my making speeches in the House. I can get what I want done by having a quiet talk with Ministers or their officers.

I have very carefully studied the position of the farmer since I have been a member. I have obtained all the literature and all the data I can on the subject, so that I might solve this problem. No matter which way I tackle it, I come back to the one point from which I cannot get away. I believe that under our present monetary system and in our present circumstances we shall never secure for the farmer living conditions equal to those enjoyed by people in comfortable jobs in the city. The only remedy is to socialise the industry. Take over all the land and let the farmer get rid of the idea that he is a king in his own castle! Let him enjoy a perpetual leasehold estate! Until such time as we can bring about such a state of affairs, the farmer cannot hope to secure a reasonable return for his labour. It is a big problem, but at present I cannot get beyond that point. I shall not take up the time of the Committee longer. Other members wish to speak on these Estimates and I know the Minister is anxious to reply.

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly): It is not my intention to occupy more than one or two minutes, as there is but one matter to which I wish to draw the Minister's attention, and that is the proposed distribution of super next year. I noticed in the Press a few days ago that farmers were being advised to put in their orders for super next year and it was pointed out that the orders had so far come in very slowly. The point is that the farming community today is under the impression that it must only sow 40lbs. of 18 per cent. super for wheat next year. Naturally the farmers take into consideration that the super will be of lower grade. They contend that to sow a crop with 18 per cent. super

is simply wasting super. They would prefer to sow half the acreage and double the application of super. That, in my opinion, is a reasonable request. I cannot see that the farmers will get a fair crop by using 40 lbs. of 18 per cent. super. I know the Minister's position. He knows we cannot get a larger quantity of super, because we have not the raw material from which to manufacture it and consequently we have to make what we have go as far as possible. The request is a sensible one and I hope the Minister will give it serious consideration. Numerous farmers have said to me, "I am not going to do it." All I could say in reply was, "You are supposed to do it." I appeal to the Minister to give the request consideration in order that something might be done in the matter.

There is one consideration to which I wish to draw attention. The farmer's licensed area should not be affected if this year he reduces it in order to cope with the lower-grade super. The licensed area next year should not be reduced on that account. There is another matter, about which I do not know whether anything can be done. It is in connection with manpower. I have not had a great number of applications in this regard of late, but I had one particularly hard case in which a young mechanic was called up, and I had a petition from a large number of farmers in the district on the matter. This mechanic was doing a lot of work, and his services were almost indispensable to the farmers. I know the Army requires mechanics, but there are other mechanics, and in a case where a man's worth in a district is evidenced by a petition being received from the farmers dependent upon him to do their repair work, some relief should be granted. Many farmers will be seriously inconvenienced. The view is taken in some quarters that while there is another garage in a town there are other mechanics to do the work. Farmers have gone to other mechanics but, because they have not previously dealt with those men, the mechanics have refused to undertake the work, and farmers have sometimes to go to another town to have repairs done. The manpower authorities might take that into consideration and, where a man is genuinely required to undertake repair work, his services should be retained in the town in which he is situated.

**MR. J. HEGNEY** (Middle Swan): I desire to congratulate the Minister for Agriculture and the officers of his department on the untiring work they did in connection with the recent outbreak of swine-fever that occurred amongst the pig herds in the metropolitan area. There is no doubt that they left no stone unturned to try to get control of the disease. Research work was undertaken to find out what was affecting the pigs, and the discovery was made that it was this dreaded disease. It is most unfortunate that the plague occurred, because the pig industry was at the height of prosperity. It is very hard that men engaged in the industry have lost everything. In my electorate many men are engaged in pig-farming, and many have come to me to discuss their difficulties and to try to find out the Minister's intention in regard to this problem, particularly in respect of control and compensation, and relative questions. One man lost between 350 and 400 pigs, and another lost 200. Others have sustained losses that were not quite so heavy. Some discovered the disease in time, and only a few animals were affected, but those that were not affected had to be sent to Robb's Jetty to be killed for canning purposes. The position is serious for men who have had to have all their stock destroyed, and it will be some time before they can rebuild their herds.

