

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

New Clause 89:

Hon. J. CORNELL: This clause says that no postal vote shall be taken after 8 o'clock. We have just decided when postal votes may be taken. I hope this new clause will be struck out.

New clause put and negatived.

Clause 84—Chief Electoral Officer to decide whether ballot paper to be put forward for scrutiny and counting:

Hon. J. CORNELL: I move an amendment—

That after "voter" in line 2 the words "under Section eighty-one" be inserted.

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

Clauses 137 and 149—agreed to.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have given this Bill considerable attention and have pointed out necessary consequential amendments. I have prepared a Bill to amend the Constitution to make it apply, with minor exceptions, to that part of this Bill dealing with the qualifications and disqualifications of electors for the Council. Whatever the state of the measure may be eventually, I shall have no regrets, as I feel that I have done my part reasonably well.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I should like an assurance from the hon. member that the Bill is now in order and is fit to be passed.

Hon. J. CORNELL: It is in order, except that the clauses will need to be numbered properly by the clerk, and the numerical references adjusted.

Bill again reported with further amendments.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn until Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 12.27 a.m. (Friday).

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 5th December, 1935.

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

QUESTION—SECESSION PETITION.

As to Federal Action.

Mr. SAMPSON asked the Premier: 1, With reference to the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition on the 24th October, 1935, is it the intention of the Government to request the Commonwealth Government to signify their assent to the reception of the Secession petition by the British Parliament? 2, If so, will such request be made in time to permit of supporting action by our representatives in the Federal Parliament before the end of the present sittings?

The PREMIER replied: 1 and 2, The matter is being considered in accordance with my promise to a deputation which waited upon me on the 27th November, 1935.

QUESTION—WHEAT CARTING SUBSIDY.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Lands: Is it the intention of the Government to pay the wheat carting subsidy in the Lakes King-Carnody area this year?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: No.

BILL—WHEAT AND WHEAT PRODUCTS.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands and read a first time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Miss Holman (Forrest) on the ground of ill-health.

MOTION—STANDING ORDERS SUSPENSION.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [4.35]: I move—

That during the remainder of the session the Standing Orders be suspended so far as to enable Bills to be introduced without notice and to be passed through their remaining stages on the same day, and all messages from the Legislative Council to be taken into consideration on the day they are received.

This is the usual motion moved towards the end of a session. The first portion will not be necessary because I do not think any further Bills will be initiated in this House. Of course, the motion has been framed in the usual way and therefore includes that provision as well. We desire an opportunity to deal with messages from the Legislative Council on the day that they are received.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [4.36]: I have no objection to raise to the motion but we have before us the Bulk Handling Bill that is fairly formidable. I have a number of amendments that I shall place on the Notice Paper to-morrow. I have arranged to meet the Parliamentary Draftsman at 9 a.m. to-morrow and as soon as I have the amendments completed, I propose to send a copy to the Minister and to place them on the Notice Paper as well. I hope the Bill will not be rushed through, because it is of such importance.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [4.37]: According to reports in the Press, the Bulk Handling Bill is likely to reach the Legislative Council by Tuesday. If the Government intend to push a measure of such importance through in one or two sittings, it will not be reasonable, and we will not have an opportunity to discuss a measure of such magnitude in a proper manner. I hope the Minister does not propose to push the Bill through to the Legislative Council as suggested in the Press.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton—in reply) [4.38]: The usual procedure will be followed

in connection with the Bulk Handling Bill, and ample opportunity will be given for proper discussion.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I do not mind what is done after the Bill passes the Committee stage.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The motion simply means that it will affect the formal stages of proceedings. For instance, when we adopt the report of the Committee it will not be necessary to wait until the following day to pass the third reading, and then have to wait another day before the Council can receive it. The motion is necessary so that the formal proceedings may be undertaken without delay. That is all the motion means.

The Minister for Lands: If there is any stonewalling, it will be another matter altogether.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We are not stonewalling.

MR. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Minister for Lands is looking for trouble.

Question put.

MR. SPEAKER: I have counted the House and I have assured myself that an absolute majority of members is present. I declare the question duly passed.

Question thus passed.

BILL—RAILWAYS CLASSIFICATION BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Remaining Stages.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—BULK HANDLING.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the 3rd December.

Point of Order.

Mr. Tonkin: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, No. 44 of the Joint Standing Orders relating to private Bills reads—

No private Bill shall be brought into the House but upon a petition first presented . . . The Bulk Handling Bill confers benefits and privileges on a corporation, gives power

to levy tolls and charges are to be levied. It affects the rights and privileges of the general public. It thus appears to be in the nature of a private Bill, and if that is so, it is not properly before the House. I ask for your ruling, Mr. Speaker, on the question: Is the Bulk Handling Bill properly before the House?

Mr. Speaker: The member for North-East Fremantle has asked for my ruling as to whether the Bill is properly before the House.

Mr. Sampson: Surely that is superfluous.

Mr. Speaker: Admittedly, the difference between private and public Bills of this description is very finely drawn. We have to ask ourselves what are the objects of the Bill. The object of the Bill is to give Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. the sole right, until the 31st December, 1955, of receiving wheat in bulk at railway stations and sidings where the company have installed country bins. What is a private Bill? Our Standing Orders relating to private Bills have been taken from the South Australian Standing Orders in their entirety. In that State private Bills have been defined as those—

1, Whose primary object is to promote the interests of individual persons or corporations rather than those of the community at large; or

2, Which authorise the taking compulsorily or prejudicially affecting, by individual persons or corporations, of lands other than Crown lands; or

3, Which authorise the granting of specific Crown lands to an individual person, corporation or local authority.

Bills coming within the last two categories, if introduced by the Government, are not treated as private Bills but must, after the second reading, be referred to a select committee of the House in which they originate. We must ask ourselves: Under what paragraph does the Bulk Handling Bill come? It certainly does not come under paragraphs 2 and 3. The next question is: Does the Bill affect the interests of the community at large? "May," in the 1906 edition, dealing with private Bills states—

Bills for the particular interest or benefit of any person or persons are treated in Parliament as private Bills.

I think the answer to the question I have indicated can fairly be stated to be in the affirmative. The company are not the promoters. Had they been so, the Bill would not have been subjected to criticism by the

chairman of directors of the company. The benefits of any saving of money by bulk handling, as compared with bag handling, is not limited to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., its clients and the farming community alone, but must be felt by the community in general. Bulk handling of wheat has become a national question respecting which it is fairly within the province of the Government to introduce legislation. Had this been purely a private concession, it could well be assumed that those to whom the monopoly for 20 years was to be given would see that the Bill, upon introduction, was entirely in their interests. Other private interests are affected by this Bill but those interests are, in my opinion, not sufficient to make the introduction of a private Bill necessary in place of a public Bill, but are rather arguments for the appointment of a select committee. Feeling as I do, I can only rule that the Bill has been properly introduced as a public Bill.

Debate Resumed.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [4.45]: I suppose that of all the Bills which have been introduced this session this is probably the most important and will have the most far-reaching effect, if it leaves this Chamber in the form we desire. I assure the Minister that the second reading will have the support of members on this side, and that there will be no unnecessary stone-walling. I desire to allay his suspicions in that respect. I ought to tell the House something that led up to the introduction of this legislation. The bulk handling company is not a company within the ordinary meaning of the word. It is a band of men who have been appointed by the farmers, who are benefiting by the present bulk handling system, to control their business. There are no private shareholders, except nominally, and the shareholders really are the people who are participating in the bulk handling system, and no one else. I should like to explain that there are 53 sidings in the State handling bulk wheat. A little over 11,000,000 bushels were handled, according to the last record we have, and according to the information supplied in the report of the Royal Commission. This legislation affects the farmers probably most importantly; the company, that is the people managing this concern, secondly; and the shippers of wheat and the millers thirdly. This cannot be regarded in any way as a

private Bill or as one affecting private companies. As you, Mr. Speaker, have pointed out, the general community will also receive some benefits from this legislation. There is a great difference between this Bill and a Bill that might be introduced by the Government and administered by the Government. I believe the House will be satisfied that this company—it is a registered company—has launched a bulk handling scheme in this State that is the cheapest scheme ever put up for handling wheat in bulk. I believe it can also be claimed to be an efficient scheme. The only other State we have to look to for a comparison is New South Wales. I have a very interesting statement from the Sydney "Morning Herald" of the 13th August last, dealing with the remarks of the Minister for Agriculture, who controls this business in New South Wales. He pointed out that already five millions of money had been sunk in silos in that State. He added that the additional facilities that were then asked for would necessitate a further three million to four million of money. He pointed out that in 1932-33 they handled 16,652,860 bushels in bulk. Last year this State handled 11,000,000 bushels in bulk, and I think the capital cost was somewhere about £175,000. A profit has been made on the running of the concern during the period it has been managed, but in New South Wales the loss has ranged from £40,000 to £79,000 per annum. This is taking into account the borrowing of money at a high rate of interest, and a very large sum of capital expenditure. From the point of view of a business concern the bulk handling scheme in this State has been successful, and has proved the cheapest and most efficient form of bulk handling yet inaugurated, and probably, from the financial point of view, has been the most successful. There is at the moment an accumulation of a sum in reserve towards meeting payments for the concern itself. The farmers who are carting their wheat to the 53 sidings are receiving the benefit of a premium, as it may be called, of $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel. The result is that the rest of the farmers who have to cart their wheat to sidings where no such facilities are provided are envious of the farmers who are getting this benefit. As a consequence, there has been a distinct agitation for the extension of the bulk handling system. The present Government

knew when they came into office that demands were being made to increase these facilities. Nothing was done by the Government until the early part of this year, when a Royal Commission was appointed. That Commission comprised Messrs. Angwin, Donovan and Foulkes. So far as their qualifications to inquire into the system were concerned, I do not think they had any special qualifications, but they did go thoroughly into the business. I believe their report is a reasonably fair one, so far as laymen could be expected to go. I do think there has been unnecessary delay on the part of the Government since that report was received on the 31st July. This Bill is the last Bill to go on the Notice Paper, and this is the last session of Parliament before the Government go to the people. That is why I rose a little earlier to ask that we should have a reasonable opportunity to discuss the measure. We believe in the principles of bulk handling. Whilst we believe in that we are going to make the best attempt to have bulk handling so that we may satisfy the people who have to use the system, and provide the best possible means for making it a business concern. Besides saving $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel, the scheme has also other advantages, all of which I will not now enumerate. If members would read the report of the Royal Commission they would find these advantages fairly fully set out. One of the main things is that it gives quick despatch from the farm. Early in the morning, when farmers cannot harvest, as is frequently the case, they can do their wheat carting. They have not to sew up bags. They can clean their paddocks, and transfer their stock to feeding paddocks quicker than they can under the bag system. They have these advantages besides the saving of $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. per bushel. It is a very attractive proposition. It is creating quite a lot of feeling on the part of those who desire to participate in the scheme but are unable to do so. It is not costing the Government one penny. The whole of the money that has been invested has been found by the wheatgrowers in conjunction with Westralian Farmers. As the Minister said, it is like a family concern. Westralian Farmers, West Australian Wheat Farmers, and Bulk Handling Ltd. all belong to the co-operative family at least. Between them they have found all the

money that has so far been expended. With proper legislation they will be able to find the necessary money for the extension of the scheme to the sidings that are business propositions. It is not for me to say the scheme will be extended to every siding. I have no authority to say that, and I do not think it could be done, from the financial standpoint. If Western Australia does not fall into line with the rest of the world we shall be seriously handicapped. The shippers and exporters of wheat have realised that. Although a large quantity of wheat is still handled in bags, these bags have been taken to the ports and opened, and the wheat has been shipped in bulk. In nearly every part of the world facilities are provided for receiving wheat in bulk, and bags are not required and are not used. If we do not desire to limit the market that is available for our wheat, or impose conditions upon exporters, this House ought to agree to a bulk handling system that can be financed and successfully carried on. The Minister referred to the Bill as giving effect to the decisions of the Royal Commission. I disagree with him. It does this in some respects, but in others it exceeds the decisions of the Commission. They do not suggest many of the things the Minister has put in the Bill. One would think the Government were finding the money. It is true that a few years ago the last Government introduced a Bill. The Minister may reply—I will anticipate his reply—that this Bill contains quite a lot of the provisions embodied in the last Bill. There is a great difference between them. Whilst the company were to find the money on the last occasion, they asked for a guarantee of repayment. The conditions under which they were to get the money at the time was that they would have a Government guarantee. When the Government guarantee money, whether for Bulk Handling Ltd. or any other concern, they have a right to some say in the control, and to some check upon the operations. In this case, not one penny will be found by the Government. I submit to the House that the Government have been guilty of a great deal of unnecessary interference, which must prove irksome to the company and by increasing cost tend to defeat the objects of the Bill. I cannot imagine with the Bill as printed that any company or individual would invest money in a busi-

ness that is under the control of other people. Those who read the Bill will find that the control is definitely taken away from the company and handed over to the Minister, or else to an irresponsible board comprising a number of departmental officers. The only advantage this Bill gives the company is a restricted monopoly. I use the word "restricted" advisedly. It only gives power to handle 90 per cent. of the bulk wheat. It gives the company no power to have a monopoly over bagged wheat. I am not sorry about that. I believe that if the management of the concern is such as to cause dissatisfaction to the producers they will then be able to revert to the bag system. They will have the opportunity to dispose of their wheat as they like, in such an event. It seems to be the idea amongst people that Bulk Handling Ltd. buy wheat. They buy no wheat. They only buy, as provided in the Bill, when there is a shortage in the out-turn, but they do not buy wheat in any other circumstances. All this company does is to set up the necessary storage and handling equipment. It is responsible for the transport of wheat to ships or the mills, whichever is required. The wheat is owned by the persons who put it in until such time as they dispose of the warrant handed to them by the company. The only advantage to the company, if it can be called an advantage, though the Bill itself is not an advantage, is that it gives it the restricted monopoly to which I have referred. The company never asked for a monopoly, neither do they want it, nor do the farmers want it. I admit that in the last Bill which was introduced provision was made for a monopoly. The reason for that, as I have pointed out before, is because the Government were asked to guarantee the repayment of the money in the event of the company making default. Consequently, the Government quite rightly said, "If we are to be responsible for the repayment of this money, we want to be able to handle all the wheat, so that we can get the necessary annual payments which we will be called upon to make." That is, for interest and sinking fund. I cannot understand for one moment why the merchants should not be permitted to instal bulk-handling facilities. There is no reason why they should not be. As a matter of fact, I, in common with the other members of the Country Party, believe in competition. There is no reason why this company should not

proceed with the scheme; but if shippers of wheat or wheat merchants, or wheat producers, are dissatisfied with the system, let them get together and form themselves into another company to provide facilities to handle their own wheat. I shall have no objection if this portion of the Bill is defeated, although I do not propose to assist in defeating it.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: As a matter of fact, it is the only satisfactory clause in the Bill.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. It is the only one that assists the company.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It assists the farmer more.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am talking of the company as the farmers. I want members to understand that the company consists only of the eight men who are the nominal shareholders. They each hold a £1 share. They are elected by the persons interested in getting the benefit of bulk handling. They are really just a board of management for the farmers who are to reap the benefit of the system.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They are the company.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The farmers, too.

Mr. Moloney: How many real farmers are there amongst them?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I should say every one of them.

Mr. Moloney: St. George's terrace farmers.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have heard that before. I thank the hon. member for drawing my attention to this point. It is very easy to check it. For his special benefit, I will tell him that Mr. Harper is a farmer, Mr. A. J. Monger is a farmer—he is a very big farmer, a bigger farmer than any man in the House—Mr. Warren Marwick is a farmer, Dr. Boyd is a farmer, Mr. W. D. Johnson is a farmer, and Mr. Bath, Mr. Teasdale, and Mr. Diamond are farmers. Every one of them is a farmer, without exception. I want the hon. member to take my word that that statement is absolutely true.

The Minister for Mines: That is seven of them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have given the whole list. I should have thought, Mr. Speaker, that the Minister would provide in the Bill for an extension of the bulk handling system, but there is no such provision at all made in the Bill. The exten-

sion of the system is really in the hands of the Commissioner of Railways, who, under the Railways Act, can give a lease to those who desire to provide the facilities. Therefore, it is first necessary to obtain a lease from the Commissioner of Railways. I desire to make this point perfectly clear. There is no provision made in the Bill for extending the system. Of course, if it be the Government's policy to extend the system, I have no doubt the Commissioner of Railways will conform to that policy: but, again, I want to make it quite clear to members that the Bill itself does not contain a provision for the extension of the system. The Bill compels everyone handling wheat in bulk to send all their wheat, with the exception of 10 per cent., through the bulk handling system. As regards the 10 per cent. that is carted into the siding, no provision is made in the Bill for the company to charge the farmer for the use of its facilities there. I fail to see how a person can avoid using the facilities provided by the Government for the remaining 10 per cent. of his wheat. Therefore, I think the provision should be made that if a farmer does avail himself of the facilities of the company in respect of the 10 per cent. of his wheat, he should pay for the use of the facilities. Having obtained the permission of the Commissioner of Railways, if an extension of the system is desired it is necessary to approach the Minister for his permission to instal the facilities. The Minister can then say Yea or Nay. He may feel inclined to say Yea; he may feel inclined to say Nay. Might I say here that I am not seeking to cast all the blame on the present Minister; I am looking 20 years hence.

