

certain men in the industry decided to go in for something else. I believe a number of them did not enter the tobacco-growing industry in the first place with any intention of remaining in it. They had other reasons. But those men who have remained in the industry had their reward this year when the quality of the leaf was very considerably improved and when the return for the crop was very much enhanced, fully justifying the belief of the Government that there was a future in the industry and that if the right men remained in it there was nothing in it to fear so far as the production of leaf in Western Australia was concerned.

There are indications that the extension of this production to Karridale will give still better results than have been achieved elsewhere. The soil and climate appear to be very suitable for the production of high quality leaf, and a good deal is expected from production in that area. The assistance that has been rendered to the industry so far has been fully justified and will be continued; and this is a subject that will receive consideration at the next meeting of the Agricultural Council. The Commonwealth Government is most anxious that the industry, which was assisted in the early stages of the war, shall be enabled to continue, and I have no doubt that a satisfactory scheme will be finally drawn up that will enable the industry to continue to flourish.

Progress reported.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 7.30 p.m. tomorrow.

*House adjourned at 11.3 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Thursday, 5th December, 1916.*

|   | PAUSE |
|---|-------|
| Question: Comprehensive water scheme, as to Wellington Dam-Narrogin Area .....            | 2470  |
| Motion: Standing Order suspension .....   | 2470  |
| Bills: Legislative Council (War Time) Electoral Act Amendment, 1R. ....                   | 2471  |
| Comprehensive Agricultural Areas and Goldfields Water Supply, report .....                | 2471  |
| Country Areas Water Supply, report .....  | 2471  |
| Coal Mines Regulation, 2R. ....   | 2471  |
| Industries Assistance Act Continuance, 2R., Com., report .....                            | 2474  |
| Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment, 2R., Com., report .....                          | 2475  |
| Financial Emergency Act Amendment, 2R., Com., report .....                                | 2476  |
| Stipendiary Magistrates Act Amendment, 2R., Com., report .....                            | 2476  |
| Companies Act Amendment, 2R., Com., report .....  | 2481  |
| Marketing of Potatoes (No. 2), 2R., Com., report .....                                    | 2482  |
| Timber Industry Regulation Act Amendment, 1R. ....  | 2489  |
| Wheat Industry Stabilisation, 2R. ....  | 2491  |
| Building Operations and Building Materials Control Act Amendment, 2R., Com., report ..... | 2527  |
| Bread Act Amendment, 2R. ....   | 2494  |
| Adjournment, special .....  | 2547  |

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

### QUESTION.

#### COMPREHENSIVE WATER SCHEME.

*As to Wellington Dam-Narrogin Area.*

Hon. G. B. WOOD (for Hon. H. L. Roche) asked the Chief Secretary: On page 20 of the report issued by the Minister for Water Supplies in connection with the Comprehensive Water Scheme, 80,000,000 gallons of water per annum is shown as provided for the area between Wellington Dam and Narrogin.

As this area does not appear to be included in the proposed reticulation, will the Chief Secretary advise the House how it is anticipated this quantity of water will be consumed in that area?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

The 80,000,000 gallons per annum is the estimated quantity required to meet any direct draw-off from the main itself over this section.

#### MOTION—STANDING ORDER SUSPENSION.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

That Standing Order No. 62 (limit of time for commencing new business) be suspended for the remainder of the session.

# **BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (WAR TIME) ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.**

Introduced by the Chief Secretary and read a first time.

## **BILLS (2)—REPORTS.**

1, Comprehensive Agricultural Areas and Goldfields Water Supply.

2, Country Areas Water Supply.

Adopted.

## **BILL—COAL MINES REGULATION.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [4.42] in moving the second reading said: The main purpose of this Bill is the consolidation of the Coal Mines Regulation Act of 1902 and its amending Acts of 1915, 1926, 1928 and 1940. In the majority of its clauses it is a repetition of the existing Act, and the remaining provisions are amendments which it is considered are now necessary. There is little need for me to dwell upon the arduous and perhaps unpleasant nature of coalmining, except to state that the miners are entitled to every benefit and safeguard that can be devised. This Bill does not conflict in any way with the Mining Act of 1904-1945, which provides statutory authority for the leasing of areas for all classes of mining and for incidental matters. It deals with working conditions on coalmines and the protection and safety of employees. I do not propose to touch upon those provisions that are part of the existing Act, and will confine myself to the new and amending clauses.

The Bill differs from the Act in its partition into divisions, which will result in clarity and simplicity in reading the measure. There are eight divisions and, in addition to the preliminary matter, these deal with inspectors, management, accidents, employment, Sunday labour, accident relief and superannuation, and miscellaneous. The definition of "mine" has been amended to include an open cut. As members know, this type of mining has become increasingly popular and it provides a means by which coal may be obtained speedily and at

a lesser cost than by underground working. Open cuts are sometimes very deep, and it is essential that they be brought within the scope of this measure and be thus made liable to regular inspection and control. The next amendment requires a workmen's inspector to hold a second or third class certificate of competency. Members may not be aware of the duties and qualifications of such inspectors. They are elected by the miners and must have had five years' general practical underground experience as working miners. They do not become departmental officers as a result of their appointment. Their duties include seeing that the provisions of the Act affecting mines are observed, and they are required to make investigations into the state of any mine and the safety and well-being of employees.

In Committee it is my intention to move an amendment providing that it shall not be necessary for a workmen's inspector to possess such a certificate of competency until after the 1st January, 1949. The Collie Coal Miners' Union has pointed out that only two of its members would be eligible at present to be appointed as workmen's inspectors, as they are the only members holding certificates of competency. I will therefore move an amendment later, the purpose of which will be to give members of that organisation an opportunity of qualifying, as provided in the Bill. The union has suggested that a period of two years be allowed to enable members to qualify by obtaining the necessary certificate. Certificates of competency are issued by a board of examiners and are at present divided into two classes. A manager has to hold a first class certificate, and an under-manager or overman a second class certificate, an essential qualification for either certificate being five years' practical underground experience.

The Bill provides for a third class certificate, which must be gained by any person desiring appointment as a deputy, or, in other words, a shift boss. Under the Bill a workmen's inspector must obtain either a second or third class certificate. This will ensure that only skilled and qualified men are appointed to the important position of workmen's inspector. This amendment is being introduced at the request of both mine-owners and employees, as also is one to provide that the term of appointment of a workmen's inspector be extended from two

to three years. The owners and miners contend that a two-year term is too short to allow men to gain the necessary experience as inspectors and for the mines to reap the benefit of that experience.

The next amendment is designed to give the Minister power to authorise a departmental officer or any other person to enter and inspect mines, provided that the work of the mine is not unnecessarily impeded or obstructed. The owners and the union agree that the Minister should have the right to detail any person to carry out investigations on his behalf at a mine, and this provision will enable such a person legally to enter the mine.

In connection with certificates of competency, the Bill proposes—again with the concurrence of owners and the union—that in future shift bosses should qualify by examination for appointment. These men are officially termed “deputies” and they are appointed by the manager to take charge of daily mining operations. They hold responsible positions, and while on duty are charged with the safety and health of the miners under their control. In view of the onerous nature of their duties it is felt that they, as well as workmen’s inspectors, should possess a second or third class certificate of competency. Any person who has acted as a deputy for any period of two years prior to the commencement of the Act, or who was a deputy at the commencement of the Act, may, should this Bill be passed, be granted a third class certificate without examination.

It is also proposed that a deputy’s first duty when commencing work shall be to take certain precautions. These are set out in the Bill and require him to search for the presence of gas, ascertain that there is sufficient ventilation, examine the state of the roof and walls, supervise the general duties of shot-firers and any other matter which relates to the general safety of the mine, including checking and recording the number of persons under his control. Having satisfied himself as to these statutory precautions, a deputy may proceed with his customary duties.

The present Act states that boys under the age of 14 years shall not be employed, but in view of the proposal to increase the school-leaving age, the Bill includes an amendment to make the school-leaving age

the minimum at which a boy may be employed. This will obviate any future necessity to amend the Act whenever the age may be altered.

Then there is an amendment dealing with the hours of work. For the past 20 odd years coalminers have worked a maximum of seven hours a day for a 42-hour week, notwithstanding that the Act provides for a maximum of 8 hours daily and 48 hours weekly. As the lesser period has, through the effluxion of time, become a custom, it is proposed to amend the Act in conformity with it. I think members will agree that men who toil underground at such an arduous and unpleasant occupation as coalmining are entitled to have recognised by law the shorter hours to which they have become accustomed for many years.

The next new provision concerns the Coal Mines Accident Relief Fund to which adult employees contribute 1s. 6d. per fortnight and boys 9d. per fortnight, the boys receiving one-half of the benefits accruing to adults. The purpose of the fund is to augment workers’ compensation payments in cases where employees have been injured or killed in mining accidents. This provision, unfortunately, has precluded payments from the fund to persons receiving compensation for compensable occupational diseases such as dermatitis and so forth, and the Bill proposes to bring such cases within the jurisdiction of the fund. Reference in the Act to the Aged and Infirm Coal Miners’ Superannuation Fund is not included in the measure, as this fund has been superseded by the Mines Pension Fund. Members will recollect that special legislation was passed dealing with that matter.

Power is given in the Act for the Governor to make rules which so far as is reasonably practicable shall be observed in mines. The matters covered by these rules are also detailed in the Bill, with the addition of certain recommendations made by Mr. Wallwork in his capacity as Coal Commissioner. These suggestions include the improvement of miners’ lamps, better first-aid facilities, sanitation of mines, improved change houses and lighting, transport of workers underground, drainage, improved mining methods, shelter for surface workers, suitable crib places and eradication of dust.

One of the most important of the commissioner’s recommendations concerns under-

ground transport for workers. In some mines men have to walk considerable distances to work and are required to traverse a similar distance back up an incline on ceasing work. It is considered that some form of transport should be provided by the management. It is many years since I was down a mine at Collie, but I have a very distinct recollection of the long walk I had to get back to the surface. In the circumstances, I can quite understand that men, after a hard day's work at the far end of the mine, should be entitled to have some form of transport to enable them to return to the pit's mouth.

Members will observe that the schedule to the Act which details the general rules made for the regulation, government and protection of mines, employees and visitors has not been included in the Bill, the reason being that the continual changing and improving of mining methods necessitates the frequent amendment of rules to meet the altered situation. Experience has proved, therefore, that it would be more practicable to promulgate these rules by regulation, and it is proposed that this be done in future. Mr. Wallwork, too, is in favour of this change.

Any improvements in working conditions that the men will receive if this Bill is approved will also react in favour of the employers, as it cannot be disputed that better conditions result in better service from employees. As the Bill is mainly a consolidation of existing legislation and the other provisions are designed with the general concurrence of mineowners to ease the lot of their employees, I trust that it will receive favourable consideration from the House. I understand that Mr. Parker has a few amendments that he desires to move and I do not think he has had an opportunity so far to place them on the notice paper. Consequently, although I am anxious to get the measure through as expeditiously as possible, I shall not, even though the second reading may be agreed to today, take the Bill into Committee until I have had an opportunity to examine the amendments. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. H. S. W. PARKER** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [4.59]: I do not propose to embark upon a discussion of the Bill at length and shall support the second reading. As

the Minister has stated, I have a few amendments to move and perhaps I may be allowed to outline them briefly. With regard to the Minister concerned being empowered under this legislation to give a permit to any person entitling him to go down a mine, I am afraid my advice is rather different from those received by the Chief Secretary. I will endeavour to have that portion deleted and substitute "any officer of the department." My reason for doing so need not be given at this stage. Another important amendment is required and whether the need for it arises from an error or not, I cannot say. The former regulation provided that the owner or manager could lay a complaint and have the weigher removed, but now it is proposed that the owner or manager shall no longer have this right and that only miners will be entitled to lay a complaint. Division 8 deals with the accident relief and superannuation fund. Up to the present the regulations have provided that the miners shall have the advantage of an accident relief and superannuation fund in addition to the benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act. They also have a pension fund, and it seems that by Clause 38 we shall be giving these workers somewhat more than they should expect or are really entitled to.

The Chief Secretary: They contribute to the fund.

**HON. H. S. W. PARKER**: And the owners also contribute. However, we can discuss the details later. I shall mention only the major amendments that I think ought to be made to the Bill. There is provision also for general rules or regulations to be made by the Governor. These are very broad and the powers given under them are enormous. Obviously we could not include in an Act of Parliament all the regulations that are now necessary and will be needed from time to time. To meet the difficulty, I propose to move that no regulation shall have any force or effect of law until 14 days after it has been laid on the Table of the House. This represents a slight departure from the usual procedure. If regulations are made under an Act in January, they normally come into force immediately and could not be rejected until action was taken within 14 days of their being laid on

the Table of the House. The amendment will provide that these regulations shall not have force or effect until 14 days after they have been tabled, irrespective of when they may have been made.

The Chief Secretary: That would mean that no alteration could take effect between January and August?