Another problem that faces the metropolitan area in particular is the getting rid of slops from various places about the city, since the men engaged in the pig industry are not now taking swill for their herds. I understand that the Government has given some attention to the question of compensation. Men have had to have their pigs destroyed, and the amount they receive will probably be only a fifth of what they would have obtained had the animals been sold on the market. It is unfortunate that certain producers were so lax as not to acquaint the veterinary officers of the department with the fact that their animals were suffering from some disease, and got rid of their herds. I have heard of certain producers who, knowing their herds were suffering from some complaint, got rid of those that had not already died, with a view to cutting their losses. Unfortunately, in doing that, they spread the disease. As the Minister pointed out some few weeks ago, even when pigs passed through a race, the infection was spread, and producers, after having visited

an infected piggery, have carried back on their boots and clothing to their own piggeries, the germs of the dreaded plague. The outbreak has decimated the herds in the metropolitan area, and has extended beyond that area. It has gone further afield. The officers of the department have been engaged in tracking down the disease. Every piggery has been visited to check up and with a view to telling the producers what to do, and the officers have done a great job. Many have worked night and day, and are deserving of our best thanks. I know the Minister has left no stone unturned in that regard.

Producers are concerned about what compensation is likely to accrue to them, because they have had to destroy many of their herds, and, where a clean bill of health has been given, the animals have had to be taken to be killed for canning purposes. It is unfortunate that the Agricultural Department has still to be housed in the building it has occupied for so many years. We know it is proposed to build a new Agricultural Department, with proper laboratories in which research work can be carried on. Highly qualified officers, holding science degrees, are engaged in doing research work which will be of benefit to the country, but they have to carry on that work under great difficulties. The very first new public building that should be erected is one for the Agricultural Department, that has meant so much to the lifeblood of Western Australia. Many years ago, through the representations of the Minister for Agriculture, I had the pleasure of visiting experimental stations in Queensland, and seeing what was taking place there. Experts there have brought the stations to a high standard of perfection and great work is being carried out in the interests of the primary industries of Queensland. We must give more attention in this State to that phase of agriculture, and help the scientist to overcome the many pests and problems that attack farm life.

No matter whether it is in the metropolitan area or outside, there is always something to attack plants. It costs nearly as much to combat these pests as to carry on the remainder of the activities. It is a life-long struggle. A lot of research is undertaken by the C.S.I.R. in this respect, and in many ways it is doing good work. I congratulate the officers of the Agricultural Department. I know some of them and have, on occasions, discussed with them the prob-



lems which they are attacking and trying to solve. The question of wilt in tomatoes is one requiring solution. Very few people can grow tomatoes in the metropolitan area because of that disease. Many people have engaged in this form of recreation and are trying to beat the high prices of tomatoes referred to by the member for East Perth. They are trying to produce table tomatoes at a lesser cost than 1s. 6d. per lb. Again, the scientists and plant pathologists are giving a great deal of attention to this matter and making some progress, although they have not solved the question so as to completely eradicate wilt. These are matters coming within the scope of the Agricultural Department and its officers and the many scientists engaged in that work.

We are fortunate in the appointment of the Minister for Lands in Queensland, Mr. Bulcock, as Commonwealth Director of Agriculture. His organising capacity will have a great influence on these Commonwealth activities. He is a man of great capacity and has a large knowledge of the agricultural problems, particularly those of Queensland, because he made a special study of them for years. He brings into this new department first-class knowledge and keen administrative capacity. We can expect a great deal from him.

Mr. Seward: What influence will he have over here?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I would say, just the same as the C.S.I.R., which is able to set up offices in this State. Officers working under its jurisdiction come here, and their investigations are of first-rate importance to us. Though he is a Commonwealth officer, I have no doubt that he will inform himself of the conditions existing in all the States in the same way as a Commonwealth Minister is expected to do.

