

given no intimation that it had this information at hand. If one has considered the articles appearing in the Press and the speeches that have been made at conferences and meetings of farmers' unions, I think one would have to agree that few people, including the Government, knew where it was going in regard to this problem. Therefore, it is indeed heartening to know that at least it is in a position to make a decision on this vexed question.

The Minister for Transport: It has taken a lot of investigating.

Hon. D. BRAND: If for no other reason, we should commend the member for Blackwood for having brought about this decision so early in this new session of Parliament. I think the Minister might agree with me if I were to say that this motion has hastened him to make an announcement. The Minister shakes his head, but I know differently.

The Minister for Transport: About three months ago it was announced to the Farmers' Union, apart from being announced in other places.

Hon. D. BRAND: If it was, I am sure it was not announced very clearly because I am positive that such a vital announcement would have hit the headlines in the Press and it would have been conveyed to the public, no matter what our opinion of the Press might be or the attitude of any Minister towards it. If the Minister feels that the motion by the member for Blackwood is unnecessary, he should, in greater detail, tell us how he is going to tackle this problem of the rationalisation of all forms of transport.

The Minister for Transport: I mentioned the details when speaking for about three quarters of an hour about a fortnight ago, but apparently the Press is not anxious to publish those details. I explained that this inquiry had been made, and mentioned that we had received the report, but the Press apparently was not interested.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am pleased to hear that, but I still say that any inquiry with respect to road transport in this State with a view to relieving us of the problem of continuing with an uneconomic railway system is well worth while. In spite of what the Minister has said—and I am very glad to hear what he has said—I hope that he will make another effort to give a precise statement to the Press and so advise us what the intentions of the Government are and not merely tell us that this proposed inquiry is not necessary. I support the motion.

On motion by Mr. Bovell, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.10 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 27th September, 1956.

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

QUESTIONS.

TRAFFIC ACT AND REGULATIONS.

Chauffeur-driven Vehicles.

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is it a fact that chauffeur-driven vehicles not governed by the Traffic Act and regulations may be hired?

(2) Is it also a fact that such vehicles carry ordinary private vehicles licence plates and are assessed for licence fees as private vehicles?

(3) If so, is it intended to amend the existing Act in order to bring such vehicles under the control of the Traffic Act and regulations?

(4) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. All vehicles are covered by the Traffic Act and regulations. The hon. member evidently has in mind some "Drive Yourself" vehicles, which may at the option of the hirers, be hired with drivers.

(2) These vehicles carry private plates, but pay a higher insurance rate.

(3) The question is being investigated.

(4) Answered by No. (3).

EDUCATION.

(a) *Cleveland Street School, Additional Seating, etc.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Has any consideration been given to—

- (a) the provision of additional seating along the eastern edge of verandah now protected by canvas blinds;
- (b) the provision of additional protective canvas blinds in regard to the continuation of the verandah past the two new rooms;
- (c) the continuation of the bituminous surfacing to front the recent extensions;

at Cleveland Street School?

(2) If not, why not?

(3) If the answer to No. (1) is "Yes," what was the decision arrived at?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) Yes.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) Yes.
- (2) Answered by No. (1).
- (3) (a) It is not intended to provide extra seating.
- (b) It is not intended to provide additioned blinds as this would be contrary to the general policy of the department.
- (c) The additional bituminous surfacing will be provided.

(b) *North Inglewood School, Funds for Improvements.*

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it a fact that certain moneys have been allocated and labour rostered to carry out certain works at the North Inglewood school during the current financial year?

(2) If so, what amount of money has been allocated, and what are the works intended?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) Yes.
- (b) Labour has not been rostered as it is intended to invite tenders for the work.
- (2) (a) £1,250.
- (b) Ground improvements.

ROBBS JETTY ABATTOIR.

Personnel of Board, Control, etc.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What is the personnel of the board that operates the Robbs Jetty abattoir?

(2) Are they under the control of the Minister?

(3) What are the details of attendances of the personnel at meetings for the last 12 months?

(4) When and where do they meet?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There is no board operating Robbs Jetty abattoir.

(2) The abattoir is under the control of the Minister for Agriculture.

(3) and (4) Answered by No. (1).

DERMATITIS.

Warning re Detergents.

Mr. ANDREW asked the Minister for Health:

As there are quite a number of housewives who are suffering from dermatitis which has been caused through the use of detergents in their daily chores, will he have published a warning by his department to such people that they should wear rubber gloves when using detergents?

The MINISTER replied:

Not all housewives are sensitive to detergents and when they are, it is usually found that they either wear rubber gloves or go back to using ordinary soaps.

The position is being watched by the Public Health Department and a suitable Press statement will be made as soon as all the facts have been considered.

RAILWAYS.

Length, Population per Mile, etc.

Mr. ANDREW asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What is the total length of railway lines in Western Australia?

(2) Has Western Australia the smallest population per mile of railway of any State or country in the world?

(3) What is the population per mile of railway in Western Australia?

(4) How does this compare with the other States?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) The route mileage of the Western Australian Government railways is 4,119.

(2) So far as is known.

(3) 162.

(4) The latest information available for other States shows:

South Australia	....	....	319
Victoria	....	....	546
New South Wales	....	....	569
Queensland	....	....	205
Tasmania	....	....	508

These figures do not include the mileage operated by the Commonwealth Government.

CURRENTS.*Production, Disposal and Price.*

Mr. ANDREW asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What was the total production of currents in Western Australia last season?

(2) What proportions were used for—

(a) local consumption;

(b) export?

(3) What price was received for currents—

(a) sold on the local market;

(b) sold to other States;

(c) sold overseas?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 1,997 tons.

(2) (a) 237 tons.

(b) Eastern States—468 tons.
Overseas—1,146 tons.

(3) (a) Period—1st October, 1955, to 31st December, 1955—

Gross returns.	Price per lb.	
	s.	d.
4 crown	1	7½
3 crown	1	7
2 crown	1	6½
1 crown	1	6¼
Plain	1	5¼
Manufacturing	1	3½

(b) New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria—½d. off the above prices.

Queensland, Tasmania—add ½d. to above prices.

(c) Includes all Australian currents—106s. 10d. sterling per 1 cwt.

WATER SUPPLIES.*Goldfields Rating System.*

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) When was the latest water rating system adopted on the Goldfields?

(2) In what respects does this system differ from the previous one?

The MINISTER replied:

The water rating system at present in use has operated unchanged since the inception of the scheme.

NATIVE WELFARE.*Expenditure and Rations, Kalgoorlie, July and August.*

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) What amount of money was expended for the months of July and August for the provision of food rations, for distribution from the department's office at Kalgoorlie?

(2) What food commodities constitute a food ration?

(3) How many natives were in receipt of rations during July and August?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) For Kalgoorlie (includes Kurrawang mission) £705

For natives under the control of the Kalgoorlie office (i.e., Eastern Goldfields subdistrict) £5,239

(2) A copy of the department's ration scale will be tabled.

(3) Average number at Kalgoorlie (including Kurrawang mission) issued with provisions each week during July and August 60

Average number for the State 1,878

LANDS.*Applications, Tone River Area.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) How many applications for land have been granted in the Tone River area?

(2) How many applicants are awaiting allocation?

(3) What is the cause of delay, if any, in granting applications?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Four blocks have been made available and allotted.

(2) Twenty (20) applications were received.

(3) Approval notices for the applications in respect of the four blocks mentioned in No. (1) will issue after survey.

AGRICULTURE.*Vegetable Trials, Gascoyne Research Station.*

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) As the Department of Agriculture has been carrying out a programme of trials with vegetables at the Gascoyne research station, will he advise the House—

(a) the type of vegetables used in the trials;

(b) the period over which plantings took place;

(c) the approximate number of plants used in each planting of each type?

(2) Are any experiments being carried out on private properties on the Gascoyne by the department with respect to vegetables or other crops? If so, will he give brief details of each?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Onions, pumpkins, sweet potato, egg plant, capsicums, cucumbers, rock melons, water melons, sweet corn.

(b) The 15th February, 1956 to the 16th July, 1956.

(c) Vegetable seed is planted, and numbers in types are governed by germination.

An area of approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ acre has to date been sown under experimental trials, the area of each plot being necessarily small.

(2) No trials have been carried out on private properties. Private growers avail themselves of the services of the two advisers in the area, in respect of their problems.

GOVERNMENT BALANCE SHEET.

Completeness and Further Information.

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

(1) Would it be correct to say that the balance sheet of the Government of Western Australia as at the 30th June, 1956, published on page 2086 of the "Government Gazette", of the 17th August, 1956, does not show the full liabilities of the Government either with respect to determined liabilities such as deferred payments and trade creditor commitments, or contingent liabilities?

(2) If the answer is "Yes", would he agree to a revision in the form of future balance sheets so that they present a more complete disclosure of the State's financial position?

(3) Would he advise the House of the Government's contingent liabilities under guarantee and other forms of contingent financial liability?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No, as the presentation of public accounts on a cash basis is standard throughout Australia.

£

(3) Metropolitan Market	
Trust debentures -	73,268
State Housing Commission debentures	790,871
State Electricity Commission inscribed stock and debentures	9,866,700
Treasury guarantees to Rural & Industries Bank	6,724,394

STARTING PRICE BETTING.

Conviction of John Victor Godwin.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Has he seen the report in "The West Australian" of the 21st September, wherein it was stated that John Victor

Godwin, licensed starting price bookmaker of 7 Walcott-st., North Perth, was fined £10 for having made erasures on his betting sheets?

(2) As a result of this conviction, has Godwin's licence to operate as a bookmaker been withdrawn?

(3) If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. The question is one for the Betting Control Board to consider and it is listed for such consideration at the next meeting of the board to be held on the 2nd October, 1956.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th September.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [2.25]: The Minister has introduced this Bill with a view to amending the parent Act so that local authorities, at their own discretion, can establish and maintain homes for the aged in the districts in which they reside. At this stage it might be just as well to refer to the original provision dealing with this matter in the Act. It states—

Every local authority may subsidise any district nursing system, infant health centre, or hospital, public or private, for the reception of the sick generally, but any expenditure under this section shall not exceed ten per centum of the ordinary income under this Act of the local authority or one hundred pounds, whichever is the greater.

This section was amended during the final session of the 21st Parliament by substituting for the passage—

but any expenditure under this section shall not exceed ten per centum of the ordinary income under this Act of the local authority or one hundred pounds, whichever is the greater.

the passage—

or any institution or centre, residential or non-residential, for the care of the aged.

Now the Government intends to give local authorities the power to establish these homes for the aged and, as I said, the purpose for which the Bill was introduced is to enable a local authority, if it so desires, to establish these homes, whereas before, I understand, they could only contribute towards their maintenance.

I want to be quite clear that the Government is not introducing this measure with a view to shelving its own obligations. I quite agree that it is desirable that homes of this nature should be available so that the aged people can be catered for in the district in which they

have lived for most of their lives. Nobody wants to be taken hundreds of miles away to live in an environment different from that in which he has spent most of the years of his life.

Mr. May: They would be lucky to get in there, too.

Mr. BOVELL: I support the Bill because it is a move in the right direction, but I hope that neither this nor any future Government will shelve its responsibilities and force local authorities to establish these homes for the aged which would have the result of ratepayers in the districts concerned having to maintain them. In my opinion, it is a Government responsibility to establish these homes, but I quite agree that if local authorities want to carry out the work, and they have the approval of the ratepayers, they should be permitted to do so.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The number of homes that the local authorities will be able to establish will be very limited. I think.

Mr. BOVELL: That is quite so; but, as the Minister said when introducing the Bill, it was mainly to comply with a request from the Perth City Council. I support the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre—in reply) [2.30]: The principle behind the Bill is to help aged people throughout the State. The Government is not trying to shelve its responsibility. It will contribute one-third of the amount of £3,000 supplied by a local authority, which amount is the maximum to be paid by the Government in any one year. The Government will also contribute towards any maintenance that is carried out in any year to the extent of one-third of the cost not exceeding £500 in any one year.

Therefore, this measure will assist the aged people to enjoy some comfort which they deserve. It will allow them to congregate together in these establishments so that they may relax and reminisce. It will afford an opportunity to local authorities to provide these elderly people with recreational facilities such as a bowling green for the males and a croquet green for the females. Also, the Lotteries Commission has promised to contribute towards the establishment of the homes built under this proposed scheme. That would come within its own jurisdiction, of course, but I feel sure that that commission will contribute one-third of the cost, together with the one-third contribution from a local authority.

Mr. Roberts: Is that amount of £3,000 to be spent in each year or can it be accumulated?

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is the maximum that can be spent on any one home.

Mr. Roberts: But it is not cumulative?

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No. However, if the local authority raised £9,000, the Government would probably raise £3,000 and no doubt the Lotteries Commission would contribute £3,000. These proposed homes are not for the aged people to live in, but they are to be places where they can meet and indulge in recreation or activities which will discourage them from entering hotels and betting shops because they only go into those places to seek company.

Hon. D. Brand: Do the plans have to be approved by the Government before the building is commenced?

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, they will be subject to the approval of the health authority. The Government will also make sure that the plans are reasonably adequate. Local authorities will not only come under this scheme, but also any organisation recognised by the Government.

Mr. Hall: Will it also apply to holiday homes?

