

business, however, they could get the first claim over the property on account of netting supplied. I am perfectly certain that the present mortgagees would not object to the Government becoming first mortgagees in such circumstances, as the value of their security would be enhanced. I repeat, the matter is so urgent and important that a special loan is warranted. I think the Minister will agree that in addition to this Bill an amendment of the Dog Act is required. Sheep owners in the vicinity of towns are heavy losers by stray town dogs getting in amongst their sheep. As these dogs usually do the killing at night, it is very hard indeed to discover the culprits. Then there is the question of native dogs. An amendment of the law is necessary in that direction. I have known the police in my district to come home from a tour and report having shot from 200 to 300 dogs, mostly found around the native camps. The law allows the aborigines to have one dog each, but unless checked they collect as many as 20 and 30 apiece. I welcome the Bill, and I will support the second reading, while hoping that in the Committee stage the measure will be improved. I trust that the Minister will listen to reason, especially on the point that this proposed fund shall be controlled by a board, one member of which will be appointed by the Minister, and the remainder by the pastoralists.

On motion by Mr. Thomson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.17 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Thursday, 22nd October, 1925.

	PAGE
Bills: Industrial Arbitration Act, 2A	1491
Labour Exchanges, 2A.	1500
Primary Products Marketing, 2A.	1512
Municipality of Fremantle, returned	1518
Land Act Amendment, 1A.	1518

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

BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. HARRIS (North-East) [4.35]: To rectify the unjust conditions that exist in employment and to minimise strikes, the Legislature in its wisdom passed an Arbitration Act and made it compulsory for litigants to go before the Arbitration Court. Experience has made it perfectly plain that it is useless to expect to get 100 per cent. peace. From time to time different conditions will exist, and while we were hopeful when the measure was placed on the statute-book that it would prevent strikes, we find that it cannot maintain peace. I am afraid the spirit of mankind will have to alter considerably before we reach that stage because, notwithstanding the bitter experience of want and poverty to women and children, strikes still occur and we may look forward to further outbreaks in future. The stubborn, reckless natures of different men, not only amongst employers but also on the employees' side, have not recognised the duty they owe to the community, but at their own sweet will they have brought about industrial conflict. We should therefore retain arbitration as a means to settle industrial strife. I mention this because Mr. Holmes suggested that we should abolish arbitration on the ground that it did not prevent strikes. It might be opportune to refer to the earliest recorded strike which was mentioned in a Brisbane journal recently. This occurred about 308 B.C.

Hon. J. Cornell: There were some before that. Was it Adam or Eve that struck?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The earlier strikes may not have been settled so amic-

ably as was this one. The city pipers of Rome, whose special duty was to provide temple music, were privileged in those days as an ancient custom to hold feasts in the temple of Jupiter. When the high priests desired to abolish this custom, all the pipers withdrew to Tiber, the modern Tivoli, 18 miles north-east of Rome, much to the embarrassment of the priests. The senate thereupon despatched an envoy to the Tiberians entreating them to use their best endeavours to persuade the pipers to return. Being unable to prevail by fair means, they resorted to strategy. The players were generously supplied with liquor until one and all the musicians were found helplessly drunk.

Hon. J. Cornell: They could not have been Scotch pipers.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: They were then placed in a wagon and transported back to Rome. The populace were so delighted at their return that they prepared a great banquet in their honour. And so ended the first strike.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Do you propose that similar measures be adopted with the British seamen?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: We do not settle our strikes quite so harmoniously to-day. I submit that through arbitration the workers of Western Australia have received very great benefits. Through the Arbitration Act they have conferred upon them benefits perhaps greater than under any other law on the statute-book. The Arbitration Act consists of 126 sections, and last session the Government introduced a Bill to amend no fewer than 68 of those sections. Practically half the Act was to go into the melting pot. Notwithstanding that many amendments were submitted in another place, objections were raised that they would be futile, and it was left to this House to endeavour to make a workable measure of the Bill. No fewer than 58 separate amendments were put up in this House. Some of them were small and perhaps not of great importance, but nevertheless that was the number. When we conferred with another place on the conflict of opinion regarding the amendments, we found that 20 were acceptable to the Assembly. The present Bill, however, does not embody any one of the amendments then agreed to by the managers from both Houses. That is a matter for extreme regret, because those amendments would have constituted a very

fair first instalment. After the strenuous debate that took place in both Houses, I consider that the Government made a grave error of judgment in not accepting many or all of those 20 amendments. I appeal to the Government to give serious consideration to this matter and accept those amendments for a start. Some of the amendments I submitted, and I shall move similar amendments again this session. Some of the clauses of this Bill are entirely unfair and some are impracticable. When the Minister replies to the debate, I should like him to indicate that the Government are really desirous of making this a workable measure, and that they will accept many of the amendments placed on the notice paper. The highest courage is sometimes needed to admit a mistake, but the Government should admit that they made an error of judgment in not accepting the amendments agreed to last year. I wish to direct a few remarks to the chief points of difference regarding the amendments that were rejected last session. These dealt with the constitution of the court, the monopoly grant of unionism to the Australian Workers' Union, the provision that the conditions of awards should extend to persons not engaged in the industry, and the preference to unionists proposal. I wish to direct attention to what I may term the proposed monopoly of unskilled workers. The Labour Party have stated from time to time that they object to monopolies unless Government controlled. The Honorary Minister, in putting up the case for a State labour exchange, clearly indicated that the whole of the workers would be engaged through that exchange, and that preference would be given to unionists. The exchange would, of course, be a Government monopoly. In this instance it is sought to grant a monopoly to one of the many organisations registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act. Section 19 of that Act reads—

The registrar may refuse—

I want hon. members to note the word "may"—

to register any society, trade union, or company, or any industrial union, if in the same locality there exists an industrial union to which the members, or the bulk of the members, of such society, trade union, or company, or industrial union, can conveniently belong.

Hon. J. R. Brown: What is wrong with that?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: There is nothing wrong with it, and I hope the hon. member interjecting will vote for its retention. What is wrong, however, is that the amendment embodied in the Bill seeks to delete the word "may" and insert "shall." The section would then read—

The registrar shall refuse to register any society

and so on. The point is that if the amendment is carried as proposed, the registrar will be compelled to register the A.W.U., and that any society coming forward to be registered will be refused registration. Thus the A.W.U. will be given a practical monopoly as regards further registration. The regulations provide for the lodging of objections to registration, and there will be some substance in an objection if it can be said that there is a union already registered to which the persons applying for registration can conveniently belong. Mr. Dodd pointed out the avocations which may be followed by members of the A.W.U. Those avocations cover every industry now in the State, and many that we may hope to have within the next 20 years.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Only general labourers and workers.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I have here a list of the avocations, and they cover every industry we have and many that we may hope to have. The ramifications of no organisation registered in Western Australia go so far as those of the A.W.U. Thus there is a particular object in submitting this amendment. The "Industrial Gazette," Vol. II, No. 3 of 1922, contains a complete record of applications for registration that were lodged. Recently I asked some questions regarding the A.W.U., in order that members might have it direct from the registrar that that organisation already has some registrations. From the debate so far as it has proceeded, one might be led to conclude that the A.W.U. were an organisation anxious to obtain registration. Some sections are registered now, and the A.W.U. know that they can register another 20 or 30 sections. But that does not satisfy their constitution. They are part of a Federal organisation. Under the law of this State, in applying for registration in Western Australia one has to indicate the industry and the locality in which the proposed members are working. From a reference to the registration of the A.W.U., it appears that the whole of Western Australia is the locality mentioned in

the application of that body. If registration is secured as proposed by the Bill, it would mean that in future the A.W.U. would absorb the whole of the industrial workers employed in parts of the State which are now but sparsely populated. That is not desirable.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: You know that that is not correct.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I know positively that it is correct, and the hon. member interjecting knows it too.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Does it include butchers or joiners?