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: That would be the effect of my amendment. I have been fortunate in being able to suggest that amendment because the draftsman seems to have overlooked the Interpretation Act. Those are the principal amendments I intend to submit in Committee. Under the Standing Orders, I could not have them placed on the notice paper until after the second reading of the Bill had been moved.

**HON. W. J. MANN** (South-West) [5.5]: I support the second reading. As Mr. Parker has indicated, there are a few directions in which the measure could be improved, but generally speaking it appears to be acceptable to the men and the owners. At any rate that is the information conveyed to me. I regret that the Bill does not make provision for the appointment of a State mining engineer of wide experience whose functions should be confined to the coalmining industry. I have mentioned this matter here on several occasions, because I have felt that the industry is not given the standing in the department that it should have. I believe much good would result from the appointment of such an officer, because he would be in a position to take a broad survey of the position from all angles and at all times, which would be of great advantage to the industry.

We have already had evidence of the good work of a gentleman who has not had the advantage of training in this industry; I refer to Mr. Wallwork. I congratulate him upon the excellent work he has done for the industry during the past year or two. The appointment of an official as I have indicated, perhaps as assistant State mining engineer, would meet the wishes of many of the men who have been engaged in the industry for years and who have informed me they have often felt that, if such a person were available, he would be able to

smooth over difficulties and solve many problems.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

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

*Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.10] in moving the second reading said: The Industries Assistance Act was introduced in 1915, its main purpose being to assist farmers who had been seriously affected through the partial failure of the 1913-14 wheat crop, which was followed the next year by a severe drought. The aid given to farmers covered practically all their farming requirements. They received considerable benefits under the Act which otherwise would have been denied them owing to the shrinkage of rural credit caused by the drought conditions. This assistance enabled many to continue their activities who otherwise would have been forced to leave their properties.

In 1917 an amendment was passed providing that no supplies or advances should be made under the Act subsequent to the 31st March, 1918. Since then Parliament has approved each year of legislation designed to present the restrictions imposed by the amendment being brought into effect. This has been necessary in order that advances previously made and outstanding might be protected, and also to provide machinery whereby future assistance might be granted to settlers suffering from drought or other adverse conditions. By 1934 requests for assistance under the Act had practically ceased. The drought year of 1935, however, brought fresh applications; and in 1940 it was found necessary to amend the Act to control the distribution of moneys provided by the Commonwealth to aid drought-stricken settlers.

During the financial year ended the 30th June, 1946, the Commissioners of the Rural Bank approved of the allocation of the sum of £38,135 for seasonal assistance. Of this amount £29,315, or £10,323 more than in the previous year, was actually advanced. Members will be aware that assistance has also been provided under the Act to various secondary industries.

In asking members to approve of the Bill, there is no need for me to stress the benefits that have accrued to the State by these operations, and I feel sure that the House will agree to a continuation of the Act for a further twelve months. I wish to point out that there is not a large number of settlers who are receiving assistance under the Act; but it is very important indeed that they should still be allowed to enjoy the benefits which the Act confers upon them. I can but express the hope that as the years pass we will not have a repetition of some of the seasons we have experienced in the past, so that the time will eventually arrive when there will be no necessity for this legislation. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. A. THOMSON** (South-East) [5.15]: I think all members had hoped that this legislation might become a thing of the past. However, as the Chief Secretary has pointed out, it is apparently necessary to continue the parent Act in order to protect moneys that were advanced by the Commonwealth to assist farmers. Many of us were under the impression that those moneys were a gift and that consequently the farmers would not be called upon to repay them. The assistance was unfortunately necessary because of drought conditions. However, it is not my purpose to delay the measure, although I hope that in the not distant future this legislation will be discontinued for all time.

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—FARMERS' DEBTS ADJUSTMENT ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.19] in moving the second reading said: The object of this Bill is to continue the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act for a further period of 12 months to the 31st March, 1948. The Act came into operation in 1931 and was limited in its application to the end of March, 1932. Sub-

sequently it has been extended from time to time and it is not due to lapse until the 31st March, 1947. At the time of its introduction many farmers were in difficult straits through the serious fall in the price of primary products. A large number of them were granted stay orders under the Act and their financial affairs were administered by receivers, a review meeting being held following each harvest. With the passing of the Rural Relief Fund Act in 1935 many of these stay orders were allowed to lapse, and the farmers obtained advances under that Act.

The Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act has always been well thought of in farming, banking and commercial circles, and farmers and creditors have frequently sought the advice of the officers administering the Act. On many occasions this advice has been the means of solving difficulties without recourse to a stay order. The advent of good prices and better seasons has resulted in a great diminution of work under the Act, but there are still a number of farmers operating under it by mutual arrangement with their main creditors. Although the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act was to some extent amended by the Rural Relief Fund Act, this did not interfere with the main principles of the former Act which operates separately from the Rural Relief Fund Act. In view of the value of the Act to farmers and other persons I trust that the House will agree to its extension for a further twelve months, which will take it to the 31st March, 1948. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. G. B. WOOD** (East) [5.23]: Naturally, I support the Bill and hope it will be passed; but there is one point to which I would draw attention. I wish the Government would give us some figures each year as to the progress made by people under the Act, and how many are no longer subject to its provisions. There must be a considerable decrease in the number of people benefiting from the measure, and I think it would be a good idea if the Government would supply us with that information when continuance measures are introduced.

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Central) [5.24]: I want to take this opportunity to thank the Government for bringing in the Bill. The measure has served a very vital need

in the past, in giving protection that was well deserved. However, I want to say what is known to all members but is not so well known by the public generally. It is that, try as Parliament may to pass laws for the benefit of deserving people, it has been unable to prevent undeserving people from taking advantage of them. That has happened with regard to this measure as with others. There is no doubt of that. I have had to stand up to people who have been inclined to challenge Parliament for giving protection to people not deserving it. I have been called upon to reply that we can only do what we think to be in the interests of honest and deserving people. Unfortunately, in doing so we have made it possible for others to benefit who have not played the game by obtaining stores and other requisites to carry on their farming operations. However, we have to put up with that sort of thing.

The measure has been a real boon to many honest farmers; of that there is not the slightest doubt. Concerning Mr. Wood's remarks, I thought I read in the Press a couple of weeks ago that there are only five or seven farmers still under this Act. I happen to be personally interested in at least one of those men, and I was advised that the protection afforded to him would expire this year; so I am rather surprised to find that the Government has seen fit to continue the Act for another 12 months. However, as the Chief Secretary said, we have to give consideration to the farmers and creditors concerned and this measure has enabled deserving people to carry on. I hope that, with better prices and seasons, next year will see the end of the Act, which has at least served the purpose for which it was introduced.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [5.26]: I think it will be recognised that this is one of quite a number of Acts which from time to time have had to be introduced by various Governments to protect the interests of very deserving people. It is inevitable that, in matters of this kind, we shall find what I would describe as a very small minority who are perhaps not deserving of the assistance and protection which such legislation affords. In this case I understand that the number of persons now protected is

very small indeed. I do not know the exact number, but it is certainly small. I do know it is anticipated that there will be no necessity for a further extension of the measure after this one. However, one can never be sure of these things. We do not know what is in store for the next 12 months; and therefore, while we may express a hope that certain action will not be necessary, we must wait until the time arrives before we can determine whether it is or not. I have not with me the information that Mr. Wood requested, but I can obtain it for him 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—FINANCIAL EMERGENCY ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.30] in moving the second reading said: As members are aware, the Financial Emergency Act which was passed in 1934, provided for a 22½ per cent. reduction in salaries and wages, and for the control of interest rates. Following the amendments of 1934 and 1935, the Act is now only concerned with the control of interest in certain cases. All mortgages in existence prior to the 31st December, 1931, are subject to the Act, by which the interest rates were reduced to 5 per cent. or the original rate, less 22½ per cent., whichever was the greater. It is felt that mortgagors suffer little or no hardship as a result of this reduction, as money rates at present are much lower than 5 per cent. or the rates applying after the reduction of 22½ per cent.

Consideration was given last year to allowing the Act to lapse as from the 30th November, 1945, but it was thought desirable to continue the measure for a further 12 months to give mortgagors the chance to obtain fresh accommodation at the lower rates of interest that were offering. Inquiries have revealed that there are still a number of mortgages in existence that were entered into prior to 1931, and with the lapsing as from the 30th

November, 1946, of the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act it is thought that it would be advisable to continue the Financial Emergency Act for another 12 months to allow mortgagors a further opportunity to make other arrangements at the current low rates of interest. Otherwise these persons would have to pay the full rate for their present mortgages, which would probably be about 7 or 8 per cent.

Hon. G. Fraser: And 10 per cent. too!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have not heard of any at 10 per cent. The Bill therefore provides for the continuation of the Act until the 30th November, 1947, and if it is passed I would strongly recommend mortgagors protected by the measure to make other arrangements without fail prior to the date mentioned, as it is extremely unlikely that any further extension of the Act will be sought. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. L. CRAIG** (South-West) [5.34]: I am not going to oppose the second reading of this Bill, but I wish to say that some mortgagors are so lax that they deserve something to wake them up. The number of mortgages that were due to lapse in 1930, 1931 and 1932, is amazing. The other day I saw some that were still carrying interest rates as high as 8 per cent., and many at 7 per cent. They represented sound security, and the mortgagors could have got a reduction to 4½ per cent, which is the maximum allowed.

Hon. A. Thomson: Surely they are not paying 8 per cent!

Hon. L. CRAIG: They are paying 8 per cent., less 22½ per cent., which works out at £6 8s. 6d. per cent., and every one of these people could get money at 4¾ per cent., but they just do not bother. The only way to bring them to a sense of their own responsibility is to let this measure lapse. When they reverted to 8 per cent. they would all come along and renew their mortgages at the present rate.

The Chief Secretary: No, they would blame the local member!

Hon. L. CRAIG: I suppose they would. I do not think this legislation would have any effect. I support the Bill because one must protect fools against themselves. It is amazing how some people deserve to lose money.

**HON. G. FRASER** (West) [5.36]: I mentioned, by interjection, that I knew of at least one instance where 10 per cent. was the rate. In fact, in that case a little over 8 per cent. is being paid because of the 22½ per cent. reduction. Whilst it might be said that generally people are careless, and it is their own fault, this instance happens to concern a particularly elderly couple, and, although through the years I have advised them what to do, they are at the mental state that they cannot grasp what is being told them; and, in addition, only a small amount of about £50 is still owing under the mortgage so, from their point of view, it is hardly worth borrowing to make other arrangements. This measure will, however, at least give them protection to the extent that they will pay just a little over 8 per cent. That may be typical of others who are not so much careless as incapable of grasping what is told them.

Hon. L. Craig: It is mostly carelessness.

Hon. G. FRASER: I suppose so, but I have in mind people who are getting up to 80 years of age. They do not seem to grasp just what is required, and when they get so old they are a little suspicious and are apt to continue on in the old way. From that point of view, this measure will give protection.

**HON. H. S. W. PARKER** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.38]: This measure is a dead-letter now, so far as I can see, because money is so easy at present. One cannot get a mortgage at all for trust funds, and it is the trustees, who have trust funds, who are in difficulties in knowing how to invest the money that they hold. All they can get is 3¼ per cent. on loans. Little or no money is required for building, and that is where most of this mortgage money goes. If a tenant suggests that there might be a reduction of rent, 90 per cent. of mortgagees are only too anxious to reduce the interest to 5 per cent. so as to allow the money to remain on mortgage. The Act is not necessary; it is not wanted. In the odd case that Mr. Fraser mentioned, the mortgagor need only have some friend or relative to mention to the mortgagee that the mortgagor is thinking of getting another mortgage, and the interest would be reduced at once because the mortgagee could not get another investment. I am sorry the Act is to be con-

tinued. Now when money is so easy is the time for this, and other similar Bills, to lapse.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. Kitson—West—in reply) [5.39]: I can hardly agree that this measure is a dead-letter. On the evidence of Mr. Craig it is anything but that. I have given a strong enough warning to indicate that the people concerned should be prepared to look after their own business within the next 12 months because there is little likelihood of their getting further protection. I hope the House will agree to the extension for a further period of 12 months till the 31st March, 1948.

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—STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.42] in moving the second reading said: This Bill relates to the appointment under the Public Service Act of a coroner, and applications for the position are now in the hands of the Public Service Commissioner. It has always been considered a desirable practice for inquests to be conducted by magistrates, but during the past few years it has become increasingly difficult to make magistrates available to carry out these duties. In fact, of the 47 inquests that were held during the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1946, it was only possible to arrange for three to be conducted by magistrates, it being necessary to call on justices of the peace for the remainder.