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It should, but it does not specifically make reference to holiday homes. However, if it can be applied to such homes, no objection would be raised. It would be subject to the approval of the management of the particular place, wherever it is established.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you mean to say that the Government will subsidise the erection of a holiday home for aged people which would not be occupied all the time?

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not understand what the hon. member means.

Hon. D. Brand: I am just going a little further following on the question asked by the member for Albany. I thought you did not understand what he said.

Mr. Hall: I was referring to a home for the aged sick. A place where they could be sent to spend a holiday or to convalesce.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member can discuss the Bill in detail later in the Committee stage if he so desires.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—PROFITEERING AND UNFAIR TRADING PREVENTION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th September.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [2.37]: I would like to have a word or two to say on this measure because it has caused so much talk during the last few days. I would not dream of disappointing the member for Roe in so doing because he was so persistent last night in inquiring whether the member for Fremantle intended to speak. I will not be long in enlightening him. He was also complaining bitterly that the members on this side of the House were inconsistent. I sincerely congratulate the member for Roe and his colleagues opposite on their continued consistency.

One has only to criticise one of these big firms and one will see how members opposite will rush to its protection. They are always out to protect big business, and they have never failed yet. I admit that I am always willing to do everything I can for the worker and the people I represent, and there was no doubt that members opposite never fail to protect the people whom they represent and they certainly do not comprise the workers of this country.

I am sorry that the member for Roe was so antagonistic towards this Bill. He worked himself into a frenzy. Then I remembered that he was the managing director of a very large firm.

Hon. L. Thorn: Yes, a co-operative firm that looks after the workers.

The Minister for Transport: When is it going to start?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: There you are, Mr. Speaker! The member for Toodyay immediately starts to protect a co-operative firm and says it looks after the workers. The hon. member said the co-operative firm had won its way through by hard work and that all its profits were paid out in bonuses. However, there were not many bonuses paid to the workers. I notice that the member for Moore has just arrived in the Chamber. He said that all these co-operative companies were going to pay bonuses to the workers.

Mr. Nalder: Some members of your party belong to the same company.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: No doubt there may be some mixed up in it, but they can speak for themselves.

Mr. SPEAKER: I suggest that the member for Fremantle looks this way and he will get on a lot better.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I wish you would stop them interjecting, Mr. Speaker, because they put me off. The member for Roe became so excited that for a moment I almost thought there was something in

what he said. Then I suddenly remembered that he was the managing-director of this patriotic and generous co-operative firm. I heard the whole story about this particular firm. It is said that it has a splendid tie-up with the petrol suppliers and those who supply gas for household use. One cannot even buy the stove in which to burn this petrol gas unless one buys it through this firm of which the member for Roe is the managing director.

Mr. Ackland: Don't you realise you are talking about two different firms which have no connection at all?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I know what I am talking about, and I would advise the member for Moore to look after his own side of the business. The whole affair is wrapped up with this huge combine of gas. Some complaint was made that they had to pay £15 for their bottles, and £4 odd a year for the maintenance of those bottles. The fact that it is necessary to pay £4 a year for the maintenance of those bottles does not sound good to me at all. Anyway, when the member for Roe gets back, he will have a chance on the third reading of explaining to me how this firm, of which he is managing director, labours on behalf of the working class. The member for Moore can also tell us of the bonuses given by this firm; he says it is not the other firm—it is probably a 31st cousin.

Hon. L. Thorn: I understand that you are protesting about this liquid gas because it interferes with the Fremantle Gas Co. of which you are a shareholder.

Mr. Moir: It is a pity it doesn't interfere with some of the gas here!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: That is the sort of interjection we expect from the member for Toodyay. We certainly have plenty of gas here. The gas to which he refers is not required because local gas is used at present, so Fremantle does not come into it at all.

Mr. May: They are using Collie coal.

Hon. L. Thorn: No, they are not; they are getting it from Newcastle.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: From the remarks made by the member for Toodyay, I feel that he ought to be on the publicity campaign over the air. I have listened to and read a lot about the publicity given to this "dreadful profiteering Bill"; and I have heard such remarks as, "How would you like to have a shop full of groceries and have to sell them all at a loss?" That is the sort of tripe that is being put out against the Bill, because the friends of members opposite are likely to get hurt. The member for Roe no doubt thought that if this measure were passed, his company would be declared guilty and he would have to answer a few questions. The clause in the Bill which relates to the managing director being asked a few questions, is the one to which members opposite have objected very strongly.

I will now pass on to the other firm that makes this gas. There was a gift made to the Kwinana concern by a firm called "McLarty, Brand & Co."

Mr. Court: Limited or Unlimited?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Leader of the Opposition and his deputy gave that firm everything in order to establish it here.

Hon. D. Brand: Why did you not tell us at the time?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I would suggest that the hon. member keep quiet for a moment. After having given this firm all the gifts imaginable, including such items as free wharfage and pilotage, we find that it sells oil to the people of South Australia at £2 a ton less than it supplies it to Western Australia. That is the sort of gratitude we receive from this firm.

Mr. Wild: If it does, how does it affect you?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: What a stupid question! It affects the people of this country who are doing so much for this firm, and who are paying thousands of pounds out of their pockets; and yet we find that this firm, by way of gratitude, sells oil to South Australia at £2 a ton less than it does to the people of this State. That is how it affects me. Does it not affect the member for Dale and his people? Does it not affect the people of Western Australia? I daresay the hon. member will say it does not; but I say it does. That is the sort of gratitude we find handed out to the people by this firm. It is nothing short of biting the hand that feeds one, and I think it is time that a measure such as this was passed to enable questions to be asked not only of firms like the one I have mentioned, but others as well.

But that is not the worst part of it. This firm was given all the privileges necessary to refine its products. I do not complain about that. What I do complain about is the lack of gratitude that has been shown. Now, however, it is bringing in refined cargoes and not cargoes that have to be refined at Cockburn Sound as was originally intended. We find that the Harbour Trust authorities send this firm an account which it should pay just as any other firm, and what happens? The firm sends that bill back to the Harbour Trust which, in turn, sends it on to the Government, asking if it can help. The Government says it cannot help because the privilege was given to it by the firm of "McLarty, Brand & Co." the privilege of not having to pay for refined cargo. Tomorrow it can bring in cargo after cargo and not pay one penny piece under the agreement given to the firm.

It is bad enough giving the State of South Australia oil at £2 a ton less than the price charged to the people of this State, but to bring in refined oil cargoes and refuse to pay is, I think, the stone end.

I understand that the Crown Law Department has said that that was not intended. Be that as it may, it was done here. The oil firms in the East do not get away with that sort of thing; they have to pay a reasonable amount for the privileges given to them by the Governments of the respective States in which they are operating.

Hon. D. Brand: Does the company pay nothing at all?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The hon. member knows what the agreement contains and he can answer that question. I am not in the witness box.

Hon. D. Brand: You are making the speech.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I would like to ask the hon. member what he thinks of the agreement he gave that firm which enabled it to bring in refined oil without paying anything at all to the Fremantle Harbour Trust. There are thousands of pounds owing. I would like to have some of the money owing for use in helping the poor unemployed in this State instead of having it go where it does.

Hon. L. Thorn: A lot of it was paid to the lumpers for doing nothing.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I am glad the hon. member said that because it reminds me of a statement made by the member for Moore. He said that four men came along—

Mr. Ackland: I said six men.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: —and it took them all day to chop a little tree down and cut it up. I would like to tell the member for Moore that they were probably following the advice given by the cockys to the effect that they should grow less wheat. That was their motto—"Grow less wheat and you will get a bigger price for it." So it is likely that they followed the advice given by the member for Moore and his colleagues to do a little less work and get more money for it.

There are plenty of other cases of profiteering with which I will not weary the House at the moment. But let us have a look at the portion of the Bill which has raised such a storm. The relevant provision is Clause 36 (2) which reads as follows:—

Where a person convicted of an offence against this Act is a corporate body, every person who, at the time of the commission of the offence, was a director or officer of the body corporate shall be deemed to be guilty of the offence unless he proves that the offence was committed without his knowledge, or that he used all due diligence to prevent the commission of the offence.

Let us imagine for a moment that "McLarty, Brand & Co." is a firm that is up on a charge and that it is convicted.

It does not have to prove its innocence; it is found guilty. Then the authorities contend that this company was guilty, therefore the managing director must also be guilty, and he will be charged. He will have to prove that he had nothing to do with the offence.

As far as I am concerned, on this matter I stand where I have always stood. This is not exactly a parallel case, but it is nearly a thirty-second cousin to it. I hope that when the Bill is dealt with in Committee some alteration will be made in this respect. For about 20 years I have been attempting to have such an anomaly altered and I am hoping that during this session I shall be able to bring down a Bill to provide that where such an anomaly occurs in any Act, it shall not apply. If I had my way, such a provision would be made law.

I am sorry that my friend the member for Roe is not here. He claimed to know all about this matter but he does not seem to be present when I want to address my remarks to him. Today he is busy, and I accept that as the reason for his absence.

Mr. Court: I think you are dealing with an entirely different clause to the one he was complaining about.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: He wanted to know my sentiments! I can quote no greater authority than Lord Halsbury, when he said on page 378, Vol. 9, Laws of England—

The general rule of evidence is he who affirms must prove. Therefore a defendant who pleads not guilty throws upon the prosecution the burden of proving that the facts alleged in the indictment are true. In all criminal trials where the defendant pleads not guilty, the burden of proof is on the prosecution who must prove the facts that are alleged in the indictment. But a person cannot be convicted of stealing goods of an unknown person unless due proof is made that a felony was committed in respect of these goods.

That is a perfect explanation and represents my sentiments, upon which the member for Roe wanted to be enlightened. I also wish to quote the remarks of Mr. Justice Napier of South Australia who once said—

If the law of a free country is to provide for the punishment of suspected persons and to require suspected but quite possibly innocent people to be fined or sent to gaol merely because they cannot prove their innocence under circumstances which to me as to other judges have seemed startling, the responsibility for propounding this as the law must rest with the legislature, not with the court.

That is another tenet which we should all remember. I trust that within the next few months we will be able to amend the laws of this State.

It is all right to prosecute a person and find him guilty of unlawful possession, but that is the easy way to go about it. He is charged with unlawful possession and he has to prove his innocence. That is not a fair method. If a person is in possession of an ounce of gold, he has to prove his innocence; but if a mine manager is charged summarily with the fraudulent conversion of money or stealing or anything else, he has the right to be tried by a judge and jury. Furthermore he must be proved guilty of that offence before he can be convicted.

In the old days certain acts were considered as terrible crimes and the stealing of an ounce of gold was viewed with such severity that an accused person must prove his innocence. However, if a person stole a house and furniture from a widow, he had the right to be tried by judge and jury, and the prosecution had to prove him guilty.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot alter that position by this Bill.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I was only answering the point raised by my friend opposite. He contended that under this Bill the accused had to prove his innocence, but that is not the position at all. I am repeating the opinion of people who should know these things and, in fact, do know about them. The anomaly I referred to has for too long been on the statute book of this State, and if there is anything I can do to remedy the position, I shall do it. I congratulate my friends opposite on their consistency. No doubt they are looking after the people they represent. They are out to protect the big man.

Mr. Wild: And the little man.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Members opposite will put the gun into the little man. They will see that the arbitration Bill and the workers' compensation Bill are thrown out of another place so that the little man will not be able to benefit. Therefore how can members opposite say that they are looking after the interests of the little man? I support this Bill.

MR. MOIR (Boulder) [2.55]: If there was one thing needed to convince anyone of the justice in bringing down this measure, it was amply furnished by the speeches and performances of members opposite. They literally tumbled over themselves to attack the Bill, not in any calm manner or by putting up reasoned arguments, but, in the case of a few of them, by indulging in what can only be described as a diatribe against the measure. It makes one wonder what spurs them on to this furious activity against the Bill. I can only come to the conclusion

that strong and powerful interests are involved. When those interests speak, our friends on the opposite side have to jump to their tune.

I would like to deal briefly with an advertisement which appeared in this morning's issue of "The West Australian." I consider that the Labour Party should be looked on very kindly by this newspaper, and it should be treated very well from the publicity angle, because the Labour Party can bring so much revenue to that newspaper by way of full-page advertisements that are inserted as well as smaller advertisements. As stated, this advertisement was inserted by the Citizens' Rights Association.

The Premier: You mean by the chief robbers?

Mr. MOIR: When I saw that name I asked myself where I had seen it before. On reflection, I had to go back a few years. This Citizens' Rights Association was last active in 1949. Since then quite a lot of legislation and matters that affected the citizens of this State have received attention, but we have not heard a word of protest from the Citizens' Rights Association.

I can recall the amendments made to the Industrial Arbitration Act under the McLarty-Watts Government. Severe penalties were provided which, in the opinion of many people, seemed very unjust, but those amendments to the arbitration Act were passed. We did not hear anything from the Citizens' Rights Association then, not one word. More recently a matter of great moment to every citizen in this State was the picture of considerable unemployment, but not one word came from the Citizens' Rights Association!

Mr. Wild: Who created the unemployment?

Mr. MOIR: One would think that it was the duty of every citizen of this State to see that the people were gainfully employed, but not one word was uttered by that association regarding unemployment. I have come to the conclusion that that association has been named wrongly. It should have been named the "Privileged Citizens' Rights Association," seeing that it comes to light, and in no uncertain manner, when certain interests in this State are affected by legislation that comes before Parliament.