Mr. Seward: They do not all do that.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Mr. Menzies came here the other day to gather further information about the activities in this State. Last night the member for East Perth levelled some criticism at the prices of apples and oranges and mentioned that the price of apples has been very high. There is no question that this year apples and oranges have been exceptionally dear. At present they are 2d. each or more, which is a very high price in a country that produces an abundance of fruit. In the glut period particularly, fruit should not be as dear

as it is. If more fruit was consumed within the State the difficulty arising from insufficiency of markets would be minimised. Neither the grower nor the consumer gets the benefit of the existing high prices. I understand that under the apple and pear acquisition scheme the growers receive 2s. per case. Who gets the difference between the price paid to the grower and the price paid by the consumer? Very seldom can one buy a case of fruit for less than 6s. or 8s., even when the market is plentifully supplied. At other times the price ranges to 13s. or 14s. a case. Oranges are dear. For months one has had to pay 2s. 6d. a dozen for oranges of decent size and today a dozen of large oranges costs 3s. The member for East Perth mentioned 4s. I was not aware that the price was so high. More fruit should be made available to the consuming public.

Mr. Hughes: I said oranges were 3s. a dozen.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Members representing fruitgrowing districts are entitled to enter a plea on behalf of the producers. Between the producer and the consumer, a good deal of profit is being made. The producer is entitled to a fair return for his labour and the consumer is entitled to get the commodity at a fair price. Workers on the basic wage cannot afford to buy too many apples or oranges for their children. If fruit was available at a reasonable price there would be no need for any fear on the score of getting rid of the crop in Western Australia.

Similar remarks apply to vegetables. The grower of vegetables has many complaints and does not seem to be getting a fair return for his labour. Yet vegetable prices to the householder were never so high as they have been during the last six or eight months. The only line that has become cheap is cabbage, but beans, peas and swedes have been dear. There has been a dearth of potatoes, which are a basic article of diet, and for months the price has been very high. These high prices are necessarily reflected in the basic wage determination. Complaints are frequent that growers do not receive adequate returns for their labour and they are talking of organising. Who is getting the rake-off? Is it the middleman, the auctioneer and those who handle the fruit between the time of its leaving the grower and reaching the consumer? There is justification

for inquiry into the matter. I would be interested to know where the difference goes. The grower certainly does not get it and the consumer, in the main, has to pay through the nose. I congratulate the Minister on his activities.

**MR. SAMPSON (Swan):** I have listened with interest to the concerted commendation accorded to the Minister. Not for a moment would I question that it is well-deserved. Nevertheless the Minister would be wise to remember the saying, "Beware when all men speak well of you!"

The Minister for Mines: Is that your experience?

**Mr. SAMPSON:** I am quoting from a greater man than myself. Let me make passing reference to the call-up by the Commonwealth Government of Mr. Bulcock, a very able man. I have read of another leader in agriculture being called up by the Commonwealth, and I am wondering where the Federal authorities are going to stop. If Mr. Bulcock comes here, I trust that we shall not extend any great welcome to him because we certainly do not desire that another Minister for Agriculture should join the service of the Commonwealth Government. Let us have no more of these commendatory remarks for the time being. We do not want to have any more of our men called away.

The manpower problem is by no means limited to Western Australia or to Australia. I regularly read "The Vernon News," a weekly newspaper printed at Vernon in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia. There, to my surprise, I find that Japanese labour has been determined upon. Canada, as well as the United States, is more or less over-run with Japanese and it is by no means an easy matter to find out how best to deal with them. In the issue of the 24th September is an article headed, "Orchards tap every available source of labour." Another heading reads "Week-end orchard help available from troops." An effort was made along those lines, but it proved a slip. Japanese labour is referred to in another issue, "Japanese now working in North Okanagan orchards; petition presented by fruitgrowers is endorsed by Vernon City Council and the Board of Trade." Vernon is the centre of a large fruitgrowing district and is about the size of Northam. Another heading is "Jap-

anese Labour available for North Okanagan." About 250 Japanese are being employed in the work of helping to take off the crop.