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Mr. Harris said it included the whole of the industrial workers in a district.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I said the A.W.U. could include the whole of the workers in a district where there is no union already registered. In support of that I shall quote from the "Industrial Gazette" to which I referred a moment ago. A witness for the A.W.U. was asked by the President of the Arbitration Court, "You have reciprocal agreements with other unions?" The reply was in the affirmative, and the examination proceeded—

If registration is granted, what would be the position?—The A.W.U. will refuse to accept as members men permanently engaged in an industry in a district where there is a union.

The A.W.U. were prepared to give an assurance that they would not accept members of another organisation where there were already men permanently employed; but where men were casually employed, or where the other organisation had not established a branch, there would be a field for the A.W.U. to come in.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: The A.W.U. would not take such men except at their own request.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Taking them at their own request means that there would be industrial chaos if another union came in. The result would be that other organisations would keep away and that the A.W.U. would have the whole of the men engaged in various industries.

Hon. J. R. Brown: No.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Australian Labour Party on the 2nd August, 1924, carried a recommendation as follows:—

That the State executive of the A.W.U. be requested to approach the Parliamentary Labour Party with a view of having the Arbi-

tration Act so amended that the court, on finding that there were two unions in any one trade—

and that is what Mr. Hickey suggested would be the case—

could hold an inquiry and decide which union should remain registered under the Act.

It means that the smaller organisations would go and that the A.W.U., being the largest society in Western Australia would rightly claim that those engaged in the industry belonged to them. According to a report, dated the 24th July, 1922, a number of unions objected to the registration of the A.W.U. Five unions were represented personally. The "Gazette" shows that 15 societies objected, but some of them were small in membership and their financial position did not enable them to send representatives to remain in Perth for some days. The five societies represented in Perth were the West Australian Government Railway Employees' Union, the Western Australian branch of the Meat Industry Union, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the Australian Society of Engineers, and the Metropolitan and South-Western Engine-drivers and Firemen's Association. The membership of the societies objecting was 6,628 on the 31st December, 1924. Therefore, whilst there are 40,000 unionists in Western Australia, there were five societies out of 15, representing some 6,600 members, who objected to this registration. I submit that the House should have some consideration for the unions who were not represented, but who nevertheless objected to the application of the A.W.U., which application was rejected by the President of the Arbitration Court. To my mind, the suggestion to strike out the word "may" and substitute "shall" is about the hottest thing we have had put up to us as an amendment of the Arbitration Act since it has existed. Further, what claim have the A.W.U. to this proposed consideration? Are the A.W.U. the only society that has never indulged in a strike? Certainly not. The A.W.U. have had as many strikes as any other organisation. The A.W.U. were not even content with peaceably getting members from another union, but attacked members of another registered society and assaulted them because they would not join the A.W.U.

Hon. J. R. Brown: When was that?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: In 1919.

Hon. J. R. Brown: What did they do to them?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The hon. member interjecting was there. They killed one man.

Hon. J. R. Brown: They killed nobody. The others were out to kill them.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The others were attacked.

Hon. J. R. Brown: They were not attacked at all, and you know it.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: They were attacked by dozens of members of the A.W.U., and as a natural result the feeling between union and union working in the same industry has been very acute indeed.

Hon. J. R. Brown: All they attacked them with was crib bags.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It is on record that a number of A.W.U. men came around the men working on a mine. Two men would get hold of another man, and there would be another hefty man with a brick tied in a towel. Then the man who was held would be asked whether he would join. That was called moral suasion. That is how a man was invited to join the A.W.U. His only hope to get out of the clutches of those holding him was to say, "Yes." Then, if he had not the money on him, someone would guarantee the payment of his fee for joining and he would be told that "if he did not pay the money out of his next pay he would be dealt with."

Hon. J. R. Brown: Did not the others take an armed force out there?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: After those occurrences an armed force did go out, and it went out for the express purpose of preserving the right of men to work without joining the A.W.U. As long as I hold a seat in this Chamber, I shall never be a party to defending such tactics.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. member should confine himself to the Bill.

Hon. J. R. Brown: He is wandering

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I never wander as far as the hon. member does. My faith in the A.W.U. has been badly shaken indeed.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You never had any in it.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I had a good deal in it in recent years.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What is the name of the other union?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: The Coolgardie Miners' Union; it had been registered since 1907.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Ghost walkers; spooks!

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: They were no more spooks than any other. Mr. Hickey was a member of that union for years. When Mr. Kitson was speaking last night with reference to the proposal to dispense with the ballot, I could not refrain from interjecting. The object of the clause is to remove the necessity for taking a ballot in order that members may go to the court. The only safeguard members in an organisation have in respect of a voice in the union, is the ballot.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Cannot they go to meetings?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Yes, if they are not working. When I interjected last night Mr. Kitson waved his hand and said, "Why are you going to take these out of the rules"? The Act provides that there shall be a ballot. Every registered society has that in its rules, and we know from experience that immediately an Act is amended in the direction of not calling upon the society to do certain things, the society eliminates from its rules the proposals that formerly existed. The proposal is wicked, and the object is to stifle the views of the members. They have a right to be heard.

Hon. A. Burvill: You reckon it is not democratic.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: They have a right to express their views, otherwise you make of the union a political junta with an executive of five, 10 or 20, and they can put you into court or take you out of it and, in fact, do what they like. That is not fair, right or just.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: You leave it to the unionists themselves to decide that.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: Why not take a referendum of the unionists. If that were done it would be found that the unionists' desire would be to retain what they now have in the Act. There is another side to that other than the industrial, and it is the political side. In connection with selection ballots taken by unionists, we find that in the majority of cases those ballots are won by members who belong to the larger organisations. If, as is provided by the Bill, we grant a monopoly to a big society, any one who wants to contest the selection ballot henceforth will have to be an officer in the big union, and the result will be that no one will win a selection ballot unless he is at the head, or what might be called one of the brass hats, of the big organisation.

Hon. E. H. Gray: We have no brass hats.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: There are many of them.