Mr. Wild: Would they be the citizens who have done something for the State and for themselves by saving a few bob which you want to take away from them?

Mr. MOIR: I would advise the hon. member to keep quiet for a while.

Mr. Wild: Not when you talk rot like that.

Mr. MOIR: The hon. member should save himself up for other occasions. I propose to deal with a statement he made

in his speech on the Bill on Tuesday evening. This advertisement, to which I have referred, is intended to frighten the everyday citizen about the objects of this Bill. What a dreadful measure this is! The advertisement even mentions Magna Charta, which, of course, is a very over-worked term when one considers that it was the barons that forced King John to abrogate some of his powers in favour not of the common people but of the barons. I have read quite a lot of history, but after Magna Charta was signed, I never discovered any of the barons going home and releasing the serfs on their own properties. I think it is time we had another Magna Charta for the common people and the underprivileged few.

Mr. Court: You will, of course, agree it was a vital landmark in the interests of the British people.

Mr. MOIR: It was a starting point but the privileges and rights the people enjoy, have been obtained by legislation in the Parliaments of the country.

Mr. Ackland: Now you put it in reverse.

Mr. MOIR: Legislation of the nature of the Bill before us today is to protect the citizens from the privileged barons in the community. There is too much poppycock in this advertisement to deal with it all, but I think it is rather an amusing one and indicative of the mentality of these people when they use such methods to try to scare the ordinary citizen. There is one section headed, "To all who read between the lines." It reads—

George Orwell wrote a book called "1984." Have you read it? It showed what happened in a Police State. In the wall in every room in every home there was a television eye. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU.

I tried to visualise who the big brother would be and, of course, there is no doubt by the tenor of this advertisement that it is our worthy and esteemed leader, the Premier. I had quite a bit of a chuckle because in no sense of the imagination could he be regarded as the big brother of George Orwell's book. It goes on to say—

Western Australia is still a fair way from this; some say, a long way. But the Profiteering and Unfair Trading Bill is a move in its direction.

They did consider that our Premier has not developed to the big brother stage yet.

Mr. Court: We haven't got television yet.

Mr. MOIR: Did members ever hear such tosh? It is just utter tripe! Then it goes on to mention about the Gestapo.

Mr. Norton: Where is their headquarters?

Mr. MOIR: There is no address. Generally speaking, associations are an open book, so to speak. They democratically elect all officers and have a certain membership, but the details concerning this particular body are kept in the utmost secrecy. No one knows the membership, the president or the secretary. I have never found anybody who belonged to it.

The Minister for Labour: The member for Nedlands may know.

Mr. Court: I suggest you go to the association's office and find out.

Mr. MOIR: I can only come to the conclusion that the person who wrote the advertisement also wrote the speeches for the Opposition.

The Premier: The member for Bunbury is self-conscious!

Mr. MOIR: I am very sorry the member for Dale has vacated his seat, after my giving him the advice that I will be dealing with his remarks on this Bill. I do not like to deal with a member who is not in his seat, but he had a warning. The other night when the member for Dale spoke against this Bill, his was an absolutely amusing speech for any responsible member to make.

The Premier: He is not responsible.

Mr. MOIR: He is supposed to be responsible. He puts himself up to the electors as being a responsible person and no doubt they take him at his word because they have again returned him to be their member for a further three years. However, we have this extraordinary statement from the member for Dale. Amongst other things he said—

We have in power a Labour Government which believes in socialism. I gradually reconciled myself to the fact that this was just another link that they desired to create. If ever there was a Minister who has endeavoured to do this, it is the one who has just coughed.

The Minister who was said to have coughed, was the Minister for Labour. It is evidently an offence to cough, especially when it can be linked with socialism.

Mr. Court: It was a very expressive cough.

Mr. MOIR: There is evidently a socialistic type of cough because several members here have it, and it is fairly equally distributed. To revert to the statement of the member for Dale, which I read to the House, what an extraordinary assertion it was to make! Incidentally, I am very glad the member for Dale has resumed his seat in order to hear what I have to say, although no doubt he is well aware of what he said. Quite frankly, he regards workers' compensation as socialistic legislation.

Mr. Wild: I do, when you go mad with it to the extent that industry cannot stand it.

Mr. MOIR: I point out that this statement was made absolutely without qualification.

Mr. Wild: It was not at all.

Mr. MOIR: It is no good the member for Dale saying, "It was not at all". There is no qualification in his statement, nor is any implied.

Mr. Wild: You are putting the workers into the drink by pricing them out of the world's markets.

Mr. MOIR: We find that workers' compensation is regarded as socialistic legislation.

Mr. Wild: It is, if you ask for too much.

Mr. MOIR: Even the opposition indulges in socialistic legislation, because when its members constituted the Government, they amended the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. Wild: With reason.

Mr. MOIR: If the member for Dale stands square with his conscience, he should resign immediately from the party to which he belongs, because it did things with which he is not in accord. He also includes industrial arbitration which he regards as being socialistic. I suppose the member for Dale would rather see the law of the jungle prevail.

The Premier: He would so long as he was the jungle-keeper.

Mr. MOIR: Those are true words spoken.

Mr. Wild: I suppose you would like to see the penal clauses taken out of the Industrial Arbitration Act so that you and your mates could go on strike any time you or they wanted to.

Mr. MOIR: When the hon. member includes me, I think he makes a mistake because as a member of this Parliament I have never been on strike, which is more than he can say. It is not long ago when he walked out of the Chamber in a huff, and was not here to attend to the business of his electors.

Hon. D. Brand: Have you read Federal Hansard? There was a walk-out there led by Dr. Evatt.

Mr. MOIR: It is extraordinary that a responsible member of this Parliament should be guilty of such utterances. I only hope that the people in his electorate will find out the sort of utterances he makes here and will know that it gives him the utmost displeasure to see amendments made to the Workers' Compensation Act, and that he regards the Industrial Arbitration Act of this State as socialistic legislation.

Mr. Wild: I hope you come out and get on the platform and talk.

Mr. MOIR: I know that members opposite do not want any part of the Bill notwithstanding that similar legislation exists in Great Britain and the United States of America, both regarded as being among the foremost of the democratic countries of the world today. However, what is good enough for those countries is not good enough for little Western Australia! Members opposite think there is no right to interfere with anybody here. They have told us that we must not have our way of life interfered with, yet when the Opposition has been the Government, its Ministers have introduced legislation to interfere with the way of life of a lot of people, principally workers. But evidently when a Bill comes before the House to interfere with the way of trading of certain interests, it is a bad Bill indeed. Special mention has been made of the penalties. They have been referred to as "savage" and "vicious."

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do not forget "diabolical."

Mr. MOIR: I remind the House, and particularly the Leader of the Opposition, of the amendments that were introduced in 1952 to the arbitration Act, by which penalties of up to £500 were imposed, and penalties of £100 or six months' imprisonment, or both, were liberally sprinkled through the measure. Members opposite ought to talk about a £500 fine, imposed on some firm, as being vicious, when they introduced legislation to provide for a £500 fine on workers! Mention was also made about the clause dealing with the onus of proof. The onus of proof is provided for in that legislation. The onus is on the worker to prove that a strike was not a strike.

Mr. Court: Have you had a look at the penalties that Dr. Evatt put into the Commonwealth industrial law about 1949?

Mr. Wild: A deathly silence!

Mr. MOIR: This particular section applies to the position that arises when two workers, after conferring together, cease employment and their action is then declared a strike, and it is a strike until they prove to the president of the Arbitration Court that it is not. Those men could easily lose £500 in wages before they got a determination of their case. I cannot believe that members of the Opposition are sincere in their criticism of the Bill when they refer to vicious penalties. I have here the Prices Control Act, which is described as—

An Act to provide for the control of prices and rates of certain goods and services and for other purposes.

This measure was introduced into this House in 1948 when our friends opposite were the Government, and it was assented to on the 20th September, 1948. That legislation provides for a £500 penalty,

and because of the way the value of money has deteriorated since then, that was a far more severe penalty than is £500 today.

To show the hypocrisy of the Opposition, I have another measure here, the Profiteering Prevention Act of 1939 which was assented to on the 13th October, 1939. This was not introduced when the present Opposition was the Government, but there were at the time sufficient numbers of their colleagues in the Legislative Council to reject the measure if they felt it was necessary to do so. That Act provides for penalties of up to £500 including penalties of £200 or six months, or both. Again I suggest that in 1939 the sum of £500 was equivalent, practically, to what £2,000 would be today. How insincere are our friends of the Opposition when they protest about the penalties!

Another matter that they protested vigorously about was the fact that the commissioner would have the right of entry. In the Profiteering Prevention Act of 1939 the right of entry was also provided. Section 24 of that measure states—

If the commissioner has at any time reason to suspect that—

- (a) any person has been guilty of any offence against this Act with respect to any commodity under investigation pursuant to section eleven of this Act; or
- (b) any such commodity is kept, stored, or had in possession and has not been duly included in any prescribed return;

he may, by an order, authorise any State officer to seize, take possession of, carry away, and detain such commodity, and for such purpose, with any necessary assistants, to enter any place and search for such commodity and to use such force as may be necessary, and, if necessary, open any chests, packages, or other things in which any such commodity is or is supposed to be.

The Minister for Native Welfare: Who introduced that measure?

Mr. MOIR: No word is contained in that section about a warrant being necessary, although it seemed to perturb members opposite when dealing with this anti-profiteering legislation. There was no necessity to get a warrant then. They agreed to this measure.

Mr. Court: Do you know the life of the Act that you have just quoted?

Mr. MOIR: I am not concerned with the life of it, or what was done with it. The fact is that it was passed by this Chamber and another place, and was eventually put on the statute book. I

know there was no necessity to use it because the Commonwealth Government brought in legislation under which the National Security Regulations were issued.

Mr. Court: It was only to apply for six months after the cessation of the war.

Mr. MOIR: We know that it was wartime legislation, but I put this to members opposite: If there are people in the community who are so dastardly as to profiteer in wartime, what is to prevent them from profiteering in peacetime? Nothing at all.

Mr. Court: The circumstances are entirely different.

Mr. MOIR: When the country is fighting for its life and the citizens are pouring out their blood, and others are working in civilian jobs to keep the troops in the front line, and we know that we will have people in our midst who will profiteer if they have the chance, legislation has to be introduced to stop them, and what, I ask, is to prevent people from profiteering in peacetime? According to members opposite, what is a heinous offence in wartime is no offence at all in times of peace. Then these people can put their hands into the pockets of the citizens and take out as much as they like.

Mr. Wild: Who is doing it?

Mr. MOIR: I know members opposite will say, "You don't have to buy the article," but nowadays we have not the position that existed years ago when there was competition among those who had articles to sell. Today we have associations and combines which put their heads together and decide not to sell below a certain price.

Mr. Wild: Give us an instance.

Mr. MOIR: The oil companies compete for business but do not compete in regard to the price of the goods they sell. There seems to be complete unanimity on that point. It is remarkable that the various oil companies can bring oil from different parts of the world in a refined state, or import it and refine it here and yet it is all sold on the local market at exactly the same price. One would have to be a babe in the woods not to believe that there was collusion there and that the oil companies put their heads together to determine the ultimate price to the consumer.

Hon. D. Brand: Do you know of any case of profiteering on the Goldfields?

Mr. MOIR: The people of the Goldfields are reasonably respectable in that regard. Reverting to the advertisement to which I previously referred, it also says, "Inflation is Not Caused by Profits. Premier's Statement Nonsense." We know that at present there is a great deal of inflation and we have heard from members opposite that the major cause of it is the rise in wages. We have seen attempts made to halt the rise in wages and, according to members opposite, the quarterly adjustment of wages

is iniquitous, yet when those adjustments were suspended in 1953 that did not prevent the cost of living going up. When the quarterly adjustments were continued on the 9th September, 1955, the basic wage went to £12 17s. 1d. as against £12 6s. 6d. when it was suspended in 1953. We must bear in mind that under the system of determination of the wage, there was £1 4s. 1d. which was not taken into account, which means that the workers of this State are now £1 4s. 1d. worse off than they were when the cost of living adjustments were suspended in 1953.

We had price control in this State when it was administered all over the Commonwealth by the Commonwealth Government, until 1948, and it is interesting to recall what happened during the war years. The cost of living, as measured by the basic wage, held reasonably static, considering that it was wartime, and there was only a slight upward movement, but, as the result of the referendum in 1948, when our friends opposite took a vigorous part and were instrumental in defeating the referendum, the State took control of the prices legislation. The basic wage in November, 1948, was £6 1s. 7d. and at present it is £13 1s. 6d., an increase of £7 or over 100 per cent. We know that price control on a State basis was an absolute failure.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOIR: There is no doubt that this legislation is long overdue. The people who are not profiteering have nothing to fear from it and will not know it is on the statute book. The honest trader and he who is not greedy will not be affected by it, but those who are greedy and avaricious will have everything to fear.

Mr. Court: How will you distinguish between the two under this measure?

Mr. MOIR: There is no need to consult Webster's Dictionary in order to decide that. I know that the member for Nedlands and I could never agree on what is a fair profit.

The Minister for Lands: The sky is his limit.