The Minister for Mines: You are not advocating that with us, are you?

**Mr. SAMPSON:** We have no Japanese to lay our hands on.

**Mr. Cross:** Yes, there are some interned in the North unless they have been moved elsewhere.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** Is the member for Canining putting that forward in support of what I am saying? If so, we think alike for once. That is what is being done in British Columbia.

The Minister for Agriculture: It would be too late for the impending crop.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** There is other labour the utilisation of which might be considered. I refer to prisoners with a record of good conduct who could be put on their honour, as is done in many countries.

**Mr. Cross:** Would you put the Japs on their honour?

**Mr. Thorn:** They have not got any.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** I have completed my references to the use of Japanese or the Nipponese, as they are sometimes termed in this and other newspapers. But there is labour in our prisons, and I believe it can be very usefully employed. The reformation of prisoners is a highly important work, and those who are placed on parole—as has been proved at Pardelup—even if serving long terms can be relied upon, in most cases, to do a good job of work.

**Mr. Warner:** A lot have nipped off from Pardelup!

**Mr. SAMPSON:** The matter requires consideration; the country is greatly in need of labour. We would be doing good in utilising this labour. The prisoners would be assisted. All of them would prefer to work, once they got back into the habit. But we hold prisoners in a state of idleness, more or less, and consequently, when their terms are finished, they prove a greater menace to society than they were when they went in. Therefore I venture to suggest that this matter might receive consideration. There are potato digging, stonefruit picking, cultivation, road construction and other works to be carried out. I hope that what I consider a good, useful proposition will receive attention. The Minister for Agriculture has on various occasions told us of the difficulty facing him in regard to potato-

digging. Then why not utilise this labour for that purpose? Our own people, even if they are in prison, are not as bad, perhaps, as one might think. At all events they could be made better by being given work.

I shall not refer to the prices for fruit and vegetables which have been quoted, but I can affirm that the absence of organisation is the reason for the wide variations in prices which so readily occur. We need organisation in marketing. Someone spoke of cabbages. Cabbages were up to 80s. a bag. Then, within a few days, they were down to 9d. a bag. What is the cause of that variation? The inefficiency of everyone of us who is concerned with marketing! We have failed to do what we should do, and therefore the jumps of prices up and down cannot be avoided. As regards cherries and strawberries, we will pass over them lightly, because, strange to say, strawberries do not grow in Western Australia today as once they did, and—

The Minister for Agriculture: When was that?

Mr. SAMPSON: Remarkable to say, a friend of mine who developed one or two new varieties of strawberries has found in recent years that the same quality, no matter whether grown on ground new or old, has not been obtainable.

The Minister for Agriculture: I will take you to half an acre of strawberries within three miles of here.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am very pleased to hear it and would much appreciate an inspection. In the Apple and Pear Acquisition Board I am strongly interested. That board was brought into being in order to care for exporters. One of the things done first was to make it illegal to market any variety of apple or pear that was not scheduled.

Mr. Cross: The board has proved rather an expensive board.

Mr. SAMPSON: I was not pleased when I knew that those varieties of apples which were not scheduled or approved were not permitted to be marketed. I know a man who had a good stand of White Winter Permain apples, and who got no market price for them. He was paid 1s. per tree, and the fruit was not allowed to be marketed at all. Up to then that man, like many others throughout the hills districts, had depended entirely on the local market. Because of the non-allowance of the marketing of any save the varieties approved for ex-

port, other varieties could not be sold in Western Australia. That was a shocking thing to happen, and definitely embittered the minds of many people in regard to the board.