These justices have carried out their duties in a satisfactory manner, but it is considered that it would be preferable to have a coroner available at all times, rather than that it should be necessary to call on a number of different justices to carry out this function. This official will possess qualifications similar to those of a magistrate, and where possible it is proposed to utilise his services as a

magistrate to assist in coping with the voluminous work of the metropolitan courts. To do this it will be necessary to amend the Stipendiary Magistrates Act, which precludes the appointment of magistrates other than under its provisions. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. H. S. W. PARKER** (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.45]: I am afraid I must oppose this Bill. The Stipendiary Magistrates Act was brought in for the sole purpose of giving security of tenure of office to magistrates. It provides a tenure of office until a magistrate reaches 70 years of age. Section 9 of that Act states—

After the commencement of this Act, no person shall be appointed a paid or salaried magistrate, or a police or resident magistrate, or a magistrate of a local court, except pursuant to the provisions of this Act.

That deals with magistrates, and no magistrate can be appointed unless he is a stipendiary magistrate. The section further says—

Provided that nothing in this section shall be deemed to abrogate or limit the power of the Governor to appoint wardens or establish wardens' courts under the Mining Act, 1904, or to appoint coroners.

When that Act was brought in a coroner was not expected to be a magistrate, and therefore a coroner may be appointed at any time, irrespective of the Act, but that coroner cannot be appointed a magistrate. At present there is a special magistrate of the Children's Court, who is not a stipendiary magistrate. He is not a salaried magistrate or a police or resident magistrate. He performs the duties of a magistrate and proceeds, I presume, as a justice of the peace. Personally I do not think coroner's inquests are necessary, but that is not the question before the House. The Coroners Act is in force and therefore coroners are necessary.

So long as we have coroners' inquests it is, to my mind, essential to have a paid full-time coroner. It may be said that there is not sufficient work for a full-time coroner, but there is nothing to prevent such a person still carrying on the duties of a magistrate. He could proceed as a justice of the peace in the police court or the local court. If this Bill passes no further stipendiary magistrates will be appointed and only those at present appointed will remain as such. There are five or six gentlemen now holding that office, and they will be permitted to continue with security of tenure until they

reach 70 years of age. Further magistrates appointed will become civil servants, if the Bill is passed, and will be appointed under the Public Service Act. They will be liable to have their services terminated at 60 or 65 years of age, as is the case with other civil servants. One can see the danger that might arise in the case of a man 59 years of age, if his decisions did not please the then existing Government.

I think it would be a retrograde step to abolish this law, which has been in force since 1930, merely because we want to appoint a coroner. Why cannot a stipendiary magistrate be a coroner? As the Chief Secretary pointed out, only a few inquests have been presided over by such magistrates, because they have not been available. Mr. Wallwork is on some special duty for a great part of his time and Mr. Moseley is frequently away on special duty. I understand he is now conducting Public Service appeals. So long as we have a Coroners Act I suppose it is essential to have a coroner. We should have properly qualified men, with security of tenure of office. Why cannot the coroner be appointed a stipendiary magistrate or one of the stipendiary magistrates be appointed to act as coroner in addition to his other duties? It does not seem to me to be quite accurate to say that the Bill is essential because the Government desires to appoint a coroner.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [5.51]: I am rather surprised at Mr. Parker's opposition. I did not anticipate there would be any objection to the measure, and I certainly cannot agree with the construction that the hon. member has put on the Bill. It does not seek to abrogate the provisions of the Stipendiary Magistrates Act, which provides that there shall not be more than 12 stipendiary magistrates appointed at any one time. Even now we have not 12 such officers, so that there is room for the appointment of further stipendiary magistrates if they are considered necessary. It is regarded as desirable, reasonable and essential that a coroner should be appointed. It is perfectly true that if a coroner be appointed, the whole of his time will not be occupied with the duties attached to that office, and so we are anxious

to utilise his services in assisting the stipendiary magistrates who find it very difficult to meet the requirements of the courts in the metropolitan area. I do not see anything wrong with that. The person to be appointed as coroner must have qualifications similar to those possessed by stipendiary magistrates. He certainly is to be appointed under the Public Service Act, but that does not say that there will be no further stipendiary magistrates appointed under the Stipendiary Magistrates Act.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why delete Section 6? I feel you have not read it.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: I think the hon. member is far too suspicious.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: No, you read Section 9 of the principal Act.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: Section 9 of the Stipendiary Magistrates Act reads—

After the commencement of this Act, no person shall be appointed a paid or salaried magistrate, or a police or resident magistrate, or a magistrate of a local court, except pursuant to the provisions of this Act.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: You are wiping out that section.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: Yes, in order to provide that the particular person who may be appointed as coroner may also act as a magistrate when he is not officiating as coroner. Surely that is reasonable.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Why not appoint him as a stipendiary magistrate?

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY**: The drafting of this Bill was done by the Government's legal advisers. All the Government desires is to appoint a coroner who, when not acting in that capacity, shall be able to act as a magistrate, and this is the method it has been recommended to adopt. I cannot accept the construction Mr. Parker has put on the Bill and I trust the House will not oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

### Clause 3—Repeal of Section 9:

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: In his reply to the debate the Chief Secretary made it quite clear to me that what he has put forward is not the intention of the Government in view of the wording of Section 9, which is to be repealed. If that section is taken out of the principal Act, of what use is that measure? There remains nothing in it! Section 2 provides for the appointment of stipendiary magistrates, and embodies a proviso that no more than 12 persons shall hold office at one time as stipendiary magistrates and that there will be nothing to prejudice or limit the power of the Government to make temporary appointments under Section 12. The Stipendiary Magistrates Act was passed with a view to compelling the Government to appoint stipendiary magistrates with tenure of office until they reach 70 years of age. If Section 9 is deleted it will simply mean that the Governor may appoint them; so far as I can see he will not be required to do so.

Let members peruse Section 5 of the Act which sets out that every stipendiary magistrate shall be a justice of the peace and coroner for the State and can exercise the jurisdiction, powers and authority conferred by any statute throughout the State. Why is it that the Government does not want the coroner to be a stipendiary magistrate, but wants an official who can perform all the duties of a stipendiary magistrate? I cannot understand it. I asked several lawyers what this measure meant and they agreed that it meant the repeal of the Stipendiary Magistrates Act. I am sorry to say that that is the way I look at it. I strongly advise the Committee to vote against the clause.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I cannot agree with Mr. Parker who asks why a stipendiary magistrate could not perform the duties of a coroner. During my second reading speech I pointed out that last year out of 47 inquests held on three occasions only was it possible for stipendiary magistrates to preside.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Then appoint another.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: As a result we had to call upon the services of justices of the peace who presided over 40 odd inquests. We are anxious to see that the duties of coroner are carried out by one individual

possessing proper qualifications enabling him to undertake the task, and that at the same time we shall be able to utilise his services to assist in the courts in the metropolitan area when he is not required to preside over an inquest. The Government has been advised that it is necessary to adopt this procedure. I cannot see how anyone can argue that this proposal is going to wipe out the Act. It will not interfere with the conditions under which stipendiary magistrates are engaged, or with their rights.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Will this apply to the metropolitan area?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, insofar as inquests are concerned.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: I am wondering how we shall manage in the North-West.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: We could not send a coroner from the metropolitan area to conduct an inquest in the North-West, except in special circumstances. I cannot agree with Mr. Parker, and hope his suggestion will not be acted upon.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I cannot agree with the Chief Secretary. If we delete Section 9 of the Act, men without qualifications might be appointed as magistrates.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The Act does not affect the appointment of coroners.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: No, but the Bill will affect more than coroners.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: This proposal would give the Government authority to appoint a coroner with qualifications that would permit of his acting as a magistrate. The coroner would be available to assist stipendiary magistrates in the metropolitan area in their work. Section 6 of the Act is the one that contains the qualifications for appointment as stipendiary magistrate. So long as those qualifications are retained and Clause 9 remains in the Act, it would not be possible to appoint a coroner as we desire to do. The idea is that the coroner shall carry out other duties, and we have been advised that it is necessary to amend the Act in this way.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: The intention apparently is to appoint a coroner who is not sufficiently qualified under the Act to be magistrate. The Government evidently desires to do this with a view to using the

coroner as a resident magistrate also. Therefore it is proposed to delete Section 9, but this will mean that in future we need not have stipendiary magistrates. A stipendiary magistrate has a tenure of office until he reaches the age of 70, whereas an ordinary magistrate has to retire at 60 or 65. Why cannot the Government appoint a coroner who is sufficiently qualified to act as a stipendiary magistrate? If such a man were appointed, there would be no need to amend the Act. I consider it very important that Section 9 should be retained.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I thought I made it clear that applications for this position are already in the hands of the Public Service Commissioner and that the qualifications required of the applicant are those which must be possessed by a stipendiary magistrate. The appointee will be a member of the legal profession and capable of discharging the functions of a coroner and a stipendiary magistrate.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: Mr. Parker's observations have created a doubt in my mind and I therefore feel I must vote against the clause.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: As a member of the legal profession, I am anxious that the appointee should have a tenure of office until he reaches 70 years of age. Under the Bill he would have to retire either at 60 or 65 years of age.

The Chief Secretary: Perhaps that is the reason for the opposition to the clause.

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

|                  |    |    |    |    |    |
|------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Ayes             | .. | .. | .. | .. | 6  |
| Noes             | .. | .. | .. | .. | 16 |
|                  |    |    |    |    | —  |
| Majority against | .. | .. | .. | .. | 10 |
|                  |    |    |    |    | —  |

## AYES.

|                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Hon. G. Bennetts | Hon. E. M. Heenan |
| Hon. G. Fraser   | Hon. W. H. Kitson |
| Hon. E. H. Gray  | Hon. F. E. Gibson |
|                  | (Teller.)         |

## NOES.

|                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Hon. C. F. Baxter      | Hon. H. S. W. Parker |
| Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch | Hon. H. L. Roche     |
| Hon. L. Craig          | Hon. C. H. Simpson   |
| Hon. R. M. Forrest     | Hon. A. Thomson      |
| Hon. E. H. H. Hall     | Hon. H. Tuckey       |
| Hon. J. G. Hislop      | Hon. F. R. Welsh     |
| Hon. A. L. Lofton      | Hon. G. B. Wood      |
| Hon. W. J. Mann        | Hon. G. W. Miles     |
|                        | (Teller.)            |

Clause thus negatived.

Clauses 4 and 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

## BILL—COMPANIES ACT AMENDMENT.

### Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [7.30] in moving the second reading said: This very short Bill concerns the Companies Act of 1943. Members will undoubtedly recollect the volume of work that was put into this Act by both Houses. It was originally introduced in another place in 1940 and after the second reading debate a Joint Select Committee was appointed to examine its proposals. In June, 1941, this committee was converted into an honorary Royal Commission and later submitted a very extensive report to the Lieut.-Governor. As a result of that report and of the deliberations in another place, the Bill arrived at this House in a very amended form, and I think I can say the result was considered satisfactory from the point of view of all parties interested in the measure.

During the Committee stage in this House Sir Hal Colebatch secured an amendment, to which the Government did not object, to postpone the proclamation of the Act until six months after the end of the war. This was intended to give all parties likely to be affected by the Act the opportunity to make reasonable preparations pending its proclamation; preparations that it might have been difficult to carry out during the war. The Government considers that the time is now opportune to set a date for the proclamation of the Act, and it proposes that that date shall be the 1st October, 1947. The intervening period should enable everyone interested to be prepared for its coming into operation, and it will give the Registrar of Companies the opportunity to secure additional accommodation and increased staff.

Hon. Sir Hal. Colebatch: The Bill is necessary because you do not know when hostilities will cease?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There seems to be a very grave doubt as to when they actually will cease, more particularly from a legal point of view. To enable the Act

to be proclaimed on the date mentioned the Bill proposes to amend Section 1 (i) of the Act by deleting the words "but not until six months after the cessation of hostilities in the present war." That is all that is in the Bill and I hope it will meet with the approval of members.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It does not mean that the Act will have to be proclaimed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It will be proclaimed.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: The Government could proclaim the Act whenever it liked?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, we are providing in this Bill, by deleting these words—

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: What are the remaining words?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have not the original Act but the words to be deleted are "but not until six months after the cessation of hostilities in the present war." The Government considers that the 1st October would be a very suitable date for the proclamation and therefore desires that the measure shall be amended in this way. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 1:

Hon. Sir Hal. COLEBATCH: I take it there is no intention of putting the date in the Act. I presume the Chief Secretary merely mentioned it for public information.

The Chief Secretary: That is so.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

### **BILL—MARKETING OF POTATOES** (No. 2).

#### *Second Reading.*

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [7.38] in moving the second reading said: My object in bringing

this Bill forward now is in order that we may make some progress with it in view of the lateness of the session. I suppose there will be a certain amount of interest in the Bill and by my introducing it tonight members particularly concerned will be given an opportunity to study it. The Bill is introduced at the request of the potato growers who are concerned that the expiration on the 31st December next of the National Security Regulations will mean the end of the present system under which potatoes are grown under contract at assured prices. This system was inaugurated during the war by the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of ensuring an adequate supply of potatoes for Service, civilian and oversea requirements. The result of this scheme was an immediate and large increase in production in the main potato-producing States of Victoria, Tasmania and Western Australia. In Tasmania the area under production was trebled, and in Victoria more than doubled. In Western Australia the acreage was increased from 7,000 to 14,000.