Hon. J. R. Brown: Anyhow, that has nothing to do with the Arbitration Bill.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It has, because one of the objects is to provide for a close corporation, and unless one is connected with a big organisation he will never have a chance of winning a selection ballot. I omitted to mention that the A.W.U. is also registered under the Federal Act, and by granting this registration the union will be permitted to participate in a State award. There would thus be an overlapping of awards in regard to which already there have been many complaints lodged. In confirmation of what I say, I may quote an extract from an annual report issued by Mr. Watts, who is secretary of the A.W.U. He says—

The defeat of the amendment to the Arbitration Act retarded our activity. It is hoped that the Act will be amended this session to permit of the State registration of the union in its composite form which will enable us to get awards for the country municipal workers and also the road board employees.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Is there anything wrong with that?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: There is a good deal wrong with it. If the union gets control over the whole of the municipal and road board employees throughout the State, many will be merged into the one big union and then by force of weight, the union will compel the public bodies to accede to their wishes. A local authority is different from an ordinary employer because the local authority is composed of men who deal with public funds and carry out their duties in an honorary capacity. They might be forced into the position of being compelled to pay £1 a day for manual work.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Don't you think they would earn it?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: I do not know whether the hon. member would be worth it if he had such a job. The union could take all those people to the State Arbitration Court and get another award, and that award might overlap the Federal award. The same thing would apply in regard to the pastoral industry for which there might be a Federal award. All this would make for greater difficulty than exists to-day. There is another clause that it is thought to amend—Clause 34, which provides that any rules prescribed under paragraph (b) shall extend

to and bind every person engaged in the industry to which the award applies, notwithstanding that such person may not employ any worker. If this is passed it will inflict a grave injustice on many men and women who are following a trade or avocation and who may be working for themselves. I refer to the occupations of tailoring, millinery and dressmaking. At a time preceding a race meeting, or before Christmas or Easter, these people work 14 or 15 hours a day, and immediately after the holiday season is over there is no work at all for them to do. If the clause is put into operation, they will all be forced out of business and will be driven into the large shops. That is not desirable, apart from being unfair. Take the case of a book-keeper. He, too, would be committing a breach of the ward if he were to take some work home to do in the evening. An accountant also would be bound by the hours of the award which may not suit him. It is unfair to those engaged in a small business, and who are endeavouring to build up a connection, that they should be hampered in this way. With regard to the constitution of the court, we had a long debate on the subject last session. What we should make for is continuity of office. It might be a long term, if not actually life tenure, and if an amendment be submitted on those lines, I might be inclined to support it. I would direct attention, however, to the fact that Section 60 of the present Act provides for assessors being appointed with the leave of the court. That is one of the things that I wonder the Labour Party have never made an attempt to alter. I submit that if the court is sitting in judgment on any case, and if the people interested in the case can by their presence assist the court, they should have the right to nominate someone to sit with the court. The services of the lay member of the court might be dispensed with, and a man qualified to speak on behalf of the particular trade might be appointed. He would have a knowledge of the inner working of the trade, and, similarly, the employers should select a man who also was familiar with the industry. That would be of immense help to the court. I intend to submit an amendment on those lines when we come to the clause. Last session, following on some questions I asked I drew attention of the long list of cases that were awaiting a hearing, chiefly because of the president's inability to devote the whole of his

time to the work of the court. There were 23 references, 10 interpretations, and 61 cases for breaches before the court at that time waiting to be heard. Since Judge Burnside retired from the position of president, Mr. Davies has been appointed an acting judge and president, and I understand that he has devoted the whole of his time to the work of the court. We find now that the court has nothing to do, and yet we have a Bill before us to provide for six boards to assist the court to carry out its work. With regard to apprentices, I do think that it would be desirable to have a board, but I fail to see the necessity for establishing half-a-dozen boards on the lines indicated.

Hon. J. R. Brown: If this Bill is passed there will be plenty of work for the court to do; no one will go to the court to-day.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Then the object of the Bill is to make work for the court.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: It has been suggested that these boards are highly desirable. I draw attention to what has happened in New South Wales. They passed a Bill there providing for industrial boards, in order to relieve the court. They chose some briefless barrister as chairman. There were also representatives of the employers and employees on the board. The court had nothing to do with it. It was like some of the select committees and Royal Commissions that are appointed: its members hope that the job will not be over in a hurry. As a result they killed the whole system as regards boards, for they sat there from day to day in order that they might draw their fees. In fact, they farmed the case out. If we decide to have those boards here, this may happen also. We may be appointing people over whom the president may have no control, and they may occupy as long as they like over every case.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: These boards will be appointed only as occasion arises.

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: If they are appointed, they may drag the thing out as long as they like. What I have referred to has happened in another State, and we must see that it does not happen here. I am surprised the Government did not provide a safeguard for the margin of skill. There is a proposal that wages shall automatically rise or fall with the basic wage. This is in the case of unskilled men. If an unskilled man is getting 10s. a day and the wages go up 2s. or 5s., provision should be made for this increase to apply also in the case of the skilled man. An attempt was made last year

to have such a principle embodied in the Bill, but it is not there to-day.

Hon. W. H. Kitson: Are you not making a mistake?

Hon. E. H. HARRIS: No. I have read the Bill through, and can find nothing in it to safeguard the margin of skill. The Bill provides for the unskilled worker to rise or fall in accordance with the scale. The same provision should be made for the intervening man. The scale does not go direct from the minimum to the maximum. There are many handy men in between. If the unskilled man gets 2s. or 5s. more for his particular margin of skill, or because the basic wage goes up, the whole lot should rise too. The court has granted so much more than the minimum, because of a man's skill or his ingenuity, or his responsibility. I shall be keenly interested in the Bill when we reach the Committee stage. I hope we shall not have to debate many of the amendments agreed to in another place, and that we shall not have to go over the same ground again.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central—in reply) [5.20]: Some severe criticism has been passed upon the Bill, mostly on the lines followed last year. The replies given will be similar to those given last year. I do not propose to attempt to deal with all the objections raised during this debate, because they are almost identical with those submitted during the lengthy progress of the measure through this Chamber last year. If I remember rightly, the Bill was recommitted four or five times, and the arguments pro and con were repeated at least half a dozen times. One important and vital principle of the Bill has been attacked by many members, principally by Mr. Nicholson. I intend to make a few remarks in support of the attitude of the Government in connection with the basic wage principle, and hope to fortify my remarks by quotations from high authorities. All, I think, are agreed upon the necessity of a basic wage, and upon the Arbitration Court being the tribunal to fix that wage. The Government, however, contend that Parliament should determine the standard of comfort of the worker, and that it should be left to the court to fix the amount in accordance with that standard. Otherwise, the responsibility which Parliament

ought to carry will be subject to the ideas of the court. We say in the Bill that the basic wage shall be a sum sufficient for the normal and reasonable needs of the worker, and in the case of the male worker shall be fixed with regard to the rent of a dwelling house of five rooms, the cost of food, clothing, and other necessities for a family consisting of a man, his wife and three dependent children, according to reasonable standards of comfort. I hope to show that the existing basic wage rests on foundations that will not bear examination, and that the principles sought to be introduced in this Bill are supported by the best of authority. Let me now trace the history of the basic wage. In 1907 Mr. Justice Higgins, in the Harvester case, laid down as the living wage 7s. a day. This was not done in the course of Arbitration Court proceedings, but during an investigation under the Excise Tariff Act in an effort by the employer to obtain a declaration that his conditions and remuneration to the workers were fair and reasonable. He had to prove that under the Tariff Act. The decision of Mr. Justice Higgins was that 7s. a day was ample in the circumstances. It was calculated on this basis—rent 7s. a week, food and groceries £1 5s. 5d., clothing and miscellaneous requirements 9s. 7d., a total of £2 2s. No evidence whatever was taken on that occasion as to the cost of living. The employers who were public bodies were paying 7s. a day. The fact that corporations in a responsible position were paying this sum was taken as evidence that 7s. a day was a fair and reasonable wage.