The Minister for Lands: You do not mean you are going to die in 20 years?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Bill provides that this monopoly shall continue for 20 years. I do not know what Minister will be in charge of the bulk handling system. That is indefinite, but it is to be presumed that some Minister will be placed in charge of the system by an Order in Council. Under this Bill, the Minister would have authority to grant or withhold his permission. Not only that, the Minister can come along and direct what sort of facilities shall be provided. He has the power, he has the right, to ask for plans and speci-

fications to be submitted. Let us see what that means. Plans and specifications must go to the architectural branch of the Public Works Department for examination and approval. That is quite right. The Minister for Health knows, and I know, something about that. The architects of the Public Works Department are very over-worked. It is impossible to obtain their approval of plans that are submitted owing to the fact that they are so busily engaged on public works in progress.

The Minister for Works: The morgue has ceased to exist.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is very fine for the Minister to describe his office as a morgue. Until the hon. member went there, no doubt it was.

The Minister for Works: As soon as this Government took over it ceased to exist.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: You are referring to three years ago. It was no more a morgue then than it is to-day. Why was not this Bill introduced earlier? There will therefore be unnecessary delay if at any time we find the architectural division is working as it is at present. The plans and specifications must be submitted to the Minister. He can approve of them, or he can send them to the Public Works Department for its approval, and he will probably do that. The Minister is, of course, taking the responsibility for 20 years.

Mr. Sleeman: This song and dance business won't last.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will try to avoid hearing interjections. Anyone who has had anything at all to do with Government departments knows very well that the standards of the Public Works Department are very high, and it is very uncertain whether the department will approve of plans and specifications that are accepted by the Commission in their report as being suitable. Again, you might get a cantankerous Minister who might say, "We want concrete elevators." The company might not be able to find the money to build them. I pointed out what the cost of concrete elevators has been in New South Wales. Besides that, the Minister is taking upon himself the power to alter the plans and specifications, and to order the company to make alterations to existing bins. He can come along and say, "That bin does not satisfy me. I

want a concrete one, or I want that bin turned inside out." Such tactics would be irritating to a company that has to find the money, and money for which the Government is not responsible. That is one of the objections. The Bill also prohibits trading by the company or its officers. I pointed out a little while ago who the directors of this company were. I do not know if it is necessary for me to say that the Royal Commission pointed out that these companies were so interwoven that the managing director, or the chairman of directors or of the trustees, was very frequently the one person. We will take Mr. Harper, for instance. I mentioned his name. He is chairman of directors of the West Australian Farmers, director of the Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., and a trustee of the Wheat Pool.

Mr. Moloney: He cannot have much time to do the farming you were talking about.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know that the hon. member has much time for building or for answering his correspondence, but he has plenty of time for making interjections. I am afraid that if we leave the Bill as it stands, it will prohibit these people who have grown up with the company, and who have a thorough knowledge of the working of the system, from continuing to hold office. I do not think it can be claimed by anyone, whether the shippers or others outside the co-operative concern, that there has been any unfair treatment. I hope these men will be allowed to continue in office and that no alteration will be made until such time as their term has expired. To hand over the control of this system to persons who know nothing about it will probably jeopardise the success of the scheme. The Bill also makes provision for the putting up of a substantial bond. I do not know why that provision is inserted, but a bond of £50,000 is required to ensure the performance of all obligations and duties under the Act. The bond is to be in a prescribed form, and I do think that the form of the bond should have been set out in a schedule to the Bill. I am hoping that the Minister will include such a schedule in the Bill. I cannot do it myself, because I do not know what is in his mind. I am not asking anything unreasonable in this respect. If it is left blank as at present, we do not know what conditions may be imposed; and I doubt whether any concern, looking at this piece of legislation when it becomes an Act,

will be inclined to give a bond. I doubt whether the company could raise a shilling, because the Bill takes away from it the management of the concern and imposes conditions which the company will have no control over. I think we ought to set out clearly what the implied conditions are in connection with this proposed bond of £50,000. Again, the Minister restricts the giving of the bond to an insurance company. I trust he will not leave that restriction, as there will probably be no difficulty in getting some other big concerns, such as Lloyds, or Bennie S. Cohen and Company, or a bank, to provide the necessary security. The insurance company, before quoting, would want to know what the conditions of the bond were likely to be. The business is of an unusual type. Therefore the legislation itself should set out exactly what is expected of the insurance company and what is expected of the bulk handling company, before Parliament insists upon the insurance company taking the risk or the other company executing the bond. From the point of view of investors, this provision in the legislation must render it impossible to raise any money. The Minister said that under the Bill the bulk handling company would be carried on as a utility. That is relevant to what I am now about to say. The Bill provides that no relief shall be given to the company in respect of liability for conversion. This means that if Smith comes along the road and steals some wheat from Jones, and then puts it into the bulk handling system and thus obtains a warrant for it in his own name, Jones, when he finds that the wheat has been stolen, can demand from the company the return of the wheat although Smith may have sold the warrant to some other firm, who also have a claim on that wheat. So that the responsibility will be shelved. If this is, as the Minister told us, a utility, I shall ask him in Committee to agree to the corresponding provision in the New South Wales Act. In New South Wales bulk handling is a Government concern, with the people's money behind it; and provision is made for contracting out of the law. I hope that similar permission will be given here. If it is good enough for the Government of New South Wales, it ought to be good enough for this company. I fully agree that we should protect as closely as possible those who deal with the company; but we must not, by this legislation, throw all responsibility on the company by

compelling them to take all the sound wheat offered to them and also compelling them to issue a warrant almost forthwith. Under the Bill, they have to take wheat offered and issue a warrant for it, and then accept further responsibility although they have no means of finding out whether the wheat is stolen or not. We should legislate so as to relieve the company of that responsibility. As to fixing of charges, I notice that the Minister—who I do not think consulted the company very freely on this aspect—has inserted a maximum amount. He has provided that five-eighths of a penny shall be charged for a toll. That toll is money deducted from the persons using the system, for the purpose of paying for the system. The money belongs not to the company, but to the people who use the system, and from whom the money is to be deducted. Besides that, although he has power to alter the type of building to be erected, he restricts the company to a maximum charge of five-eighths of a penny. Again, he limits the charges which may be made for services rendered to one and one-eighth pence. That amount cannot possibly cover all the expenses of the company—insurance and all the other things they are called upon to meet, besides entering into a bond. I hope the Minister will not show himself hard and fast on that point. He insists upon all sorts of unreasonable restrictions, and yet limits the charges to be made to the people using the system. The worst feature, as to which when I heard the Minister describe it I remarked that I did not know why he put it in, is the proposed shippers' board. The shippers' board absolutely takes control away from the company. The board is to include a representative of the Commissioner of Railways and a representative of the Fremantle Harbour Trust. The people who are finding the money have only one representative, and all the wheat merchants have only one representative. This makes a board of four members. The Government are not satisfied with that position. They say, "In case there should be an unfair advantage given to the merchants or the company, we will take additional powers." So the representative of the Commissioner of Railways is given two votes. As chairman he has yet another vote, making a total of three. The company are answerable at law for dereliction of duty, and yet the board take the control out of the company's hands. The board's functions are to see that the

wheat is transported to the port or to its destination, and that provision is made at the port—I am sorry the member for Bunbury (Mr. Withers) is not here, because his port is definitely excluded, not being even mentioned in the Bill, from which fact it is to be presumed that no consideration will be given to the port of Bunbury, though the Bunbury people will want the bulk handling system before long—

Mr. Tonkin: Have they not got enough lumps at Bunbury?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member interjecting looks at these things lopsidedly. Let him look at them from a national standpoint, and then he will not get on to the narrow avenue he treads here night after night.

Mr. Raphael: Plenty of men are going to be thrown out of work.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think the hon. member interjecting had better go back to that committee meeting.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If we are to have interjections, let them be sensible.

Mr. Raphael: Sit down!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member has just entered the Chamber. He interjects merely that the House may know he has arrived. He usually arrives late.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: We do not want to know of his arrival.

Mr. Raphael: I am quite content.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The board has accepted the responsibility of determining how wheat shall be brought down to the port or to its destination. There is also thrown on the board responsibility for providing at the ports sufficient storage. Storage must be provided, as the Railway Department will not let the wheat stay in trucks without imposing demurrage. The board have to provide for a minimum quantity of wheat to be kept at the port. That is unfair. The company have to pay, and the board will call the tune. It is unreasonable. The Minister said the shippers' board were already in existence. The present shippers' board, however, do none of the things the proposed shippers' board are to do. It is true that by agreement the merchants have decided on a board, and that the board fix a roster for ships, so that all the ships will not come in at one time. Ships are ordered into the port in such a way as to avoid congestion and enable the Railway Department to bring

down wheat to fill the ships. That is the most important duty of the shippers' board. The matter is arranged, among others, for the merchants' own convenience. I have not heard of any trouble in that connection. In point of fact, that feature has not caused nearly as much difficulty as have industrial troubles at the port. However, I want to keep away from that subject this afternoon. As regards transport of wheat, the company are compelled to put up storage. There will have to be storage at the ports. The company have nothing whatever to do with the port. I do not want them to have anything to do with it. Let the exporters arrange among themselves about the shipping. That is all that is required. The job of the company is not shipping wheat at all. I have already pointed out their functions. The merchants are quite capable of looking after themselves. Up to date there has existed a highly satisfactory arrangement. Now the Bill proposes to put in two Government officials with majority voting power, and says to them, "You shall control this, and the other people must pay." All that part of the Bill dealing with the Board will go out, so far as I am concerned.

Mr. Raphael: That is the finish of the Bill, then!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is extraordinary to impose on the company the whole responsibility of complying with the agreement. The company have nothing to do with the running of the railways. During the year they have been in operation they have got on very well with the railways.

The Minister for Railways: Not altogether.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: What has been the trouble?

The Minister for Railways: There has been some little expense caused.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I shall deal with that expense. The trumpery case put up by the Commissioner of Railways is not worthy of that official. In one place he says that the department made a loss because they did not carry the cornsacks they had been used to carrying. He said nothing, however, when the harvest fell from 50,000,000 bushels to 26,000,000 bushels. The railway system is a business concern. If the Commissioner is not careful, he will drive the wheatgrowers out of business. The railways exist for the benefit of the people—not the people for the benefit of the railways. I

have a great respect for the Commissioner's abilities, but he is not infallible. Some of the stuff he puts up here is wide open to contradiction.

The Minister for Railways: And some of it is not open to contradiction.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Now the Minister is taking my side of the argument.

The Minister for Railways: You say there is no ground for complaint. I say there is some ground.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I can see the Commissioner fears he is going to lose some revenue because the State is moving with the times. But there is no proposal by the Commissioner to put up passenger fares on the Fremantle to Perth line because some people travel between the two cities by motor bus. He does not raise goods rates because some goods are transported by road.

Mr. Moloney: You are letting your imagination run riot.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member always makes his speeches by interjection. I pointed out previously that the difference between the present Bill and the previous Government's measure is that the latter provides a guarantee for repayment of the money. I acknowledge that the Government have the right to be closely associated with the company in order to see that the company do not default. But in this case the Government have only the responsibility of holding the scales of justice evenly between all sections of the community. The Minister said that the 10 per cent. provided in the Bill was also included in the previous Government's measure, but that is not the case. The previous Government's Bill was referred to a joint select committee of both Houses of Parliament. When it came back from the joint committee, the 10 per cent. had been inserted in it. Why it was inserted I do not know. The present Bill gives to Bulk Handling, Limited, an exclusive, or partly exclusive, right to handle 90 per cent. of the wheat in bulk for 20 years. It provides for no extension of the present system. That will be at the discretion of the Commissioner of Railways. The Commissioner of Railways limits the period for leases to seven years, although the Government provide that the company shall have power to operate over a period of 20 years. If the Commissioner grants leases, facilities cannot be installed without the consent of the Minister. The Minister can compel the

company to equip sidings where the average annual receipts of wheat are 20,000 bushels or more, and may determine the type and class of building to be erected. The Minister may insist upon improvements and additions to existing or future installations. The Bill prohibits the company's officers or servants from being concerned either directly or indirectly in the business of any other wheat company. The measure compels the company to take out a £50,000 bond, and the Minister is to fix the conditions for the fulfilment of the obligations. The Bill makes the company liable for the conversion of wheat passing into their hands as stored wheat. It compels the company to insure and to keep a sufficient quantity of special milling wheat to satisfy the requirements of millers. It fixes the date on which the company's financial year shall end.

The Minister for Agriculture: Are you enumerating the advantages?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Those are some of the disadvantages. I admit that there are some advantages, to which I shall refer later.

Mr. Raphael: Make it some time next week.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Bill provides that the Governor may determine what records shall be kept by the company and stipulates that the Auditor General may inspect and take extracts from the company's books. The Governor may vary the terms and conditions under which the wheat is delivered to and handled by the company. The Bill protects the wheat against seizure or attachment for any debt contracted by the company. That is a very wise precaution. The Bill provides that the Governor may limit the charges to be made for the repayment of capital borrowed and the interest thereon, and fix and limit the charges for all services to be performed. The Bill proposes to set up a Government board to control transport and storage of wheat at ports at the company's expense. It provides also that the Governor may make regulations even to taking complete control, leaving the company to meet the expense.

The Minister for Lands: At their own expense, not the company's.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There is no provision in the Bill for that. As a matter of fact, no payment is to be made to the board, but no provision is made for payment to the secretary, though presumably the job

will be a full-time one because his services will be called into use in other directions.

The Minister for Lands: The Bill provides that the members of the board shall not be entitled to receive any fees for their services from the Government or the company. Yet you said the Government would have to pay them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I did not say that the company would have to pay for the board. I said that the operations of the board would have to be paid for by the company, not that the board would have to be paid by the company. The board will have to determine where the wheat is to come from, and how it shall be conveyed to the ports. Provision is made for a limited quantity of wheat to be kept at the ports, and someone will have to pay for that. To meet the cost no appropriation is made under the Bill and the Government are not providing any money. Consequently the cost will have to be met by the company.

The Minister for Lands: The company will not have to pay.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I say that the company will not have to find any money to pay for the board itself, but what about the operations of the board—the work that the board will insist upon having done?

The Minister for Lands: The Bill does not impose on the company any such obligation.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is true there is no penal clause in that respect, but when I discovered that fact, I turned back to the £50,000 bond. What will be the conditions there? The bond is designed to ensure enforcement of the measure. Consequently, if the company do not, at their own expense, carry out what the board say shall be done, there must be a penal clause, and that will be provided by the bond.

The Minister for Lands: You are exaggerating.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am not. Provision is made for a quantity of wheat to be kept at the ports of Fremantle, Geraldton and Albany. The port of Bunbury is excluded. Wheat cannot be kept at those ports excepting in trucks or in some kind of storage system. If it is kept in trucks, there must be a certain amount of demurrage.

Mr. Wansbrough: Who is going to provide the storage?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The company, until terminal elevators are erected. If the

Minister reads the Bill, he will find that I am right. The schedule sets out the conditions for receiving, handling, transport and delivery. The company have to find the capital and will be responsible for repayment of principal and interest. The company have to carry out all the services, namely handling at the sidings, housing the wheat, transporting the bulk wheat to its destination and delivering it. At the same time the company have to accept full responsibility for the wheat in their charge. The Government fix all the conditions, and all that the company have to do, so far as I can see, is to pay. If it were not for the principle of bulk handling, I would probably say I could not support the Bill. I hope the Minister is in a reasonable frame of mind and that he will consent to the deletion of some of the objectionable features of the Bill, or limit the powers of the Minister or, if necessary, clarify them. If they are clarified, I might be able to agree to some of them. I hope we shall be able to do something with the measure so that it will prove helpful to the farming community.

The Minister for Agriculture interjected.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Bulk Handling Ltd. is a growers' company. The difficulty is to make members understand that the growers own the concern and that the growers hope at the end of 10 to 15 years to have paid for it. If at the end of that period it is paid for, it will be handed over to them and they will become shareholders in proportion to the quantity of wheat handled for them. The Minister for Agriculture has a smile on his face. I cannot understand the reason for it. Those are the facts.