Mr. MOIR: I suppose he has had his hands in the sugar bowl for a long time now. The person that the privileged citizens' rights association is trying to scare is the small business man and I suggest that even the member for Dale, with his little furniture factory, would have nothing to fear from this measure.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What about his chook farm?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: But what about the other provisions—

Mr. MOIR: The Leader of the Opposition has already made one second reading speech and, if he desires to speak again, I suggest that he do it on the third reading.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: This is the first time I have interrupted you.

Mr. MOIR: There is no doubt that this measure is long overdue.

Mr. Court: Do you agree with all the points in it?

Mr. MOIR: Labour's political opponents have been ready in their advocacy of wage control, but as soon as it is suggested that profits should be investigated or that people should be made to do the fair thing in trading, there are loud cries of indignation. During the period when wages were practically static, prices continued to rise. We know that wages played no part in that. They did not play a major part such as members opposite assert they did. Anyone who has studied these matters knows that one of the items which bulk large in our costs is the price charged by firms for commodities—that covers a wide range, but I do not include commodities used in the home—necessary to carry on the work of the State.

I think it is high time we had legislation such as this. No doubt some alterations will be made to it in the Committee stage but I think it is well worth while to introduce legislation of this nature and pass it through Parliament in a reasonable form—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Reasonable!

Mr. MOIR: —so that if there are those who are profiteering and indulging in unfair trading methods, they can be stopped, because stopped they should be in the interests of the people of the State generally.

MR. MARSHALL (Wembley Beaches) [3.31]: This Bill proposes to prevent profiteering and unfair trading. I have listened attentively, as one of the new members in this House, to some ideas members opposite had about this legislation and what they considered should be done in regard to it. I think that most of the speeches made from the Opposition benches emphasised certain specific parts of the legislation more than should have been done and did not mention the other sections of it. I refer particularly to the penal clauses. They were emphasised by members opposite far more than any other parts of the Bill apparently because they feel that there must be some who are profiteering and conducting unfair trading and that these penal clauses will eventually effect them.

Penal clauses in any legislation affect only those at whom those clauses are directed and it is only natural that members opposite would object to them in this instance. As regards penal clauses in themselves, I possibly have something in common with those members. But I would also remind them that there are a number of penal clauses in a lot of other legislation for which members opposite were responsible, and as a consequence they should object to them, too; they cannot have it both ways. If it is good enough to insert penal clauses in legislation which reacts

against the ordinary worker, then members opposite must agree to the insertion of penal clauses into an Act which is aimed at those on the other side of the Chamber.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Did we inflict any punishments that compelled any person to carry a placard around to show that he had been punished?

Mr. MARSHALL: I am glad the Leader of the Opposition asked that question.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I would be glad to hear what you think about it.

Mr. MARSHALL: It is quite obvious that if members opposite claim that the penal clauses inserted in other legislation have not been implemented, I cannot understand why they are squealing in this instance because it is quite possible that the Government would not implement the penal clauses in regard to this legislation.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I did not say that they had not been implemented.

Mr. MARSHALL: I think the main purpose of the Bill is to protect the purchasing public and in the main the purchasing public is comprised of workers because these profiteering traders would not exist if the workers did not have to purchase goods from them. It is quite obvious, too, that the money that is spent can come only from workers' pay envelopes. They have to purchase goods but one interjector said that they did not have to buy if they did not want to.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What is your definition of "worker"?

Mr. MARSHALL: I think that the amount of money in the pay envelopes of workers must be looked at to ensure that they get the best possible value for their money.

Mr. O'Brien: And not be robbed.

Mr. MARSHALL: When one looks at the basic wage—

Hon. D. Brand: Are they robbed on the Murchison? The Murchison Inn, maybe?

Mr. MARSHALL: —one finds that at the outbreak of war, at the end of 1939, the basic wage was £4 2s. 2d. and in the ten-year period up to the end of 1949 it had risen to £6 15s. 11d. From that it is clear that the controls which were instituted during the war period had some considerable effect on stabilising prices and that the basic wage did not rise to an exorbitant figure. But it is remarkable that immediately the Menzies-Fadden Government took control of the Federal Parliament and lifted price controls on everything possible, prices increased.

Hon. A. F. Watts: The people lifted it long before that Government came into office.

Mr. MARSHALL: From the end of 1949 up to the 23rd July this year the basic wage increased from £6 15s. 11d. to £13 1s.

6d. It has always been argued, by some people, that every increase in the basic wage forces prices up. But anybody who has dealt with industrial legislation knows full well that there is an intervening period between the time prices go up and wages are increased. If it is considered that a rise in wages is justified, prices must have risen in the previous quarterly period otherwise the court would not declare an increase.

That has been the position from 1949 up to the present day and workers' wages have been chasing prices. In the intervening period, while the worker is waiting for an increase in his wages commensurate with the increase in prices, his standard of living is reduced because he is paying more for his goods and services in comparison with the money he is receiving. To argue that because the basic wage goes up we have to increase prices, is ridiculous.

In 1953 the Government felt that some different policy should be adopted in order to prevent the serious inflationary spiral, which was in existence at that time, from growing, and the basic wage was pegged. That was in September, 1953. This policy also affected margins and during that period no increase in margins was allowed by the industrial court. The workers accepted this idea more or less peacefully in an endeavour to try to keep the cost of living down and to stop the inflationary spiral. But what has been the position since then? We have found that the cost of living has been steadily rising and the workers have not had sufficient money in their pay envelopes to keep up with increased prices. There must be some reason why this inflationary spiral has been steadily growing.

It must be remembered that during the war years rates of interest on investments were controlled at somewhere about 4 per cent. for industry and other forms of investment. Ever since controls have been lifted, the banks and the insurance companies have had their fields of investment limited and as a result the cost to the consuming public has risen considerably. There is no doubt that in some respects a considerable degree of profiteering has been practised. This legislation will have some effect in restraining people who have been indulging in those practices.

Mr. Court: You said that you think there has been a considerable degree of profiteering. Can you give us a case of it? No one is prepared to cite a case.

Mr. MARSHALL: The member for Nedlands could give us a lot more information on that score than can members on this side of the House.

The Minister for Lands: That is what the Bill is for.

Mr. Court: The reply by the member for Wembley Beaches is a most extraordinary one.

Mr. MARSHALL: There is no doubt that the member for Nedlands knows more about the subject of profiteering than I would.

Mr. Court: You give me credit for knowledge that I have not got.

Mr. MARSHALL: It has been found that in our system of trading large monopolies have grown up and in consequence they have been able to apply restrictions to trade by demanding that a certain price shall be charged for a particular commodity. As a result, the consuming public has had to pay more than it should for that commodity.

I am not referring to perishables such as vegetables and other foodstuffs because there is a certain amount of supply and demand in regard to these. However, with other commodities for which there is an appreciably large demand by the consuming public there has been a fair amount of profiteering. If the Bill is passed, I am certain that it will have a good effect. Similar legislation has been passed in other States. If placed on the statute book, the measure may assist to stabilise the basic wage.

Statistics have been produced before the Arbitration Court in an endeavour to prove that the existing basic wage should be higher than it is. On the figures presented it would appear that the basic wage is now about 24s. less than it should be. I am not suggesting that we should demand automatically that the basic wage should be increased to agree with the statistical figures, but I think that under this legislation we can possibly control profiteering and any form of unfair trading.

Mr. Wild: What about giving us your example of unfair trading? Does it occur in the food line, or where?

Mr. MARSHALL: With the controlling of the basic wage—

Mr. Wild: You do not know.

Mr. MARSHALL: —we could stabilise prices, reduce our costs and consequently enable the consuming public to get better value for their money than they are getting at the moment. At the present time it is quite simple to borrow money at a high rate of interest, but if the basic wage is pegged, it will mean that a greater strain will be placed on the family resources in order to pay for the necessities of life. I support the second reading of the Bill and hope it will be passed.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.5 p.m.

MR. OLDFIELD (Mt. Lawley) [4.5]: This Bill in its present form is entirely unacceptable. It contains some of the most outrageous of clauses and for that reason I reserve the right to oppose the third reading if it is not suitably amended. I have closely studied the amendments appearing in the notice paper and I find

that they are mainly directed towards undesirable practices now prevalent in certain industries. I am convinced that if there were entirely free competition in these industries, there would be no need for any control whatsoever.

A select committee was recently appointed by this House to inquire into these practices, but it will be at least another twelve months before anything can be done to put into effect any of the proposals which that committee may recommend. I notice one amendment in the notice paper proposing to limit the life of the Act to twelve months. In my opinion, this provision is essential because by the end of that time the select committee's report will be available and the House will be in a position to know just what is required to be done. In the meantime if the Bill is amended during the Committee stages, along the lines indicated in the notice paper, it will result in all unjust clauses being either removed or amended.

Mr. Ackland: The Premier intimated that he was not going to accept them all.

Mr. OLDFIELD: If I remember correctly, when introducing this measure the Premier said clearly and emphatically during his second reading speech, that the Bill was purely exploratory, and, using his own words, he was prepared to accept any reasonable amendments. I have not checked the report of the Premier's speech but I seem to remember those were the words he used.

The Premier: The member for Moore is only trying to quieten his own conscience on the matter.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I trust that the Premier will take heed of those remarks which he made because I must agree with the opponents of the measure that the Bill is in some degree rather unjust and outrageous. In conclusion I repeat what I said at the outset: If the unjust clauses are not removed or amended, I shall oppose the third reading.

MR. CROMMELIN (Claremont) [4.9]: I have listened to most of the speeches in this Chamber on this Bill. I gather from some of the remarks of the Government speakers that they consider the introduction of this legislation is likely to bring down the cost of living, and at the same time to halt the inflationary trend which we are now experiencing. I prefer to think that inflation should be taken in the true meaning of the word, and that is internal pressure. There is no doubt that internal pressure is forcing up the cost of living.

The cost of living of the working man—I think the majority of people in this State are working people—consists mostly of expenditure in obtaining the food necessary to keep him alive, clothing, entertainments and the small pleasures in life. We will find that most of these items are controlled in some way. For

instance, butter, bread and tea, together with numerous other items—for example, water rates, land tax, train fares, tram fares, electric light, gas and such like—are fixed and controlled by the Government or governmental institutions.

Therefore, I fail to see why the few remaining items of the necessities of life should be controlled by such a measure. I have heard it repeatedly said that the effect on costs of increases in wages is very small, and for certain items I agree with that contention. Later on I will give some indication in regard to particular items in respect which wages do have a very big effect.

In speaking on the measure, the Minister for Works, according to my interpretation, made the point that profits were to a large degree inflationary. But if we have regard to the total amount of profits and take into consideration the fact that in Western Australia company profits are coming down considerably, I venture to suggest that if all companies throughout Australia had a fall in their net profits in proportion to the fall in the net profits of the companies in this State during the next 12 months, it would have a very serious effect on the amount of taxation received by the Federal Government from company tax.

That, in its turn, could embarrass that Government to some extent and this State could suffer quite considerably as a result. The same could apply to the shareholders of these companies who must also pay income tax on the dividends they normally receive. If these dividends are cut, it is reasonable to assume that they, in turn, will pay less tax, and the position could be somewhat serious. One must not lose sight of the fact that a lot of articles which are manufactured in Australia are affected tremendously by the necessary components required in manufacturing.

For instance, we cannot control the price of cloth which is not manufactured in Australia but is imported from England, Italy and other countries. I have no hesitation in saying that at a time like this when the importation of these goods is strictly licensed, people in those overseas countries have not the slightest hesitation in getting the highest possible prices for their goods which they are selling in Australia, because they realise that they will not be allowed to hold their licences for ever and they are making hay while the sun shines. So under these conditions it is not possible to keep the price of all articles down.

In the course of his speech, the Minister for Police had something to say in regard to the adverse effect of big stores. I do not agree with him in his contention because I feel that the more big stores we can get in this city of ours, the better it will be. They are not combines but are very competitive. Firms like Coles and

Woolworths are solely chain stores and I doubt if anyone could say that the amount of profit they make on an article is excessive. If it were not for the big stores about which I previously spoke, the small manufacturers in Perth would find it extremely difficult to keep going.

There are certain aspects of the Bill to which I take exception and the main clause I have in mind is that relating to the classification of unfair trading. Members may not know of all the methods employed by small manufacturers in order to keep trading. For instance, I heard the member for West Perth interject the other night and say, "What a wonderful thing it was, and the money which could be made out of a fixed line of bathers." A lot of small manufacturers today at the prices they have to pay for cloth, find that finance is limited but they buy all the cloth they can in order to manufacture garments at the cheapest possible price, and then sell these garments, which is reasonably easy in these times.

Mr. Toms: There is not much cloth in bathers.

Mr. Jamieson: You pay for what you do not get.

Mr. CROMMELIN: I cannot swim. When they find they have expended what capital they had available plus what they can borrow from the banks, they approach some of those bigger stores and I give those stores credit for the support which they give to the local manufacturer. The latter says to them, "I want work. Can you give me some?" These stores also have quotas for clothing and in many cases they will turn round and say, "We will buy cloth for you and you can make up our garments for us at a price." The price they are prepared to pay is the cheapest they can arrange. But the small manufacturer must of necessity do the work. He then becomes what is known as a maker-up. The only possible hope he has of making a profit is by efficiency in his factory and by reliance on the men and girls who work for him. By these means he hopes to make a small margin over the cost of manufacture.