I am inclined to think that our apple and pear growers would, with a small subsidy, manage to get through, or certainly get through better than they do today, if the early varieties of apples which were never exported were allowed to be marketed. We have apples coming in just about Christmas. That is not limited to this State. Elsewhere early apples come in about that time. There are the Irish Peach, Mr. Gladstone, Prince Alfred, Lord Nelson, the Gravenstein and other early varieties. In the case of pears, there is the Bartlett, which has never been exported. Now, why should the grower of the Bartlett pear and the grower of early apples be prevented from finding his own market? I refer particularly to the early apples, which should be permitted to be marketed without being subject to the Apple and Pear Acquisition Scheme. I would say again that the owners of small orchards throughout the hills, prior to the scheme coming into operation, supplied the Perth and other Western Australian markets. Those growers for whom the acquisition scheme was brought into existence exported their fruit. It was a very hard blow when the small growers found that the incomes which hitherto they had enjoyed were cut off, and that in respect of those trees which produced non-exportable fruit they received only 1s. per tree. That, I know, has been altered; but it was a most heinous and shocking and disgraceful decision which prevented fair treatment of these people. To repeat, they should be permitted to market their early varieties of apples and Bartlett pears—which are the early pear—without reference to the acquisition board.

Mr. Patrick: There is still to be control in this State.

Mr. SAMPSON: Yes. Small growers certainly have had a bad time; and it is not surprising that, because of some of the things that have happened, there has grown up a disregard for acquisition that is spreading.

Mr. Doney: To what small growers are you referring?

Mr. SAMPSON: Those adjacent to Perth who, before this acquisition board was appointed, supplied the needs of Western Aus-

tralia, and who did not export their fruit. As the Minister is well aware, difficulty is being experienced at present in obtaining fruit-case wood. I have been wondering whether consideration has been given to the use of old fruit cases, provided they are first fumigated. I think it would be a practicable scheme for a fumigating chamber to be erected somewhere in Perth where used fruit cases could be fumigated. That would help to get over the difficulty.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You can now return cases for 3d. each.

Mr. SAMPSON: It is permissible to utilise used cases for grapes and tomatoes, but not for other fruits which come from areas where the fruit-fly is prevalent. In passing, I wish to say that I believe the fruit-fly problem is being solved. The pest is not nearly so bad as it was, and the officers of the department are doing thoroughly good work in this connection in their various districts. In my opinion, the time is not far distant, if the same vigorous policy is maintained, when the fruit-fly will be eradicated. I wish to remind the Minister of the matters to which I desire him to give attention. The first is prison labour.

The Minister for Mines: The Minister noted that.

Mr. SAMPSON: The second is fruit-case wood.

Mr. Patrick: What about California?

Mr. SAMPSON: California is more wide awake and active than we are. We have something to learn from that State.

Mr. Patrick: Schools there were closed for three weeks.

Mr. SAMPSON: The additional labour was required. There is another method by which we can secure labour. At first blush, members may not like the proposal, but we could utilise the services of the chronic and harmless patients in the Hospital for Insane. It would be difficult in some cases to say whether some of those patients are different from normal persons.

The Minister for Agriculture: I think there are many chronic cases outside.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am with the Minister in that statement. When we are introspective, we sometimes see perhaps more than we should. I know that in other countries farms worked by such patients have proved successful.

The Minister for Mines: You might make application to the Minister for Health to give that suggestion consideration.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope the Minister will consider it, because we are living in difficult times.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—College of Agriculture, £6,124—agreed to.

Progress reported.

## BILL—INCOME AND ENTERTAINMENTS TAX (WAR TIME SUSPENSION).

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. PATRICK (Greenough) [5.57]: Like the Minister for Lands, we may regret that this legislation has been introduced, but I am afraid we have no option but to pass it. The Minister said the Commonwealth now has power to collect all Commonwealth and State taxation for the duration of the war and 12 months thereafter. I am afraid that is not the way in which the Commonwealth puts it. The Commonwealth says it is imposing a Commonwealth tax, out of which it will give financial assistance to the States. That seems to me rather a different way of expressing it, and it is just as well to note the point for future reference. Under the uniform taxation legislation, the Commonwealth Government has agreed to pay to each State compensation for revenue lost. This compensation—or financial assistance, as the Commonwealth terms it—is only payable to the States which do not impose an income tax. Therefore, we have no alternative but to bring down this legislation. What alternative have we, when the Commonwealth tax goes up as high as 18s. in the pound? All that is left is the lower income tax groups and, even were it practicable to tax these, we should not get anything like the revenue we require.