The Minister for Works: It is not contrary to the Standing Orders to smile.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Sometimes it is to frown. There are such things as dummies.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are making me smile.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I hope the Minister will tell me the cause of his amusement and point out where I am wrong. I have given a great deal of consideration to the Bill and probably know much more about wheat production and wheat marketing than does the Minister. In saying that, I have no wish to set myself on a pedestal. I know what is happening in respect to the bulk handling company and I know how

it affects the farmers. If we can do anything to increase the number of installations, then we shall be enabling the farmers to effect a saving of 2½d. per bushel on their wheat in addition to conferring other advantages upon them. That saving is well worth considering. But if the whole of that 2½d. is to be eaten up owing to the restrictive conditions of legislation introduced by the Government, we might as well drop the legislation. I cannot understand why the company are not left alone to conduct the business on their own resources.

Mr. Tonkin: That would be lovely with a monopoly.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But it does not need to be a monopoly; the company do not ask for it.

The Minister for Water Supplies: They have obtained it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: When in Canada in 1928 I saw sidings where three elevator companies were working, and I was informed that at some sidings more than three were operating. The capacity of their bins was only 30,000 bushels. Here we have to make provision for a capacity up to 300,000 bushels.

The Minister for Lands: The farmers pay for the whole of that duplication.

Mr. Patrick: They are the largest owners.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In Canada the farmers have formed themselves into companies, but there is no private company that I know of.

The Minister for Lands: And they have three elevators at one siding?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. I suppose they consider that quite all right.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is why a monopoly is provided for in the Bill. It will prevent duplication.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: During the last two years, provided the Commissioner of Railways would have granted the same land facilities, other companies could have installed elevators.

The Minister for Water Supplies: The others had not a monopoly.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Government have a monopoly of the land. The company say they do not want a monopoly. I am anxious to see the Bill amended and passed into law. During the last three years no less a sum than £405,000 has been sent out of the State for the purchase of wheat

sacks. I do not say the whole of that amount could be saved by the adoption of bulk handling, but a great deal of it could be. Another important factor is that if bulk handling were extended throughout the wheat-growing areas, there would be no necessity for increasing the harbour facilities at Fremantle for many years. That is a very important consideration. The handling of wheat in bulk would facilitate shipping to such an extent that it would not be necessary to do what was expected would be necessary a few years ago, namely, to spend several millions of money on extending the Fremantle harbour. I am anxious that the farmer who desires these facilities and desires also to get a little more out of the industry—he expects to save 2½d. per bushel and to obtain other benefits—should be given a reasonable chance. I wish to see the facilities provided and permitted to be used. I wish to see the companies who are operating with Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. given reasonable protection. Some of the provisions in the Bill are very necessary. I am pleased to see some of them included, but some are objectionable. If members approach the Bill in Committee as I desire to do, namely in the spirit of sweet reasonableness—

Mr. Wilson: Oh, oh!

[The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.]

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: —we might be able to mould the measure so that it will render assistance to an industry that every member, if he does the right thing, would be anxious to help. We should do all in our power to prevent the wheat-growing industry from deteriorating. Since the season 1930-31, the production of wheat in Western Australia has been reduced by 50 per cent. That decrease is a very serious matter. My sympathies go out to members representing ports in their desire to find work for the men who will be displaced by the adoption of bulk handling, but if we had bulk handling with a harvest of 53,000,000 bushels, there would be as much work for those men as they have to-day, when half of the harvest is being handled in bags. If our farmers are to stay on the land, we must give them facilities to handle their wheat and market it in competition with the rest of the world. Parliament and the Government would have

to make provision for employment for those men who are displaced by the introduction of the scheme. If we help the industry along, it will more than compensate for the loss of employment by men on the wharves. The other evening I did not have anything to say when you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, put up a plea for the people you represent. I realised that your intentions were honestly directed towards doing something for those men. But if we do something that will lead to an increased production of wheat, and enable growers to produce it and market it under reasonable conditions and successfully compete with the rest of the world, more cash will be brought into this country than will be required to recoup the loss. There will be other avenues opened up, and I can assure the member for Fremantle that we will render the men on the waterfront any assistance which is at all possible. There is a great deal of work to be done in the agricultural areas, but unfortunately there is no money with which to pay for it. There will be any amount of employment for all the men thrown out of employment, if we can get the money necessary for the payment of those men. Every farm is suffering from want of improvements; improvements are deteriorating. There is an unlimited amount of work to be done and it is only a question of getting the money for it. We shall put new life into the agricultural industry if we permit agriculturists to have a bulk handling system which will enable them to compete with the rest of the world and save £115,000 a year in bags. That ought to appeal to the Minister for Industries, who is always asking us to produce goods here so that we shall not have to send our money away. We do not send to other parts of Australia money for our bags, but we send it to India. If we can retain that money here, and if the Minister can get the benefit, I am sure he will be able to find employment with it.

Mr. Tonkin: Now tell us about the railways.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We shall have plenty of time for that in the Committee stage.

Mr. Tonkin: Yes, but you promised it, or threatened it, I do not know which.

Mr. Raphael: He has forgotten all about it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The hon. member desires that I shall give him some informa-

tion. See what the Fremantle Harbour Trust lost in 1933-34. Mr. McCartney, the secretary to the Trust, said that in that year the Fremantle Harbour Trust sustained a loss in revenue of £7,512. It will be interesting to see how that amount is made up. It is not stated how much of the loss was due to decrease in production, but it is stated that of that loss £262 was due to a reduction in the number of vessels using the port to discharge cornsacks; that £115 was due to pilotage; that £2,710 was due to a decrease of 8,213 tons of cornsacks imported; that £561 was due to the non-use of appliances, and that £3,504 was due to the increased rate of loading. That is how Mr. McCartney made up the loss of £7,512. Bulk handling contributed nothing directly to the loss, but indirectly it helped to off-set that loss. So, to say that they had a loss of £7,512 seems to me somewhat remarkable. The Commissioner of Railways, in answer to Question 2651, stated that there would be a saving to the railways of £7,000 a year if a terminal elevator were provided at Fremantle. He claimed that a loss of £3,476 had been incurred on account of decreased haulage of bags and twine, and the carriage of such bags and twine as wheat. That again is a remarkable contention to have been made, that because they did not have to carry bags and twine, such bags and twine were charged as wheat. We ought to have had from the Minister a statement that it was the intention of the Government to put in bulk handling facilities at the port at once. That would be carrying out the recommendation of the Royal Commission, who declared that the most important thing was to have facilities at Fremantle for the storage of wheat. The Commissioner of Railways says he will save £7,000 per year if those facilities are provided. If the Commissioner of Railways can say that, then the Government have a responsibility; they ought to make an announcement that the very first thing is to have those facilities at Fremantle. The Government will then be paid for the use of those services by the people exporting their wheat.

Mr. Moloney: Why at Fremantle?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Because that is the only place where bulk wheat is going to. Then immediately following there would be Geraldton to deal with and subsequently Bunbury and Albany. The Minister knows that our policy is decentralisation. We believe that the port should drain the terri-

tory round about that port. Therefore we are not going to pick and choose, but we say that if the Government seriously and honestly desire to help the wheatgrower, they ought to lay the foundation stone of the terminal elevator at Fremantle to-morrow.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [5.50]: Parliament is again asked to give its consent to the establishment of bulk handling of wheat and to confer upon a certain number of people the legal right to handle one of our staple products; in fact, one of our principal lines of food. If Parliament agrees to the Bill, it will give legislative sanction to still another phase of the mechanisation of industry. It is that feature of the measure which concerns me very much. Among some classes it is thought that the sanction of Parliament is a matter of course and that it is in strict accord with the trend of industrial events to-day. That being so, there should be no vital objection to its passage. We also hear that the Government, having appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the bulk handling of wheat and that Royal Commission having elicited a large volume of evidence and having brought in certain recommendations, it was the duty of the Government to bring down legislation so that effect would be given to those recommendations and they would be put into operation. No one can cavil at that. Undoubtedly the Government looked upon that phase of the situation as part of their duty. And we are well content that the Government, having appointed the Royal Commission, should not have pigeonholed their recommendations. I admit it is not in the public interest that any Government should appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into an important matter and then do nothing with the recommendations of that Royal Commission. It is only right that Parliament should have a chance to consider those recommendations and, if it be deemed necessary, give legislative sanction to them. Of course, that point of duty appealed to the leader of the Government, because he has a responsibility to us. It is not necessary to go back along the history of the agitation for bulk handling. The pages of "Hansard" teem with the statements of members on this very subject, but I think it is time to realise that if this measure becomes law, and bulk handling comes into operation on a State-wide basis, a considerable number of men engaged at the port

of Fremantle will be displaced and their occupation will be gone. And not only the men engaged on the waterfront, but men engaged at country sidings will also be thrown out of employment. But it is said that that is a natural outcome of labour-saving machinery, and that we should bow to the inevitable and allow things to take their course. To my mind we have accepted that phase of consideration for too long; for too long have we agreed that because the inventive genius of man brings out a machine which is going to save labour it is only a matter of course that men should be displaced by it. I think the time has arrived when we should make a stand and say that if the machine is going to displace men, workers, then something must be done to protect the victims of the machine.

Mr. North: How can you stop the inventors?

MR. NEEDHAM: I do not want to suggest to my honourable friend nor to any other member that we can stop the inventive genius of man, nor do I desire to do so. Nobody desires that. But I want to point out that the inventive genius of man is intended to benefit his fellow-men, instead of which it does not benefit the fellow-man but rather has become a Frankenstein, an industrial monster, and proved the means of displacing innumerable numbers of men. I think the member for Claremont will admit that the curse of unemployment rampant throughout the world to-day has been brought about largely by the inventive genius of man. By the installation of labour-saving machinery, man, whom it was intended to benefit, has been made a victim.

Mr. Lambert: Brought about by the money-changers.

MR. NEEDHAM: I admit that is a fact, but I am referring to the progress of the invention of machinery invented for the saving of labour. We all know how the inventive genius of man has displaced labour. Now at this time, with all those examples before us, we have brought down a measure of this nature. It should be accompanied by a scheme either to absorb the men displaced or to make some provision for them so that they shall not be in want. I admit it is claimed that the farmer is to have the benefit, but that he shall not be saddled with the cost of providing employment for the men displaced from employment. I am not sufficiently expert to

know whether the farmer will benefit by this system of bulk handling, but since this question came before the House I have had a look at many speeches which were delivered by members in this Chamber some three years ago. I remember particularly one speech delivered by the then member for South Fremantle (Hon. A. McCallum). I am still in doubt as to whether the farmers, in whose interests this legislation is intended, will benefit materially if it becomes law. Having read the provisions of the Bill, I am under the impression that if the farmers do not benefit, certainly Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. will benefit. I believe the company will be the only ones in that position in the long run. I need not go into the question of machinery versus man, the tyranny of the machine and the part it has played in developing the unemployment curse that is with us to-day. The position is well known to members. If the Bill were to embody some provision such as a shorter working week, or one to minimise, as far as possible, the number of men to be displaced in connection with the handling of wheat, I might be inclined to look upon the measure with some degree of favour. No such provisions are made. It will hand over the system to a private monopoly, and we are aware that, as a result, a large number of workers will lose their employment and immediately become a charge upon the Government. We must realise that we are faced with the probability of a serious position arising, and we must protect the workers, who will be displaced, as well as we can. From your seat on the floor of the Chamber, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you moved to amend the order of leave. I oppose your amendment, because I was then, and still am, under the impression that you went about it in the wrong manner. I realise that in your capacity as member for Fremantle, you were anxious about a large number of your constituents, and about the position of other workers throughout the State who will be displaced if the Bill be agreed to. I am looking at the matter now from another angle altogether. I am concerned with the drift of the times and the danger to the community of legislation of this description, particularly if such legislation receives Parliamentary sanction without making provision for those whose interests will be sacrificed. I am hopeful that Parliament will determine, before agreeing to the

Bill, to include some provision for the protection of the people I have mentioned. There is no doubt that the Bill will confer upon Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. a private monopoly. The Minister for Lands argued that the Bill contains certain safeguards from the standpoint of the Government and the community, so that the monopoly will be kept within certain bounds. Even with those provisions in the Bill, I cannot look upon it with favour. Reading through the speech of the former member for South Fremantle, to which I have already alluded, I find that Mr. McCallum said it was estimated that nine per cent. of the men engaged on the work in connection with the handling of wheat would be sufficient under the bulk handling system. There has been no refutation of that assertion, and that percentage has never been challenged. In those circumstances, I claim that we should insist upon being extremely careful in dealing with legislation of this description. I admit that the farmer is not in a position to pay the cost of helping to place in other employment the workers who will lose their positions because of the introduction of the bulk handling system. I do not think the farmer should be called upon to pay for that, because I regard it as a community charge, and the whole of the people should be taxed to provide employment for the men who will be displaced. I was not prepared to cast a silent vote on this matter because the Bill is far too important for that. If my vote on the second reading can prevent the Bill from becoming law, it will not find a place on the statute-book.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [6.7]: I oppose the second reading of the Bill, and I shall do all I can to assure its defeat. Probably I shall find myself in alliance with the Leader of the Opposition on many points.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Then you are improving.

Mr. Raphael: But the hon. member should endeavour to get a few original ideas.

Mr. TONKIN: I do not oppose bulk handling because I am against progress. I am not so foolish as to think it is possible, for instance, to hold back the sea. On the other hand, before we make any revolu-

tionary change such as that implied by the Bill, we must consider all the facts and not view one side of the picture only. I believe bulk handling will result in a saving to the farmers individually. I do not think there is any doubt on that point. In actual cash there will be a benefit to the farmers who are able to participate in the bulk handling system. On the other hand, we have to consider not only the benefit to the farmers individually, but the dislocation which will result and the effect of that dislocation upon the rest of the community. Our great difficulty is to maintain the balance between production and consumption, and it seems to me that when we institute this system of bulk handling, we will so interfere with that balance that we shall find the consumption side will be so upset that it will react against the interests of the farmers individually. It is essential that the consumer shall be in a position to buy the various products available for sale. If we do anything that results in the reduction of the purchasing power of the community, there will be immediately apparent something in the nature of a snowball effect. Large numbers of men will be thrown out of employment, and the State will be called upon to provide for them. In the end, it may be that the added cost will prove greater than the initial saving to the farmer as the result of the institution of the bulk handling system.

Mr. Lambert: But their exportable surplus is over 80 per cent.

Mr. TONKIN: But what has that to do with the point I am making? I am not suggesting that the whole of their products are consumed within the State. If we throw a large number of men out of employment, those individuals will not be able to purchase the goods they were in the habit of acquiring previously. That will mean smaller profits for the storekeepers who will not be able to pay their rent to their landlords, and they will have to go out of business. The landlords in turn will lose revenue, and they will spend less. So it will be seen that people in various walks of life and avocations will be affected, and there is a snowball effect resulting from actions of this description. The upshot is that we may so interfere with the mass purchasing power as to involve the Government in greater costs than can be set off against the

initial advantage to the farmers. The Bill proposes to grant a monopoly. The only monopoly that I will ever countenance is a State monopoly. If we are to grant a monopoly it should be in the hands of the people for the benefit of the people. On the other hand, the Bill proposes to grant to a limited liability company the sole right to handle wheat in bulk. The only saving feature in the Bill from the standpoint of the monopoly is that the corporation is to be subject to numerous safeguards and to much control. In my view the more numerous the safeguards and the greater the control, the better it will be for the State. The Leader of the Opposition said that it would be all right for the Government to impose safeguards and to take control if the State were advancing money or even guaranteeing funds; as it was not suggested that the Government would either provide funds or guarantee the company, the control indicated in the Bill was not justified. Let us analyse the hon. member's point of view. It amounts to this, that if the people's money is in danger, then control of the company is necessary because that money is endangered. In those circumstances safeguards must be provided. But if the State has lent no money to the company, the Leader of the Opposition suggests that there need be no control, and the company should be allowed to do as they like, although in the exercise of their functions the company may infringe the rights of the individual and take away certain privileges enjoyed formerly by the community. Here again the Leader of the Opposition has had in mind one point of view only. He has had regard to the money standpoint. According to him, if the State has money at stake that is likely to be lost, then by all means let us have control and adequate safeguards, but if the State has not lent any money and is not likely to be called upon to meet any guarantee, then we need not worry about safeguards, but give the company carte blanche to go ahead, do as they like and exploit the people to the full limit. I cannot follow that type of reasoning at all. If the company are to be given power that will make it possible for them to exploit the people, it is surely essential that adequate safeguards shall be provided. I am therefore pleased that the Bill does provide numerous safeguards and a large measure of control. As I pointed out at the outset,

I do not want the Bill at all, but if we must have some such measure, we should see to it that it embodies the greatest possible measure of control and the most numerous safeguards possible.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. TONKIN: The Leader of the Opposition said he did not want a monopoly; in fact he rather preferred private competition. He instanced Canada where he said that at various terminals there was competition as between different companies. The Leader of the Opposition said that with his tongue in his cheek.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You have no right to say a thing like that.