He must accept this work to keep his factory going. Even if he makes only his overhead, he is achieving something. By these means we find that the big stores are able to produce their goods at the same price as the manufacturer does; and indeed in many cases at a cheaper price because they are capable of buying large quantities of cloth whereas the small manufacturer is not. In turn, they cut out the warehouseman and become direct manufacturers with the chance of giving the public articles cheaper than the price at which they could be sold if they were purchased from the manufacturer himself.

The point I am endeavouring to make in regard to the clause dealing with unfair trading is: It is possible that these large

stores, who turn themselves into direct manufacturers, are trading in an unfair manner to the detriment of the manufacturer; yet I feel that they are the salvation of the manufacturer.

The commissioner who is appointed may be without any chance of doing wrong. Having worked under price control for a number of years—and I am glad to say without having broken the law, but, in fact, having been asked by the Prices Commissioner for advice on certain questions, which was gladly given—I point out that it is not only the commissioner with whom we will have to contend. He can delegate his authority to other people.

Frankly, my experience is that some of the people to whom, in the past, the Prices Commissioner delegated his powers were not the right type to carry out the investigations. I do not mean that they were not the right people, morally, but on numerous occasions the ones who came to check the manufacture-price of boots had been petrol pump attendants, and some who came to check the price of clothing had run garages. It is somewhat odious to try to teach such people how to cost goods, and it is difficult to convince them of the doubtful methods they adopt.

The other night the member for West Perth, when speaking about the price of fixed lines, referred to bathers. I do not know much about bathers, but I know that chemists have to sell certain lines at set prices. The same thing applies, I presume, to some types of women's garments—especially hats. Under the Bill if a shopkeeper bought a woman's hat for £1 and sold it for £2 2s., he could possibly be classed as a profiteer.

Personally, I would not be game to buy hats to sell to women under any conditions, no matter what the profit was, because I think there can be nothing more dangerous. Women's fickle fancies for hats can go to such an extent that a shopkeeper might have 100 hats for which, at the end of three months, he would be lucky if he got 100s. Under those conditions, a trader might make a big profit on the sale of a few hats but show practically no profit over the whole lot.

As I say, I am defending the small manufacturer, and the State depends a lot on him. The big stores are only too glad to go to the small manufacturers of clothing, furniture and other items. In the last few weeks I can honestly say that I have been rung up, written to and stopped in the street by dozens of small manufacturers who all have the horrible fear that they are going to be persecuted under the Bill.

Mr. Norton: They have a guilty conscience.

Mr. CROMMELIN: I do not know whether they have. I can take the hon. member around and he can talk to them. I know they would be only too happy to

to talk to him. If some Government members had walked around their electorates and gone into the small backyard factories, as they might be called, and said, "I am the member for so-and-so. What do you think of this profiteering Bill?", they would have got some terrific shocks because the small manufacturers are sincerely worried about this matter, as they are all battling to keep going.

The general feeling among the small manufacturers is a fear of this Bill, and, because many of them have had past experience of similar legislation it takes a lot to convince them that there is no harm in the measure. Previously when we had price control, we had a certain type of individual, who walked mostly around the suburbs and took delight in going into the greengrocery of Micky the Greek and finding a lb. of potatoes marked at 2d. above the fixed price, and then going straight to the Prices Commissioner. The sort of person I have in mind loved that, and lived for it. That is the type of person who is going to approach the commissioner and to whom he will have to listen. A woman who complains about the price of potatoes is justified in laying her complaint before him and he must then do his duty.

Those are the aspects of the Bill to which I take exception, and especially the term "unfair trading." If we had a clear definition of what "unfair trading" means, I believe many people would have less opposition to the measure. Our manufacturers are not profiteers and they find this Bill very worrying. Among all the small manufacturers that I know and with whom I have worked for many years, I do not know of any profiteers. For those reasons, I oppose the second reading.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [4.32]: This Bill has created a great deal of interest throughout the State and there are many dangerous clauses in it. Unless the Premier is prepared to agree to a large number of amendments, I, for one, will vote against the measure at the third reading stage. I do not think there has been any legislation of this kind introduced into the House since I have been a member here—

Mr. Ackland: Or in any British country, for hundreds of years.

Mr. NALDER: I do not think there has been any legislation like this introduced during the history of this State. I have examined the prices control measure which operated during the war period, when goods were in short supply, and immediately after the cessation of hostilities when goods and services which the public were entitled to receive were also in short supply. The price control legislation which applied at that time was nothing like what is envisaged in the Bill now before the House. I believe a measure of this nature is likely to restrict rather than increase progress and I am sure that, unless it is drastically amended, that will be its result. I desire

to ask the Premier whether what he said was correctly recorded in a report which appeared in "The West Australian" of the 18th September where, under the heading "Profits Law Would Drive Away New Industries," we read the following:—

Representatives of three firms which are contemplating establishment or expansion here have indicated that they will not proceed with their plans if the Profiteering and Unfair Trading Prevention Bill becomes law.

Further on, we read "Mr. Hawke said that the State would probably be better off without three firms of the type mentioned." Was he correctly reported there?

The Premier: Yes.

Mr. NALDER: Did he say that?

The Premier: Yes, indeed.

Mr. NALDER: I thank the Premier for answering that question and I think the public of the State would like to know his objection to these companies coming to Western Australia.

The Premier: I have no objection.

Mr. NALDER: They are contemplating coming here and setting up their industries. I understand that one of them is already here and wishes to expand his industry and increase production. I think every encouragement should be given to all such enterprises to come to Western Australia, but from the Premier's remark it appears that they are not welcome here.

The Premier: You are not being logical, now.

Mr. NALDER: Has the Premier sent a copy of this Bill to the Minister for Mines, who is at present in America?

The Premier: No, but I am prepared to do so.

Mr. NALDER: I wonder whether he considers that the Bill would be likely to attract American capital and investors to Western Australia. I say, without fear of contradiction, that it is preferable that Australian industries should be attracted to and encouraged in this State, rather than outside capital. In the same issue of "The West Australian" the Premier is reported to have said—

The anti-profiteering Bill has been drawn in its present form to apply only to individual firms or traders because the Government was keen to get at only those who might be guilty, not to harass firms which were treating the public fairly.

I think we should have a definition of "unfair trading", about which much has already been said in this House. Although I do not think it necessary for me again to cover that ground, some definition is clearly required so that people may know what is unfair trading and what is an unfair profit.

Why are these vicious clauses included in the Bill and why is there need for so much power to be given to an individual? If the Government were to give so much power to a commissioner—no matter how decent-minded he were or how much knowledge he might have of commerce or finance—I feel sure he would prefer to have an advisory committee to assist him in carrying out the duties required by this measure. I imagine he would prefer to have the advice of a committee representing every section of the community. That would be more democratic and, I am sure, more acceptable to the business people of this State.

To digress a little and consider the necessity for an investigation into rising costs, I feel that some investigation should be made. I would like to quote a paragraph from the report of a committee appointed by the Country Party to consider this matter. This is what was stated in one part of that report—

The primary producing industries are seriously affected by rising costs and restriction of credit. Were it not for the fact that the prices of our two major primary products, wheat and wool, are being reasonably well maintained, the state of affairs would be even more pressing than it is. Any further rises on production costs would, however, place even these industries in difficulties and some of the lesser primary industries in a condition which could only be classed as extremely serious.

There are two points in that report to which I would like to refer and the first is that of rising costs. This is a major problem that is facing primary industries today and it is so important that we must consider it carefully because Australia is so dependent on those industries for its exportable income.

I now want to quote from portion of a lecture delivered by Mr. J. V. Moroney, secretary of the Department of Primary Industries, Canberra. This was broadcast over the air by A.B.C. in the central and southern breakfast session recently and the script was obtained for me by the parliamentary reporter for the A.B.C., Mr. Costello. It is most interesting and is entitled, "The role of primary producers in relation to the export trade". It states—

There is no need to emphasise that Australia must export products in sufficient quantity and of sufficient value to earn the foreign exchange needed to purchase from overseas the goods necessary to sustain continual prosperity and development in this country. Consequently any industry that provides a contribution to our export income earnings is recognised as being of some basic importance in the

national economy. It may not be amiss from the start, to give a general picture of our import-export position.

There is no necessity to read the rest of that portion of the lecture because it gets away a little from the subject but it details the amount per head of imports and exports in regard to the population of Australia. The point I wanted to make was the importance of the primary industry to Australia as a whole and to Western Australia in particular, and to emphasise that some action must be taken to try to stay rising costs. Further on the report stated—

Since Australia has always been dependent on rural products for most of her export income and this dependence is diminishing only very slowly, our hopes for increased export returns necessarily turn to the primary industries. In 1934-35 rural products and their processed derivatives accounted for 89.6 per cent. of Australia's export income. This figure declined to about 87 per cent. in the three prewar years ended 1938-39 and, of course, still further during the war years. The wool boom in 1950-51 took the proportion to a somewhat unrealistically high 92.2 per cent. but during the last three years the average has been 84.6 per cent. Timber and minerals have constantly accounted for almost another 3 per cent. of exports. In the last three years, therefore, secondary products have represented only 12.6 per cent. of exports compared with 10.3 per cent. prewar.

Mr. May: Have you any ideas as to how to tackle the problem of rising costs?

Mr. NALDER: So I think members will see from that how important the primary industry is to Western Australia and to Australia as a whole and how important it is to endeavour to stay costs that are continually rising.

There is another point I would like to mention in regard to this matter and this is one that was mentioned in the report in regard to the restriction of credit. I believe that large sums of money are being diverted into unnecessary channels and instead of helping to stabilise and improve our financial position, they are contributing to the inflationary spiral. The other day in a speech in this House the Leader of the Country Party referred to advertisements and I, too, want to have something to say about that aspect.

In the paper of the 16th September there were three advertisements drawing attention to the exceptionally high rate of interest being offered to investors. There was also another one which appeared in the same paper. The people concerned were offering up to 7 per cent. per annum for large sums of money, and the

years and the amount of interest involved in each case were quoted. The one I was particularly interested in was that which stated that if money were invested for from three months to one year, 6 per cent. per annum would be paid and if it were invested for three years and up to five years 12½ per cent. per annum would be paid.

Why is the Commonwealth Government experiencing difficulty in finding money for public works and essential services? Why is the loan market taxed? Why is it that money for primary production is hard to secure? I know this is a fact because I have received a number of reports recently from people who have approached banks with the object of getting credit to extend their primary production and they have been refused. I think that speaks for itself. If investors are able to get much higher interest rates, such as the ones I have mentioned, will they invest their money in Commonwealth bonds and loans? I believe that the reason for this shortage of money for specific industries, such as the primary industry, is that money is being channelled into other sources.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: A firm that will offer 12½ per cent. could not be regarded as a gilt-edged security.

Mr. NALDER: The Leader of the Opposition might know more about that than I would because I have not sufficient money to invest in things like that whereas the Leader of the Opposition might have. It is a problem. These firms must anticipate making some very large profits when they are able to offer such high rates of interest to the investing public.

The Premier: The member for Nedlands does not think so.

Mr. NALDER: I do not think banking institutions are entirely without blame in this regard, either.

Mr. Court: I seem to have been elevated to a very high position of eminence in regard to knowledge on this subject.

Mr. NALDER: I believe that we will achieve what the Premier is seeking if the amendments which appear on the notice paper are agreed to. Apparently, the members on the Government side of the House do not consider that the Bill is as vicious as we consider it. The Premier, when he spoke, regarded it as a Bill to deal with profiteers and that only certain sections of industry would become involved if its provisions became law.

From such a statement I take it that the legislation will apply only to individual traders or firms that are not treating the public fairly. Nevertheless, it is unnecessary to place on the statute book a Bill which contains such vicious clauses as this one does. The Premier and his Government will get the same result without retaining these vicious clauses in the Bill, and if the Premier is prepared to

accept the amendments that are proposed, I, for one, am prepared to support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. GRAYDEN (South Perth) [4.53]: In view of the fact that a vote will be taken on the second reading of this Bill very shortly, I would like to indicate briefly my position with regard to this measure. I intend to vote against this piece of legislation because I think it is wrong in principle. We live in a competitive and free enterprise economy. In those circumstances, I would not concede that there is such a thing as unfair profit. I do not believe that any individual or body of persons could investigate any firm or business in Western Australia and then be able to say that a particular firm was making excessive profits. It might have made fabulous profits over the past few years, but it could make equally fabulous losses over the next few years.

There is certainly nothing in the Bill to compensate such firms in adverse times. I do not think a firm that is making a large profit is any more culpable than a man who buys a lottery ticket and wins the first prize of £3,000, or a man who goes to the races at the week-end and, on the information that he has received, places a bet on a winning horse and wins £500, or a man who spends £200 on a prospecting venture and discovers minerals worth, say, £20,000.

I do not believe that firms which make what are frequently called excessive profits are any more culpable than those people I have enumerated. This legislation in its present form seeks to deal with firms that are making unfair profits, but if all the amendments that apparently are to be moved in Committee are agreed to, it would develop into a measure designed principally against restrictive trade practices. That is an entirely different position. I, for one, am not in favour of restrictive trade practices and I do not think anybody else on this side of the House is either. I will support a measure aimed at preventing restrictive trade practices if satisfactory legislation can be evolved.