Hon. A. Lovekin: It was the existing wage.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: The 7s. set aside for rent was not representative of the rent for a worker's house in Melbourne, but represented the rent of a 4-roomed house in Sunshine, where the operations of the Harvester Company were being carried on. It has since been ascertained that the rent of a house in Melbourne at that particular time was 8s. 11d. per week. However, the wage definitely became known as the basic wage. No Commonwealth Arbitration Court, nor any other Arbitration Court in Australia, has ever attempted to inquire into the cost of living untrammelled by the decisions in the Harvester case.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Board of Trade in New South Wales have done so for the last five years.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am informed that it has never been done, and that the Harvester decision has been taken as the basis every time. Since 1912 the Commonwealth Statistician has ascertained the fluctuations in the cost of rent, food and groceries, all taken together. No such fluctuations were assessed in the case of clothing or miscellaneous requirements. These inquiries were not designed by the Commonwealth Statistician for the purpose of fixing the basic wage, or any wage, but have been utilised to make variations in the basic wage. In 1916 Mr. Justice Powers suggested that the Harvester case, the foundation of all the decisions, should be reopened. In the storemen and packers' case, in 1916, Mr. Justice Powers said—

I certainly think that an inquiry should be made, as soon as we get back to normal times, to ascertain as nearly as possible what a fair living wage for a Commonwealth award should be based on the ordinary regime of a working man and his family, and on the cost of all the items taken into consideration, not on food and groceries only, supposed rightly or wrongly to be 40 per cent. of the expenditure.

Mr. Justice Higgins, who made the rough estimate in the Harvester case in 1907, writes in his book "The New Province for Law and Order"—

There is no doubt that the rough estimate made by the court in 1907 ought to be superseded or revised by a new investigation as to the absolute present cost of living.

Mr. Justice Higgins was the judge who made the rough estimate in 1907. The Western Australian Arbitration Court usually determines the basic wage for the metropolitan area on the index figures compiled by the Commonwealth Statistician. There has, however, been no fixed method of applying the index figure, with the result that different basic rates have been fixed and made current for the same period. For instance, in the case of the railway employees it is 77s. a week, for other Government employees 80s. per week, and for cemetery labourers 78s. a week. There is no consistency whatever. There should be some consistency in common with determinations on the question of the basic wage. The figures of the Commonwealth Statistician are based on houses of all sizes and types, from the one-

room shanty upwards. Consequently they are quite useless for the purpose of coming to a decision as to what is or is not a fair basic wage. Mr. Justice Draper, in 1923, recognised the fact that in the Harvester case the rent of 7s. a week was 1s. 11d. a week below the Melbourne rents. He came to that decision after investigation.

Hon. J. Cornell: All Federal awards for the last five years have provided for that discrepancy.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: In 1923 the judge admitted that the data on which the court had to ascertain the amount of rent paid was unsatisfactory, and decided that the amount provided in the Harvester judgment of 1907, on which the Commonwealth Statistician's index figures were founded, was not correct, and he added 1s. 11d. per week for Government workers in regard to rent. I do not know whether that has ever been done before, or whether it has ever been done since.

Hon. J. Cornell: He added 3s. a week to the Kalgoorlie miners' award.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He recognised the fact that the Harvester judgment was unsound, and that it had been based on the rent of a house at Sunshine instead of on the rent of a house in Melbourne. In 1923 Mr. Justice Draper was satisfied that the rent had not been fairly adjusted, and added 1s. 11d. per week to the wages of the Government workers to provide for the difference. In 1909 the Federal Government—it was not a Labour Government, but a Nationalist Government—appointed a Royal Commission to investigate matters connected with arbitration. I have an extract from the Commission's report regarding the basic wage. It reads as follows:—

Throughout this report, therefore, the rental found by the Commission as a necessary item in the actual cost of living, according to a reasonable standard of comfort, will be the rental ordinarily paid by the tenant of a five-roomed house in sound, tenable condition; not actually cramped as to allotment; situated in decent surroundings; and provided with bath, copper and tubs.

The principle of the basic wage in the Bill before hon. members is in exact conformity with that finding. Another extract from the Royal Commission's report on the same subject set out:—

More important still is the requirement of at least five rooms. This appeared so clear to the Commission that, at a certain stage, the Commission, having got the impression that

the point would not be disputed, announced its intention of confining the evidence for the future to houses of that size. In deference, however, to the protest of Mr. Ferguson, the matter was re-opened. The only consequence was a loss of time in collecting evidence as to smaller houses, while not one witness—either house agent, or medical authority, or architect—was found to maintain that a four-roomed house was a proper standard for the typical family.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That Royal Commission did not take into account the case of men working in timber areas where there are no such houses.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Royal Commission took everything into consideration. It was concerned with the position throughout the whole Commonwealth, not regarding one isolated section.

Hon. J. Nicholson: The Royal Commission dealt primarily with people within the town areas more than in the country areas.

Hon. J. R. Brown: The Commission dealt with the workers generally.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Again the Commission reported—

The Commission had learnt from an officer of the Commonwealth Statistician's Department that in 75 per cent. of the cases of a family of three children under 14, two would be of one sex and the third the opposite sex. This necessitates two bedrooms at least, apart from that of the husband and wife, and, as the kitchen is always counted as a room, the four-roomed house leaves the worker without any other sitting room or social room than the kitchen.

Subsequently, there was a supplementary report furnished by the Royal Commission, and in that report appeared the following:—

The American standard lays down for the average family of five persons "a house of five rooms consisting of living room, dining room, kitchen, and two bedrooms," but for the standard family (comprised of husband, wife and three children, boy aged 12, girl 6, and boy 2), it is suggested the following practical arrangement of the house should be adopted—3 bedrooms, a living room, and a combination kitchen and dining room. It is specified that the house should also contain a bathroom with toilet arrangements and proper sanitation and drainage.

It will be interesting to note who some of the witnesses were who supported the proposal for a five-roomed house. This is an important consideration, particularly when we bear in mind the standing of those witnesses in the community. The witnesses included W. B. Griffin, Director of Design and Construction for the Federal Capital;

L. S. Bradshaw, architect, Commonwealth Works Department, Melbourne; the principal architect attached to the War Service Homes Department, Melbourne; Dr. Sutton, school medical officer, attached to the Education Department of Victoria; W. H. Foggett, architect, attached to the New South Wales Housing Department; F. F. Hall, manager of the New South Wales Housing Board; and Dr. R. Arthur, medical practitioner and member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. There were many other medical men and others who have made a close study of the question. I could give numerous other authorities in favour of insisting upon that provision in the interests of decency. There should be no need to stress the point in favour of a five-roomed house for the worker; the necessity should be apparent to all. Where the family includes two sexes, there must be three bedrooms. In addition, the kitchen and a living room are also indispensable. That makes the five rooms necessary for a worker's home. It follows that the rent of such a dwelling should be taken into consideration in fixing the basic wage. Although there has been a good deal of criticism regarding the method proposed by the Government for fixing the basic wage, no one has been able to suggest a more satisfactory alternative. Mr. Nicholson's complaint was that a single man would receive a wage based on the rent of a five-roomed house, equally with the married man. Mr. Nicholson, however, has not been able to suggest how that could possibly be avoided. I do not see how it would be practicable to make a distinction. Under the existing law, the Arbitration Court fixes the basic wage and that wage applies equally to married men and single men. Another suggestion made was that the rate of wages should be governed by production. Such an academical discussion, while very interesting, offers no solution whatever of this important problem.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Except that it has been done in America with satisfactory results.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I would like to hear Mr. Nicholson propound his scheme and show how it could be carried out with satisfactory results here. A reasonable standard of comfort should be the guiding principle in determining what the minimum wage of a worker should be. I do not think Australia will be prepared to accept

any other alternative. I do not propose to deal with any of the other objections that were raised, although I appreciate their weight in some instances. I have noted them all, and I hope to be able to meet the arguments raised against particular clauses of the Bill when the measure reaches the Committee stage, which I feel sure it will.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—LABOUR EXCHANGES.

** Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [5.40] : I was astounded to hear the various arguments advanced against the Bill yesterday. The case outlined by the Minister respecting the necessity for drastic alterations in the present arrangements regarding private employment agencies, and the eloquent appeal made by Mr. Dodd regarding the operations of the International Labour Office at Geneva, were not answered by any of those who took exception to the measure.

Hon. J. Cornell: Mr. Dodd had a lot of qualifications to make.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: He put up a case in favour of the Bill that was not answered by any hon. member. The real object of the measure has been overlooked by previous speakers. The evils they saw in it do not exist; neither is there the danger apprehended by country members who interjected or spoke against the Bill.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: We have already had experience ourselves.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Dealing first with the question from an international standpoint, some hon. members have protested against the Bill from that very aspect. I have believed in international co-operation for many years. Though I am a comparatively young man, I can truthfully say that if speeches were made 30 years ago in favour of international co-operation from the standpoint of labour and from the point of view of preventing war, those endeavouring to get a hearing would have experienced difficulty in securing audiences. Although Communists and those who are recognised as belonging to the advanced wing of the Labour movement, have pronounced against the International Labour

Office and the ramifications of the League of Nations, I am one of those who have pinned my faith to that international movement. The chart that has been placed before members indicates what a tremendous amount of good has been achieved under the auspices of the League of Nations since the first conference was held in 1919.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Can you explain the chart?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is so simple to understand that I am surprised to hear that interjection.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: The chart hardly does justice to Australia.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It is a correct record of what Australia has done.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: It is not nearly complete from the Australian standpoint.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The Commonwealth Parliament has not ratified any convention or resolution adopted by the International Labour Office. The chart, therefore, is a true record.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But they have been ratified by the State Parliaments, and that is not indicated on the chart.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Of course, the chart deals with the Federal Government. The Commonwealth should have ratified the various conventions and resolutions adopted by the International Labour Office. On the contrary, the Commonwealth have failed to do so. So far as I can gather, this is the first opportunity, together with that afforded by the Day Baking Bill, that Western Australia has had in the direction of ratifying these provisions. I should like members to take a wider view of the Bill and so give their acquiescence in the aspirations of the International Labour Office. When we consider the great work that has to be done between the Commonwealth and the other nations to prevent war and raise the standard of living of all countries, the Bill seems to be a little paradoxical, a very small thing to start upon. If members are going to put obstacles in the way of international peace and understanding, it makes one wonder whether those members are in close touch with public opinion upon this question. I have had some experience outside of Australia and it shows me that we require something other than armaments, some other slogan than "We should be prepared" in order to avert an international

disaster that may possibly sweep away our white civilisation. One does not require to be a close student or reader; one has only to read with an open mind the newspapers or get into conversation with a traveller from overseas to know that the white race is in a very precarious position. The most alarming part is that the rank and file, the working classes, the tradesmen large and small, seem indifferent to the dangers now confronting our civilisation. True, there is the Labour movement, members of which read the newspapers and periodicals and there learn of the danger with which the white race is threatened, but the masses of the people seem indifferent to the way the world is going. We have only to look back on history to realise that no method of repression will prevent the people from rising. Repression in Russia did not stop the Russian revolution, nor will deportation Acts or oppression of any kind prevent the people from securing, either by peaceful methods or by revolution, the salvation of the working classes.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Which part of the Bill are you now discussing?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Its basis. The Bill is a small measure that has been ratified by all countries members of the League of Nations, not only by the working classes, but by the employers. Two-thirds of the International Labour Convention passed a resolution asking all affiliated nations to adopt laws such as the Bill before us. I cannot understand the argument put forward by Dr. Saw, who read the recommendation of the general conference urging the abolition as soon as possible of employment agencies. The recommendation reads—

The general conference recommends that each member of the International Labour Organisation take measures to prohibit the establishment of employment agencies which charge fees, or which carry on their business for profit. Where such agencies already exist it is further recommended that they be permitted to operate only under Government license, and that all practicable measures be taken to abolish such agencies as soon as possible.

It was definitely recommended that in accordance with the peculiar conditions of each country, each country should abolish such agencies as soon as possible.

Hon. J. Nicholson: But with compensation and the like; not to wipe them out as by a Bill like this.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The hon. member can argue that in Committee.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Can you tell us any first class nation that has abolished employment agencies?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The question is now before all the countries.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: And has been before them since 1919.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What countries have done it?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I think the hon. member is in error. It all depends upon what he calls a first class country. There are 17 items mentioned on this chart and we shall receive a further chart on which is given information as to the countries that have ratified this law.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: This chart is of no use in respect to Australia.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I challenge the hon. member to deny that since 1919 the Commonwealth Government have not even attempted to ratify any convention of the International Labour Office.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: These matters do not come within the Commonwealth Constitution, and therefore the Commonwealth Government cannot deal with them.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: They can deal with unemployment, hours of work for women and other cognate questions.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: But they are essentially for State Parliaments to deal with.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: According to this chart, Australia has done nothing in reference to childbirth.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: The Commonwealth is a defaulting nation in respect of the operations of the League of Nations.

The PRESIDENT: I think the subject is far too serious to be joked about.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Thank you for that remark, Sir. Hon. members are not giving it serious attention. If we look down this chart we see that those people who suffered most during the great war—Great Britain, France, Germany, Roumania, Poland, Greece—all those nations have taken active measures to fulfil their obligations to the International Labour Office. Australia has done nothing. Mr. Dodd said that it cost the Commonwealth a great amount of money each year to send delegates to that conference. If we are to take the deliberations of the League of Nations seriously, we should make some effort to fulfil our obligations in that regard. We have in the Bill the opportunity to fulfil those obliga-

tions and I hope hon. members will seriously attempt to do so.

Hon. J. W. Kirwan: This Parliament has passed a Bill in reference to white lead and phosphorus. There is no reference to that in this chart.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: You will get that in the next chart. I challenge any member to say that this chart is not correct.

Hon. E. H. Harris: I challenge you to prove that it is correct.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I say it is correct. If any State has passed legislation, it is the duty of the Commonwealth authorities to forward the information to the International Labour Office. In this respect the Commonwealth is a defaulting nation, not having fulfilled its obligations.

The PRESIDENT: The question before the House is whether the Bill shall be read this day six months.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I hope it will be read and passed long before then. I can see that hon. members do not take kindly to any references to the Bill in relation to our obligations to the International Labour Office. Certainly the Minister in bringing the Bill before the House showed that he knows the Chamber better than I do. I am of opinion that some efforts has to be made to thrash defaulting farmers up to their duty in respect of unemployment and rural workmen.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: The farmers have not been able to get labour at any time during the winter.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Some effort has to be made to marshal those farm workers so that the present economic waste shall be abolished. Every winter, owing to the seasonal nature of much of the work in the country, we have an acute unemployed problem in Perth and Fremantle and other towns. It is no use agricultural representatives talking about the inefficiency of labour or that men cannot get a job because they cannot work. Any member making such a statement is not in close contact with the actual position.