Mr. TONKIN: I have a right to say what I like.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You will find you have not that right.

Mr. TONKIN: I say it again. The Leader of the Opposition made that remark with his tongue in his cheek.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I ask for a withdrawal of that remark, Mr. Speaker. I consider it objectionable.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition considers the hon. member's remark objectionable, and asks that he should withdraw it.

Mr. TONKIN: I will withdraw the statement, and simply say that he makes the remark by taking his tongue away from his cheek.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is what one would expect.

Mr. TONKIN: In other words, when he says he invites competition and instances the competition in Canada, and endeavours to make us believe that competition in this State is practicable, I say he is not serious. He must have read the report of the Royal Commission, and I have no doubt he read the statement of the commissioners on page 20 to the effect that the advantageous position already obtained by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. precludes the possibility of any competition. We know that if any other company came in now, and duplicated the service, the position would either be that the second company would have no chance of establishing itself, or else both undertakings would be unprofitable, and whilst they were working the farmers would be saddled with the cost of both. That is an argument not for inviting competition, but

rather for leaving the whole business in the hands of the Government, which the Bill does not propose. If there is to be a saving of any magnitude, and Opposition members claim there will be, the workers are entitled to share in such savings. During the last few years there have been great developments in respect to the introduction of labour-saving devices. We have had bulk handling in other commodities besides wheat. We have made no attempt to give the workers a share of the savings so effected. The result in most cases is that the saving has been diverted into the pockets of property owners and the purchasing power of the masses has been lessened. The balance between consumption and production has been upset with disastrous effects to the country. Long since a start should have been made to give a share to the workers of any saving effected as the result of this mechanisation. It would be possible to give that saving in one of three ways. We could do it by reducing the hours of work for the men engaged whilst keeping the wages at the present figure. We could do it by actually increasing the wage and leaving the hours as at present. Alternatively, it could be done by lowering the price of the commodity—

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: Lowering the price of wheat?

Mr. TONKIN: I am speaking of the introduction of machinery into industry generally. It is possible to pass on a portion of the benefit in any one of these three ways. In this case it is unthinkable that we should expect a reduction in the price of wheat. We do not want to confer a benefit in that way. We are on the eve of putting through legislation to increase the price of wheat. Seeing that it is not possible to confer a portion of the benefit on the workers by a reduction in price we must turn to one of the other two methods, either reduced hours or increased wages to those who are working, with compensation to those who lose their employment altogether. There is an additional argument for the reduction of hours in the handling of wheat in bulk. On the wharf one can see persons engaged in working there, working probably in more dust than is the case with the underground miner in Kalgoorlie, Boulder or elsewhere. Already we have men badly affected as a result of that dust, men who have been in attendance at the Fremantle hospital for

some weeks, solely because of the deleterious effect of the dust in which they have been working. Extra wages are no compensation for that. Either we must shorten the hours during which men are required to work in that dust, or else endeavour to put up safeguards that will minimise the danger resulting from the dust. The Bill does not provide for anything like that, and it ought to do so. If this is not provided now, nothing will be done. We cannot go on introducing labour-saving devices without making some provision for displaced labour. The Leader of the Opposition, in answer to an interjection of mine, said I was taking a lopsided view, and that I should take the national view. I will take the national view. Everything we seem to be doing to-day is in the interests of the farmers. The flour tax is to be reimposed, in the interests of the farmers. We are calling upon the wage earner to make a special contribution in the interests of the farmer by means of this flour tax. Our railways are running at a loss, which is partly occasioned by the cheap freights that we extend to farmers. We carry superphosphate at a loss, and give the farmers a cheap freight on wheat. Because the railways make a loss, the taxpayers generally are called upon to make it good. There is a further contribution from the taxpayer for the benefit of the farmer. Then we have the tremendous losses of the Agricultural Bank, represented by money that has been advanced over a period of years for the establishment of farms. The general taxpayers, amongst whom are the lumpers at Fremantle who will lose their jobs, are called upon to make a contribution for these losses for the benefit of the farmers. Further, the men who will be turned out of employment will fall back upon the Government for sustenance. The general taxpayer once more will be called upon to contribute towards these payments for something which has been done in the interests of the farmers. What benefits are the general taxpayers to receive? We are told that the farmer will save 2½d. a bushel. Will the farmer get the saving he is supposed to get?

Mr. Fox: Will he get any?

Mr. TONKIN: I do not think he will. The commissioners in their findings speak of a reduction in shipping freights in favour of bulk wheat. They consider that compared with bagged wheat there would be a saving of 2s. 6d. per ton on a United King-

dom basis, and 1s. 6d. per ton on an Oriental basis, but that this saving is not reflected in the price offered to the farmer at country sidings. Where did that money go? The farmer did not get the benefit. It did not go to the shareholders of the co-operative concerns, because no dividends were paid. The preference shareholders must have got it. It looks to me as if this might be for the benefit of the preference shareholders of Westralian Farmers, and no one else.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Do you include the Pool?

Mr. TONKIN: They are all the same. The trustees of the Wheat Pool, Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., the Westralian Farmers Ltd. and the Westralian Wheat Farmers are practically all the same.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But where does the 2s. 6d. go?

Mr. TONKIN: The Commissioners could not find out, and they had more evidence before them than I can get to-night. I have no doubt they probed the matter very thoroughly, but they were unable to trace it through the Pool.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is obvious they did not think it worth while.

Mr. TONKIN: Why did they say it was not passed on for the benefit of the farmer?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They read it as you did.

Mr. TONKIN: It must still be in the Pool. What is there to say that it will not remain in the Pool for the benefit of the preference shareholders? The trustees of the Wheat Pool and the Westralian Farmers Ltd. each put up £100,000 debentures for Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.

Hon. C. G. Latham: They did not.

Mr. TONKIN: They did. The Westralian Farmers then passed on their debentures to the E.S. and A. Bank. They allowed the bank to carry them. I took the trouble to verify that statement this afternoon.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You are wrong.

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member had better read the report and pay a visit to the Crown Law Department. He will then find that there were £200,000 debentures.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Nonsense!

Mr. TONKIN: It is not nonsense. The trustees of the Wheat Pool took out one debenture and the Westralian Farmers the other. That makes two. The Westralian Farmers then went to the English, Scottish and Australian Bank and gave as a security the debenture

they had already had from Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. There are two debentures altogether. Will the hon. member admit that?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: There are two.

Mr. TONKIN: Yes. There are two debentures, each for £100,000.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No.

Mr. TONKIN: If the hon. member investigates further, he will find that I am right.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You should make accurate statements.

Mr. TONKIN: The statement I made is accurate. As I said before, I took the precaution to ascertain the facts from a reliable source.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is right.

Mr. TONKIN: That reliable source is the Crown Law Department. I verified the information so obtained by perusing the report of the Royal Commission. They mentioned both debentures. The Leader of the Opposition said that he failed to follow the reasoning of the secretary of the Harbour Trust when he said that the Harbour Trust had lost revenue because of the fact that bags were not now being handled. The Leader of the Opposition said he could not understand how that could be considered a loss at all. But it is as much a loss as the saving which the farmer will derive because of the fact that he is not now handling bags is a profit. If the Harbour Trust derive certain revenue from the handling of the bags, and if under the bulk handling system bags are no longer necessary, the Harbour Trust have lost their revenue from the handling of the bags.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That means that you have lost your revenue if you do not happen to own an hotel.

Mr. TONKIN: No. If I did own an hotel and suddenly lost my license, then I would lose revenue, and my loss of revenue would be due to the loss of the license. We are considering for the moment the effect that the introduction of the bulk handling of wheat will have on the country. The secretary of the Harbour Trust is entitled to argue that the introduction of the bulk handling system has resulted in the loss to the trust of the revenue which the trust derived from the handling of bags. The railways will also be put to additional expense because of the introduction of the bulk handling system. These are matters which must be taken into consideration against the

saving which it is claimed will be effected by the introduction of bulk handling.

Hon. W. D. Johnson interjected.

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member is an interested party, too, and his opinion is coloured by reason of that fact. I admitted that there was a saving to the farmer as an individual, but I am not so sure that if we were able accurately to calculate the saving to the farmer and the loss to the community, we would not establish the fact that the loss outweighs the advantage. One thing I am certain of, a large number of men will be put out of work who will be unable to find employment elsewhere.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: They can grow wheat.

Mr. TONKIN: I suggest to the hon. member that there are already too many inefficient farmers growing wheat at the present time, and we do not want to encourage more people to grow wheat in places where it is economically unsound to attempt to do so. I believe we are long past the time when we should have closed down a number of farms, because what does the country gain by producing wheat on farms where the cost of production is greater than the price obtained for the product? We have a number of such farms in this State.

Mr. J. MacCallum Smith: Who pays for the loss?

Mr. TONKIN: The taxpayer. That is what I am complaining of. Not only are the lumpers called upon to contribute towards the establishment and maintenance of farmers, but they will be faced with unemployment when the bulk handling system is actually introduced. Numbers of them have already lost their employment and nothing has been done for them. It is no new principle to compensate men for loss of employment, and I claim that if labour-saving methods are introduced, the workers should share in the saving that is effected. Previously, we have made no provision for giving the worker a share in such saving. That cannot go on for ever. Other countries are realising that provision must be made for men who are being displaced from industry. In that respect, the United States is a long way ahead of us. It is time that we in Western Australia made a start, and the introduction of bulk handling will give us the opportunity to do so. It is a Government responsibility to replace these men in industry or to compensate them if they can-

not be found employment. We are rapidly approaching the stage when we must reduce hours of labour and increase wages, and during the transition period compensation must be paid to workers who are deprived of employment. I oppose the Bill and hope it will not be passed.

HON. P. D. FERGUSON (Irwin-Moore) [7.56]: The question of the bulk handling of wheat has been exercising the attention of wheatgrowers generally throughout Western Australia for quite a long time. They have watched very carefully for some years now the progress of events and the various controversies more or less associated with this question. There has been an insistent demand by farmers from all over the State for the installation of some facilities whereby their product can be handled in a more economical manner than under the bag system. During recent times there have been many inquiries and investigations made by departmental committees and officers of Government departments, such as the Department of Agriculture and the Public Works Department, and these officers are possessed of a vast store of knowledge concerning the various bulk handling systems throughout the world. At the beginning of the present year the Government appointed a Royal Commission to investigate this matter still further. That Royal Commission recommended that the scheme already partially installed by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. at 53 sidings throughout the State should be further extended. For the life of me, I cannot see how the Royal Commission could have recommended otherwise. Overwhelming evidence was presented to the Commission by the users of the system, and, after all, they are the people most vitally concerned in the matter, unanimously favouring the scheme installed by Co-operative Bulk Handling. They proved to the Commission beyond any shadow of doubt that there was a saving of at least 2d., and in many instances 3d., per bushel by the handling of their harvest in bulk as against the bag system. I think it was in the year 1931—and that might be regarded as an average year in our wheat belt, when we harvested 41,000,000 bushels of wheat—that there were 45,000 bales of cornsacks imported into Western Australia at an average value of about £9 per bale,

representing a cost to the farmers of £405,000.

Mr. Sleeman: How much a dozen did it cost the farmer?

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: The hon. member can work that out. There are 25 dozen bags to a bale, and they cost £9 per bale. It has been definitely proved to the satisfaction of the Commission and to most of the people of Western Australia that if that were the only saving that could be effected by the change-over from the bag system to the bulk system of handling, it would be well worth while, but of course there are other savings that can be effected. The farmer who has had experience of both systems of handling wheat is in a better position to say what those savings are than anyone else, but a man has only to go on to a farm whose owner has had experience during recent years of both systems to get what proof he requires. The report of the Royal Commission was presented to the Government about four months ago, and at this late stage in the session, when in all probability we have only a few days left, the measure, I am afraid, will not receive that mature consideration that its importance demands. The Government have never been very sympathetic towards bulk handling or towards the farmers' company who have up to date installed facilities at the 53 sidings mentioned. In fact, many of the Government's principal supporters in this Chamber are actively opposed to bulk handling in any shape or form. It is difficult to follow the reasoning of members in opposition to the improvement of the handling of our grain when we know that the same members have been enthusiastic supporters of somewhat similar systems of handling for other products. The present Bill, which I desire to discuss briefly, is designed to make the growers believe that the Government want to assist them. I am definitely afraid, however, that unless the Bill is drastically amended it will have the effect of frustrating any attempt to extend the facilities that have already been installed at some of our most important sidings. I ask hon. members how any company could be expected to carry on and extend the system under such provisions as are contained in the Bill? I realise that the Minister was up against something pretty serious when trying to put into the measure what would meet with the

approval of the farmers, meet with the approval of the company trying to instal the facilities, and also meet with the approval of prominent political supporters. The task was almost beyond the capacity of any Minister—to reconcile all those divergent interests.

The Minister for Lands: Who are those prominent supporters of the Government?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: The Minister should know them better than I do. There have already been one or two speeches from them on the Bill. If the Minister listened to their remarks, he should be able to answer his own question.

The Minister for Lands: They have nothing whatever to do with the Bill. They are right out of it.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: They are right out of it as regards any system of bulk handling in the interests of farmers.

The Minister for Lands: They are not provided for in the Bill. You said they were.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: It is a cause of great regret to me that I have to raise so many objections to the Bill, because I am keenly interested in getting a system of bulk handling installed throughout the length and breadth of our wheatgrowing areas. It is for that reason I intend to support the second reading. I must, however, assure the Minister that unless he is prepared to amend the Bill drastically in Committee, it will prove of no use whatever to the people for whose benefit it is intended. The setting-up of the shippers' delivery board that is proposed seems to me to make further extension of bulk handling, as we have it today, practically impossible. Unless Parliament is prepared to delete the board proposed by the Government, the position of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. will become absolutely hopeless. They can have no shadow of prospect of making a success of bulk handling installation if they have to operate under that board. In my opinion, no self-respecting company or self-respecting body of men would tolerate the domination of such a board for one moment. Moreover, no company with any regard to the welfare of its financial resources would operate under a board of that description. May I glance for a moment at the constitution of the board. The chairman is to be the Commissioner of Railways, or a nominee of his. The Fremantle Harbour Trust are

to have a representative on the board; the wheat merchants are given a representative; and the company are to have one. The one voice of the company against the three other voices makes the company's position altogether untenable. Not satisfied with having a representative of the Commissioner of Railways and a representative of the Fremantle Harbour Trust on the board, the Government further propose that the chairman of the board shall have an additional vote. But when we look at the powers of the board, on which the personnel is absolutely stacked against the interests of the company supposed to make installations throughout the country, we realise the hopelessness of the position—

It shall be the duty of the board as far as practicable (a) to prevent any disorganisation or congestion in the railway transport of wheat; (b) to see that adequate supplies of wheat are kept transported to the ports to meet the demands of shippers and charterers of vessels.

Surely there is no need to set up such a board as proposed in order to provide that that shall be done. Surely the transport of the wheat is purely a matter for the bulk handling company, and not for the other parties constituting the board.

Mr. Sleeman: Do you think those other parties would also be against the farmers?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: It is easily conceivable that their interests might not be identical with those of the wheatgrowers.

Mr. Sleeman: Apparently everyone is against the farmers.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: What has the Commissioner of Railways, who will have two votes on the board under certain conditions, to do with the detail work of the transport of wheat? The Commissioner of Railways in this matter is, or should be, in the position of a common carrier. He has no right to dictate to his customers when they shall bring their wheat to the port, and how they shall bring it. He ought to be in a position to transport wheat, or any other commodity, to or from any place that his customers wish it transported. It should not be the Commissioner's function to say what wheat is to be brought to a port. He should not have a dominating voice on the board to declare that wheat from certain areas shall be brought to the port when the people who own the wheat, and who, under this legislation, have the privilege of dealing with the wheat, may not require that

particular wheat at the port at all. Again, what have the Fremantle Harbour Trust to do with the transport of wheat from the country? Surely they have no concern with that wheat—at any rate, not until it gets to the port of Fremantle. Why should merchants trading in wheat have a representative on the board? They are not one whit concerned with transport of wheat from the country to the seaboard. I take it that the merchants who own the wheat will get the wheat when it is handed over to them by the bulk handling company at the port, and that is all they are concerned about.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Is there not a board in existence at the present time?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: There is a great deal of misconception about the board. There is no board existing under statutory authority at the present time. The only board now existing is a purely voluntary one on which every wheat-handling merchant in the State has a representative, and the only function performed by the board, as was explained by the Leader of the Opposition this afternoon, is to arrange a roster of the boats that come into port to be loaded, and to supervise the chartering of boats. The transport of wheat from the country to the port is not a function of that board in any shape or form.