A short time ago this House passed a motion for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into restrictive trade practices and no doubt as a result of its deliberations it will be able to report, very shortly, on whether such practices exist in this State. Personally, I think they do. That committee will have the opportunity to investigate such practices if they do exist. If they do, there is no doubt that the committee will recommend legislation to deal with them. It will have a wealth of legislation which it can draw upon as a guide. There is the Sherman anti-trust legislation in America; there is legislation in Britain, and there is also a Commonwealth Act which deals with restrictive trade practices.

If the select committee recommends legislation to deal with restrictive trade practices and a satisfactory measure can be drafted and introduced, I will give it my support, but I cannot, in any circumstances, support a Bill of this kind which I regard as being discriminatory and wrong in principle, in view of the fact that we live in a free enterprise economy.

Mr. Potter: I doubt it.

MR. JAMIESON (Beeloo) [5.55]: In contributing briefly to this debate, it would appear to me that most of the reasoning advanced by members on the other side of the House is that the capitalistic system should prevail.

Mr. Roberts: "Free enterprise" sounds better.

Mr. JAMIESON: Free enterprise if the hon. member wishes, but it is still the capitalistic system.

Mr. Perkins: We do not mind your saying that.

Mr. JAMIESON: I am not objecting to the definition put forward by the member for Roe or that advanced by the member for Bunbury. It is appreciated that those who hold the capitalistic view assume that, in theory, private business should and will compete fairly. To a degree, this Bill is endeavouring to make that quite clear. So far as the capitalistic theory goes, experience has demonstrated that there is a difference between theory and practice, because in practice combinations of one sort or another have been established with a tendency to monopolise the market.

The mecca of industrialists or the sponsors of private enterprise is the United States of America. Earlier in this debate we were told that even in that country, it was found necessary, as long ago as 1890, to place the Sherman anti-trust legislation on the American statute book. Even before that year, many of the individual States of the United States of America had their own measures to prevent unfair trade practices—some even going to the extent of preventing overcharging—and many of these are still operating. I would also point out that amendments have been made to those Acts to prevent the citizens of the United States of America from being exploited to any great extent, and this is what we are aiming at with this Bill.

Mr. Perkins: Did you say there is similar legislation to this operating in the United States of America?

Mr. JAMIESON: I would not say that there is in the United States legislation which is similar, but, without seeing a copy of the Act, it would be very difficult to say that two measures were similar. The legislation which is on the statute books in America aims at the same ideal,

namely, to protect the individual citizen from unfair practices, whether they be unfair trade practices or unfair profiteering.

Mr. Court: Have you studied the principle underlying the Sherman anti-trust law in America?

Mr. JAMIESON: I can quite appreciate that because of the legislature in that country, particularly where the legal fraternity holds sway, many of its laws are fantastically complex and, of course litigation is entered into from time to time in an endeavour to interpret them. Irrespective of that, the aim in the first place was rather clear and distinct; it was an endeavour to do something for the citizens of the country.

The Premier: A few weeks ago the American authorities issued a claim for 6,000,000 dollars against one firm.

Mr. Court: They are always issuing claims, but they are never finalised.

Mr. JAMIESON: It is rather strange to say that one visiting American citizen who was berating this as a fearful piece of legislation, was involved as the principal in a firm which had to pay 3,000,000 dollars to the Treasury some years ago. Accordingly, I do not blame the Premier when he says that this sort of person should be discouraged. The business interests this Bill attempts to control are still flourishing in the United States despite the Sherman anti-trust law, the Clayton Act and half a dozen other Acts that prohibit exploitation and unfair trading to some degree. In the face of those Acts, they are still making a go of it in the United States and they have built up an empire of industrialism of which we have not seen the like in Australia, and of which we are not likely to see the like for many years.

Mr. Court: That is my point; it is obvious that the Sherman anti-trust law has not been very effective.

Mr. JAMIESON: That is probably so. But I am not arguing on the effect of the Sherman law, but on the endeavours of the legislature of the day to provide for the protection of the public to a certain degree. While in the main the legislature of the United States has not been all that could be desired, the provisions it has enacted in its legislation are better than nothing at all.

The Bill before the House is an honest endeavour on the part of the Government of the day to place something on the statute book which, as is found necessary from time to time, can be altered until something will emerge that is fair and equitable to all concerned.

Mr. Roberts: Do you think the public of Western Australia are being exploited now?

Mr. JAMIESON: My word, I do. There is a good deal of unfair profit being made at present.

Mr. Roberts: By whom?

Mr. JAMIESON: Does not the hon. member know?

Mr. Roberts: No.

Mr. JAMIESON: Then it is time he found out. This measure is to control those who are associated with the making of unfair profits.

Mr. Roberts: Who are these people?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. JAMIESON: The member for Nedlands said that the Bill was a monster. I would say that the 11 monsters sitting on the Opposition benches would have very little chance of recognising a monster, because in themselves they provide a monster which is dangerous to this fair country of ours; and they do so by their capitalistic practices, which they are prepared to defend at all costs.

Mr. Roberts: What practices are those?

Mr. JAMIESON: Does not the hon. member know?

Mr. Roberts: No.

Mr. JAMIESON: If the hon. member does not know, then we must endeavour to teach him.

Mr. Roberts: Tell us one.

Mr. Court: Since your Government is legislating for these practices to which you refer, it should tell us what they are.

Mr. JAMIESON: We are desirous of enlightening members opposite. The intention is to permit the commissioner, with or without his advisers and helpers, to be able to say to a man guilty of these practices, "Look, old chap, this is not a fair and equitable profit you are making."

Hon. D. Brand: On what basis?

Mr. JAMIESON: It could be on the basis of a reasonable attitude adopted by whoever is appointed to that position. I do not say that this legislation would act fairly and equitably for everybody, but no law does that. Some laws act viciously in relation to some people, and have little effect on others. But it is completely wrong to discount this piece of legislation as entirely unsuitable. Even the member for Moore, who opposed the measure, said that he had no doubt that the business community of Perth in many respects had not played the game. When the member for Moore believes something like that, then I can believe anything at all.

Mr. Roberts: Can you give us one person or organisation you have in mind?

Mr. Bovell: He cannot even concoct one under parliamentary privilege.

Mr. JAMIESON: I would start at Bunbury straightaway because it is obvious from the amount of noise emanating from that direction that that is where the start should be made.

Hon. D. Brand: Give us an example from Beeloo.

Mr. JAMIESON: Nobody is to be convicted without a thorough investigation at first being held, in spite of what the Opposition claims to the contrary. Everybody will be given a fair and equitable chance to show that they are not doing those things of which they stand accused.

Mr. Roberts: You have somebody in Bunbury in mind.

Mr. JAMIESON: Yes, and he may be sitting very close to the hon. member.

Mr. I. W. Manning: Who is it in Beeloo who is making the profits?

Mr. JAMIESON: I would now like to touch on the vicious propaganda that has been put out respecting this measure. It is strange to see coming to light the Citizens' Rights Association which was interred on the 10th December, 1949, and no doubt a few of these unfair profits have been ploughed into their campaign because they were able to buy space in a newspaper for their advertising. Incidentally, that newspaper knows quite a bit about unfair profits. It has a monopolistic hold in this State and, of course, it can charge what it likes, when it likes, and how it likes, and the public has to smile and bear it.

After all these years we find that association, to which I was referring, coming to the fore again, though on this occasion it has not got a Bob Freeland or a John Henry Austral at the helm. Nevertheless, we have our suspicions that the trustees are not very far away, and it is more than likely they would be found in a cellar in Hay-st. Their campaign against this Bill would probably only be bettered by those associated with the members of the Opposition in the 1949 Federal elections when those people went to the extent of frightening the public.

It has caused a stir in the Electoral Department and people are hurriedly filling in enrolment cards. All this is because of this scaremongering and the scatter ads. that have been put out. One such advertisement runs as follows:—"Did you sell your car recently? Your neighbour might think you made an unfair profit. Have you kept books on this?" That is the sort of ridiculous nonsense that is being put out.

Mr. Court: If you bring down legislation like this, you must expect people to react.

Mr. JAMIESON: It is possible for these people to say these things publicly without authorisation because there is no election imminent, but when it happens to be said by a radio announcer, the public feel there may be a degree of truth in what is said. The Liberal

Party section of the Opposition knows as well as I do that there is no fear of anybody's private activities being interfered with.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We do not know. You have put the wind up the people with this Bill.

Mr. JAMIESON: The hon. member knows as well as I do—and I would stand for no interference with it—that the people of this State have a trump card. They have the ballot box, and that ballot box must never be interfered with.

Mr. Wild: You have tried hard.

Mr. JAMIESON: In between elections, the Government of the day is entitled to put forward legislation it thinks fit for the protection of the people. If, after its three years' term, it is found to be wrong in principle, then the people can turf the Government out. When certain legislation was put forward by the Leader of the Opposition when he was Premier, the people threw him out and he stayed out. He does not look like being returned. The fact is that while such a position remains, any attempt to improve the lot of the people of this State in general is worth trying. It is better to try something than to try nothing at all.

We have heard a lot from members opposite about curbing inflation and curbing the cost of living, but they have not been able to put forward any proposition nor have their Federal masters been able to do so. All they were able to do was to create a certain amount of unemployment through their efforts. They have never made an earnest endeavour to improve the lot of the people when they could have done quite a lot and after they had received a lot of kudos for it.

The businessmen of Perth, led by one who is closely associated with the Liberal Party, approached the Premier recently and put forward a proposition to this effect, "Don't do anything. We assure you that we are honest, genuine and fair, and will go about adjusting prices so that people will not be displeased, and you will not have to bother about that again." What have those people done in the meantime to show that they were earnest in their approach? They have made no attempt to do so, and their representations were just so much talk. They want the status quo to remain and no alteration to be made to the existing laws of the State.

Mr. Court: The Premier gave them the brush-off.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Premier did not do that. He said they had not played the game so far and did not look like doing it. If anyone does not play the game with the hon. member, would he not lose his trust in that person?

Mr. Court: Do you mean to say they did not play the game on the Trade and Industries Council? They have played the game all along.

Mr. JAMIESON: If they are not prepared to treat the public fairly, the Government of the day is entitled to take such action as, in its opinion, will give the public control of the destiny of this State for the three years of its office.

Mr. Court: In what respect are they acting unfairly?

Mr. JAMIESON: They are acting very unfairly?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Tell us where.

Mr. JAMIESON: If the Leader of the Opposition does not know, it is high time somebody told him.

Mr. Bovell: You tell us.

Mr. Brand: Name a firm.

Mr. JAMIESON: I am not that gullible. I told members earlier that anybody acting unfairly was deemed to be engaging in unfair practices, but he is entitled to put his case forward before any public announcement is made. He should have that protection.

Mr. Court: That is not so under this Bill.

Mr. JAMIESON: Of course it is! Read the Bill again! That might enlighten the hon. member, instead of repeating the tripe and ballyhoo that is put out by the people associated with him, and who are giving him instructions from time to time as to the action he should take in this House.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We are not getting the instructions that you are getting.

Mr. JAMIESON: The Leader of the Opposition does not know anything about this.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Your Left Wing friends have put the whip well on you.

Mr. JAMIESON: I have a degree of knowledge of what action I intend to take in regard to a matter that will protect the public. Having that in view, it gives me pleasure to support this Bill, although I feel it is not a perfect one. But, as the Premier has assured members opposite, certain modifications will be made in the Committee stage. We should be able to iron out any differences then so that a fair piece of legislation may be effected, aimed as a protection for the public of this State. If the legislation does not prove satisfactory, we can have another look at it until such time as we get something that is fair and just to all concerned.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [5.17]: During the debate on the agreement with Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd, the present Premier, who was the Leader of the Opposition, said: "Did the Government take into consideration the vital dangers wrapped up in the proposals?"

The Minister for Works: What was the answer to that question?

Hon. D. BRAND: On that occasion he used very extravagant language right through that debate. I want to emphasise the fact that I do not think the Government has taken into consideration the vital dangers in this Bill as it is. The measure has caused a great deal of consternation in every quarter, not only in this State but in the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Works: That was created, was it not?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And consternation outside the Commonwealth as well.

Hon. D. BRAND: Let me say this: The only medium through which the public, whether they live in Western Australia or in any other State, get to know about the legislation and the proposals of any Government is, in the main, through the Press or over the air.

The Minister for Works: They get only one side through those media.

Hon. D. BRAND: The fact is that the Premier, when he was on this side of the House, availed himself of Press publicity because a fortnight did not pass without his moving one motion or another in the hope that the public would be stirred by what he sincerely thought was wrong in principle and detail.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You ought to hear what the Premier says over the air these days.

Hon. D. BRAND: On Monday night the Premier really goes to town in the session "Highlights of Parliament," but he puts his own story forward in line with the policy of socialism. We have no fault to find with that. The fact remains that at this juncture there is a Bill before the House which is causing consternation in every quarter.

It is not to be wondered at that people generally are puzzled and perplexed as to what the Government really intends. In the first place the Government set up a Cabinet sub-committee comprising the Premier, the Minister for Labour, the Minister for Health and the Minister for Transport. They produced this Bill, but before the ink was dry, because of the upsurge of public opinion, the Premier said, "We will accept amendments." If I understand that aright, the amendments which have been placed on the notice paper by the Leader of the Country Party and others are going to be in some form or in part acceptable to the Premier.

Mr. O'Brien: That is wishful thinking.

Hon. D. BRAND: The public are wondering what is the policy of the Government which prompted it to bring forward this Bill with all its iniquitous provisions. That has been outlined by almost every speaker.