Hon. H. J. Yelland: Is there no technical work of any sort on a farm?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Yes, and such work should be specially paid for. The State Labour Bureau has greatly increased its operations during the life of the present Government. Since the Honorary Minister has been in charge a great effort has been made to deal with this peculiar problem

that arises every year. The operations of the bureau last year were on an increased scale. It is necessary that the Bill should be brought into operation in order to cope with the present situation. The agricultural labourer and the farmer would be very much better off if the private labour exchanges were abolished and the whole of the business were marshalled in the State Labour Bureau.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are saying that, having had no experience. We have had experience and we say the opposite.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I have had some experience, too. From the 1st July to the 19th October, 1925, there were 4,004 registrations at the State Labour Bureau and 2,361 engagements, of which 1,012 were Government and 1,349 private. During the same period of 1924 there were 3,334 registrations and 1,770 engagements. For the 12 months ended the 30th September, 1925, there were 6,374 engagements, compared with 5,303 during the previous year. I quote those figures to offset the inference that the State Labour Bureau is not an efficient institution to deal with the whole of the business. I am opposed to private labour exchanges because almost all countries recognise that the private agency system is an evil that should be abolished. I am also opposed to private labour exchanges because from my own experience they are a source of inconvenience, loss and in many instances evil to large numbers of people, and it is our duty to obviate that as quickly as possible. Instances have been cited of girls having been employed through private labour exchanges and sent to houses of ill-fame.

Hon. J. Cornell: The Government that knew of that should be shot out.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: In one instance action was taken.

Hon. J. Nicholson: It is an offence under the Criminal Code.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: In one instance a fine was imposed and the license of the employment broker was cancelled, but it is difficult to trace such cases because we do not know to what extent this sort of thing is going on.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Was not the offender in that case criminally prosecuted?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not think so. The private agency is a source of expense to domestics in search of employment. Domestic servants receive little enough in the

shape of wages, without having to pay away one-half of their first week's wages in order to get a job. On one occasion I was at a place named Pindar, outside Mullewa. At about 11 p.m. a woman, who must have been 50 years of age, landed there, having been sent from a private labour exchange to take an engagement as cook on a station. Anyone could see that she was not capable for such work.

Hon. J. Nicholson: How do you know that she did not represent herself as being efficient?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: She landed at Pindar friendless and without money, and a collection was taken up at the hotel to assist her.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Did she say that she was a qualified cook?

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Perhaps the station had to take anyone that could be obtained.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: It would be better to marshal the unemployed in one office.

Hon. J. Nicholson: Any port in a storm!

Hon. E. H. GRAY: There are numbers of good employers amongst farmers, but there are large numbers of farmers who deliberately try to rob and defraud rural workers.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You are making a charge that you cannot substantiate.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Such employers should be dealt with.

Hon. V. Hamersley: And vice versa.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Employers wishing to engage labour through the Government Bureau are not supplied if they are not decent employers.

Hon. J. Cornell: That is a nice indictment.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: It is ridiculous and you cannot substantiate it.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Consequently they have to go to private agencies in order to get labour. Instances have come under my notice of men having been sent to jobs in the country and, on arriving there, have found that they were not wanted. The places had been filled, and the employment agency had not been advised. Then there is a type of man who sets himself out to rob the rural workers of their wages. There is a big number of them in this State.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: If you had had my experience of the Labour Bureau, you would not say that.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I am not referring to the hon. member.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Then why look at him?

The PRESIDENT: The hon. member had better address the Chair.

Hon. F. H. GRAY: Then members might think I am alluding you. This is one of the evils of the present system, whereas if we had one office, the officials could deal with all the unemployed and also with the bad employers. Instead of men being sent up and down the country needlessly and defrauded by being paid less than the wages for which they were engaged, the whole business could be systematised to the advantage of the farmers and of the employees. That is the strongest argument in favour of the Bill.

Hon. J. Cornell: What would you do with the unemployable?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I question whether there are any.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What would you do with the old woman at Pindar?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I daresay there are many people unsuitable for work in the country, but whether they are unemployable or merely unemployed, we have arrived at a stage in our civilisation when the State undertakes to feed people who are in want. No one is permitted to starve.

Hon. J. Nicholson: What you need is a State Feeding Bill.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: Given one labour exchange conducted by the State, the Government would be able to arrange their works in such a way as to cover the period when unemployment is greatest, and thus misery, discomfort, and hardship would be eliminated. I consider that a good argument in favour of the Bill. Some members have expressed the opinion that compensation should be paid to the proprietors of labour agencies abolished under this measure. I do not agree with that, and I should be surprised if any country member voted for such a proposal. Rather than see the Bill jeopardised, however, I would accept an amendment to that effect, though I cannot speak for the Government. Still, I do not favour the payment of compensation, because the closing of these private exchanges is merely an ordinary risk of the business. The farmers did not set out to pay compensation when they started their co-operative stores throughout the State, although established storekeepers lost a lot of money as a result of their action.

Hon. V. Hamersley: The other store-keepers were still in competition with them.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: If the Bill be passed I cannot see that any hardship worth mentioning will be inflicted upon anyone in the business. Most of the people so engaged run the registry office in conjunction with some other business such as a land and estate agency. One employment broker has premises where he engages in the buying and selling of second-hand furniture, which often proves very profitable when dealing with farmers who come to Perth to look for labour. The greatest argument against the Bill is that the Government will take the opportunity to give preference to unionists.

Hon. A. Burvill: That is combining two operations.

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I do not think the Government intend to do anything of the kind. If I were running the Labour Bureau, I would pick up a unionist first of all. A man who would honour his obligations to his mates would honour his obligations to his boss, but the man who would not do so to his mates would not be likely to do so to his boss. If members consider that this is the nigger in the pile, it will be easy for them to insert an amendment guarding against it.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Will you move in that direction?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: No, I do not want it; the hon. member may do it. I merely mention that I would prefer an amendment on those lines rather than have the Bill jeopardised. Seeing that the questions of compensation and preference to unionists are the only two objections to the Bill, it is up to members to table amendments to remedy those objections.

Hon. E. H. Harris: Would you vote for an amendment of that nature?

Hon. E. H. GRAY: I ask the House seriously to pass the second reading, firstly because we have to honour our international obligations, and secondly because we want to deal with the big unemployment problem and eliminate economic waste consequent upon large numbers of rural workers having to lose time and money in moving about the country. If we centralise the work in this way, we shall be able to obviate many of the hardships that confront rural workers to-day. I support the second reading.

HON. J. NICHOLSON (Metropolitan) I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion negatived.

HON. F. E. S. WILLMOTT (South-West) [6.13]: I should not have spoken had it not been for the severe criticism and, I may add, the absolutely incorrect statement made by Mr. Gray regarding the farmers. I cannot allow such a statement to go unchallenged to the Press. It is incredible to me that the hon. member could have made such an assertion seriously. Of course we know there have been instances where farmers have treated their employees harshly, but I venture the opinion that they are the most extreme and isolated cases that could be gathered. We cannot find men to go out and work nowadays except under decent conditions, and if there are a very large number of farmers such as Mr. Gray would have us believe, those farmers could never obtain any labour at all.