Mr. J. H. Smith: Have the present company a statutory authority?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: They are not operating under statutory authority, but if the Bill becomes law they will have to operate—if they continue to operate at all—under the provisions of the measure, harsh though they be. I maintain that the transport of wheat from the country to the seaboard should be the function of the bulk handling company and of nobody else. While there should be co-operation—and I have no doubt there will be co-operation—between the various interests concerned, there should be no domination by any combination of those interests to the detriment of the main body concerned—the co-operative bulk handling company, who have been granted a monopoly of handling 90 per cent. of the bulk wheat raised. Incidentally, they have not asked for that monopoly, and so far as I am able to gather they do not want it. Apparently the Government have gone out of their way to find all the so-called safeguards they can to place in the measure—safeguards for other sections of the community, safe-

guards far-reaching in many respects and of such a nature as virtually to cripple the company; and the company represent the most important section of the community so far as the handling of wheat is concerned, naturally with the exception of the producers of the wheat. And those so-called safeguards will really have a tendency to raise the cost to the producer higher and still higher. We should not increase the producer's costs in any shape or form. The Minister has said, "I am going to give the company a monopoly, and I have to make all sorts of safeguards." When the farmers of this country some years ago put about £70,000 of their own money into the Fremantle freezers and the Government put about £70,000 of public money into that enterprise, did the Government give that particular company a monopoly of handling all our export lambs? There was no such suggestion. No Government wanted to grant such a monopoly, notwithstanding that they had put about £70,000 into the venture. And in this instance there is no necessity for a monopoly, so far as I see. My definite opinion is that the bulk handling of grain is absolutely essential in the interests of our wheatgrowers; but let me assure the House that bulk handling at any old price is no good to the wheatgrowers. Unless they are going to have bulk handling on reasonable terms, they would be better off without it altogether. Bulk handling can be too costly to our wheatgrowers: and unfortunately it seems to me that the so-called safeguards contained in the Bill will have a tendency to take away a great many of the benefits of bulk handling, which benefits, after all, are mainly in the direction of economical handling. Seeing that the Minister has made a great virtue of giving a monopoly of the handling of grain in bulk to this company, why is it necessary to exclude that 10 per cent. which has been excluded? Has that 10 per cent. been excluded so that the opponents of the bulk handling company can get together and in some way try, by means of that 10 per cent., to cripple the company's operations?

The Minister for Lands: You forget that that provision was contained in your own Bill.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Mighty little comparison can be drawn between the two bulk handling Bills which have been intro-

duced into this House, for in one instance the Government, while not finding the money, had to guarantee it, and in the other instance the Government are not asked to find a penny-piece nor to furnish a guarantee in any shape or form. There is no responsibility on the Government in any shape or form in connection with the present proposal. Have the Government suffered at all through the installation of facilities at the 53 sidings already equipped? Of course, no demand has been made on the Government, and if another 200 sidings were equipped, the same position would obtain. There would be no financial responsibility whatever on the Government. The Bill also provides, unnecessarily in my opinion, that the company must submit the plans for any new bulk bins to the Minister. That is an altogether unfair provision. The Minister has the power to reject or alter those plans in any way he thinks fit. It seems to me that he has the power entirely to jeopardise the whole success of the bulk handling scheme, if he thinks fit, by inserting that certain specifications shall be observed in the construction of the new bins.

Mr. Sleeman: Do you think a Minister would do that?

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Suppose the Minister's ideas were entirely different from those of the company who are to carry the responsibility and to find the money for equipping the sidings. He might easily say, "I will not approve of an installation at any more sidings on a basis similar to those already equipped, but will insist on other specifications being complied with." It is conceivable that such an attitude might prove so costly to the company installing the facilities that it would not be worth while for them to continue with the installation. The company would be entirely in the hands of the Minister, and if he insisted upon some absurd specification being complied with, the company, who have made such a success of their operations to date, might conceivably be completely ruined. I know that the Minister has not been very appreciative of what I might term the magnificent efforts of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., to reduce farmers' costs so far, and I should like to suggest in all seriousness that if Parliament and the country generally wish to encourage the type of service that the company are giving to the wheat-growers and through them to the community

generally, the company are entitled to better consideration than is being meted out to them by this Bill. For instance, the company are to be called upon to provide a bond of £50,000. That is going to add considerably to the farmers' costs. After all, the farmers have to find that bond. I consider that a bond of that description is entirely unnecessary. The farmers are not going to get any equivalent advantage from it; it is not going to benefit them in any shape or form, but it is going to add to their costs. I appreciate the fact that some bond might be advisable, though I do not think any bond is necessary. There has been none up to date. If we are going to insist on a bond, surely one of 10 per cent. of the amount mentioned in the Bill would be ample to cover all contingencies. A bond such as is stipulated might be hard to get and costly. Again, the bond has to be in a form prescribed by the Governor. No one knows the form in which it will be presented to the company. That is entirely an unknown quantity. How could the company ask any financial institution to assist them with money further to extend the installation with a gun like that held at their heads? I venture to say there is not a bank in this country who would be prepared to find the money until they knew exactly what was contained in the bond. Surely it is possible to state clearly in the Bill the form that the bond shall take, and then any financier approached by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. would have some idea of what the company had to face in the shape of the responsibility entailed by the bond. The Governor will also have power to make certain regulations for the carrying out of bulk handling under this measure. I am afraid there is a possibility that some of the regulations might easily prove irksome and costly to the company. It is conceivable that they might add considerably to the company's costs. The Bill, as drafted, takes a great deal more cognisance of the welfare of other sections of the community than of the company who are called upon to accept the responsibilities, and the regulations might offend in that direction, too. While I agree that the Governor should have power to make regulations, I consider that in a case like this no power should be given to the Governor to make regulations unless he is requested to do so by the company. If the

company presented certain regulations to the Government with a request that they be given legislative effect and they were not acceptable to the Government, they would not receive the force of law, and the company would have to draft other regulations that would meet with the approval of the Government. But I do suggest that no power should be given to anyone to make regulations unless requested by the company to do so. The Bill seems to be altogether unsatisfactory to meet requirements. It is unfortunately inimical to the best interests of the growers and of the company concerned, but I suggest that if the Minister is willing to amend it very materially in Committee, it might easily be made a measure that will be acceptable to those sections of the community most vitally concerned. Those sections, of course, are the growers and the company who will be called upon to make the installations. Unless drastic alterations are made in Committee, I am afraid it will not be of much use putting the measure on the statute-book. Personally I shall vote for the second reading in the hope that the Bill will be improved in the Committee stage.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [8.24]: I think it can be said without doubt that every member on this side of the House is whole-heartedly in favour of the principle of bulk handling. It can therefore be taken for granted that we here wish to deal with the Bill now before us with extreme care in order to minimise, to what extent we can, the danger of its defeat. The most amazing feature of the Bill, to my mind, is that it foists upon the company a monopoly that the company did not seek and did not, in my opinion, wish for, and then proceeds to penalise the company very heavily indeed for holding that monopoly. That is undoubtedly a very strange attitude to adopt. Still, what most perturbs us on this side of the House is the clause which aims at setting up a shipper's delivery board. It may be that that clause is capable of a somewhat milder interpretation than we at the moment are inclined to place upon it. I do not know; but until that point is cleared up, possibly by the Minister when replying to the debate, I certainly cannot escape the impression that when the Minister was constructing the Bill and decided to embody that

clause in it, he certainly must have known—or the Government must have known—that they were undoubtedly strangling the measure and providing a bitter disappointment, not only for the farmers, but for everybody possessed of a broad and fair outlook upon the agricultural industry and upon our export trade. We have, for a very long time, very anxiously awaited this Bill, and now that we have it, it is presented in a form which, unless it is very drastically amended, will certainly ensure its rejection by the company. I do not think any member of the House will dispute that, as at present constituted, the Bill has not a dog's chance of being accepted by the company to whom it is addressed. It will be obvious to you, Mr. Speaker, as to other members, that the proposed restrictions form so big a financial burden on the company that the company certainly cannot bear it and still observe their statutory obligations to users of the existing system. The House does not need to be told that if rejection does ensue, it certainly will be a terrible blow to all wheatgrowers, and for that matter a very real tragedy indeed to quite a number of wheatgrowers. The report of the Royal Commission, to which copious reference has been made, makes very clear that the sum of nearly 3d. per bushel can be saved and has been saved on every bushel of wheat handled by the company. The farmers need that 3d., and need it very badly indeed. I imagine that every member will realise that fact. After listening to some of the members on the Government cross-benches, however, I think quite a number of them do not appreciate the extent to which that saving is needed by the farming industry. Because of the huge benefits from the 3d. per bushel and because of the big saving of labour upon the farm, I hope very fervently that the several amendments that will be moved in Committee by the Leader of the Opposition and other members will be embodied in the Bill so that this, possibly the last Bill to be brought down this session, may contrive to be the most beneficial of them all, and certainly one of the most sincerely welcomed. I am not making the mistake of regarding the Minister as an enemy of bulk handling. Far from it. As a matter of fact, I think the House gathered the impression when the hon. gentleman was introducing the Bill that he was not too enthusiastic about it. He certainly gave me the im-

pression that had he spoken as a private member, or perhaps as a practical farmer, rather than as a member of the Cabinet, he might quite easily have been found uttering views which members on this side of the House have been expressing to-night. I do not wonder at that at all. I think the Minister probably has the opinion, as I have, that whilst the Bill certainly copies certain of the recommendations of the report, equally plainly it does not copy the spirit of the report. I hope the House will not overlook the fact that the report showed that the company, by the success with which it has pursued its objective in the past, has earned the trust and goodwill of probably 100 per cent. of the farmers who use the system. I think the evidence taken before the Royal Commission very clearly established that fact. Therefore one is entitled to ask why, that being so, the Government do not accept the verdict of the Commission, which after all was of its own appointment, and say "here is a body of sound honourable business men who are experts in the handling of wheat whether in bulk or in bag, men to whom we can with every confidence entrust the handling of this project." Instead of that, they first flatter and astonish the company by handing them the monopoly which, as I have already said, the company did not seek. Next they burden them with restrictions which manifestly are too heavy to be borne, then frighten them with the costly £50,000 bond, which perhaps after all is not an insuperable burden; because something in the nature of an undertaking was given to the Government by the company as to their acceptance of that bond, although not perhaps at as high a figure as has been stated, and finally and worst of all of course making the company subservient to this transport authority, the Shippers' Delivery Board consisting of four men, three of whom can by no stretch of the imagination be regarded as friendly to the bulk handling idea. What a mixed control this is which the Government would foist upon the company and how very discordant are its elements. I do not see how it is possible under such a board to secure any success, and I cannot help asserting that if the Government insist upon the retention of this Clause 29 it is tantamount to asking the company to reject the Government's offer. In any case what a position to arrive

at after all the very costly inquiries that have been undertaken not only in this State, but in other States and other lands where wheat is grown on any substantial scale, after all the Commissions in this State and all the delays and suffering in the farming areas. It is, we must admit, a confession of failure on the part of the Government and a reflection also upon the House. It must be pretty plain to us that this question has been viewed entirely from the wrong angle. The Government would seem to be giving altogether too much attention to the views of small minorities of people and correspondingly perhaps ignoring the view of the bigger numbers of people who are involved.

Mr. Hawke: Who are the small minorities?

Mr. DONEY: I should have imagined that it would be plain to the hon. member that I was referring to the merchants and the millers. I at once admit that they are pretty deeply concerned in the handling of wheat in bulk, but I would point out to the House that by comparison with the big number of farmers involved, the merchants and the millers are in a comparatively unimportant minority.

Mr. Hawke: How does the Bill help the merchants or the millers?

Mr. DONEY: It quite plainly helps them by putting them in a position of control over the whole bulk handling system in this State. If the hon. member has examined the Bill, as no doubt he has, he will have noticed that the Shippers' Delivery Board will have bigger control of bulk handling than will the company nominally in charge of bulk handling.

Mr. Hawke: How does the Bill put the millers and merchants in control?

Mr. DONEY: I thought I had stated that.

Mr. Hawke: You stated it, but you did not prove it.

Mr. DONEY: Well, perhaps a little later on I will come to that point and maybe I will make good the lack which the hon. member has pointed out. I cannot help thinking that if the Bill were to be regarded from the point of view of those most concerned, namely the wheatgrowers who have most at stake, in fact have millions annually at stake, it might be possible to construct a Bill acceptable to the House and not perhaps unfair to any of the interests concerned. Actually what

does seem to have happened here is that there has been what might perhaps be described as a smoke screen set up by the merchants and the millers and it may be the members for the Fremantle area. Certain it is that the Government's vision has been blurred considerably, otherwise they would have seen the trick hidden in Clause 29 which provides for the appointment of the Shippers' Delivery Board. It is to this board and not to the company that is entrusted the most consequential decisions. The hon. member who was interjecting will perhaps agree that although the board makes the decisions, the most important decisions of all, it assumes no responsibility whatever for them. This board decides whence and when come the wheats; it decides upon the quality of the wheat that shall come down and the quantity and upon the order in which the wheats shall come. It is in determining these matters that money is gained, that is when the question is handled by experts with perhaps half a lifetime's experience of the game; and equally where money is lost when the question is handled by those men like, say, the Commissioner of Railways who, although expert enough in their own line are inexpert when dealing with the technique of wheat handling. It is by deciding correctly on these matters that the 2½d. per bushel is built up. Most hon. members understand that different countries and different buyers require different grades and qualities of wheat, and herein it is that the experts can deal beneficially with those matters, while others of lesser experience cannot. I do not want it to be thought that I have fought against the Commissioner of Railways participating in this matter. Far from it. I think myself that his very wide transport knowledge and his undoubted capacity for administration should be utilised by the company, but only in a consultative way. However I do not discern any wisdom in putting the Commissioner into a position of virtual control of the whole of bulk handling. It appears to me that in the past when bulk handling questions have been before the House, Fremantle through its members has played a bigger part than has been warranted either by their numbers or by their importance. Their policy in my opinion has been very far from sound. They have been in the habit, and I think the House will recognise it, of disregarding entirely the question of whether the

particular bulk handling matter being discussed is or is not for the benefit of the State. All they have been concerned about is its influence on Fremantle, and they have always regarded bulk handling questions as being good or bad according to their effect upon Fremantle. That is a very narrow outlook indeed. Now in the present instance they are objecting because bulk handling, which is admittedly a labour-saving device—nobody has denied that—will put a number of wharf workers out of employment for certain months during the year. They claim that the Government of the day, whether it be the present Government or some other Government, should compensate those so put out of work. I am ready to agree that there is every reason in that plea. Without going into precedents one must allow that the taking away of a man's livelihood is not the less wrong because it is legalised. Personally I think the increase in the State's income which will spring from an extension of bulk handling and the further result of increased trade throughout the State will benefit Fremantle and Geraldton, Albany and Bunbury to a greater extent probably than it will other centres. But even that apart, I certainly do not agree personally to compulsorily sacrificing any one section of the State's population of the general benefit without compensation being paid to that section in some suitable form. I know that, believing as I do that up to £500,000 annually can be saved under normal production by not sending that amount to India in payment for cornsacks, the outlay of a relatively small amount at Fremantle, in the circumstances, will not present any great difficulty. I am glad that the Minister for Railways is in his seat because I want to make reference again to railway zoning. I mentioned this matter on the Address-in-reply and rather hoped to have coaxed some comment from the Minister. Unfortunately, I was not able to do that. It is, of course, difficult at this juncture to determine whether an extension of bulk handling is likely to ensue as a result of the Bill. If there is that extension, then the question of railway zoning will once again arise. I am hopeful that, assuming the extension of bulk handling facilities is to come, the Minister will regard this as an opportune moment to amend the present system of railway zoning. We are just about to lay down possibly a large-scale

bulk handling scheme and this would seem to be the best time to give some attention to this phase. I think the present Minister for Railways was responsible for the zoning system in vogue at present, and I believe he laid down the system on the basis purely of distance from the port and gave absolutely no attention whatever to the far more important consideration of the actual cost to the railways. That means that a great deal of the trade from around Wagin, for instance, which, had the zoning system been based on costs instead of mere mileage, would have gone to the port of Albany, is now taken through the hills by a far more costly route to ports on the western seaboard. I am submitting to the Minister that he has done considerable damage to the port of Albany by not permitting that port, through the zoning system, to secure the advantage that should rightly have accrued to it from the back country.

The Minister for Railways: A lot of that trade used to go to Fremantle from near Albany.

Mr. DONEY: That may easily have been so.

Mr. Wansbrough: At one time it did not get any at all.

Mr. DONEY: Two wrongs do not make a right.

The Minister for Railways: Prior to the zoning system very little of the trade went to Albany.

Mr. DONEY: But that does not get away from the fact—I do not think the Minister will controvert this statement—that under the present system of zoning the great proportion of the trade that should have been secured to the southern port has been diverted to Fremantle or Bunbury.