All the Bill proposes to do is to ratify the arrangement made by the Commonwealth with the States. As a matter of fact, the States have already begun to collect this money, so there is no alternative but for us to accept the position. The Minister referred to the case heard by the High Court, in which the decision was given in favour of the Commonwealth. What I have never been able clearly to understand is whether that decision relates only to the war period, or whether it is a permanent decision and will operate when the war is over. The undertaking given by the Federal Treasurer, when introducing the Bill in the

House of Representatives, was that the arrangement was to be merely temporary. He gave an undertaking that the arrangement would last only for the period of the war and 12 months thereafter. But to me, the disturbing thing is that since then various Federal members, and even Federal Ministers, have made statements that this is now a permanent tax. They are making no bones about that. They say it is not a temporary measure but a permanent tax, in spite of the undertaking that was given to the States.

Mr. Doney: That undertaking will hold good, anyhow.

Mr. PATRICK: Even if the Commonwealth Government did not retain that right after the war, and even if the States had the right to carry on, they would be put in a very difficult position, because the Commonwealth could tax at such a rate that there would be nothing left for the States to tax. This is a very serious matter for the States. It makes it very difficult for them in the control of their Budgets because, if the amount they receive from the Commonwealth Government as so-called compensation is not sufficient to meet their commitments, where are they to get the extra money? If there is a rise in the basic wage, must we increase the charges on our services to meet it? The Commonwealth Act certainly provides that we can appeal to the Grants Commission if we are in difficulties, but the Grants Commission might say, as it has said on other occasions, that if we want more revenue we can increase our motor license fees and pay that into revenue, or increase our railway freights. We have heard something about that lately. If the Commission told us that we had to do that before any relief could be obtained under this Commonwealth Act, perhaps we would have no option but to carry it out.

As to the other portion of the measure dealing with the entertainments tax, the position is the same even though this is what might be termed an afterthought of the Commonwealth Government. I think one of the members suggested it would be a good way to get more revenue. We can consider ourselves thankful that they stopped there because other members suggested there might be a uniform land tax, and if that were brought about there would be very little revenue for the States to collect. I think that at one time there was both a Commonwealth and a State entertainments tax. The

Commonwealth tax was on the higher amounts, but later the Commonwealth decided to vacate this source of revenue, and left the lot to the States. The present tax is on such a scale that the States could not possibly superimpose a tax on it. Some disquieting speeches have been made by Federal members in regard to this tax. One member hoped that amending legislation would be introduced later to restrict the amount given to the States. It was evidently thought that we were receiving a gift and that legislation should be introduced to restrict the amount. The difficulty is that once a Government lays its hands on money it is hard to recover it again, even if it means giving it up to another Government. However, as with the income tax, we have no option but to carry out the agreement. We are held in what might be called a pincer movement, and we are unable to escape from these Acts.

I remember that when I first took up land in this State, the Lands Department issued a pamphlet stating that one of the great advantages of taking up land here was that we had neither a land nor an income tax. I remember that Sir Walter James, who was the Agent General in London, made a similar speech at the Western Australian dinner in London, pointing out the great advantage of migration to Western Australia, because it was one of the few countries where there was neither a land nor an income tax. Of course that state of affairs did not last; it was too good to last. It did not have the same permanency as I am afraid the present taxation is going to have. I remember reading a story in a magazine about a young man who was complaining to a very well-known American judge concerning the high tax he was paying. The judge replied, "Young man, when I pay taxes I buy civilisation." We are certainly buying civilisation today, and all we can hope is that from the financial point of view we are getting good value for our money. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

*House adjourned at 6.8 p.m.*