The Minister for Health: Supposing we accept those amendments?

Hon. D. BRAND: Is it any wonder the public is thinking that if the Government gives the commissioner the power it hopes to vest in him, how are they to know he will not go to extremes.

The Minister for Lands: Just about every Bill you brought in was amended.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am not dealing with our Bills; I am dealing with yours! The Premier, after returning from the Premiers' Conference, made a statement to the effect that price fixing was a cumbersome measure and burdensome to industry. So it was not the intention of the Government to introduce price fixing. But when I look at this Bill and give it any thought at all, I would imagine it is the means through which he hopes to control prices, which must be difficult and impracticable.

I think the member for Claremont stated a case of Mrs. Jones—it could quite easily have been the bananas referred to by the Deputy Premier—who paid 2d. more than she thought she should. If she thought she was justified, she would place her complaint before the commissioner and he would be bound to give some reason or consideration as to why he was not prepared to investigate the case. There will be many times when he will find it difficult to give a reason for not going forward with an investigation. He may also be required to go out on lots of wild goose chases. That is one point which is definitely against the Bill if it is intended to be used as a price-fixing measure.

The Minister for Health: Supposing we accept those amendments on the notice paper, will you support the Bill?

Hon. D. BRAND: I do not propose to ask the Government to accept the amendments and have the words put into my mouth by the Minister for Health. I propose to oppose the second reading because I think the Bill is wrong in principle.

The Minister for Lands: We know whom you support.

Hon. D. BRAND: As members on this side of the House, we know, and I think all have expressed their opinion that they find it a strange policy that the Government should come forward with such an extravagant piece of legislation in order to achieve what it hopes will be achieved.

The Minister for Lands: Hooley!

Hon. D. BRAND: The Minister for Works has made two speeches with respect to profits and quoted from the newspaper, reading the reports of the year's accounts of Eastern States firms, but he very carefully avoided the local situation.

The Minister for Works: No, I did not.

Hon. D. BRAND: We know that if this legislation is passed in toto, it will not affect that situation at all as it will deal only with local firms and, in spite of being challenged on so many occasions, not one

member of the Government has been able to state a case or quote a company to which this Bill could apply.

Mr. Jamieson: Don't be funny!

Hon. D. BRAND: The member for Beeloo should talk about being funny! When he talked about this legislation as being something to enable an inquiry to be made as to who these profiteers are, that is another angle on the Bill. The Minister for Police, bearing in mind what his deputy leader was thinking of profits of companies, said if we controlled the profits, we would control the cost of living.

The Minister for Works: Yes, so you would.

Hon. D. BRAND: I would say, taking industry as a whole, both the employer and the employee, that if all were to give a good day's work for a good days pay, we might get somewhere and get at the basic root of the increased cost of living in Australia.

Mr. Jamieson: You are putting the boots in now.

Hon. D. BRAND: Not at all. I do not think it can be disproved. The Minister for Police implied that the Bill could well apply unfair trading to supermarkets which buy collectively and sell at a low price and which are embarrassing the man in the corner shop. From the suggestion in his speech, this situation is what this Bill is aimed at or at least could cover. Is the Government going to say to the people who own supermarkets that they are acting unfairly? Surely not! Yet that is what the Minister said and he is a member of the Government and very interested, I understand, in co-operative concerns.

Hon. L. Thorn: I think he is a director.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Government has accused the member for Roe of being associated with a co-operative concern. I cannot see anything wrong in that at all.

Hon. L. Thorn: It is Labour policy.

Hon. D. BRAND: Those are points I have deduced from speeches made by members of the Government, and I am wondering just what this legislation will actually do, especially as the Premier has already intimated that he will accept amendments to alter it. I would refer to the debate on the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd. agreement, when the Premier suggested something about a challenge and going to the electors about it. We at that time said we would answer to the electors when the time came, and I think that would be the reply of the Government if I suggested they should go to the public at the present time.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I must take that speech down to the opening of the B.H.P. rolling mill.

Hon. D. BRAND: I represent a country electorate and the farmers are coming to me and asking what this legislation means and whether they could be charged under it for profiteering. The member for Beeloo quoted propaganda and stated the case of a car sale where a neighbour could query the profit made on a car sale. As the Act stands at the present time, I think that matter could be the subject of an investigation.

Mr. Jamieson: You only think!

Hon. D. BRAND: The hon. member never thinks, and that was only a rough thought. I think under this Bill these cases could be investigated and if that is not intended, why have a Bill of this nature?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Under this legislation anything could be investigated.

The Minister for Lands: Nearly all primary producers are under a marketing system for their products, which governs their incomes.

Hon. D. BRAND: Yes. To hear the wild assertions of profit-making in every quarter, leads one to forget that many essential commodities affect the cost of living. Let us not forget that this legislation is here as a result of the controversy that has raged in the Commonwealth, and in this State in particular, because of rising costs and the problem of inflation. The Government says that this is its method of tackling the question.

The Minister for Works: What would you say?

Hon. D. BRAND: I would say—

The Minister for Works: You have no ideas on the subject other than to peg wages.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Minister for Works made a great deal of the reading of speeches and finding no suggestions as to how to deal with inflation. I do not think the measure can affect the problem of inflation in Australia because it is a national problem. The Minister will say, "What is the Federal Government doing about it?" Well, it is still a national problem to be dealt with at that level. It is closely associated with the problems of the Arbitration Court. Unless the courts in each State are able to work collectively, we will not get very far in regard to an overall policy.

The Minister for Works: Here we are, pegging wages, which is your idea of it.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Minister rushes in, but we do not suggest that at all. Our side of the House agrees with the decision of the Arbitration Court to suspend the quarterly adjustments of the basic wage at its discretion.

Mr. Moir: You disagree when it gives quarterly adjustments.

Hon. D. BRAND: Support of arbitration is the policy of those on this side of the House. The member for Fremantle got off on another branch.

The Minister for Lands: It is a good idea to get away from the agricultural angle. You are doing no good there.

Hon. D. BRAND: As the Speaker allowed the member for Fremantle to say something of the position at Fremantle, I would like to reply. The Minister for Works was not here when the hon. member was speaking.

The Minister for Works: I was not far away.

Hon. D. BRAND: The member for Fremantle referred to the agreement made by this side of the House with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. He made some wild statements about—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Not too wild.

Hon. D. BRAND: —allowing the ships to come in free of charge. Seeing he made that accusation, I would like to read the provision in the agreement dealing with ships and tankers going into Cockburn Sound.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You will be very proud of it when you read it.

Hon. D. BRAND: It states—

One year after the first day of July next following the date on which the company reaches full production, and thereafter annually on the first day of July in each succeeding year during the term of this agreement—

which could be 68 years—

—pay to the State or its written nominee an amount equal to a sum of six per centum of one-half of the cost as defined in clause one of this agreement, calculated to the 30th day of June next before the due date of payment, or the sum of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds, whichever sum is the lesser.

I am not saying whether that is proving to have been a wise move or not, but the fact is that the company out of the profits it makes is bound to pay, over its full life, that sum of money to the Government.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Tell us about the refined cargoes on which they pay nothing.

Hon. D. BRAND: Petroleum is mentioned, and if that is covered, the Crown Law authorities who drafted the agreement must have appreciated what was intended.

The Premier: Do not blame the Crown Law Department. The Government decided it.

Hon. D. BRAND: The agreement was before the House for debate.

The Premier: Your Government decided it.

Hon. D. BRAND: We certainly did decide it, and we also made an appeal to have a bitumen plant included, and up to date it has saved the State £65,000.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are making very heavy weather of this.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am not.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are foundering, in fact.

Hon. D. BRAND: The member for Fremantle also mentioned "Kleengas". He was attacking the member for Roe. The people in the country will much appreciate the facility which is being made available by Westralian Farmers who have obtained the sole rights for the distribution of this gas. I mention that because the member for Fremantle made great play on it—a great service to country residents.

I hope the Bill will be defeated on the second reading because I believe it can achieve nothing at all. I am not going to deal in detail with the criticisms that have been levelled by other members at the penalty clauses and the definition of unfair trading. It has been made clear by most speakers that "unfair trading" is most difficult to define. The power to be given to the commissioner is of such a nature that he will become a mighty powerful person in the trading and commercial life of this State. Very little right of appeal is given to the individuals who are declared traders or whose affairs are inquired into.

Possibly one of the most puzzling aspects of the legislation is its effect on the issue of attracting capital to Western Australia. At the present time the Minister for Industrial Development is touring America—with this move I am heartily in agreement—with a view to attracting capital here. The Premier and the Government are faced with the problem of unemployment, and they say it has come about as a result of the shortage of money. The only alternative, as I see it, is to attract to this State, as soon as possible, and with all the goodwill that we can, companies which would establish and develop their industries here. But I feel that if the directors of companies in either America or England were to read the Bill, they would be staggered.

I believe the measure will be amended, and the amendments which have been suggested by the Leader of the Country Party are such as to bring about a very real improvement, but no matter how it is amended, any firms that might come here could go to other States in Australia where such legislation is not in existence. They might well ask themselves: What is the attitude of the Government which, as a result of an investigation by a sub-committee of Cabinet, produces this Bill, which, as the Leader of the Country Party pointed out, provides for the punishment, three times, of any one tried or found guilty under it?

Personally, I wonder why a Government, which is opposed to capital punishment, should introduce a measure of this kind so long after the war period, legislation which would force anyone found guilty to place on his stationery a statement admitting that he had been guilty under the Act. Surely that would eliminate the person concerned for all time from his trade or profession.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: From where did the Government get this class of legislation?

Hon. D. BRAND: He would have no hope of getting back into his trade or profession and one wonders what policy was behind the inclusion of such a provision. I can well imagine the present Premier attacking a Government which introduced a measure containing this sort of provision. He would talk about the rights of the individual and so on and would use the most extravagant language possible. I am sure that if, in reply to that extravagant language, the Premier of that day said, "Very well, I will accept amendments to the Bill," the present Premier would ask, "What prompted you to put this into it?"

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We protested against your provisions in regard to the Black Diamond leases, but you went on with them.

Hon. D. BRAND: A great deal has been said, since the introduction of this Bill, about the regulations under the price-fixing legislation which was introduced a number of times by our Government. For what reason that legislation was left there, I am not sure, but at all events we made some progress inasmuch as we have dropped price-fixing legislation in all the other States, with the exception of South Australia—

The Premier: That is not correct.

Hon. D. BRAND: Why make a retrograde step and endeavour to place this legislation on our statute book? America has been quoted, but I am sure this is not the sort of legislation that exists in America.

The Minister for Lands: How do you know that?

Hon. D. BRAND: I am sure it is not, and I have reason to believe that the Americans have queried the wisdom of this legislation. It is strange that the member for Beeloo said that companies were making progress in spite of this legislation, and the Minister for Works, in his utterances, cited such firms as Holdens, a company which, from what he said, we might expect him to have a go at under this measure.

The Minister for Works: Are you sure I mentioned Holdens?

Hon. D. BRAND: If the Minister did not mention Holdens on this occasion, I can turn up a speech in which he did, as I know he has done so on previous occasions. I think that during the Address-in-reply debate, he quoted the firm's annual report.

Mr. Court: The Minister for Police attacked General Motors Holdens.

Hon. D. BRAND: At all events there is an inconsistency and one wonders who the Premier and his Ministers have in mind when introducing such far-reaching legislation. If it is only to control a few traders—and the Premier has said he knows who they are in this State—it seems that he has sent a man on a boy's errand. The whole approach to this problem is wrong. Before he went to the Premiers' Conference, the Premier said he believed there must be some control over prices. He said that again at the Premiers' Conference and I think he sincerely believes it but, in my opinion, this measure is a most cumbersome way of achieving his objective.

The Premier: Would the hon. member support any system of control over prices?

Hon. D. BRAND: I would deal with each case on its merits. From time to time—

The Minister for Lands: But that is what this measure does.

Hon. D. BRAND: The Premier laughs, but I am not in favour of any control over prices in peacetime. In a period of war or special emergency we must have certain controls, but it is the policy of our party to abolish controls when they are not necessary. This legislation contains every possible control and if it reaches the statute book in its present form, its only effect must be to stifle trade and keep capital out of this country at a time when it is so badly needed.

The Minister for Lands: I do not think you are doing very well.

Hon. D. BRAND: I oppose the second reading and intend to oppose every clause of the Bill as it stands.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [5:47]: We have just heard a remarkable speech by the member for Greenough. He was asked by me whether he would support any form or system of control over prices and he immediately replied that he would, under a system which treated each case on its merits—and that is exactly what this Bill proposes to do. The hon. member evidently did realise that his admission or expression of opinion could get him into serious trouble with the Liberal Party bosses and he thereupon set out to redeem his position in that regard and said that he would not, in peacetime, favour any sort of control over prices.

Hon. D. Brand: That was what I was referring to.

The PREMIER: We have heard a lot of blood and thunder talk in regard to the Bill and have read a lot of similar propaganda in the newspapers. There is no doubt that, directly or indirectly, threats have also been made against members of this Parliament should they dare to support the Bill even in its present form or in any amended form.

Mr. Court: Have any real threats been made against members? If there have, it is a matter for Parliament to deal with.

The PREMIER: Would the hon. member support a move to do something in that regard?

Mr. Court: If any threat were made against a member of this House, I would be the first one to support such a move.