The Minister for Railways: No, you are quite wrong.

Mr. DONEY: Then I put this question to the Minister: Is it a fact that the zoning system as observed at present was laid down by the Minister purely on a mileage basis?

The Minister for Railways: Yes.

Mr. DONEY: Then I submit that is wrong. Instead of basing the system on a matter of mileage, it would have been far more proper to have based it on the cost to the railways.

The Minister for Railways: No, it is on the freight charges, not on the cost to the railways at all.

Mr. DONEY: I am pointing out that it would have been much fairer to have based the system on the cost to the railways.

The Minister for Railways: If you were a farmer in that part of the State, would you be agreeable to paying more freight over the extra 25 miles?

Mr. DONEY: But it would cost less.

The Minister for Railways: Not to the farmer; it would cost him more.

Mr. DONEY: I do not think it should. What influences freight is the cost to the railways, not the mileage. It is 50 miles downhill to Albany and that would cost the railways considerably less than the hauling of goods 50 miles uphill and downhill on the journey to Fremantle or Bunbury.

The Minister for Railways: If we do not charge the consignees more, what does it matter?

Mr. DONEY: I am pointing out—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the member for Williams-Narrogin had better address the Chair.

Mr. DONEY: I would remind the Minister that a month ago, when speaking on the Loan Estimates, the Premier said that it was essential a sum of money be set aside to attend to the railway gradients and that at present a great deal of money was wasted beyond recall on account of the gradients of railways in different parts.

The Minister for Employment: What the hon. member does not know about railways would fill a big volume.

Mr. DONEY: I quite admit that, and that statement applies equally as well to the Minister not only regarding railways but about other matters as well.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member had better address himself to the Bill and not deal with railway matters any more.

Mr. DONEY: Very good, Mr. Speaker. Still in reference to the matter I have been discussing, I shall look for an opportunity to discuss this matter privately with the Minister on some near future occasion. I desire to voice my strong protest against the hurry that is characterising this debate. I do not know why it should be so; I would like to be told the reason. This is probably the last Bill to be dealt with during

this last session of the present Parliament.

Mr. Wansbrough: We had some similar experience three years ago.

Mr. DONEY: I do not know that that is any excuse for the present proceedings. There is much exploratory and preparatory work to be undertaken in connection with a Bill such as that under discussion, and before it passes the second and third readings, which I hope it will, a great deal of compromise will have to be submitted to. In order that the farmers' point of view, as expressed by members sitting on the Opposition side of the House, may be given fuller publicity, it is certainly necessary to discuss the Bill properly, and I therefore enter my protest against all this hurry. I can see no need for it.

Mr. Wansbrough: You do not want the Bill.

Mr. DONEY: I do not expect the hon. member to listen to everything I say; that would be expecting too much. I have endeavoured to indicate as plainly as possible that we on the Opposition side of the House do want the Bill very much. Personally, I am prepared to go a long way in order to ensure its ultimate acceptance by the House. In conclusion, I point out that if the Government are not prepared to either drop or drastically amend Clause 29, I do not see the slightest hope in that direction.

MR. J. H. SMITH (Nelson) [8.55]: I support the second reading of the Bill and, like other members, regret the tardiness of the Government in introducing it. I have read through the clauses and to my mind it is a good Bill. It implements almost entirely the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Some Opposition members cavil at certain clauses. There are some that I do not propose to support in their entirety, but there are also a few that some Opposition members have intimated they intend to oppose and if necessary they are prepared to lose the Bill, which is one that they have been clamouring for. Three years ago it was on account of their short-sightedness in dealing with a small amendment I moved to secure to the growers some authority on the board that the earlier Bill was lost. I hope that will not be the experience on this occasion. Had they supported the amendment I refer to three years ago, there is no doubt that the present company would have been operating throughout the State with satisfaction to the growers and to them-

selves. The Bill proposes to give an absolute monopoly to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. for a period of 20 years. When such a monopoly is contemplated, I say advisedly that we must provide ample safeguards. The Minister has insisted in the Bill that the company must establish bins at country sidings where 20,000 bushels of wheat are delivered. If that provision were not inserted, the eyes would be picked out of the country districts and the small growers would be excluded and would not enjoy the benefits of bulk handling.

Mr. Doney: I do not think there is any objection to that.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Royal Commission came to the conclusion that the bulk handling system will represent a saving to the farmers of between 2d. and 3d. a bushel. That is what we have to look to, and, to my mind, the Bill is a good one. We will probably endeavour to amend the clause that provides that there shall be an inspection of the plans of the bins to be erected. I do not quite agree with that. The Royal Commission reported that the present type of structure is suitable.

Mr. Wansbrough: Will it do the work in 20 years' time?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: I do not believe in the "pig pen" business, but at the same time I do not think the Minister should be in a position to instruct his officers to see that bins are constructed of concrete when wood and iron structures would do just as well. Then again, one very important feature is not referred to in the Bill. I have in mind the terminals. The Minister has not mentioned that phase. The Bill deals with the receiving and trucking of wheat. Other phases we can deal with in Committee. The Bill makes no provision for terminals when the trucks reach the port. It does not say how terminals are to be erected, who will put them up, and what cover will be provided. Are we to assume they will be supplied by the Fremantle Harbour Trust and the harbour authorities at the other ports? The Minister has not explained that point. It is essential some provision should be made to deal with it. My friends object to the shipping board. That is the crux of the whole thing. It is not acceptable to the country. How can we do without a board? It is impossible to do without one. If there is no board, how will the merchants outside the corporation be

protected? The board must get together. Say that Darling's, Dalgety's and Westralian Farmers have three boats coming in this month. If there is no board what will happen? The boats may have to anchor outside Fremantle for a month and all that extra expense will have to be met. By this means the saving on bulk handling would be lost. The board is the crux of the whole thing. There is nothing new about it. A board has been in existence ever since the present company commenced operations.

Mr. Sampson: You are flirting with the board.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Not at all.

Mr. Thorn: You are always opposed to boards.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: In this instance I believe in the board. It is imperative to have one. We cannot put this Bill on the statute-book without a shipping board of control. I do not know why the Opposition complain about it. The member for Irwin-Moore knows that the board is already in existence, and that out of the eight members the merchants have five and the other parties three, including the chairman.

Mr. Doney: Who are they?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Westralian Farmers Ltd. and the Wheat Pool, and the company's chairman. That is a majority of five merchants to three others. Merchants are just as necessary as growers. It is no use to grow wheat if one cannot sell it.

Mr. Thorn: The board is not lopsided, such as this one is.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: Surely the board referred to in the Bill can be trusted. I do not think the Minister would object if the existing board were supplemented by the representatives of the people I have mentioned.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That would be all right.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: We all want to see this Bill passed. An objection has been lodged to the £50,000 bond.

Hon. C. G. Latham: What is it for?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: It is a guarantee bond.

Hon. C. G. Latham: For what purpose?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The Leader of the Opposition must know that the company has been receiving about £50,000 from the merchants who have been operating. If it is applied in one direction, it should apply in another. The company should not object to doing something they insist that others should do in trading with them. I am not

speaking without my book. I defy the Leader of the Opposition to contradict me.

Hon. C. G. Latham: A bond has never been asked for in the case of a substantial company.

Mr. J. H. SMITH: The hon. member is incorrectly informed. Reliable companies have been providing a bond of £10,000 each. I hope members will accept the Bill in a reasonable spirit. The more I read it, the less I understand the opposition to it. If members were sincere in their interests for farmers, they would accept the measure in a lenient spirit. They should not run away because they think the Minister is given too much control. In every Act on the statute-book the Minister is given full control.

Mr. Doney: Who is objecting to Ministerial control?

Mr. J. H. SMITH: What are members afraid of? Are they afraid that the present Minister will occupy his position for all time? Some other Minister may be in charge. I support the second reading, but would like to see one or two clauses amended. I feel sure the Minister is sincere in bringing down this Bill, although the Government have been tardy in implementing the report of the Commission. I also feel sure the Minister will accept any reasonable amendments that are offered in Committee. We shall then have something on the statute-book we require, and for which the country has been crying out for so many years.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [9.7]: I oppose the second reading mainly for the reasons advanced by the member for North-East Fremantle. We are not opposed to the Bill because of the introduction of machinery, but because of the effects of that machinery. The Bill is alleged to be in the march of progress. If this mechanisation of industry is to be continued, I doubt very much whether we shall progress. Our opposition is due to the absence of any provision in the Bill for compensation for displaced labour. The member for Williams-Narrogin said that the member for North-East Fremantle had taken up a parochial attitude. My opposition embraces not only those who are likely to be displaced in the Fremantle area, but is voiced on behalf of the big body of workers in different parts of the State where the system of bulk handling has been introduced. We are anxious to have as much machinery as

possible to cut out the heavy manual toil that workers who engage in the occupation of wheat lumping have to perform. We are not anxious to see men continuing to put 200 lbs. on their backs to earn a living. We want all the machinery we can get, but we want all the people to obtain the benefit of it instead of only a few.

Mr. Cross: What benefit will the worker get from this?

Mr. FOX: We all know the outlook for the farmer is far from bright, and that the great majority are hopelessly in debt. We have had that from speeches of members representing farmer constituents. I have also met at various times representatives of the Wheatgrowers' Union, who have told me the sorry plight the wheatgrowers are in. We all agree that they should be assisted, and I am prepared to do all I can to that end. The farmer is entitled to a decent living, just as are those who are employed in the city, in the Civil Service, or in any other capacity. I am prepared to do my utmost to help them, but I do not believe bulk handling will achieve that object. It may help the merchants who unloaded goods on the farmers when prices were at their peak, but I do not believe it will be of advantage to farmers claimed for it by the Commission. The Commission estimated the saving would be $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. From a previous analysis of the figures I am not satisfied that the Commission gave sufficient attention to those that were produced by most of the farmers. In all, 80 farmers gave evidence in favour of bulk handling. One would think that throughout Western Australia the Commission would have been able to get some who were in opposition to it, and thus have compared the figures. Some farmers are opposed to bulk handling; I have met some of them.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: I have not found one.

Mr. FOX: It would have been fair if the Commission had called some of those farmers before them and obtained their side of the question. They would perhaps then have been able to make a better report.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Farmers can dispose of their wheat in bags if they wish.

Mr. FOX: Yes. That would not make much difference to them. Bulk handling will not be a permanent solution of their trouble. When you were giving your ruling, Mr. Speaker, you stressed the fact that wheat

farming was of national importance. The Leader of the Opposition also stressed the importance of farming from the national point of view.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think I referred to bulk handling from the national point of view.

Mr. FOX: The bulk handling we are discussing now has some connection with wheat. We will agree that the wheat farmer is of national importance. It is very noticeable that in all functions in our economic life, both Commonwealth and State, those things that are of national importance are not left to private enterprise to put into operation. When the Great War broke out, that was not left to private enterprise, but the Commonwealth organised all the resources of the States. The railways were not left to private enterprise.

Hon. C. G. Latham: In many places they are.

Mr. FOX: Not in Australia. The only private line of any importance is the Midland line. It was only a fluke that it did not belong to the State. It was offered to the Government 20 years ago. It was a mistake the Government of the day made that it did not take over that line. They could have done so at a fair price and could have made a decent profit out of it. The line would have been an asset to the country. There is nothing of greater national importance than wheatgrowing. Millions of the taxpayers' money are invested in railways, and the Government have spent quite a lot in establishing water supplies. Cheap freights have been provided for the farmers for wheat and superphosphates, and many other aids are given to them. When I speak of the farming industry I do not mean that which is confined to the man who ploughs the ground, reaps the crop and sends the harvest to the coast. I am speaking of the whole body of workers throughout the State who are associated with the farming industry. They include a great army of workers in various callings, such as seamen, lumpers, railway workers, Collie miners, men engaged in the manufacture of machines, men engaged in the superphosphate industry, and in the manufacture of other commodities required by the farmers. While it is very noticeable that we all combine to produce the crop, yet immediately it is produced we fight over it in the way that sav-

ages are supposed to fight, but in a way in which I really believe savages would have too much sense to fight. It has been stressed very often in this House that the present social system has outlived its usefulness and that it should be replaced by some other system. The present system has no doubt solved the problem of production. We are thankful for that, but nevertheless it has outlived its usefulness, and it is time we should make an endeavour to replace it. What is wrong with nationalising the wheatgrowing industry? The farmers have nothing to lose at all, except their debts.

Members: They do not pay them.

Mr. FOX: Unless we do something to get out of the rut we have been in so long—

Mr. Thorn: That is not the way out.

Mr. FOX: If you can suggest any other way, why not do so? I have heard each member on the other side of the House speak on this question, and not one of them has put forward a solution, except bulk handling, and the introduction of bulk handling will throw thousands of men out of work. As an alternative, might I suggest that the Government should buy all the wheat at, say, 3s. 6d. a bushel?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member is wandering away from the Bill at the moment.

Mr. FOX: I am opposing the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: We have a Bill before us without any supposition.

Mr. FOX: All that I can say is that the present Bill will not emancipate the farmer.

Mr. Thorn: Then we will alter it.

Mr. FOX: I consider this House has no moral right to pass a Bill of this description, unless it makes some provision for the men who will be displaced from industry. An up-to-date system of bulk handling will practically cut out all wheat handling at the ports of Western Australia. In addition, large numbers of men will be thrown out of work throughout the country. The Commission that was inquiring into the amount of labour that would be displaced did not have much evidence bearing on the number of men who would be thrown out of work if bulk handling were introduced. When giving evidence before a select committee in November, 1932, the manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust,

Mr. McCartney, estimated that 500 lumpers would be thrown out of work if bulk handling were introduced in its entirety at Fremantle. In that number the men who would be put out of work because cornsacks were no longer being handled were taken into consideration. Mr. McCallum, in his minority report, estimated that 3,678 men would be thrown out of employment at the various ports and sidings in the State. In addition, quite a number of men working in offices would also be put out of employment. Where are the Government to get the money to make provision for all this labour that will be displaced? I notice also that in the Commission's report the secretary of the Fremantle Harbour Trust stated the Harbour Trust lost £7,152 last year on account of the introduction of bulk handling of wheat. Reference was made to this evidence by the Leader of the Opposition, and also by the member for North-East Fremantle. That figure was calculated on the basis that the system had been in operation for 12 months. On the 30th November last, an article appeared in the "West Australian" which dealt with Harbour Trust administration. To show the amount of money that will be lost by the shortened time the vessels will remain in port, I shall quote from the report. The document cited the regulation dealing with the charge for wharfage. A charge of 1-24th of a penny was made for every hour a ship remained in port plus 20 per cent. surtax. One vessel quoted, the Clan MacKenzie, remained in port for 14 days and 9 hours, and the wharfage amounted to £470. If that ship had been loaded in bulk—I can see the Leader of the Opposition smiling because this may be an argument in favour of bulk handling—

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is very definitely an argument in favour of it.

Mr. FOX: I quite realise it is. If the ship had been loaded in bulk, it would have been loaded in 20 hours, and the wharfage would have amounted to £28.

Mr. Thorn: A most important saving.

Mr. FOX: That is an extreme case, because ships very seldom remain in port for 14 days. The Thistle Brae was in port for 5 days and 10 hours, the wharfage charges amounting to £128. If that vessel had been loaded in bulk the wharfage would have been £20. I am quite aware the Harbour

Trust pays a fair amount of money into the revenue of the country each year. If that money is not available, the Treasurer will have to make it up somehow. The Government will have to tax the people to make up the loss on the railways and the loss sustained by the Harbour Trust. The loss sustained by the Harbour Trust will be increased as the result of the introduction of the bulk handling system. Although there is a saving in one direction, there is a loss in another.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The income tax paid by the farmer will make up the loss.

Mr. FOX: From reports I have heard, farmers pay very little income tax. It is not so long ago that the farmers requested the Agricultural Bank to allow them £150 per year so that they could remain on their holdings.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There was a time when the farmers had an average income of £600 each.

Mr. FOX: That was the time the farmer got into debt. He could see rosy times ahead. Then the merchants came along and sold him tractors and motor cars.

Mr. Cross: Farmers cannot grow wheat at 3s. a bushel.

Mr. FOX: I am opposed to any private monopoly. If it is necessary to instal a system of bulk handling, it should be done by the Government. The Railway Department, in conjunction with the Harbour Trust, are quite capable of dealing with our harvest. They could deal with it, whether it were in bags or in bulk. The Railways take charge of all goods at various sidings and stations throughout the country, and there is no difference between wheat and other goods, except that there is a greater quantity of wheat. Another point I desire to touch upon is the agreement between Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. and the Westralian Farmers Ltd. Under that agreement, the Westralian Farmers are allowed to make a profit of $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel in each season.

Mr. Seward: A maximum profit.