Since the war ended officers of the Department of Agriculture and producers have met on a number of occasions, and at least three meetings of the Agricultural Council of Australia have been held to evolve a method whereby the present area under production might be reduced without inflicting undue hardship on growers.

It is contended that such a reduction is vitally necessary, as with the gradual return to normal peacetime conditions there will not be by any means the same market available that there was during the war. We therefore desire to take steps to prevent any future over-production, with its resultant evil effects on producers and consumers. The growers are very much alive to this fact and desire the Government to take the most effective steps to obviate such a happening.

After careful consideration of every aspect of this subject the Agricultural Council has recommended that each of the potato-producing States should introduce legislation for the creation of a marketing authority, which would also have the power to regulate production. If each State possessed such legislation, equitable and organised methods of interstate trade could be arranged. The Potato Growers' Association has assured the Government that this measure has its whole-hearted support. Of

the 1,500 licensed potato growers in this State, 900 are members of the association and 300 are ineligible owing to their being either under age or unnaturalised. It will be realised, therefore, that 75 per cent. of those growers eligible are members of the association, which is thus fully qualified to speak as the representative of the growers.

The Bill is divided into five parts, under the headings of preliminary, the Western Australian potato marketing board, registered agents, marketing of potatoes, and miscellaneous. The passage of this legislation will repeal the Potato Growers Licensing Act of 1941, which now provides for the licensing of growers and for the payment of an annual license fee according to the extent of the growers' acreage. That, of course, was a wartime organisation. A grower is defined as a person by whom or on whose behalf potatoes are actually grown or produced for sale, and includes the parties concerned in any partnership of this nature, while a commercial producer is a grower by whom or on whose behalf at least half an acre of land is in crop and who is qualified to vote at a Legislative Assembly election. This latter proviso will prevent any unnaturalised person from having the right to vote on the conditions that shall apply.

The Bill provides for the creation of a Western Australian potato marketing board, consisting of six members, comprised of a chairman, who will be required to have no interest whatsoever in the potato industry, two consumer representatives, and three growers, two of whom must be commercial producers. The two representatives of the consumers will be nominated by the Minister, and must not be engaged in the commercial production of potatoes. One grower on the board will be nominated by the Minister, following consultation with the potato growers' executive, but the two commercial producer representatives, who are also, of course, to be growers, will be elected by the commercial producers. In this industry growers can be found in districts from Albany to north of Perth, and there are large numbers of growers in several localities. If all three representatives were to be elected by the producers it is quite conceivable that they might all come from the same district, and other districts would

therefore be deprived of a voice on the board. But if two members are elected, and the Minister, after obtaining the advice of the potato growers' executive, nominates the other, he will be able to make an appointment which will provide for balanced representation.

The board will have the power to appoint its own employees, none of whom will become officers of the Public Service. It will be clothed with the customary powers to buy and sell property, enter into contracts, etc., and will be able at its discretion to grant or refuse licenses to growers, and regulate the registration of growers and potato-growing areas. One of the conditions of a grower's license will be that the area sown must be that determined by the board. It is considered that this method of control is essential in order that the board may be aware of the quantity of potatoes available for disposal. The board, of course, will be required to make suitable allowance for the possibility of a poor season or for over-production caused by an excessively favourable season. Under this plan the producer will be in a position to calculate his probable return and will not be subject to the doubts that assailed him in pre-war years.

Power will be given to authorise growers to sell their produce other than to the board, and this will facilitate trading between neighbours, and trading in small quantities, if the board does not feel it necessary to take all the potatoes produced. Provision is made for the board to enter into an agreement or partnership with any other body in the Commonwealth which may be constituted to arrange for the production or marketing of potatoes. This will lead to a control of interstate trade in potatoes and will regulate the import into any State of potatoes from a State where there may be a glut.

The board will be given the power to take over the administration of the Potato Growers' Trust Fund, which is established under the Potato Growers Licensing Act, this Act being repealed by the Bill. Agents may be registered by the board to take delivery of potatoes from growers on its behalf and perform such duties and functions as it directs. The remainder of the clauses in the Bill are of a machinery nature and can, if necessary, be discussed in Committee.

I repeat that this measure is introduced at the desire of the growers who are

according to their full support in the belief that it will provide them with a sure and regular market, thus avoiding the very precarious conditions which applied in pre-war years. I have no doubt that a number of members in this Chamber have a very good knowledge of the precarious position of the potato market during that period. On a previous occasion when we were discussing this question, the late Mr. Harold Piesse, who was very enthusiastic on behalf of the potato growers, gave the House a very graphic description of the conditions as he had known them in certain areas, and I can add my quota to his testimony, because 35 years ago I was a potato grower and know something of the risks that are taken and the results of taking those risks. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. L. CRAIG (South-West) [7.52]:**

As a Bill, there is not very much in this measure, but its acceptance represents a policy of controlling a commodity in a way which before the war, we were not accustomed to. The scheme adopted during the war was most successful. It reduced the gambling element to a minimum—in fact almost eliminated it—and the growing of potatoes became quite a profitable industry, so much so that the area under production in this State doubled. If a similarly large area is cropped indiscriminately without control, the value of potatoes will fall to almost nil. The cost of growing potatoes has recently increased enormously; I should say 100 per cent. I paid 3s. per bag for digging, whereas we used to get them dug for 1s. For picking up and putting into bags, we used to pay as little as 4d.; now we have to pay as much as 2s. 6d. The quality of the potatoes marketed greatly improved under the scheme because the board rejected anything not of first-class quality.

Legislative control of this sort has its disadvantages, but we have to accept the lesser of two evils. We have to decide whether we are going to let the industry collapse, as it certainly will do without control. Potatoes are a highly perishable product. They come in at all times of the year. We have the South-West where the winter crop planted in July is dug in October, November and into December.

Then we have the crops at Pemberton, Manjimup and parts of the Albany district dug in January and February, while the summer crop in the irrigation swamps is planted in January. Do what growers may, they can never avoid the terrific slumps in the price of potatoes. Potatoes worth £15 a ton today may next week be worth only £4 a ton. I have sold 30 or 40 tons at £2 10s. a ton, and it cost me £7 to £8 a ton to grow them. That is a common experience. Although I do not like restrictions of this sort, I can see no escape from accepting them. This Bill will put the growing of potatoes into the hands of a comparatively few people and will prevent new people undertaking farming from growing them at all. Growers at present registered will continue to produce and there will not be any room for new growers.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is as well, is it not?

Hon. L. CRAIG: But it is hard on the new farmers.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That is so, but what is the use of growing a commodity in quantities that are not wanted?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Quite so. That is why I am accepting this Bill; it is inevitable.

The Chief Secretary: You would not say that 1,200 was a small number of people.

Hon. L. CRAIG: But the Minister should not overlook the fact that 1,200 people are growing potatoes now, whereas only 500 or 600 grew them previously. Returned soldiers can demand and are obtaining permission to grow two or three acres. Many such licenses are being issued.

Hon. H. L. Roche: A lot of those are for Southern Europeans.

Hon. L. CRAIG: A lot of those growers have had their licenses cut out entirely: they were excellent fellows, some of them growing large areas. However, some have to be eliminated in order to give the returned Servicemen two or three acres. I regret to say that a few of the returned men have obtained licenses and then sold them. When they got the licenses, they had no intention of growing potatoes. However, I do not think much of that is going on.

By and large this is a scheme to continue the successful control of the growing and selling as was done during the war. There

is nothing intricate in the Bill. It provides merely for the formation of a board, giving that body almost complete power. The board may acquire property, erect its own building, have its own staff, license growers, and determine under what conditions growers shall produce potatoes. When the crop is dug, the board will have complete control of the selling. If a grower has 50 tons of potatoes, the board may give an order for one truckload of six tons immediately they are dug. Then that grower has to take his turn before he gets another order for another six tons, which might be in a month's time. Meanwhile the potatoes begin to deteriorate, as they do very quickly. The grower gets an order for another six tons and awaits his turn again, by which time what is left of the 50 tons may have to be turned out and re-bagged. Odd ones will have gone bad and they, of course, would contaminate all the rest in the bag. There is much work attached to the holding and selling of a full crop.

Under pre-war methods before control was introduced, there was a rush on the part of growers to dig their potatoes, put them on the market and get clear of them. Merchants used to buy hundreds of tons and store them. They knew the market position better than did the growers. When potatoes were rushed on the market, they brought as low a price as £2 10s. per ton. Merchants stored them and held them until the market rose to £12 or £15 a ton, and made a lot of money in that way. Losses occur under the system of getting a truck order in turn if the market cannot absorb all the crop by the time the new potatoes come in. As soon as new ones come in, people will not buy old ones. The loss is then spread evenly over growers generally because they all have some left on hand. By and large the Bill means a tremendous improvement on the old catch-as-catch-can methods of growing an article that is highly expensive to produce. I think it cost me £500 to grow 10 acres of potatoes this year. That is a large amount of money, and if a decent price is not assured a tremendous loss can be made. The Bill will bring about some order in the industry, and I think, therefore, it is well worth while.

I must admit that I do not like the position arising where we have to tell a man

that he cannot grow potatoes. If a man is milking a dozen or 15 cows and wants to grow potatoes, it is irksome for him to be refused permission to do so. Last year a farmer, who had a small 50-acre farm and milked 15 cows, told me that the growing of potatoes was absolutely necessary to him, but because he had not been engaged in the industry for some time he had been refused a permit. That was a great hardship to him. He had a family and he said to me, "This is part of my living."

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Why did not you give him half your license?

Hon. L. CRAIG: My son gave him his license for three acres, and that is the only way that this man could get a license. I said to the board, "If I ask for this license to be given to this man, will he get it and not someone else?" The board said, "Yes, he will." I hope the House will support the Bill. I can see no alternative to it. No-one will receive any benefit if we vote against it.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [8.3]: I intend to support the Bill. I want to refer to the constitution of this board, as I have on previous occasions referred to those of other boards. In this case the producers will not be in a majority on the board. Two or three times previously the House has agreed with my view by providing for a majority of the producers to be on boards but I am not going to ask for that to be done here because I know the reception such a provision would get in another place. The Bill contains something that is much better than what we have found in other marketing Acts, and that is in relation to the power of the Minister. We have, perhaps, taught him something. The board will have practically full power without any right of veto by the Minister. That is a big step forward.

The Chief Secretary: That is problematical.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I think it is a good thing. Under another Bill a board was established and the Minister given the right to nominate four members out of six on that board. As a result he should not have needed the right of veto because he had his safeguard in the board itself. Under this measure he has the right to nominate two-thirds of the personnel of the board but no right of veto. I support the second reading.

**HON. W. J. MANN** (South-West) [8.5]: On numerous occasions members have expressed their dislike of boards, and it is proposed under this measure to establish another. One feels that on this occasion one might reverse one's ideas.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is coming nearer home.

Hon. W. J. MANN: That may be the reason. But there are special circumstances surrounding this Bill that cannot be claimed for other measures of this description. My colleague has referred briefly to the position of the potato-growers, and it is only right that the true facts regarding the industry should be voiced. We should realise that some measure of control is required. It may be news to members to know that 60 per cent. of the people growing potatoes in this State are aliens. I suppose 10 or 15 years ago there would not have been 6 per cent. Due to circumstances that have arisen through the influx of the alien into this industry, the Bill has become necessary.

Some provision is made for regimenting that section of the growers in that at the election for certain members of the board no unnaturalised alien is permitted to vote, and no-one is permitted to vote who is not qualified to exercise the franchise at a Legislative Assembly election. That is all right so far as it goes, but unfortunately there is no provision in the Bill to prevent the employment of so many aliens in the industry. I am afraid that in the course of years, if we are not very careful, we will find thousands of young people of British stock in a very invidious position. Not only in this industry, but in other walks of life as well, the alien who has come to our shores and settled in our midst, has been particularly vigorous and acquired large interests.

One only needs to walk through Perth and see in many of the shops, of varying descriptions, the number of people of foreign extraction who are employed, to realise that that is so. I fear sometimes that they are being employed to the detriment of our children, or our grandchildren. I repeat, I am sorry that no attempt has been made in this Bill to regulate the number of aliens who may be employed in the industry. I say that because many young men just leaving school—farmers' sons—will want to take up land and follow agricultural pursuits.

We should safeguard their position as far as is humanly possible. I am much afraid that if the present state of affairs is allowed to continue, it will not be many years before the young people of British stock will be merely hewers of wood and drawers of water.

Hon. G. Fraser: You want protection only so that they can go in for potato-growing.