Hon. A. Burvill: That is certain.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: Is labour so abundant to-day that farmers can afford to treat their employees in that way? On the contrary, efficient labour is frequently very hard to obtain. At certain times of the year no doubt there is a superabundance of labour available—of a class. I am somewhat in agreement with the hon. member when he says that no man is unemployable. To assert that a large section of the community are unemployable is as wrong as is the statement made by the hon. member. There is some niche for every man to fill. No doubt the so-called unemployable man would have difficulty during the process of sifting down and down until he reached his proper level.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: During the tea adjournment I was thinking over Mr. Gray's libellous attack on that fine body of men who are engaged in the farming industry of Western Australia. I have come to the conclusion that he must have judged others by himself. I understand that for some years he was farming. No doubt he was one, and possibly the only one, of those imaginary thousands of farmers who treat their people brutally. In my many years as an employer of labour I have found that it is not the employee who suffers. On

numerous occasions I have paid the fares of men to come to me and work, and they have never turned up on the job at all.

Hon. E. H. Gray: You must have gone to private labour exchanges.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: It matters not whether one goes to the State Labour Bureau or to a private bureau, one meets with men who get their tickets and step off at various points along the railway line for a variety of reasons. When such a man gets as far as Mundijong or Picton, he possibly falls in with friends who talk him into stepping off the train and joining them. The object may be to go in for contract work, or perhaps to go to the races. There are a hundred and one argumentative reasons used for drawing men off the straight and narrow path and preventing them from reaching their destination. I would be as wrong in classing the whole of the working community as scoundrels because of the action of those men, as Mr. Gray was in speaking in such derogatory language of such a fine body of men as the farmers. There must be something amiss to allow the cases stated to us by the Honorary Minister. With the Act laying down such heavy penalties, there must have been remissness somewhere to allow those cases to occur. The Act provides—

Every employment broker who knowingly by any false statement or representation induces any servant to enter into an engagement shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding £50, or to imprisonment with or without hard labour for a term not exceeding six months.

With such a drastic section in force, does it not seem extraordinary that so many instances, extending over so long a period, can be quoted by the Honorary Minister without at least one of the offending brokers having been caught? Instead of agreeing to this Bill, we would do better to tighten up, if necessary, the Employment Brokers Act. I cannot help thinking that someone has failed in his duty in not obtaining evidence sufficient to convict the offending brokers. They are licensed, and after two convictions, a license can be annulled.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Men seeking employment would not know anything about the Act.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: The employee is not the simple individual Mr. Gray would have us believe. The employee has all his wits about him these days. He asks in-

numerable questions, and safeguards himself in every possible way. There may be some weaklings whom employment brokers can take advantage of, and it is for the benefit of those weaklings the Act was framed.

Hon. E. H. Gray: What about the stranded migrant who knows nothing of local conditions?

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: I suppose I have had as much to do with migrants as anybody in this country. Let me tell the House that anyone who takes migrants for fools is very far away from his mark. One can see those men in the South-West, and they are pretty shrewd. Among them are to be found some of the finest stump orators and bush lawyers in Australia. Let hon. members listen to the yarns they put up and the tales they tell to the group foremen. Look how they will read into everything something that is non-existent. If Mr. Gray goes to the South-West, he will never take the migrants there for fools.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I do not.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: He will recognise that those men will never be imposed upon by employment brokers.

Hon. J. R. Brown: They are merely out of their element down there.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I have seen parties of two or three hundred migrants who have known nothing about local conditions and could not get a decent job.

Hon. F. E. S. WILLMOTT: That may be so. I have seen hundreds of sterling Australian workers out of employment, each and every one of whom I would have been only too pleased to employ had I been in a position to do so. We all know that at certain times there is unemployment trouble. However, something must be wrong to permit of the occurrence of the cases quoted by the Honorary Minister, while there is such a drastic Act on our statute-book. Let us find out why this has been allowed to go on so long. Let us take to task the people whose duty it is to deal with such matters. In my opinion there is sufficient power under the Employment Brokers Act if only it is carried out.

HON. A. BURVILL (South-East) [7.41]: In speaking to the amendment, I should like to ask what was the object for which the Bill was brought forward? According to its title, the measure has two objects—to establish State labour exchanges, and to abolish

all other labour exchanges. The Honorary Minister said he would not tolerate private exchanges. In view of that declaration I take it he would not accept an amendment to tighten up the Employment Brokers Act. His next point was that if the private exchanges were abolished, the State labour exchanges would have a monopoly. He went on to say that it was the policy of the Government to give preference to unionists. That means that at a State labour exchange capability would not be the first consideration, but would come after preference to unionists. As to that aspect, I agree with Mr. Dodd. I believe in preference to unionists so long as it is properly safeguarded. It is not good enough that some men should band together to get better conditions, while other men stand out. I agree with Mr. Dodd also in the view that State activities should not be used to force men into unions which levy political dues. I do not say it is the object of the Government, but the moment State labour exchanges are introduced, they can be used for a political purpose for which they ought not to be used. They can be made a cat's paw for the unions to establish branches throughout the country and probably upset the work of the farmers. As the representative of a farming district, I know that some of the farmers spend part of their time working for wages. They do that until they get established on their holdings. Moreover, the sons of some farmers have to look for work. They go to Perth or to a country town where there is a labour exchange that can find them employment. If there is only a State labour exchange, they will be compelled to join a union. Possibly they may belong to a certain union already—say the Primary Producers' Association, which has a political aim. Thus they will find themselves called upon to join another union having political objectives with which they are not in agreement.

Hon. J. R. Brown: The farmers ought to join the Labour Party.

Hon. A. BIRVILL: Very likely, but I do not believe in the introduction of a measure like this to force such a thing. I believe in a certain amount of freedom. If the Honorary Minister will not agree to the modification of the principle of preference to unionists, and if he will not agree to the continuance of private employment agencies—I shall not object to drastic amendments being made in the Employment Brokers Act to keep them in their place—I cannot sup-

port the second reading of the Bill, but must support the amendment. The State Labour Bureau now existing is perfectly free to both employers and employees. Yet we have private agencies existing which are not free both ways: most of them are not free either way. The employer has to pay a fee to some of them, and the employee has to pay a fee to others, while there are some employment agencies that charge a fee to both the employer and the employee. Why do these private employment agencies exist at all? The Honorary Minister has said that they must exist on the necessities of the people. I reply to that that the private agencies must give more satisfaction than the agency that is entirely free. Certain employees must be able to get better work and find better employers through the private agencies than through the State agencies and certain employers will get a better class of employee through the private agencies. That is a question that the Honorary Minister has not considered and it has an important bearing on the matter. I am not in favour of private agencies being abolished, although I would be in favour of a reasonable amendment.

HON. J. CORNELL (South) [7.48]: When introducing the Bill the Honorary Minister told the House that we ought to pass it for three reasons. The first was that it had emanated from the industrial section of the League of Nations; the second was that no person seeking employment ought to pay for the privilege of obtaining it, and the third was that some of the private exchanges have been the means of procuring women for immoral purposes.

The Honorary Minister: Not for immoral purposes.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I think it was said that they were engaged for immoral purposes.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Sent to places of ill fame.