Mr. FOX: That is to be in force for 10 years. Assuming the Western Australian crop averaged during that period 35,000,000 bushels, and that has been the average for the last ten years, the Westralian Farmers would have made a clear profit of approximately £364,000.

Mr. Seward: You are quite wrong.

Mr. FOX: But on the Government will fall the entire cost of making provision for the men thrown out of work. If the wheat handling is done by utilising the present State facilities and the Government retain that $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per bushel, the amount so derived would be sufficient to pay interest on £1,000,000 at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., which would go a long way towards establishing the men displaced in some other avenues of employment. I do not think I will say any more on the matter at present, but in Committee I may have a few more remarks to make on some of the clauses of the Bill. I intend to oppose the second reading.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [9.27]: I intend to support the second reading of the Bill. I regard this Government measure as essentially non-party in character. Therefore, I convey my appreciation, and the appreciation of a very large section of the wheat-growers of this State, to the Government for having granted a Royal Commission of inquiry into the bulk handling of wheat. In the second place, I wish to convey to the Government my appreciation for bringing down this Bill relating to the bulk handling of wheat by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. I would like to explain to hon. members, in case they should be under any misapprehension, that I hold no brief for Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. I have too recently returned from hostilities on that particular front. There is peace to-day reigning there, and I hope that peace will prevail for a long time. I gave a definite pledge and promise to my electors in the Avon district that I would accept the findings of this Royal Commission on Bulk Handling. Those findings have been delivered and upon them the Bill has been drafted. The recommendations are worthy of recital to let hon. members know upon what premises this most important piece of legislation is founded. The Royal Commissioners were not normally, because of their party affiliations, antagonistic to Labour. The Chairman was Mr. Angwin, an ex Labour Minister for Lands, and the members were Mr. Donovan and Mr. Foulkes. One would give them credit for approaching the question without any desire to displace labour unnecessarily. But those Commissioners very properly decided that the preservation of a national industry was of

paramount importance. Therefore, as I say, their recommendations are worth reciting.—

(1.) That Co-operative Bulk Handling, Limited, be permitted to extend and carry out their proposals for a State-wide scheme relating to the bulk handling of wheat at country sidings.

(2.) That it is imperative for up-to-date orthodox concrete terminal silos of 1,500,000 bushels capacity to be erected as soon as possible at the port of Fremantle, and controlled by the Commissioners of the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

(3.) That up-to-date orthodox concrete terminal silos of 500,000 bushels capacity should then be erected at Geraldton, and controlled by the Commissioner of Railways.

(4.) That the equipment of the various zones should be carried out in the following order:—Fremantle, Geraldton, Bunbury, and Albany, and that until the terminal facilities to serve those zones have been completed, the construction of the necessary additional bins at railway sidings to make the scheme State-wide should only proceed according to the ability of the Commissioner of Railways to transport the wheat in bulk.

(5.) That legislation should be enacted to provide for the protection of those vitally interested in wheat handled in bulk.

(6.) That the doubt which exists as to the effectiveness of a warehouse receipt in conveying title to the quantity of wheat shown in that receipt should, in the interests of all parties, be removed by Act of Parliament.

(7.) That serious consideration be given to the proposals of Co-operative Bulk Handling, Limited, to provide bulk handling facilities at Bunbury and Albany.

(8.) That permanent bins to provide for storage facilities equivalent to at least 75 per cent. of receipts at country sidings are necessary.

The Government, in my opinion, have endeavoured to give effect to those recommendations; but the Bill introduced is certainly not a perfect instrument for carrying out the Royal Commission's views. The recommendations which I have read left a lot to be inferred by the Government in instructing the drafting of the Bill. It has been suggested by several speakers to-day that there is little or no saving in bulk handling. I happen to have presided since 1931 over four annual committees appointed by the Wheatgrowers' Union of Western Australia. We examined the position annually to discover whether the handling of wheat in bulk would benefit the farmers or otherwise. Our conclusions, embodied in four reports, have been unanimously in favour of the adoption of a bulk handling system for this State of

Western Australia. Our farmers are overwhelmingly in favour of the bulk handling of wheat. It has been mentioned by the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) that only 80 farmers gave evidence before the Royal Commission. It would not have made any difference at all if a thousand farmers had given evidence.

Mr. Fox: I did not say that. I said the Commission got 80 farmers in favour of bulk handling, but did not get any against it—a different thing altogether.

Mr. BOYLE: I do not wish to place the member for South Fremantle in a false light, but that is what I concluded. I see his point now—that the 80 witnesses called were in favour, and that those not in favour did not give evidence.

Mr. Fox: I said the Royal Commission did not take the trouble to find some farmers against it; and there are many farmers against it.

Mr. BOYLE: Is it the duty of Royal Commissions to go around inviting members of the public to give evidence before them? It is the duty of those people to appear, following advertisements published in the Press by Royal Commissions calling on those who wish to give evidence. The saving under an effective system of bulk handling would be to this State an average of about £400,000 per annum. The committees I have alluded to took out figures for the five years from 1926 to 1931, and we found the value of imported cornsacks at 9s. 3½d. per dozen delivered at Fremantle amounted to the colossal sum of £731,000. Certainly a good many of those cornsacks were used for other purposes, but we estimated that over the period of five years cornsacks cost the farmers of Western Australia in round figures a cool half-million sterling. The country supplying the cornsacks reciprocated by practically imposing an embargo on our wheat in 1931—an embargo in the form of a duty of 1s. 9d. per bushel. The Indian jute merchants, or Indian Jute Combine, send those cornsacks to this country in their own steamships. They charge us 45s. per ton freight from Calcutta, but they take back our wheat at 16s. 6d. per ton freight. And those are the people for whom some solicitude is expressed, though not in this Chamber. I have heard solicitude expressed in connection with exchange of trade with India. We can do without India if that is the way we are to be treated by that

country. I agree with the Royal Commission that we have not received the benefit of the 2s. 6d. per ton which is saved to shippers by sending wheat in bulk from Western Australia. That 2s. 6d. per ton is in terms of English currency, and really amounts to 3s. per ton at Fremantle, equivalent to 1d. per bushel. So far as I know, Western Australia has not received any consideration in that regard, from which we should gain a benefit of £125,000 a year on top of the £400,000 representing the saving on jutes—an annual total of £525,000.

Mr. Tonkin: Where has that gone?

Mr. BOYLE: I will give the hon. member one guess if he knows the people we are dealing with in that respect. The money goes into somebody's pocket, and that is not the pocket of the wheatgrower of Western Australia. A point which has not received sufficient recognition from the people concerned is the physical difference involved in the handling of a crop in bulk as against the handling of it in bags. The average farmer, we will say, sends in 1,200 bags to a siding. The 1,200 bags equal 100 tons, to be lifted on to a truck and discharged at the siding—a physical strain which has resulted in serious injury to many farmers in this State, as I can testify from personal knowledge. The whole trouble, as it appeared to us, is that this scheme was started at the wrong end, so to speak. It was installed at country sidings, where the quantity of wheat floated in, without adequate provision being made for it at the exit, the ports of the State. The result has been to set up in the port of Fremantle a depot known as the Leighton Depot, which has been the cause of considerable expense to the farmers of the State, for the simple reason that wheat stored at Leighton has to pay minimum freights in and out of Fremantle. I understand this amounts to about 3s. 6d. per ton—quite an unnecessary expense and a serious loss to the farmers. This was due to the fact that at Fremantle no adequate provision had been made for, as the Royal Commission pointed out, 1,500,000 bushels of wheat, representing 40,000 tons weight and loading for five steamers. It may interest hon. members to know that Australia is the only country in the world that to-day ships its wheat abroad in bags. That is a fact which may not have been brought home to hon.

members. We are the only country in the world than can apparently afford to do so. Imagine a struggling industry like the wheat-growing industry of Western Australia being able to afford—I speak in a purely ironical sense—from £1,500,000 to £2,000,000 per annum to foster the jute trade of Calcutta. This is an attempt, which I welcome, by the Government to introduce and stand behind a scheme of bulk handling in Western Australia. Bulk handling to-day is not an original movement on the part of the Government, nor is the Bill an original Bill of theirs. No such thing, presumably, would be claimed by either the Minister or the Government. In New South Wales bulk handling of wheat has been in vogue for quite a considerable time, and I have received from the Commissioner and manager in New South Wales reports which have convinced me that the comparative freedom of New South Wales from the troubles with which we have been faced here is due to the fact that they have handled wheat in bulk for a number of years, and moreover have been assisted in other regards. The New South Wales Act is administered by a board consisting of a commissioner, who is also the manager, two wheatgrowers' representatives, one miller, and one shipper. I was highly pleased to hear the Minister say that he would have preferred to see in Western Australia an Act similar to the Victorian Act. I expressed almost similar words to those which the Minister has expressed when I was giving evidence before the Royal Commission on Bulk Handling in Western Australia. Under the Victorian Act of 1934 Mr. Judd, who until recently was the general manager of the Victorian Wheatgrowers' Corporation, was appointed chairman, with one railway representative and one representative of the growers. They have been entrusted with the installation of a bulk handling system, and it might interest members to know that they received support from the Labour Party in the Victorian Assembly. They received no small measure of assistance in a reciprocal way, so to speak. The Victorian Act charges the commissioners with the responsibility of installing the scheme, and the limit of expenditure is £2,000,000. Thus Victoria is tackling the scheme in a big way. South Australia has not yet a bulk handling scheme. I have a copy of the South Australian "Hansard" which states that the Premier of South Australia has been collaborating with

the Premier of Western Australia regarding the installation of a scheme of bulk handling in Western Australia. I do not know whether the statement is correct, but it is said that the basis of the Bill has been borrowed from South Australia. In South Australia it is proposed to entrust the carrying out of the scheme to the South Australian Producers Union, a firm very much on all fours with Westralian Farmers Ltd. Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., who will receive a monopoly in this State, are working under a deed of trust between the wheatgrowers and the company. The deed of trust expires on the 31st October, 1948, and herein lies a point that I cannot understand. The date for the expiry of the monopoly is 1955, a currency of 20 years, and I cannot understand why the Government did not make the expiry of the monopoly to the company coterminous with the expiry of the deed of trust. I say that advisedly because the toll of $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per bushel in a scheme costing a total of £735,000 is equivalent to £2,500 for every million bushels passing through the silos. This means that on a 30,000,000 bushel crop the company would receive in tolls £70,000. That is on the estimated cost of the scheme including the silos at Fremantle, but I hold that those silos estimated to cost £288,000 should not be part and parcel of the expenditure on the scheme, but should be erected by and be a charge on the Fremantle Harbour Trust. The sheds on the wharves wherein goods are stored and handled are necessary to that class of cargo just as are silos that would be erected to accommodate 1,500,000 bushels of wheat, and the cost should not be a charge on the scheme. The country installation will amount to £453,000. On a $\frac{5}{4}$ d. tollage, the scheme would be paid for in six years. That was the evidence given before the Royal Commission. If that is so, why the necessity to give a monopoly to the company for 20 years? Would it not be better if provision were made for the whole scheme, which will take about three years to instal, to expire and to be handed over to the farmers in 1948? In Committee I intend to submit an amendment to that effect.

The Minister for Lands: The Leader of the Opposition stated that the charges were not sufficient.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I did not.

Mr. Seward: Was it not tollage?

Mr. BOYLE: There is a contract in existence between Westralian Farmers Ltd. and Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. operating from the 7th June, 1933, to the 7th June, 1943, and it was that contract, I believe, which swayed the Commissioners into departing, as they said, from their almost-arrived at decision to recommend something similar to the Victorian Act. I do not oppose the granting of a monopoly to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. We hold that there is room for only one activity of the sort at country sidings in this State. There is no room for a duplication of such services.

The Minister for Lands: Who pays for all the competitors? The farmer.

Mr. BOYLE: I find myself in agreement with the Minister; we have proved that over and over again. Now, however, I must disagree with the Minister over the so-called shipping board in that it is provided that no fees are to be paid for the services rendered. I do not think that men representing the Commissioner and the Harbour Trust and other highly trained men will devote their services without looking for recompense from some quarter. The wheatgrowing industry has been the fattest calf for a number of years for services of that kind. I claim to speak for a great many wheatgrowers when I say that a monopoly is welcomed provided it is kept within bounds and under some form of control. I do not say that the control should be hard or irksome. I am firmly of opinion that Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. should be given every opportunity to make a success of the scheme. I confess to having a great deal of sympathy with the members representing the constituencies at Fremantle, as well as Albany, Bunbury and Geraldton, in standing up for the men who will be deprived of employment. It is one of the tragedies of the existing system and a reflection on our so-called civilisation that a measure which will benefit the farmers and is essential to the farmers will have that effect. I do not agree with the member for South Fremantle when he said that that will not be a solution of farmers' difficulties. We do not hold that it will be, but we want all those aids. We want the 3d. per bushel that will be saved by bulk handling; we want the 5s. or 7s. 6d. that will be saved on superphos-

phate; we want the cheapest railway freight possible; we want all our costs cut down. The organisation to which I belonged came into existence to fight the ever-increasing costs of production and we were determined to secure a reduction of costs to the lowest possible amount. The displacement of labour at the ports evokes my sympathy. Measures should be taken, and no doubt will be taken, to provide employment for the displaced men, but I am afraid that members are rather inclined to over-state the trouble at Fremantle. I have the evidence of Mr. Thomas Fox, ex-secretary of the Fremantle Lumpers' Union of Workers, given to the Royal Commission. No one has greater admiration for Mr. Fox than I have. I have known him for a good while and have come into contact with him and I know he is whole-hearted in his attempt to lessen the blow to the men at Fremantle. Mr. Fox, in speaking to-night, referred to the number of men who would lose their employment. This afternoon I think the member for Victoria Park mentioned hundreds of thousands.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Millions.

Mr. BOYLE: I have cut it down. In reply to Question 4398 Mr. Fox said that if all the wheat shipped at Fremantle during the season 1933-34 had been in bags, 212 men would have been employed at a cost of £43,991, but if it had been shipped under the present system of bulk handling, only 87 men would have been required at a cost of £18,000, showing a loss in wages to the lumpers of £25,991. Mr. Fox further stated that the bulk wheat actually shipped in the 1933-34 season necessitated the employment of 41 men at a cost of £8,603, but if a similar quantity of wheat had been shipped in bags, 119 men would have been employed and would have received wages totalling £24,780, showing a loss of wages to the lumpers of £16,177. The difference between the 212 and the 87 men employed is 125, and the loss of wages would have been £25,000. I should like members to note the difference between the loss of wages by 125 men at Fremantle and, say, another 200 men at other ports, and the gain of £525,000 which will be made by the introduction of the system of bulk handling.

Mr. Fox: That estimate was not made on a proper system of bulk handling. It was the actual amount lost on the shandygaff

system there at present. I had estimates of an efficient system that would practically cut out all of them. That estimate was made by Mr. McCartney, manager of the Fremantle Harbour Trust.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BOYLE: What has become of the 2,000 wheatgrowers who have left their holdings? The men at Fremantle had little except their employment to lose. I am a native of Fremantle and I know them. But let members pause for a moment and inquire the whereabouts of the 2,000 wheatgrowers who have lost their farms and all that they had put into them. They walked off their properties, and for five years I was engaged in trying to ameliorate their conditions. Contrast that with the loss of labour at Fremantle. Where have those wheatgrowers gone? Who looked after them? Not a voice was raised in any part of the State when they went off their farms, but voices are raised, and properly so, when Fremantle men lose their employment. Every member should realise that by keeping men on their farms, employment would be provided at Fremantle and at every other port. There has been a shocking decrease in the acreage of wheat sown in Western Australia and Victoria, but increases have been recorded in New South Wales, South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania. In New South Wales, where they have bulk handling, the increase from 1929 to 1935 was 600,000 acres, in South Australia 180,000 acres, and in Queensland 28,000 acres. Queensland is the elysium of wheatgrowers. I sat in a conference at Melbourne when the Queensland representatives refused to agree to a home price in Australia because they were getting 4s. per bushel, whereas we were getting only 1s. 8d. Victoria has decreased her area by 500,000 acres and Western Australia, which of all the States in Australia is most largely dependent on wheat, has decreased her acreage between 1930 and 1935 by the colossal total of 900,000 acres. Let us see what that means to the waterside workers. In 1929-30, the wheat production was 1,060,000 tons, or a loading for 115 vessels lifting 8,000 tons of wheat and flour. In 1930-31, our peak year, the production ran to 1,420,000 tons, or loading for 160 vessels. In 1931-32, the production was 1,121,000 tons, or loading for 123 vessels. In 1932-33, the production was 1,130,000 tons, or loading for 125 ves-

sels. In 1933-34, there was loading for 108 vessels; in 1934-35, there was loading for 70 vessels, and this year there is loading for 50 vessels. The decline shown in those figures is really what has affected the waterside workers, whose loading has dropped from 160 vessels in 1930-31 to 50 vessels in the present year. It was in that year 1930-31 that we were told to grow more wheat and did so, and got only 1s. 8d. per bushel for it. But the lumpers got their award rates and so it made no difference to them, and consequently no indignation meetings were held in the Fremantle Town Hall.