Hon. W. J. MANN: I am speaking generally and not only in connection with potatoes. I have in mind a number of callings with which the hon. member is quite familiar. I would like to have seen some provision along those lines in the Bill, but as they are not there we must accept the measure as it is. This board, when created, can do a lot of useful work for the potato-growers. In the past, because they were unorganised, they had many difficulties to contend with. It is only a couple of years ago that I received a frantic telegram from Marybrook stating that there were 200 tons of potatoes at the siding, and they were coming in at the rate of 200 or 300 tons a day, and that only one truck was sent to lift them. Representations had been made to the railways, and they had promised to send sufficient trucks to shift the crop, but the trucks did not materialise.

At certain times of the year it is dangerous to have large quantities of potatoes stacked at railway sidings, particularly if there is any fly about, and on that occasion there was a distinct danger. However, we were able, by contacting the Railway Department and stressing the urgency of the case, to overcome the trouble. I must give credit to the railways and say that when the position was fully placed before them there was little reason for further complaint. I hope that when the board contemplated here is handling the crop that kind of thing will be obviated. Some potatoes will possibly be kept in cool storage, and that also will prevent much of the element of loss that has been so prevalent in the past, and will benefit not only the consumer, who will get a good fresh product instead of one that may be somewhat wilted, but also the producer because he will get a better price. It will be possible to feed the crop on to the market in an even fashion and any question of gluts will be done away with.

One could speak at considerable length on this subject. I can mention the fact that the aliens, to whom I referred earlier, have in their eagerness to show what they can do, wrought considerable harm to the reputation of our potatoes. They bagged up fork-stabbed and undersized potatoes, and, somehow or other, whether by design or accident, they bagged up quite a lot of soil as well. Consequently when those potatoes were opened up, the buyers complained and said they were buying food and not part of the continent. These are matters that the board will be able to police and I am hopeful that in this instance the creation of the board will be fully justified. I intend to support the Bill and in doing so I may add that I am in receipt of letters from every part of the potato-growing districts of Western Australia urging that this measure should become law.

**HON. H. TUCKEY** (South-West) [8.16]: I intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill, not that I care very much about the imposition of restrictions, more particularly with regard to our primary products. We have to develop our primary industries and we require markets, if we can procure them. It seems terrible to think that in a State like Western Australia with so much good potato land, we have to ask growers not to produce them. I do not know how long this will have to be continued. It may be that we will never be able to send our products oversea. If that is so, we must ensure that we have a very much larger population than we possess today in order to have a home consumption market.

I feel that the Bill is necessary. When a commodity like potatoes can be subject to such great fluctuations in price that at times they reach as much as £25 per ton, it is only to be expected that individuals, looking round for a way of making money—and this applies to potato growers in particular—are inclined to anticipate good markets in succeeding years and put in extra large crops. Reference was made to potatoes being procurable at times very cheaply. One member said that the price had been as low as £2 a ton. The outstanding instance of the cheapest potatoes I have ever heard of was when a grower in the Benger district hung out a sign on his fence invit-

ing passers by to use the fork provided to dig potatoes for themselves and take as many as they required. They were asked to help themselves but to leave the fork.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: That was in 1931.

Hon. H. TUCKEY: They were prime potatoes.

The Chief Secretary: Did the grower lose his fork?

Hon. H. TUCKEY: No, the fork was left behind.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: It had the owner's name on it!

Hon. H. TUCKEY: In the Pinjarra district there is some fine potato land along the South Dandalup River. Heavy crops were grown there for years but then a bad season was encountered and one grower lost about £2,000. The potatoes were not worth digging. Instances like that furnish the main justification for a Bill of this description. While we may not like imposing restrictions in many instances, the Bill represents the best way of protecting the interests of the growers. The measure has been well received and I support the second reading.

**HON. J. G. HISLOP** (Metropolitan) [8.18]: There are two points concerning the Bill about which I would like some information. Why have distributors been explicitly left out of the composition of the board? Surely the distributor must take a considerable hand in the organising of the industry. The Bill sets out that the chairman must be an independent man having nothing whatever to do with the production or distribution of potatoes. But there will be no-one on the board itself associated with the distribution or marketing of potatoes. I am just wondering why. The second point that interests me is that in Clause 26 it is set out that—

A grower shall not use in or in connection with any hotel, boarding house, restaurant, manufacturing business or other business which is owned or conducted by him, potatoes produced by him or under his control.

Just exactly what does that mean? Apparently the grower can get a permit but does it mean that a grower is a man who grows potatoes for sale and as such he cannot use them in his hotel? I believe it would

be much better in the interests of the public if those conducting hotels, restaurants and eating houses had their own dairy farms, vegetable gardens and so forth from which they could draw their food supplies.

One of our greatest regrets in this State is the standard of our eating houses. If one goes to the Eastern States and visits the capital cities, particularly Melbourne, one recognises the difference. For instance, if one went to the Elizabeth Collins and Russell Collins in Melbourne and made inquiries with a view to ascertaining the source from which their reputation has sprung and the standard they enjoy, one would learn that their standard is largely attributable to the fact that they have their own farms and so on from which they draw the requisite supplies for use in their restaurants. If the measure is meant to exclude such people, I will move to delete the clause when the Bill is dealt with in Committee.

If it simply refers only to growers who attempt to sell their potatoes in one direction and get rid of the remainder in their own hotels or restaurants, it is a different matter and does not run counter to what I have in mind. It does not seem clear to me. If the position is in accordance with the latter suggestion I shall raise no objection. I have looked at the definition of "grower" and I see that he is a man who has potatoes for sale. It may be that my fears are unfounded but I should like to have the position explained before I know how to vote. I shall, however, support the second reading of the Bill.

**HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH** (Metropolitan) [8.20]: I should like to know whether by passing this Bill we shall be enabled to procure the new potatoes we used to obtain before the war and prior to these methods of control coming into force. We have been told that the cost of producing potatoes has been doubled.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: It has been trebled.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: What I want to understand is this: Everyone is agreed that Australia's most desperate need is population. What sort of people do we think will come to a country if they are told that they will not be allowed to do anything except by consent of a board

and when they get that consent they must still not do any more than they are allowed to do and that their livelihood may be taken away from them at a moment's notice? We are drifting in a very dangerous fashion by the establishment of these boards to control all sorts of products and activities. I do not know much about the potato-growing industry and I do not propose to take any part in the discussion on the Bill. On general principles I am convinced that we are drifting in the wrong direction in regulating what everyone shall do and what produce may be grown.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [8.27]: Sir Hal Colebatch is certainly consistent but I would ask him: Which is preferable, to have control as provided for in the Bill or to have the conditions that existed in pre-war years as exemplified by the instance quoted by Mr. Tuckey? As a matter of fact, I saw that incident myself—without taking advantage of the use of the fork! In those days, it was no laughing matter. The potato-growers were in a very bad way indeed. However, I can go back beyond that period and speak of the position some 34 years ago. In 1913, the growers in the southern parts of the State had to accept very low prices indeed for their potatoes because of the floods in their districts. All the potatoes from there were supposed to be dug while the floods were in progress, and therefore would not keep. They had to be disposed of at whatever prices were offering.

Hon. W. J. Mann: They had to be dug when half-ripe.

**The CHIEF SECRETARY**: The potatoes I refer to were fully matured and, in fact, had been dug before the flood. Despite that fact, they did not command the ordinary prices. I know that the growers in those days were particularly affected and suffered serious losses. The late Mr. Harold Piesse regaled this House for over an hour with the experiences of potatogrowers in different centres throughout the State. I say that in view of conditions such as those I have indicated and more particularly after our experience of organisation during the war years, the method proposed in the Bill is the only one by which the growers can

avoid the disabilities from which they have suffered in the past.

To deal with the points raised by Dr. Hislop, that hon. member referred to Clause 26. In explanation I may inform him that it was found on occasions that growers were concerning themselves with using their potatoes with the object of defeating the legislation. In the circumstances, it has been necessary to provide against that, and we set out in this instance that potatogrowers shall have knowledge of what potatoes are grown for sale and to exercise control over that output. The clause makes provision for necessary exemptions and for permits to be granted to enable people to utilise potatoes grown by themselves—up to a point. Then again, Dr. Hislop referred to the position of distributors in relation to the proposed board. If he analyses the Bill, he will find that only those registered by the board will be able to deal in potatoes.

There will be no question of distribution in the same way that there has been in the past. Even if there were, I do not see any reason for distributors having representation on the board, the composition of which provides for representation of growers and consumers. The distributors will be agents of the board and therefore should not expect to have representation thereon. I am very pleased with the manner in which the Bill has been received by members. The experience of potatogrowers during the war years was happier than it had been for many years previously but unless the industry is controlled as provided for in the Bill, the industry will be confronted with difficulties arising out of the fact that the number of growers has so largely increased, as well as the areas under crop.

If the desire were that we should carry on in future as in the past, it would simply mean that the growers would produce within the State far more potatoes than the population could possibly consume, with the result that prices would be seriously affected and the experience mentioned by Mr. Craig would be multiplied many times. I share with some members the fear that sometimes these boards can go to extremes, and it is for that reason that I prefer, as a rule, that the Minister should at least have some control, but in this case I am satisfied

it is the only method that is going to keep this industry on a decent footing, and one that will give those who have the right to grow potatoes the opportunity to reap a decent reward for their labour.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 22—agreed to.

Clause 23—Duty of board to accept delivery:

Hon. A. L. LOTON: I would like to ask the Chief Secretary a question with regard to Subclause (2). What will happen to the potatoes that are refused by the board? Will they come under Clause 25?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I should have thought the honorable member would probably know more about that than I do. I can only assume that Clause 25 would cover all potatoes.

Hon. L. CRAIG: What happens is this: A grower receives an order for a truck of potatoes, which he consigns to the Perth markets. An officer of the department opens some of the bags, inspects the potatoes and may condemn them. He may condemn the whole consignment because he finds two or three potatoes with a fork mark through them. The grower then has the option of coming to Perth and regrading the potatoes, or asking the department to do the work for him. He would be charged with the cost of the grading and picking-over. If all the potatoes should prove to be of inferior quality, the board can sell them for what they will fetch.

Hon. A. L. Loton: Or the grower could sell them himself?

Hon. L. CRAIG: Yes, if he could get anybody to buy them.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 24 and 25—agreed to.

Clause 26—Grower may not use own potatoes in own hotel, etc.:

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The board may refuse the proprietor of a hotel or a restaurant a permit to grow potatoes. I protested against such a provision when the

Egg Marketing Bill was before this Chamber. Restaurant-keepers should have the right to grow their own products and so raise the standard of their establishments. I suggest adding a proviso to the clause, and I will attempt to draw one and place it on the notice paper. I will then probably ask for the recommitment of the Bill.

Hon. G. B. WOOD: This question was raised, as Dr. Hislop said, when the Egg Marketing Bill was before us and the matter was then satisfactorily dealt with. There is a clause in the Bill exempting the people of whom Dr. Hislop speaks.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Dr. Hislop is under a misapprehension. There is nothing to prevent a hotelkeeper or a restaurant-keeper from having his cottage garden and growing beans, cabbages and potatoes, and other vegetables, so long as they are not produced for sale. But if he should grow potatoes in large quantities which could be sold, then the board would want to know what he produces and what he does with it, otherwise the object of the Bill would be defeated. If Dr. Hislop succeeds in drawing up a provision more satisfactory than that which appears in the Bill in regard to this matter, the Committee would probably agree to it.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: I am quite prepared to accept the statement of the Chief Secretary.

Hon. W. J. MANN: To me the position is quite clear. If a hotelkeeper grew potatoes with the idea of supplying his own hotel and he had a surplus, he would say to the board, "I have three tons of potatoes, but can use only one ton and I want a permit to dispose of the remainder." The board would allow him to do so. But I have heard of cases where such people have grown a large crop of potatoes, used portion of them and sold the balance at rates very much under the ruling price.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 27 to 29—agreed to.

Clause 30—Compensation:

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In line 3 of paragraph (a) of Subclause (3) the word "or" should be inserted between the words "treatment" and "processing."

The CHAIRMAN: I think that would be considered a typographical error. Otherwise it would mean re-printing the whole Bill.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If you are prepared to regard it in that way, Mr. Chairman, that suits me.

The CHAIRMAN: I am prepared to rule that it is a typographical error and that there is no need for an amendment to be moved.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 31 and 32—agreed to.

Clause 33—Restrictions on carriage of potatoes:

Hon. G. B. WOOD: I would like to know what is the necessity for this clause. I have not seen it in any other control measure.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Off-hand, I can give only my own interpretation of the clause. Any potatoes vested in the board are under its full control; and if it does not desire certain potatoes to be transported from one place to another, it may request the Commissioner of Railways not to transport them.

Hon. G. B. Wood: You think it is a safeguard for the board?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. If the hon. member is not satisfied, I will get an official interpretation.

Hon. G. B. Wood: I did not understand why it was included, that is all.

Hon. G. Fraser: It is to prevent trafficking.