The PREMIER: Then we will probably do something about it and test out the assurance that the member for Nedlands has just given, because if he cares to read a leading article, to which reference was made here in recent days, he will find that a very vicious threat was made against the members of the Country Party if they dared to support this Bill.

Mr. Court: That was not so. It was an expression of opinion. Are you going to stop members expressing an opinion?

The Minister for Works: No, it was a promise.

The PREMIER: The member for Nedlands gave an assurance and when he was brought into line with it, he quickly went into reverse gear.

Mr. Court: I have not withdrawn my assurance at all. Do you know of any genuine threat against a member of this House? If you can show me one, I will support your move.

The PREMIER: We might have a debate on that issue subsequently.

Mr. Court: Good.

The PREMIER: I want very quickly and briefly to deal with the main points which have been submitted by those members who have opposed the Bill. The member for Nedlands, who was the official speaker for the Liberal Party section of the Opposition, told us that this Bill was not only wrong in principle but also was unnecessary. He argued that it was unnecessary because all firms today, or most of them, are struggling for momentum.

It is very true that over the last several months the degree of profit-taking by many firms has been reduced very considerably. One of the important reasons for this reduction in the general level of profit-taking is to be found in the fact

that there was too much profit-taking in the years, say, from 1950 to 1955, inclusive. Members of the Liberal Party, including the member for Nedlands, seem to entertain the weird idea that the taking of profits consistently over a matter of years, no matter if the level of profit-taking is sky high, does no harm to the the economy as a whole.

Mr. Court: Have you worked out how much prices would fall if they reduced all profits to bond rates?

The PREMIER: I am prepared to say that the taking of unduly high profits by many firms during the period from 1950 to 1955, inclusive, had a very detrimental and speeding-up effect upon the process of inflation in Australia and had the result of substantially pushing up prices of all commodities and services in the country.

Mr. Court: I think you are exaggerating its effect.

Mr. Bovell: If that is so, why have you not done something about it before?

The PREMIER: The fact that profits generally are now on the down is a most logical effect arising from the excess taking of profits during the period to which I have referred.

Mr. Court: I do not think that is a logical assumption.

The PREMIER: I know that the hon. member is not in a position to agree with anything anybody says which does not line up with the feelings and opinions of those who believe with him that the taking of profits, excessive or otherwise, as high as the sky, is the right thing to be done, no matter what the effect might be upon the general community or upon any section of it.

Mr. Court: That is not true, and I think you should answer my question. Have you worked out the true effect on prices?

The PREMIER: What I have said is true. I have worked out the effect of the taking of excessive profits and I have worked out the effect of continually increasing prices upon the wage and salary levels; and I have worked out the effect of increasing wage and salary levels upon the cost of production, and so have members who represent the Country Party section of the Opposition.

Mr. Court: What difference would it make to selling prices?

The PREMIER: I would say that the cumulative effect would be terrific.

Mr. Court: You should tell the House what it would be.

The PREMIER: I have told the House what it would be and it is to be seen on every hand. I suggest that the hon. member has a talk with one or two practical

farmers in this House and ascertain from them what effect the increases in the cost of machines and other goods have had on the farmer over the last five to seven years.

Mr. Court: Two practical farmers are opposing the Bill on the second reading, according to their speeches.

The PREMIER: Two practical farmers might be opposing this Bill at the second reading stage, but at least one of them admitted and emphasised that at least some sections of industry, trade and commerce had been far too greedy in the taking of profits from the community as a whole over recent years.

Mr. Court: But he is still opposing this Bill.

The PREMIER: The member for Nedlands also said that local industries in Western Australia would be most vulnerable under this Bill and that companies with headquarters in other States or other countries would not be vulnerable or vulnerable only to some lesser extent. In reply to that I say this: If the local companies are giving the public a fair deal, and I think most of them are, they are not vulnerable under this Bill at all. The other companies, with headquarters in Eastern Australia or in other countries, who are operating here, if they are not giving the public of Western Australia a fair deal, are vulnerable and will be vulnerable if this Bill becomes law.

Take the case of the oil companies. They have not their headquarters in Western Australia and yet we know that people in this State, including the primary producers, are paying more for petroleum products than are the people in South Australia and Queensland.

Hon. D. Brand: Have they made an offer of oil at that price to the Railway Department?

The PREMIER: An offer at what price?

Hon. D. Brand: The same price as they are supplying it in South Australia.

Mr. Court: The member for Fremantle referred to it.

The PREMIER: I understand that one company has made a qualified offer—

Hon. D. Brand: It is still an offer.

The PREMIER: —to supply oil to the Railway Department at a lower price than it is receiving now. But the qualifications are such that the Railway Department would have to involve itself in a great deal of capital outlay to take advantage of the offer and in the long run the Railway Department would save little or nothing at all.

Hon. D. Brand: But they are offering the oil to this State at the same price as in South Australia. That is the point.

Mr. May: Why only to the Railway Department?

The PREMIER: The consumers of petroleum products in Western Australia, New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria are paying more for petroleum products than are consumers in South Australia and Queensland.

Mr. Court: I would hazard a guess that they are paying more because of price control in those two States.

The PREMIER: It is very easy to say that, but it is not correct. If the oil companies had been legitimate in their approach to this matter, they would have made their applications for increases to the price fixing authorities in South Australia and Queensland and would have stood or fallen on the decisions in those States. But they did not do that. They applied the increases immediately in the States where no price control legislation existed with the result that the consumers of petroleum products in those States have already paid a very great sum of money to the oil companies because of those increases.

It has been said that this Bill, even because of its introduction, and more so if it were to become law, would act as a deterrent to the investment of capital in this State in manufacturing and other industries. All I can say is that the Government is currently negotiating with three large firms for the establishment of new industries in this State and not one of those firms has ceased negotiations. Those negotiations are active at present.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: They are bound to be considering the implications of this Bill just the same.

The Minister for Transport: You hope!

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What does the Minister know about business?

The PREMIER: I know that the conservatively-minded people in this State, the real dyed-in-the-wool reactionaries, including two or three members of the Liberal Party section of the Opposition, have, in effect, bitten off their noses to spite their faces in connection with this issue. There is no doubt that this Bill has become strongly party-political. I do not blame the members of the Liberal Party section of the Opposition for trying to make political capital out of it, but at least, in their desperate efforts in that regard, they might spare a thought—even if it is only a small thought—for the welfare of Western Australia as a whole and its future progress.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: We are thinking of the future of Western Australia.

The Minister for Labour: You are like Mr. Freeth!

The PREMIER: It was only yesterday that two prominent businessmen in this State came to me and told me of the considerable industrial progress they are planning at the moment and which will be put

into operation in the near future. They did not mention this Bill and if it would not bring financial ostracism to them and social ostracism to themselves and their families, I would mention their names here and now. We know that in such situations one has to be careful because of the penalties which the reactionaries of the business world would impose upon their colleagues if the names were to be announced.

Mr. Court: Their views would change if this Bill became an Act.

The PREMIER: No, they would not change at all because these individuals of whom I speak and many more like them in this State, are anxious to achieve industrial development, not for the purpose of making extortionate profits, but for the purpose of making a material contribution to the further greatness and progress of the State.

Mr. Court: I think most business people come within that category.

The PREMIER: The member for Nedlands tried to justify the taking of excessive profits by telling us that the Federal Treasurer takes 10s. in the £1—

Mr. Court: And more.

The PREMIER: —and more from every £1 of profits taken by industry, trade and commerce. The member for Nedlands seemed to put that forward as being some justification for the taking of more and more and even more profit.

Mr. Court: No, I did not! I did not put it forward on that basis.

The PREMIER: How did the hon. member put it forward?

Mr. Court: I tried to explain that if they were making profits considered to be excessive, they were well and truly being dealt with by the Federal Treasurer to your benefit.

The PREMIER: I accept that, but it makes the hon. member's position not one whit stronger and his position is weak beyond all possibility of successful defence. Why does the Federal Treasurer have to take 10s. and more in the £1 from these excessive profits? Obviously, because the taking of the excessive profits by the people concerned has loaded the prices higher and higher, pushed up the costs of Government and the costs of production and made it necessary for the Federal Treasurer to take millions of pounds and more in the way of taxation than would have been necessary had these huge excessive profits not been taken by industry, trade and commerce in Australia during the last seven or eight years.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: He does not call them excessive profits.

The PREMIER: And so, ladies and gentlemen—I mean Mr. Speaker—I cannot get the member for Bunbury out of my mind. Here is another unfortunate highly injurious effect flowing from the taking of excessive profits in Australia over the years; the highly injurious effect of crippling taxation upon the people of Australia, including the industries themselves which have indulged in this excessive profit-taking. It has been said, too, that in the event of this Bill becoming law, no one who might conceivably come under the provisions of the law would ever know when he was within the law. The obvious answer to that would be that he would always be within the law until he was placed outside of it.

Mr. Court: That is a bit double-Dutch or left-handed.

The PREMIER: It is the fact.

Mr. Court: That makes it even worse. One is living in uncertainty the whole time.

The PREMIER: The member for Nedlands, I should imagine, does not sleep much. I imagine that he turns and tosses through the long hours of the night and into the small hours of the morning, worrying; his mind full of doubts and fears and wonder as to what will happen about this, that and the other thing. Yet, although that is the superficial attitude he puts on here, I imagine, and indeed I am almost convinced, there is no one in Western Australia who sleeps more soundly than he does.

Mr. Court: A sign of a clear conscience.

The PREMIER: The member for Roe said, "This problem is not as easy as the Premier thinks." I have no idea who misled him into thinking that I regarded the problem as simple. I regard the total problem of inflation as tremendously difficult, and I regard this element of the total problem as also difficult. There is nothing simple about it, and I am sure I have never said anything that would lead anyone to think that that was my view. The Leader of the Opposition made an extraordinary speech on this measure.

The Minister for Labour: That is not unusual.

The PREMIER: In a way it is a pity he was not the official speaker for the Liberal Party side of the Opposition because had he been so, I am sure he would have given more time to the subject and, consequently, he would have made a much better speech. He quoted me as saying that I would do my utmost to accept amendments to the Bill. He said that on the evening of the 25th September, on the afternoon of which there appeared in the "Daily News" a clear statement of

what I had said in regard to amendments. What I said then and what I say now is that Cabinet had given consideration to the amendments on the notice paper and had decided to support some of them, had decided to try to alter others and had decided to oppose some of them.

The Leader of the Opposition and the member for Greenough have tried to make it appear that I and the members of the Government have panicked into this attitude because of the blood and thunder propaganda which was let loose after this Bill was introduced. Those members who are still capable of being fair and reasonable on this point, will admit that at the time I introduced the Bill I clearly said that members of the Government would be prepared to give careful consideration to any amendments that were submitted and that we would incorporate amendments that we thought were reasonable; we would be prepared to accept them and have them included in the Bill.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I was only quoting you word for word from what I saw in the paper.

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition has been in politics long enough to know that when he quotes on the basis of newspaper reports, he quotes on the basis of shifting sand. The member for Dale talked about the Bill but I have found nothing in his speech that merits any reply at all.

Mr. Wild: You have still got the stiletto in your hand.

The PREMIER: The member for Moore adopted an extraordinary attitude.

Mr. Roberts: He represents the primary producer.

The PREMIER: He said the Government was unlikely to accept the more important amendments placed on the notice paper by some of the members of his own party. That was an extraordinary attitude of mind at that stage and, I imagine, the member for Moore developed that thought for the purpose of trying to quieten his conscience and to give him support in the erratic decision he made not to support the second reading of the Bill at any price or under any circumstances.

Mr. Bovell: It was a clear-cut decision.

The PREMIER: One would have thought the member for Moore would at least have waited before making up his mind on that point until there had been an authoritative statement from the Government. The member for Bunbury made the surprising admission that business interests generally had sobered up over the last year or so in regard to the taking of profits.

Mr. Court: He was quoting your speech.

Mr. Roberts: That is what you said.

The PREMIER: The member for Bunbury said he agreed that was so and therefore he confirmed what I said; and that admission of his was, of course, confirmation of what I said earlier in my speech about the effect of the excessive profits that were taken during the period from 1950 to, say, 1955, inclusive. The member for Avon Valley justified his opposition to the Bill mainly on the ground that it was five years too late. Does he mean to suggest that because salt erosion or some other erosion has been taking place for five years, nothing should be done to stem it after that period because it is five years too late?

In view of the time and the fact that, on what has been said by the majority of members, the Bill will be passed at the second reading, I will not delay the House any longer, except to say that the Government will, without any shadow of doubt, accept some of the major amendments placed on the notice paper by members of the Country Party. I sincerely hope and trust that, as a result of discussions in Committee, the Bill will be so shaped as to make it not only acceptable to a majority of members in the Legislative Council, but so as to make it effective in its operation and endeavour to protect not only the general public of Western Australia but also those traders who are prepared to treat the public fairly.

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

Ayes	.....	31
Noes	.....	12
Majority for	.....	19

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Norton
Mr. Evans	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Gaffy	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Graham	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Hall	Mr. Owen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Lapham	Mr. Toms
Mr. W. Manning	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Watts
Mr. Molr	Mr. May
Mr. Nalder	

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. Mann
Mr. Bovell	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Court	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Crommelin	Mr. Wild
Mr. Grayden	Mr. I. Manning

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Cornell
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Brady	Mr. Hearman

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 6.18 p.m.