Mr. Fox: But they halved the average of the basic wage.

Mr. BOYLE: I know that, and I sympathised with them. I think they got £3 10s. per week.

[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]

Mr. Fox: No, they did not get that much.

Mr. BOYLE: Well, it was a shame. The position is serious in all our ports. Take the list of commodities handled in bulk to-day. What protests have been made regarding the handling of oil in bulk, of petrol in bulk, of kerosene in bulk, of phosphatic rock in bulk, of sulphur in bulk or of cement in bulk? And what cry have we heard regarding the dire position of the farmer? The compelling of the farmer to stick to a system which involves him in an extra outlay of £525,000 is not a solution of that difficulty. I am loth to criticise the remarks of any speaker who is standing up for those to whom he owes a duty, but one must refer to some of the arguments used by the member for North-East Fremantle, who alluded to the flour tax, and said that it had been re-imposed on the consumers in Australia. It may interest members to learn that the wheat industry in Australia for the past five years has been giving the workers and people of Australia the cheapest loaf of bread in the world. That contention was made by the Prime Minister in the House of Representatives when he drew attention to the fact that Australia had the cheapest 2-lb. loaf of bread in the world, the price being 3¼d. for a 2-lb. loaf.

Mr. Tonkin: But the wages of the workers are based on that cheap loaf.

Mr. BOYLE: During that conference we conducted an inquiry regarding a household

budget with a view to seeing what that cheap loaf meant to Australians.

Mr. Tonkin: The majority of those on the basic wage in Fremantle live almost principally on bread.

Mr. BOYLE: Evidence has been given before commissions that wheat has been produced in Australia and sold at 1s. per bushel below cost of production, and the people of Australia have benefited by that cheap bread. Now I desire to give members a constructive idea of how this labour which it is feared may be displaced could be re-absorbed. A lot of argument has been used destructively. I have here a letter from a surveyor at Fremantle. It is well known to us that the west end of Fremantle is practically deserted to-day; it has its streets and buildings, but nobody lives in them. And so buildings that once were worth £25,000 are worth now not more than 25,000 shillings. Cliff-street is largely inhabited by southern Europeans. I commend the Minister for Employment on having worked very hard to establish local industry. Why not get out a planning scheme for the west end of Fremantle and build factories for the employment of those men who, it is feared, will be displaced? I notice to-day that the Minister, in speaking to a section of local authorities, said he took a long view in the solving of the problem of unemployment. Some of us take such long views that we never get there, but I really think the Minister has got there. If the Town Planning Commissioner were instructed to prepare a plan for the creation of factories in the metropolitan area from Fremantle to Midland Junction we should not then have a match factory planted in West Perth and another factory planted miles away. There is an ideal spot for factories in the west end of Fremantle which might be largely resumed at a satisfactory price, and would provide employment for a thousand unemployed men, if companies were invited to erect factories in one of the best positions in the whole of Australia, close to the wharves and close to the railways and with a population of from 40,000 to 50,000 to be drawn upon for labour. Then there is a favourable position west of Pakenham-street which could be resumed for the erection of factories. I was amazed to find that factories are decreasing in Western Australia instead of

increasing, and have dropped since 1930 from a total value of 7½ millions to less than six millions. So notwithstanding the Minister's valiant struggles, the people of the State are not backing him up as they should do. I do not intend to delay the House any further. I will support the second reading, and I hope the Government, in the spirit of sweet reasonableness, will accept amendments that will make the Bill acceptable to the company, which is not prepared to work under too drastic restrictions. The shippers' board has been mentioned and so often thrashed that I think it must be in splinters by now. I will support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

To Refer to Select Committee.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move—

That the Bill be referred to a select committee.

There is a number of interests requiring investigation. The Bill provides for certain interests, whilst ignoring other interests vitally affected. It is very necessary that those other interests should be inquired into. At the start of the proceedings to-day the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) raised the question of whether the Bill was in order. You, Sir, in your ruling, mentioned that it was a suitable Bill to be sent to a select committee. In some countries it would be thought a high-brow Bill and would certainly have to go before a select committee. I think that all interests concerned should be duly given a chance to present their case before a select committee.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not think there is any necessity to refer the Bill to a select committee. It seems to have been very well understood by every member who has discussed it. Bulk handling has been before the country and indeed the House, for nearly five years. Its principles are well understood, and I think we should get the Bill into the Committee stage. I do not see any necessity to send it to a select committee. Such a committee could not get any more information about it than we have already, so I hope the motion will not be carried.

Mr. SEWARD: Briefly, I will support the Minister and oppose the Bill going to

a select committee. As has been pointed out by the Minister, we have had numerous investigations into bulk handling. The Government themselves appointed the recent Royal Commission, which went exhaustively into the question and reported their findings. Then the Government went further and referred the Bill to a select committee of Cabinet, and now we have this Bill as a result of their investigations. What possible use would be served by referring the Bill to a select committee and still further delaying the matter? Reference has been made to the absence of any provision in the Bill for dealing with the men who may be thrown out of employment through the establishment of the bulk handling system.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member is entitled to speak on that matter. He can discuss the reasons why the Bill should not be referred to a select committee.

Mr. SEWARD: The point I refer to was mentioned by the member for Fremantle when moving for the select committee.

Mr. SPEAKER: He did not mention that particular matter.

Mr. SEWARD: I will bow to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, and express the hope that the House will not delay the passage of the Bill. The Government hope to conclude the session next week, and if the Bill is to be referred to a select committee, it cannot be dealt with in a few days. It will be held up for another week, and then will have to go to the Council. There it will probably be thrown out because there is insufficient time to enable members there to deal with it.

Mr. SLEEMAN (in reply): It is suggested that there is no time for the Bill to be referred to a select committee. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) did not indicate any objection to the points raised in favour of referring it to a select committee, and there are some strong points that could be mentioned in favour of that course. Some interests are shut out by the introduction of the Bill, and the views of those interests could be heard if the select committee were appointed. A motion is before the Legislative Council for the reference of another matter to a select committee, and that inquiry will take more time than the one I propose. I hope the House will agree to the motion.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	5
Noes	..	..	..	29
				—
Majority against	..	..	24	—

AYES.	
Mr. Fox	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Raphael	Mr. Clothier
Mr. Sleeman	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Doyle	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Brockman	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Cross	Mr. Seward
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. F. O. L. Smith
Mr. Hawke	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Latham	Mr. Troy
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Waits
Mr. J. I. Mann	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Willson
Mr. Munse	Mr. Wise
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Doney
Mr. Patrick	(Teller.)

Question thus negatived.

In Committee.

Mr. J. H. Smith in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short Title:

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause the following words be added:—"but not until such time as the men displaced in the industry are adequately provided for either in suitable employment or with monetary assistance until such time as those employed in bulk handling have their hours reduced to four hours a day."

The time has arrived when something has to be done. Members of the Opposition have admitted that the hours of employment will have to be reduced, and no doubt they agree the position has to be dealt with properly. Sympathy has been expressed with me in the efforts I have made to see that the displaced workers secure some compensation. Someone has to meet the expense. I am not particular whether the assistance is in the shape of other employment or monetary assistance. I shall not agree to those who are thrown out of the industry being shanghaied into the bush on relief work. I do not regard that as adequate provision.

Mr. Thorn: You can have them placed on abandoned farms.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The member for Toodyay can have a go at that himself. He did not raise his voice on their behalf when the men had to leave those farms. Those men

were allowed to drift into Perth and Fremantle, and we had to provide them with sustenance or relief work. Not a finger was raised by Country Party members to assist them.

Mr. Thorn: Of course that was not so.

Mr. SLEEMAN: It was so. It was left to city and port members to see what could be done for them. There were immigrants among the farmers who pleaded to be sent Home because they were starving. I hope members will indicate their sympathy for the men who will be displaced, by supporting the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not know that the amendment is relevant to the Bill; it is certainly open to question. The Bill deals with bulk handling, and the system to be adopted in this State, whereas the amendment seeks to defer the proclamation of the Bill. Is the amendment in order? It may appear to have some relevancy to this particular clause, but it is not relevant to the subject matter of the Bill, and that is what is required under our Standing Orders.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule that the amendment is relevant. I could state a reason in support of my ruling, but I shall not do so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I think you are wise, Mr. Chairman, in not stating your reason! I shall leave the amendment to the Committee. I told the member for Fremantle the other night that while the Government sympathised with his objective, they could not agree to an amendment of this description. Provision will have to be made in some other direction, and there are many ways open to the hon. member. I am sure Parliament and the Government will do their best to meet the situation that may arise.

Mr. TONKIN: I support the amendment; it is reasonable and desirable.

Mr. Thorn: You have a queer idea of what is reasonable.

Mr. TONKIN: The hon. member has a distorted view.

Mr. Thorn: Four hours a day! You want to make bank clerks of them.

Mr. TONKIN: If the hon. member lives long enough he will probably see the hours of labour reduced to four hours a day. We are asking that the Bill be not proclaimed until provision is made for the men who are displaced. It is generally accepted

that in the interests of the people of a nation it is necessary to provide for men and women who lose their employment through mechanisation. Now is the time to start doing that.

Mr. SLEEMAN: The Minister says this is not the right way to achieve my object. He says the farmers cannot afford to carry the obligation. The amendment will put the burden upon the right people. I want to ensure that the Bill is not proclaimed until a certain thing takes place. How could a private member bring down a Bill providing for the absorption of those men who will be displaced from the industry? The Minister knows I cannot do that. It is a side issue to suggest that this is not the right time or place to do that which I am attempting to do now. This is the only place in which it can be done. I hope the Committee, in fairness to the people concerned, will agree that something should be done for their protection.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This amendment is not relative to the subject matter of the Bill. The subject matter is the whole Bill and the principles it contains. What is your ruling on that, Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN: I have already given my ruling.

Dissent from Chairman's Ruling.

The Minister for Lands: I move—

That the Committee dissent from the Chairman's ruling.

I contend that the amendment is not relative to the subject matter of the Bill.

[*The Speaker resumed the Chair.*]

The Chairman stated the dissent.

Mr. Speaker: Does the member for Fremantle desire to speak to the dissent?

Mr. Sleeman: I think the Chairman was correct in his ruling. The amendment deals with the time when the Bill shall come into operation. The title says that the Bill shall come into operation on a date to be fixed by proclamation. The amendment simply states that the proclamation shall not be made until certain things have been done. It is quite relevant to the clause. It provides that the Bill shall not come into force until the men who are displaced in industry are provided for. What could be more relevant than to provide for the men this Bill sets out to displace?

Mr. J. H. Smith: I contend the hon. member would have been in order if he had

moved that the Bill should not come into operation until 1937. His amendment is on all fours with that principle. It is on that ground that I gave my ruling.

The Minister for Lands: The member for Nelson would have been in order if the amendment had merely altered the date of proclamation. It is, however, a question beyond that. According to the amendment, the Bill could not come into operation until certain things had been done.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Bill does not control any of those things.

The Minister for Lands: It makes no reference to the persons who are displaced.

Mr. Speaker: The member for Fremantle has moved an amendment to add to the title of the Bill a provision that it shall not come into operation until the men displaced in industry are adequately provided for, etc. The Minister for Lands has moved to disagree with the Chairman's ruling. Standing Order 277 reads—

Any amendment may be made to a clause provided the same be relevant to the subject matter of the Bill, or pursuant to any instruction, and be otherwise in conformity with the Rules and Orders of the House; but if any amendment shall not be within the title of the Bill the Committee shall extend the title accordingly, and report the same specially to the House.

The procedure of Parliament is that any amendment must be not only relevant to the Bill, but must not be beyond the scope of the Bill. Those are the two fundamentals of amendments to be made to any Bill in Committee. The first thing I have to consider is whether the amendment is relevant, and secondly whether it goes beyond the scope of the Bill. The Bill is to provide for an Act relating to the bulk handling of wheat by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.; that and no more. The amendment provides that the Bill shall not come into operation until such time as the men displaced in industry are adequately provided for. It goes far beyond the scope of the Bill, and is irrelevant to it. I must therefore uphold the contention of the Minister for Lands that the amendment is out of order.

Committee resumed.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am sorry the Chairman's ruling was not upheld. I now move an amendment—

That all the words after "operation" in line 2 be struck out.

If that amendment is agreed to I intend to move to insert other words later on. It is the duty of the Committee to see that the men who are displaced are provided for. By the attitude of certain people I am satisfied that if this is going to be done by proclamation that they will not be provided for until that proclamation is made. A definite time should be set down when the Bill shall come into operation. A period of 12 months will not be long enough. Things have not been going to my liking. Whatever is done must be done at once. If something is not done soon, the way that machinery is overtaking man's labour, we shall have more unemployed than employed. This will lead to a revolution. I hope something will be done to prevent the Bill from being proclaimed too quickly, so that the powers that be may have time in which to do what they are going to do on behalf of these men. The time has long passed when something should be done. It is the last straw that breaks the camel's back.

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

Ayes	5
Noes	26

Majority against 21

AYES.	
Mr. Fox	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Raphael	Mr. Clothier
Mr. Sleeman	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Brockman	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Doney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Seward
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Lambert	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. Troy
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Munis	Mr. Cross
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I move a further amendment—

That all the words after the word "proclamation," in line 2, be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"but shall not come into effect until the 31st day of December, 1937."

This will give the Government ample time in which to deal with the men who will be thrown out of employment.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are only trying to add to our difficulties when we come back next session.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I do not know that the hon. member will ever come back. If the amendment is carried, the Government will realise that they must do something to see that the men displaced are adequately provided for.

Mr. FOX: I support the amendment. It is time the House carried a resolution in the terms outlined by the member for Fremantle. Machinery is so rapidly taking the place of labour that we should give a lead in this matter not only to the people of Australia, but to the world.

Mr. TONKIN: New inventions and the introduction of labour-saving devices are causing unemployment. I support the amendment.

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

Ayes	7
Noes	24

Majority against 17

AYES.	
Mr. Fox	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Raphael	Mr. Clothier
Mr. Sleeman	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Brockman	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Cross	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Seward
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Troy
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Munis	Mr. Doney
	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I am not prepared to allow this clause to pass as it stands. Evidently two years is too long and the Government think they can do the job in less time. I move a further amendment—

That all the words after the word "proclamation," in line 2, be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—"but shall not come into effect until the 31st day of December, 1936."

It is immaterial to me whether the bulk handling system is put into operation in six months or six years, so long as the workers who will be thrown out of employment because of its introduction will derive some benefit.

Mr. FOX: I support the amendment. I fail to see how any member on this side of the House cannot be in accord with it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the amendment is carried it will not achieve the object of the mover. It will not carry any instruction at all to the Government to put the men displaced into employment elsewhere. The amendment is only for the purpose of delaying the Bill.

Mr. Sleeman: You have no right to say that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Government will not take that form of instruction. No Government possibly could. There are other methods by which the hon. member may be able to test the feeling of the Committee.

Mr. Sleeman: The Leader of the Opposition is not stating the truth.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am stating the exact truth.

Mr. SLEEMAN: As a matter of fact the amendment should have the effect that it is intended to have. Right throughout this evening it has been stated that hearts are bleeding for the poor men who will be displaced, and that these men should be compensated. But the hon. member also said that I sought to put the expense on the wrong quarter. The carrying of the amendment would be an instruction to the Government to provide for the men to be displaced; and the amendment declares that they shall not be displaced until after the 31st December, 1936, so that the Government may have time to make provision for them.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	..	23
Majority against					14

AYES	
Mr. Clothier	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Cross	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Fox	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Raphael	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Brockman	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Seward
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Troy
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Munsla	Mr. Doney
Mr. Nulsen	(Teller.)

Amendment thus negatived.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	24
Noes	..	..	..	..	7
Majority for					17

AYES.	
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Brockman	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Cross	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Seward
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Latham	Mr. J. M. Smith
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Troy
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Munsla	Mr. Doney
(Teller.)	
NOES.	
Mr. Clothier	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Fox	Mr. Wansbrough
Mr. Lambert	Mr. Raphael
Mr. Sleeman	(Teller.)

Clause thus passed.

Progress reported.

BILLS (4)—RETURNED.

- 1, Adelphi Hotel.
- 2, Public Service Act Amendment.
- 3, Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment.
Without amendment.
- 4, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment (No. 2).
With amendments.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT ACT, 1899, AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Received from the Council, and read a first time.

RESOLUTION—STATE FORESTS.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read, notifying that it had concurred in the Assembly's resolution.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [11.12]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourns until 4.30 p.m. to-morrow (Friday).

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.13 p.m.