Hon. H. L. Roche: It might restrict interstate trade.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No; this applies within the State. The idea is that where the board is in full control it should be in a position to prevent trafficking, as Mr. Fraser put it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 34 to 43, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## **BILL—TIMBER INDUSTRY REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

## BILL—WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION.

*Second Reading.*

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [8.52] in moving the second reading said: This is a similar measure to those that have received, or are under, consideration by the Parliaments of the other States and of the Commonwealth. It is designed to give protection and security to the Australian wheat industry and to relieve wheat farmers from the possibility of a sudden fall in prices with its disastrous effect upon their returns. Farmers will have the knowledge that for some years ahead they can rely on a guaranteed minimum price, without fear of that price being affected by events overseas.

For many years wheatgrowers in Australia and in other countries have found it difficult to obtain an adequate return for their labours. Indeed, wheat has been described as the world's greatest agricultural problem, the swing from glut to scarcity being often very swift. Gluts accumulate quickly, and the resultant low prices spell disaster for many growers. Under the stabilisation scheme that has been evolved by the Commonwealth and the State authorities, growers will be able to make their plans without fearing the consequences of unforeseen market changes. This scheme requires the utmost co-operation of the States and the Commonwealth, and all States have indicated their willingness to assist. A Commonwealth organisation will be responsible for the marketing of the Australian wheat crop, and the States will regulate production in accordance with the markets available.

It is proposed that this Bill, if passed by Parliament, shall be referred to a poll of registered wheatgrowers to decide whether the Act should be proclaimed. Word has been received that a similar provision to this has been included in the South Australian Bill, providing for a poll of the growers to be taken; and the Premier, Mr. Playford, has asked growers to vote for the scheme. This procedure appears wise in view of the decided opinions that have been expressed by wheatgrowers and their representatives. I have been astonished when listening to the Commonwealth debate on this stabilisation scheme and to discussions elsewhere at the amount of disagreement; but I think that in view of the in-

section of the provision for a poll to be held, it should not take this Chamber long to decide to support the measure.

As members will be aware, there have been efforts in the past to stabilise the industry, but none has met with any particular success. In this State compulsory pools were in existence from 1915 to 1922, when the then Government decided on their discontinuance. As growers had been generally satisfied with these pools, a voluntary pooling system was continued for some years, this, however, not being quite so effective as the compulsory scheme.

In 1940 the Commonwealth Wheat Tax (War Time) Act brought into operation an emergency stabilisation plan which provided for a payment of 3s. 10d. per bushel f.o.b. for the 1941-42 crop, provided that the crop did not exceed 140,000,000 bushels. Any wheat in excess of that figure had to be sold on the open market without guarantee, and this applied to an excess of 14,000,000 bushels which could not be sold at the guaranteed price. This scheme included the payment into a stabilisation fund of half the difference between the minimum price of 3s. 10d. and the actual average export price. By this means a fund was established to guarantee the 3s. 10d. minimum price in years when the return was less than that figure. The licensing of growers, registration of farms and regulation of production were also provided for.

The experience gained by growers over the past years has made them anxious to obtain a stabilisation scheme. To bring this about, the plan that this Bill relates to has been evolved, and it is proposed in this State to refer it to a poll of growers before putting the Act into operation. The plan provides a minimum guaranteed price for wheat for a period of five years from 1945-46 to 1949-50, and during this period the extension of the scheme for a further period will be reviewed. The guaranteed minimum price over the five years will be 5s. 2d. per bushel f.o.r. at ports for f.a.q. bagged wheat. For wheat sold for export, the farmer will also receive 50 per cent. of the difference between the guaranteed minimum price and the export price. The remaining 50 per cent. will be placed in a stabilisation trust fund which will be used to meet the guaranteed price should prices fall.

It is considered that if the taxpayer is guaranteeing the grower against low prices, then, when prices are high, the grower should be prepared to make some contribution towards the fund. There is no intention of building up an excessively large balance, and should prices remain high the growers' contribution will be reduced below 50 per cent. Should a series of low prices exhaust the fund, the Commonwealth will guarantee the minimum price. If the export price exceeds a ceiling figure fixed by the Government, the grower will receive the whole of the excess amount. So far as the 1945-46 crop is concerned, the price paid will be the guaranteed minimum of 5s. 2d., plus 2s. 2d., which is 50 per cent. of the difference between the guaranteed price and the ceiling export price, plus 6d., which is the estimated excess over the ceiling export price—a total of 7s. 10d. per bushel. For wheat that is consumed locally, the guaranteed price of 5s. 2d. per bushel will apply.

Turning to the Bill, most of which is of a machinery nature, it will be seen that it provides for the establishment of a wheat industry stabilisation committee, and that under the Commonwealth Act an Australian Wheat Board and a Wheat Industry Stabilisation Board have been constituted. The Australian Wheat Board will be comprised of a chairman, a representative of the millers, two delegates from New South Wales and two from Victoria, and one from each of the other States excepting Tasmania. This will be a marketing board and will give all its attention to the sale of the product. It will be established under the joint powers of the Commonwealth and States, the States attending to marketing and the control of production, and the Commonwealth caring for external trade. The Commonwealth stabilisation board will work in close co-operation with the State committees, with a view to regulating but not restricting production, according to the state of the market. The Western Australian committee will therefore be responsible for regulating production and attending to marketing in this State.

It is provided in the Bill that all wheat must be sold to the Australian Wheat Board or to a person, firm or other authority licensed under the Act, with the exception of wheat retained by the grower for his own use. Substantial penalties are provided for

any unauthorised dealing in wheat. Any person may apply for a license to grow wheat, but his acreage shall be determined by the State stabilisation committee. If he should grow a greater acreage than he is licensed to do, he must deal with the excess wheat as ordered by the committee.

I trust that the Bill will have a successful passage through this House. There is, as is well-known, some cleavage of opinion, but practically everyone is agreed on general principles. The giving to the growers the opportunity by poll to state their opinion will reveal what the industry's feeling really is. The scheme is flexible and susceptible to amendment where necessary, and should provide an ensured future for the industry, and a basis on which to build a high standard of prosperity. That is the explanation of the Bill. There has been a great deal of debate, and much feeling has been shown in some parts of it, but I think the matter has been gradually cleared up, and finally agreement has been reached on the provision for a poll which will discover the exact opinion of the farmers, who, I believe, desire, by a vast majority, a Bill of this character and a solid stabilisation scheme for their own protection. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. G. B. WOOD** (East) [9:4]: A week or two ago it was my intention to speak at length against the Bill and to ask the House to reject it, but in view of the way in which it has come here in its amended form, providing for a poll of the wheatgrowers of this State as to whether they want it or not, it is my intention now to shift my campaign from this House to the wheat belt, and to do my talking there, in urging farmers to reject it. The Honorary Minister is optimistic if he thinks the wheatgrowers will accept the scheme. He may not know that certain of them have subscribed the sum of over £5,000, with which to test the legality of the Bill. It is not often that farmers subscribe such a large amount for any purpose. I make that point to show what many farmers think of the scheme.

Hon. G. Fraser: What they think of the full scheme, or that part which affects the 1945-46 harvest?

**Hon. G. B. WOOD:** The full scheme, and particularly that part which affects the 1945-46 crop. I have an amendment which I desire to move, when in Committee, as to the form of the ballot paper. If the Bill goes into Committee straightaway I will ask permission to put my amendment forward without its first having appeared on the notice paper. We do not yet know how the ballot paper will be presented to the wheatgrowers. There was a sorry happening in the Commonwealth Referendum, when the ballot paper was presented and many people did not know what it was about. My amendment will provide for a ballot paper which will have on it the words "Yes" and "No" so that people can put a cross against whichever they want. I support the Bill.

**HON. C. H. SIMPSON** (Central) [9.6]: I expected that this Bill would come forward on tomorrow's notice paper, which would have given me an opportunity to obtain certain figures that I wish to bring before the House. My constituents, the wheatgrowers, have been very much against the original wheat stabilisation Bill, as submitted. They rather hoped that the amendment that Mr. McDonald endeavoured to bring forward in another place, calling for a ballot of the growers, would be acceptable. Finally, as we know, it was agreed to. As to the ballot paper, I support the remarks of Mr. Wood, except for a slight difference in its form. I think the grower is a sufficiently intelligent individual to be asked to write the answer "Yes" or "No" according to whether he wants the present stabilisation scheme or not. As Mr. Wood said, we had the experience during the referendum of a ballot paper on which numerals were to be placed. There were a great number of informal votes, and many votes were registered which did not indicate the real intention of the voter. In my opinion, there should be a note at the bottom of the ballot paper asking the voter simply to register his opinion by writing the word "Yes" or "No" as an answer to the question submitted. I support the proposal to submit the matter to a poll and I have pleasure in supporting the Bill in its present form.

**HON. H. L. ROCHE** (South-East) [9.8]: I support the second reading of the Bill in its present form. The only thing that makes

it tolerable to me is the provision for a poll of the growers. Possibly some amendment is desirable, even in that respect, to make provision for taking a poll as acceptable as possible to all concerned. The question of the 1945-46 crop being included under the stabilisation scheme is a matter that greatly concerns the majority of growers in this State. It has prompted a good deal of hostility towards the present measure. As Mr. Wood has stated, the Western Australian growers a few months ago contributed over £5,000 to a fund to test the inclusion of that provision in the stabilisation scheme, their contention being that under the Commonwealth Constitution the wheat of that crop was acquired by the Commonwealth Government under the provisions of the National Security Regulations, and that it should be paid for under those provisions, because the Constitution provides for a fair and just price. It is contended that it should not be taken into the stabilisation scheme, which would mean a loss of millions of pounds to the wheat-growers of Australia.

Another provision that the wheatgrowers think decidedly unfair relates to the home consumption price and to stock feed wheat. The home consumption price was fixed at 5s. 2d. f.o.r. at ports. That price was decided on when the flour tax legislation was introduced in about 1938 and it is obvious to anyone that if 5s. 2d. was a fair price then it is an unjust price today, because costs have increased so considerably in the meantime. Five shillings and twopence f.o.r. ports will average out at about 4s. 2d. or 4s. 4d. f.o.r. at growers' sidings, and before any stabilisation scheme can be satisfactory to the producers of this country the home consumption price—the price they receive for that portion of their product consumed within the Commonwealth—must be related to the cost of production.

Although it was at election time, and was advanced by Mr. Menzies, one proposal did seem quite a good one. It was that an authority should be set up to arrive at a fair price to return the grower a reasonable profit on all wheat consumed in Australia, and that that authority should be established on much the same lines as the existing Tariff Board, which investigates and decides on protection for secondary industries in this country. The wheat authority to be set up would do likewise, and would decide what

was a fair price, but that price would vary each season in accordance with the cost of production of the wheat consumed in Australia. However, it is somewhat late in the session for us to worry about amending the Bill.

Stabilisation is a principle that the growers have fought for over a number of years and although I think the Bill falls far short of giving the protection to which they are entitled, and that some of its provisions are grossly unfair, with the safeguard now contained in the measure providing for the approval of a majority of the licensed growers of wheat in Western Australia to be obtained, I think we would be justified in agreeing to the Bill and allowing the licensed growers to decide for themselves whether they want this piece of legislation to govern their industry—unsatisfactory and all as it is—or whether they are to oppose it and expect the Commonwealth Government to introduce another Bill more in accord with the requests that have been made.

In tonight's paper there is a reference to another wheat Bill having been introduced in the Commonwealth Parliament. Apparently it has a direct relationship to this measure and I am wondering whether we are justified in proceeding with the consideration of this Bill when it may be found that it will require radical amendment to bring it into line with the later ideas of the Commonwealth or whether this Bill will be consigned to the wastepaper basket and something else substituted.

**HON. E. H. H. HALL** (Central) [9.16]: I wish to express my appreciation of the action of the Government in deciding to take a poll of the growers on this important matter. We in this Chamber were looking forward to a long debate on the measure because undoubtedly there is a big divergence of opinion amongst the growers themselves. I content myself by saying on behalf of the growers I represent, being a grower myself, that I am quite willing to let this matter be decided by the growers, and I have no doubt what the result will be. I support the second reading.

**Hon. A. L. LOTON:** I move—

That the debate be adjourned till Tuesday next.

Members: No!

The Chief Secretary: Not till Tuesday next.

Motion put and negatived.

**HON. G. FRASER** (West) [9.17]: This is a measure affecting the country and members seem to be a little afraid of venturing into the debate.

Members: No, no!

**Hon. G. FRASER:** I am generally prepared to listen to the arguments of country members particularly on measures affecting chiefly their constituents. I have been astounded to hear members say they are prepared to stomp the country in opposition to this stabilisation plan.

**Hon. G. B. Wood:** What is wrong with that?

**Hon. G. FRASER:** According to my knowledge of the subject, this stabilisation plan was agreed to by the wheatgrowers of Australia.

Members: No.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** That is the information I have and I am seeking enlightenment. I have been informed that the stabilisation plan was put forward by the wheatgrowers of Australia. I have received a lot of correspondence on the subject.

**Hon. E. H. H. Hall:** From the wrong quarter.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** I cannot say whether it came from the right or the wrong quarter. I do not know whether the members who have spoken have done so from the right quarter, either. My deductions from certain figures I have are that the wheat-growers' organisations of Australia do not represent 17 per cent. of the farmers. For whom are our friends speaking? Are they speaking for an organisation or are they speaking from their knowledge of individual farmers? I should like to know.

**Hon. E. H. H. Hall:** We are speaking for Western Australia.

**Hon. G. FRASER:** I believe that not 17 per cent. of the wheat farmers of Australia belong to the organisation. If that is so, when members set out to speak for the farmers, they are speaking for a minority. I have no desire to enter into an argument on the home consumption price for wheat. I could deal pretty severely with that, too.

I understand that 5s. 2d. per bushel was the price of the agreed advance after consultations between the growers' organisations and the Commonwealth.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Circumstances have altered considerably.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Take a poll of the growers.

Hon. G. FRASER: Many wheatgrowers are not satisfied with the home consumption price of 5s. 2d. because of the famine prices ruling overseas. If the farmers are not going to be satisfied with a ceiling price for their wheat used for home consumption, they should bear in mind that the workers have been subject to ceiling prices for a long time.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Why should the wheat-growers provide cheap wheat?

Hon. G. FRASER: Why should the workers provide cheap labour?

Hon. G. B. Wood: They do not.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Where does that happen?

Hon. G. FRASER: Right through Australia there has been a ceiling wage. Mr. Wood knows all about it. During the war years and since, the workers have been receiving lower wages than they were entitled to.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Do you know the export parity of wheat today?

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not speaking of the export parity of wheat; I am speaking of wage conditions in Australia. The farming community want it both ways. The farmers want top price for their wheat and continued control by the Commonwealth over labour and material. That is what has been happening. They want the top price for their commodity and they also want the benefit of everything else at controlled prices.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Who controls labour in Australia?

The Chief Secretary: The farmer?

Members: Oh, oh!

Hon. G. FRASER: I do not wish to start an argument, particularly as the Bill will be passed, but I felt impelled to make these observations because of the attitude adopted by the representatives of the farmers. Let me put another point. If country members

stump the country and succeed in getting this stabilisation plan defeated, what have they in mind to take its place?

Hon. G. B. Wood: It is up to the Commonwealth Government to bring down a better scheme.

Hon. G. FRASER: If that happens after consultation with the various organisations of the growers throughout Australia, let us hope that those organisations will stand up better to their contract than they have done on this occasion. I support the second reading.

**HON. L. CRAIG** (South-West) [9.22]: I am surprised at members demurring a little while ago when Mr. Loton suggested the adjournment of the debate till Tuesday next. This is a most important Bill involving millions of pounds to the farmers and there is a desire to rush it through, this at a time when two or three members are absent. If on any Bill an adjournment for a few days were justified, I think it is this one.

The Chief Secretary: Do not you think other members might want to speak tomorrow?

Hon. L. CRAIG: They could speak on another Bill tomorrow.

The Honorary Minister: They might want to speak on this Bill.

Hon. L. CRAIG: This measure requires great consideration and, if a member requires a couple of days extra to give it further study, his request should be acceded to. Nearly all the representatives of the farmers have spoken, but Mr. Baxter is away and Mr. Bolton arrived only a few minutes ago.

Hon. A. L. Loton: The Bill only reached us tonight.

The Chief Secretary: At this stage of the session the debate should not be adjourned till Tuesday next.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Had I been a representative of the wheatbelt, I would have wanted to give the Bill a great deal of attention.

The Chief Secretary: There have been months to give attention to it.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not agree with that statement, because the proposal to take a poll is quite new and has entirely altered the attitude of members of this House. The questions involved in this measure cover

more than the local consumption price. Wheat is being sold in New Zealand at about 5s. 2d. a bushel while our friends in England are paying 13s. a bushel. Should not the wheatgrowers have something to say about that?

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: They are going to have something to say.

Hon. L. CRAIG: And so should members of this House, in order that their views may be published in the Press.

The Chief Secretary: There would be no objection to a member's having the adjournment till tomorrow, but there would be a strong objection to an adjournment till Tuesday next.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I am not a wheatgrower. I have dealt with potatoes and others can have a go on wheat, but I wish to point out that this is probably the most important Bill placed before us this session, and to curb a member's desire to give it a little study is certainly hard.

The Honorary Minister: We do not want to do that.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Of course not. If I were a representative of the wheatgrowers, I would have quite a lot to say. If ever an injustice were proposed to be inflicted on Western Australia when it has a little wheat for export—we are probably to supply New South Wales with wheat at home consumption price—it is being done under this Bill. If New South Wales had reaped a better harvest, Western Australia would have received 13s. a bushel for that wheat. Thus Western Australia is going to be kicked to death over wheat this year. I want the members who represent the wheatgrowers to have an opportunity to give expression to all they want to say on the Bill.

The Chief Secretary: If they are not in a position to speak on it now, they never will be.

Hon. L. CRAIG: I do not know about that. We have adjourned the debates on innocuous Bills that did not matter two hoots week after week.

The Chief Secretary: That is the trouble.

Hon. L. CRAIG: Now the Minister wishes to rush the Bill through at one sitting.

The Chief Secretary: There is no desire to rush it through.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—BUILDING OPERATIONS AND BUILDING MATERIALS CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [9.27] in moving the second reading said: I greatly regret the necessity for having to introduce a continuance Bill this session. Members are well aware of the position regarding the supply of building materials and the number of people who are in difficulties as a result. This Bill proposes the continuance of the Act for a further period of 12 months to the 31st December, 1947. Members are aware that the action of the Commonwealth Government some 12 months ago in relinquishing its control over building materials and permits necessitated this State taking immediate legislative action for the continuance of controls, an action that was quickly validated by Parliament.

The past year's experience has revealed very clearly that the production of materials is not yet sufficient to cope with the very large demand. I have some figures to support this statement—figures which cover the period of 10 months ended the 31st October, 1946. During that time, although the Workers' Homes Board issued 1,682 private permits for houses and other buildings, it had to reject 1,978. It also approved of 1,977 permits for private alterations and additions, but was forced to refuse another 350 applications. Apart from this private activity, the Workers' Homes Board completed 283 Commonwealth-State rental homes and has 509 more under construction. Also 180 war service homes are either being built or are about to be built.

Members may be surprised to hear of the number of applicants for workers' homes to whom the board has not yet been able to allot homes. These total 7,664. Of this number 4,150 are asking for Commonwealth-State rental homes, 2,000 desire war service homes, 1,021 want workers' homes and 493 desire McNess Trust cottages. The 493 applicants for McNess homes would be people suffering special disabilities. The money to build those cottages is available but, because of the difficulty of accommodating married couples with young children, those unfortunate applicants have to be denied decent shelter. This indicates the

tremendous demand for homes, and emphasises the need for the continuance of controls until such time as production is equal to the demand. In no other way can we be sure that materials are directed into essential channels and that those persons with the longest purses do not obtain an unfair advantage over those whose needs are greater but whose resources are more limited.

To elaborate on the necessity of control I propose to provide the House with a little information regarding several basic materials that are produced in this State. Since January the output of cement has risen from 43 per cent. of normal to 83 per cent. of normal. Brick production has increased from 45 per cent. to 74 per cent., tiles from 74 per cent. to 106 per cent., and fibrous plaster sheets from 78 per cent. to 125 per cent. For purposes of comparison 1938-39 has been taken as a normal year. Were it not for the terrific leeway to be overcome we would be in a fairly good position, although the production of cement and bricks is still well below normal. Timber, too, has been a problem, but contractors and builders now report that the efforts of the Workers' Homes Board and the Forests Department have resulted in an improvement in supply.

When one studies the figures I have given the House and realises that the Workers' Homes Board has only been able to approve of 50 per cent. of the applications for private houses, and that over 7,000 families are awaiting houses to be built by the board, it is obvious that, notwithstanding the steady improvement in supply, controls must continue. At a recent interstate conference the Commonwealth Director of Housing emphasised the necessity of maintaining controls, especially from the viewpoint of keeping building costs at a reasonable level. He stated that it was clear that in those States where strong control was exercised, building costs were lower. The conference agreed that it was necessary to maintain an even flow of materials, otherwise building was delayed with a resultant increase of costs, and that this even flow while shortages existed could only be ensured by reasonable control. At this conference the New South Wales delegate admitted that under the existing "no permit" concession in his State

the situation was completely out of control and that black marketing was rampant.

In Victoria, where building has been unrestricted, the Government has now found it necessary to introduce a system of control similar to that in Western Australia, although without legislative authority. The Commonwealth Government has promised to see that all available materials are sent to the West, and in order to expedite supply we have appointed liaison officers in Victoria and New South Wales, whose duty it will be to assist merchants to obtain supplies and shipping facilities and to arrange storage pending shipping becoming available, also, generally, to watch this State's interests in regard to building. The New South Wales appointment is expected to help greatly, as that State is our main source of supply, and incidentally it is in that State that our transport troubles are most difficult.

Builders and contractors agree that continuance of control is essential, and support for the Government's policy has been affirmed both directly and in the daily press by the spokesman of the Building Industry Congress. Mr. Wallwork also strongly recommends that control should continue. The Government's decision to introduce this Bill was dictated by circumstances only, and by the need to make certain that priority in obtaining materials is gauged by the need of applicants. The Government is not desirous of continuing control any longer than is necessary, for the administration of the control is beset with many difficulties. I therefore trust that the House in making its decision will give consideration to the following important factors:—

1. The necessity to ensure that the most deserving cases receive priority.
2. That an even flow of materials helps to accelerate the building programme and reduces building costs by eliminating lost time and also enables the builder to organise his work more satisfactorily.
3. The placing of the State in a more secure position in regard to future assistance from the Commonwealth by the ensuring of an equitable distribution of the quota allotted to Western Australia from the Eastern States.

I confidently appeal to the House to pass the Bill, because it is so necessary. It is regrettable that we have to ask that this measure be continued for another 12 months. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. H. TUCKEY** (South-West) [9.36]: I intend to vote for the second reading of this Bill. Although complaints have been made about this restriction, I feel, from what I know of the supplies of building materials, it is essential that it be continued. Many materials are in very short supply and, without control, they would probably find their way into buildings that are not absolutely necessary.

**HON. G. BENNETTS** (South) [9.37]: I support the second reading. As there is not a full supply of building materials there would, without the Bill, soon be an extensive black market so that the people with the most money would get the materials. Because of my connection with certain boards, I know that without these permits some business premises would be built in preference to homes being constructed for people with children. Many families today are living in places in which they should not be allowed to reside, and if our by-laws were enforced by the health inspectors they would be turned out on to the streets. By re-imposing these restrictions, those people will be given a chance to get a roof over their heads.

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—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 3rd December.

**HON. J. G. HISLOP** (Metropolitan) [9.41]: When reading the Bill, I wondered whether the Minister who introduced it did so in a spirit of fun, or whether he brought it down to test our credulity. I do not know whether to regard it seriously or humorously; I certainly find it difficult to look on it seriously. I cannot believe that the Minister asks us to give earnest consideration to the appointment of a bread industry advisory officer, and then to leave out all qualifications for the post, and to vest him with the powers of a Royal Commissioner.

Hon. L. Craig: He would be a good mixer.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: He would have to be. The whole thing sounds a bit doughy to me. I must applaud the humour of the leading article in "The West Australian" this morning, because it did appeal to me. I wondered whether this appointment might be called "Mountjovian," if we could coin a new expression. That is what it could be. I cannot envisage a public servant, whom we might call an under secretary for breadmaking, being vested with all these powers without our being able to review his actions. I looked up the powers of a Royal Commissioner, and I found that this public servant, or under secretary, would be able to go into any business and say, "Produce your books; I want a copy of them to keep." I can quite see the need for an investigation into the bread-making industry, and those engaged in the industry can see it themselves, but I cannot see that this is the way to go about it. Many of these things were introduced as a result of a consideration of the industry by the Commonwealth, and followed, probably, upon the reports of Sir Herbert Gepp and Judge Kinsella.

It might interest the House to hear from the report, known as the Trent report, on the wrapping of bread. Even at the expense of a little delay I think I should read a couple of pages of the report to indicate to members the need for the possession of adequate qualifications by the bread advisory officer. There has been so much public demand for better bread and the desire expressed by many people that bread should be wrapped up, that it is interesting to note the result of experiments that have been made in that regard. Those experiments took place in 1928, which is some time ago, but little has been done since. It may be advisable to indicate to members the results of the experiments that were made in wrapping up bread soon after being taken out of the ovens and left for varying periods to cool down to certain temperatures before being wrapped up.

At first they were wrapped in wax papers and later in absorbent papers. Those that were wrapped at the higher degrees of 105, 100 and 95 were dealt with in wax paper and showed that the bread was badly affected in consequence of the wrapping. It became soft and doughy in the centre. It

was unfit for consumption and showed a furry growth after a number of hours. Here is an interesting paragraph from the Trent Report to which I referred earlier—

The temperature and fermentation were closely observed throughout the making of this bread and the batch produced very satisfactory results in regard to the quality of bread. Four loaves each were wrapped and sealed in wax paper after they had reached the following temperature in their cooling: 130 deg. F., 120 deg. F., 110 deg. F., 98 deg. F., 90 deg. F., 82 deg. F., and four were left unwrapped. They were then stored in a commercial bread box. The reason a commercial bread box was used in keeping the bread is that it is very loosely woven allowing a circulation of air and appeared to be the most suitable in approximating the average conditions in keeping of bread. (Therefore, quality of bread can be overlooked in these tests.)

The paper used in these tests was self sealing, waxed on both sides, having a base weight of 20.9lbs., and weight of paraffin 11.3lbs., its percentage of wax being 35.1 per cent.

After 41 hours one loaf was taken from those wrapped at each temperature and examined. The keeping qualities of the bread in respect to moisture was very much pronounced over those unwrapped. The crust of the wrapped loaves was very moist and soft, whereas the crust of the unwrapped was dry and brittle. Upon cutting these loaves the colour of the crumb varied in degree of whiteness from the loaves wrapped at 130 deg., down to 82 deg., the loaves wrapped at 82 deg. being whiter. There was also a slight difference in colour between the loaf wrapped at 82 deg. and the unwrapped loaf.

With regard to the aroma of the loaf; the one wrapped at 130 deg., possessed a decidedly sour, rancid odour, and when eating this loaf the bread doughed up into a ball in the mouth and gave a decidedly sour and unappetizing flavour. The other wrapped loaves varied in this undesirable flavour from 120 deg., down to room temperature of 82 deg., but in the loaves unwrapped at 90 deg., and 82 deg., this foreign flavour and doughiness in the mouth was quite mild compared to the loaves at 130 deg., and 120 deg.,. However, there was a decided contrast in flavour between the loaves wrapped at 90 deg., and 82 deg., over the unwrapped loaf. The loaf wrapped at 98 deg. possessed this foreign flavour and doughiness in eating very markedly.

Other loaves wrapped at each of these temperatures were examined at 65 and 89 hours after baking. At these periods the same results were noticed as at the end of 41 hours wrapping.

A number of experiments of the same type were carried out and the loaves wrapped up in absorbent paper. It was curious to find that with the absorbent paper the mould grew much more pronouncedly than when

the wax paper was used. In fact, there was no mould with the wax paper, although it appeared on the bread wrapped in absorbent paper when kept for more than 48 hours. That serves to indicate the amount of research that has to be undertaken and the knowledge to be possessed by someone who assumes the position of advisory officer. If one should be appointed, he must possess those qualifications and surely if the legislation is passed, it should embody references to the qualifications necessary for a man occupying such a position.

Another interesting feature regarding the Bill is the matter of bread zoning. This phase will meet with very little public favour because the demand has been growing upon most of us on the part of people who ask for the abolition of bread zoning. I realise that that system was introduced during the war period when the bakers found that with the zoning they could keep prices down. In fact, they make the statement that present-day prices have been maintained despite the rising costs of everything necessary for the trade, and that zoning has made it possible to maintain the present position, but were zoning dispensed with, prices to the consumer would have to be raised.

I realise that the system is accepted because of bases that are referred to in the reports of both Sir Herbert Gepp and Judge Kinsella, both of whom say that there must be some control exercised through the zoning of bread deliveries if costs are to be kept somewhere near the present figure. One paragraph in the Gepp report says—

The introduction of a "block" or "zoning" system of deliveries would not be welcomed by housewives, but if the price of bread is to be reduced some savings must be effected in delivery costs, and this must involve some restriction of the right to select a baker from among a large number.

I do not say that the zoning of bread will be any more favoured by housewives than would be the zoning of medical advice. Yet there is no doubt that by the practice of the profession, zoning does take place in connection with doctors. If a person should request a medical man to visit him in some distant suburb, the doctor may reply, "I am sorry, but I neither have the time nor the ability to attend to you at such a great distance." The baking trade may do the same thing. On the other hand, to put such

a provision in the Bill directing that a baker must work in one zone only and that should he operate outside that stipulated zone his license would be taken from him, imposes a restriction upon the trade and does not appear to me to be quite just. If the Bill reaches the Committee stage I shall certainly attempt to alter that.

My views regarding the question of licensing of bakers is fixed. My firm belief is that a license should be given to anyone who desires to undertake this work provided that he can maintain the standards provided for in the legislation. If a person desires to set himself up as a baker and is prepared to enter into competition with others, to establish a bakehouse up to the requisite standard and to turn out bread of a good quality—

Hon. L. Craig: Or better quality.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That is so. If he is prepared to do all that, I do not think it is in the interests of the public to say that such a man may not start up. There is nothing in the Bill that is really to my liking. When it comes to a question of including pastrycooks under the legislation, we are certainly looking for difficulties. I notice that in the Kinsella report references are made to the wrapping of Vienna bread, and he indicates that the results showed that the bread would be unpalatable to the consumer. Whether the same hours should be provided with regard to Vienna bread as with ordinary bread, it should be for the industry itself to decide.

I am just wondering why some provisions have been included in the Bill and whether the object is to place restrictions upon the activities of certain people. I was somewhat surprised to hear the Honorary Minister's references. If he had in mind some people who though born in a foreign country, are now living amongst us and have become naturalised, I do not think the comment was very wise.

The Honorary Minister: They are not aliens if they are naturalised.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The mere fact that some of them joined as partners rather than continued as employer and employees and were prepared to share the work between themselves, does not mean it is unjust to adopt that course.

Hon. G. Fraser: Not if it is a just partnership.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: If it is an unjust partnership, surely there is a law to deal with that.

Hon. G. Fraser: The trouble is that these people are outside the law.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: Then I agree that something must be done to bring them within the law again, but I require to be convinced first that they are acting outside the law. My feeling is that the public is bound in the end to obtain the bread it wants and the people themselves are the best judges of what bread they desire and possibly equally as good judges as to what is the best bread. We should allow them to buy the bread they require, but we should lay down definite standards to which the bakers must conform. If we do that, it is all that should be required of this House.

The Bill would have been very much better had it stopped half way and the Government had decided to hold an inquiry by means of a Royal Commission into the breadmaking industry as a whole. If those appointed to conduct the inquiry were of the calibre of Sir Herbert Gepp, Judge Kinsella, or of the gentleman who has been asked to proceed to New South Wales, Dr. Kent Jones, a thorough inquiry could be carried out and legislation introduced next session which would meet the requirements of all concerned. I do not favour the present Bill because I am very much against the advisory officer being a public servant, clothed with all the authority set out in the measure while yet he is a man with no qualifications whatever. For the reasons I have outlined I shall vote against the second reading, but should the Bill reach the Committee stage I trust I shall be given an opportunity to place a large number of amendments on the notice paper.

**HON. G. FRASER (West) [10.0]:** Instead of saying that the Minister introduced this Bill as a joke, I give him credit that down the years he has endeavoured to improve the bread industry in this State. Almost every session he has introduced legislation dealing with this subject and his objective on each occasion has been to improve the industry. Dr. Hislop has mentioned various matters, amongst them partnerships. No-one objects to partnerships and this Bill will do no harm to any reasonable, bona fide partnership. What has happened through-

out the years in this industry, however, is that a person will start as a baker and take in a partner, giving him a one-tenth share—I have known a share of one-sixteenth—and by that means he has been able to defeat the Arbitration Court awards governing the industry. Such partnerships have not only been formed by aliens. I have known Australians to enter into partnerships on those lines.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Surely not!

Hon. G. FRASER: That means that the baker employs a man at well under the basic wage.

Hon. L. Craig: A one-sixteenth share in the Broken Hill Coy. would be all right.

Hon. G. FRASER: Quite so, but not in the types of partnership to which the Honorary Minister referred. It may seem somewhat extraordinary, but we have known of such partnerships for years past.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Legislation is driving people to them.

Hon. G. FRASER: It is not. Those are the things which the Honorary Minister has been trying to remedy throughout the years.

Hon. G. B. Wood: Do the foreigners make good bread?

Hon. G. FRASER: I am not referring to foreigners only. It is partnerships of that description which have induced the Honorary Minister to bring down these Bills. I am opposed to zoning, but I wonder whether members have read the clause dealing with zoning. It appears to me that it would break up the present zoning system. We know that the Government has been powerless in this matter for the last six or seven months, as the master bakers have of their own accord introduced a zoning system. The Government has not the power to make them alter that system. The clause to which I referred gives the Minister the power to direct a baker to go into a particular area. I believe that by that means the present zoning system could be broken up. As regards the advisory officer, I agree that the Bill is rather vague. It does not say who he shall be or how he shall be appointed, or what type of person he shall be.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Yes, it does. It says he must be a superman.

Hon. G. FRASER: I agree that we want to hear something more from the Minister with regard to that officer; but the Bill gives him the right to direct bakers to go into areas. Today that power is not available and the result is that the bakers have their own zoning system. Zoning is most unpopular, and I would not be game to go home and say that I supported such a system. However, we must realise that zoning is here not because we want it but because those in charge of the industry say they will have it. This Bill will give the Minister the chance to alter the system. If only for that reason, I would be prepared to support the second reading of the Bill.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [10.5]: I am afraid I cannot support the Bill. On many occasions we have had a bread Bill introduced in the dying hours of the session. I was impressed when some years ago the Minister introduced a Bill whereby the weight of the bread was fixed by the weight of the dough instead of by the cooked loaf. On that occasion we were told that many bakers were not cooking their bread sufficiently and that therefore it was heavy. That was because they had to weigh the bread after cooking and if a person bought a 2 lb. loaf it would be weighed from the baker's cart. The Minister told us that, with the new scheme of weighing the dough, it would not matter how long the bread was baked; as long as the dough was the right weight, the bread would also be the right weight, because the extra cooking reduced the weight of the dough by reducing the water content. I thought that an admirable scheme.

But what do we find? Whether we want it or not we must take the baker's dough at the back door or the front door: it is a case of taking it or leaving it. Unless a person takes bread home from the shops in Perth, he must take the baker's bread or leave it. I have heard—whether or not it is correct I do not know—that the master bakers say that they cannot help selling this underdone bread, as they cannot get a sufficient number of employees and the demand is so great that they have not time to cook the bread properly. If this Bill dealt with matters of that sort, it would decidedly have my support, because I think zoning would go automatically if the bakers provided

the good bread which they sold years ago. If such bread were delivered, we need not worry about the alleged competition of people of foreign extraction.

Why more people cannot start bakeries I do not know. A friend of mine who was in the Services—I am not blaming the State Government for this—after his discharge wanted to go back to the baking trade in a small way at Claremont. He was not permitted to do so. He could not obtain deliveries of flour because the millers refused to supply it and therefore he could not carry on baking in the small shop where he did pastry-cooking. It seems to me that the more boards we have, the worse it is for the people generally. I was interested to hear Mr. Fraser commend the Minister for bringing in these Bills to deal with the bread industry. I would be far happier if the Minister brought in Bills to deal with bread. Never mind the industry; let us have bread. The industry will look after itself.

Hon. G. Fraser: With proper conditions in the industry you would get better bread.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I do not know what better conditions the bakers want. They have got everything they have asked for, except that they object to competition. They wanted the dough weighed so that they might cook the bread better, and when that was conceded to them they did not cook the bread better. I have no wish to make a long speech. I oppose the Bill, but I assure the Minister that I will support him in any measure he may introduce to do away with zoning and provide better bread for the people. We should have a cereal chemist and other technical advisers, as well as inspectors, to see that bread baking is carried out correctly. We should also have health inspectors and do away with zoning.

Hon. G. Fraser: You will not do away with zoning by defeating the Bill.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: Zoning will not be stopped by passing the Bill. As I said, I will support the Minister if he brings down a measure such as I have suggested.

**HON. G. BENNETTS** (South) [10.12]: I support the Bill. I am opposed to zoning, but I think we cannot have too many inspectors. I speak as a Goldfields man. I have noticed in Perth a baker's cart with at

least four boys on it, as well as the carter. I have seen a boy grab a loaf of bread, run with it and put it in a tin on a verandah. I watched this procedure for some time in the street where I live, and I consider it to be an unclean and unhealthy way of delivering bread. We must do our best to protect the health of the people. If bread is thrown about in that manner by children, it will not be conducive to the health of the people. I have noticed bakers' carts on the Goldfields and have seen bread stacked on the top of the cart. The carters deliver that particular bread first and then deliver the bread from inside the cart.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Yet the Goldfields people are the healthiest people in the State!

Hon. G. BENNETTS: Yes. It is necessary that bread should be properly looked after and delivered in a clean and healthy way. As I said, I do not favour zoning. Some bakers make machine bread, others bake hand-made bread. Some people prefer the hand-made bread but may not be able to obtain it on account of the zoning system. I think every person should be entitled to purchase the kind of bread that he wants.

On motion by the Honorary Minister, debate adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.14 p.m.*