The Honorary Minister: I did not say that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: Then it was stated in another place. The proposal I understand emanated, not from the Geneva conference, but from the Philadelphia Conference. Mr. Gray has gone to the extent of charging Australia with being a defaulter from the industrial wing of the League of Nations. Let us analyse the League of Nations and its industrial section, and let us briefly have recourse to our memories by taking Australia as an example and Liberia as another, both

part and parcel of the League of Nations. Conjure up for a moment the mighty gap that exists between the conditions as we find them in Australia and the conditions in a place like Liberia, or even China. I understand that what was and is still at the back of the heads of the foremost and most progressive nations that compose the League, is not so much to bring in a line and to improve those nations of the earth which to-day stand as a pattern to many others, but that the backward nations should be lifted, and that there should be inculcated into the minds of their peoples the necessity for humane laws and humane treatment. Mr. Gray charged Australia with being a defaulter. This is one reason why Australia may be a defaulter. Take Australia by and large. You can analyse all the constituent parts of the League of Nations in respect of industrial and social legislation and reform and you will find that Australia practically leads the world, and that there were a hundred and one things done by the League which had already been done by Australia. A lot of leeway will have to be made up by other nations before they can approach us.

Hon. E. H. Gray: In some things other countries are ahead of us.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I have been a student of industrial reform, and I know that it is a figure of speech to say that other countries are ahead of Australia. I have travelled the world a little in recent years and I claim to have read a good deal about economic reform. I say without fear of contradiction that, taking Australian conditions in the industrial field, there is no country on God's earth that is ahead of us.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Labour has achieved all that.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The hon. member made the bald statement that Australia is a defaulter. I make the statement that Australia leads in respect of industrial conditions, though one of the chief things that Australia will not recognise is that we are beating the air and endeavouring to fall from rationalism to fanaticism; we are endeavouring by Act of Parliament to reach the millenium, when we know that by legislation alone has it been possible for us to reach the position we occupy to-day. The charge made by the hon. member is just about as intelligible to me as was the serceed of music that was put before Widow

O'Brien. She described it as a lot of little black pills stuck on a wire fence. But there is one intelligible thing that I think will bear quoting, and I ask Mr. Gray to bear with me while I quote it for him, and I ask him to let it burn and sink in. This is it:—

No information has been received by the International Labour Office of any measures adopted or proposed for ratification or application of the Conventions by the following members of the organisation:—Albania, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Liberia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Persia, Peru, Salvador, Siam, Venezuela.

Last, but not least, are those two little islands in the southern sea that have pioneered the way in industrial reform and industrial legislation—nothing has been heard from New Zealand.

Hon. E. H. Gray: That is not official information.

Hon. J. CORNELL: The Leader of the House will agree with me when I say that nothing has been heard from New Zealand or those other countries that I have mentioned, and certainly nothing is likely to be heard from New Zealand. One of the reasons why New Zealand has not been heard from is that practically all that the League of Nations asks to be done is to be found in New Zealand. Japan has dealt with the question of hours, but the minimum working hours in Japan to-day is 13. With us, it is eight. Besides the humane side, there is the economic side, and the nations of the earth that work 13 or 14 hours a day as against the nations that work six or eight hours will tell in the long run so far as production is concerned. Mr. Gray will not dispute the fact that when the Japanese adopt modern machinery and up-to-date methods, their production during the 13 hours will be very much greater than ours in the six or eight hours that we work. I agree with my colleague, Mr. Dodd, that no individual seeking work should be made to pay for the privilege of obtaining it. I understand that the House is unanimous on that point. Assume for the sake of argument that the law lays it down that it shall be an offence to charge for finding employment, I would like to know from the Minister when he replies if we have not reached the happy consummation sought by Geneva. There will be a Labour Bureau as before, and no charge will be made for employment. I think we shall on those lines give effect

to what was said to be wanted by the Geneva Conference. The question of the only medium of employment in this State being through a Government department is one that requires careful consideration. Many ardent supporters of State enterprise and State monopoly in years gone by have weakened in that attitude. I am one of those who has fallen down on the job. It was said that the invasion by the Government of the realms of private enterprise would act as a balance against private enterprise, and set up a principle that private enterprise should follow. The point has been raised as to whether the Government policy of establishing State bureaux would be of any use in the direction of securing preference to unionists.

Hon. A. Burvill: The Honorary Minister says so.

The Honorary Minister: Nothing of the kind.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I join with Mr. Dodd in saying that there is serious objection to laying it down that a man shall or shall not get work according as he is or is not a member of a union. I have argued that preference to unionists is not all that is claimed for it. Preference to unionists is in the nature of a threat against a man's livelihood, and is in the direction of keeping him unemployed. It is wrong in theory and in practice. The only factor that counts in this world is reason. If you cannot reason with a man into joining a union, but have to force him to do so, you have a bad asset when you get him. There is no guarantee that the Government will not force the policy of preference to unionists. There is no guarantee that any other Government would not force a policy of preference to non-unionists. That policy would be unfair either one way or the other, for it would mean the introduction of politics into the realm of industrial economics. The other situation, that of the application of private exchanges to avenues other than those of legitimate employment, could occur if only the State functioned as a labour exchange, and does occur with the State as well as private individuals functioning as a labour exchange. That is one of the paramount features dealt with by the Geneva Conference. They do not suggest that we can overcome the difficulty by means of Government labour exchanges.

Hon. E. H. Gray: They will go a long way in that direction.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I hope the second reading will be passed. Mr. Stephenson also favours the passing of the second reading and of labour exchanges being allowed to function as before, but without charging fees to any persons applying for employment.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Perfectly ridiculous.

Hon. J. CORNELL: I am glad Mr. Stephenson has put this amendment on the Notice Paper. It is degrading and pitiful that a man should be seeking for employment without his being asked to pay when he gets it.

Hon. V. Hamersley: Why not?

Hon. J. CORNELL: That has been handed down to us from the dark ages. The returned soldiers have had their own labour bureau for about three years. They have financed it themselves. No charge is made either to the employer or the employee. Be it said to the credit of many business men and farmers and pastoralists that they have patronised the bureau and are only too pleased to do so. I think they get general satisfaction. Every effort is made to find the right person for the job, although he is not always offering. Mistakes do occur.

Hon. V. Hamersley: They do.

Hon. J. CORNELL: We have found that mistakes occur on the part of the employer and on the part of the bureau. We have our percentage of failures, just as the employers have. We cannot judge a small percentage of employers and employees as against the great mass of employers and employees. I will support the second reading of the Bill, and in Committee will support Mr. Stephenson's amendment. If we carry that amendment, we shall be doing all that is required of us.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [8.8]: The amendment is a drastic one and is very seldom put forward in this Chamber unless it is a drastic case requiring a drastic remedy. At first I felt inclined to vote for the second reading of this Bill and do my utmost to delete Clause 9. After perusing the parent Act, however, I am convinced there is no necessity for the Bill. The case put up by the Honorary Minister and Mr. Gray leads me to think that the department has been lax in not taking steps to bring to justice those who have abused the Act.

Section 16 of the Employment Brokers Act says—

If an employment broker, or the servant or agent of an employment broker, directly or indirectly, demands or receives or agrees to receive, or obtains any promise to pay from any employer or servant, or any other person, for or in respect of the hiring of any servant, any greater rate of payment or remuneration than the rate specified in such scale, such employment broker shall be guilty of an offence against this Act and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding twenty pounds.

Why has no action been taken with regard to these cases?

Hon. E. H. Gray: It is a hard job to sheet them home.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That cannot be so. If such things had happened, no doubt the employees would have taken exception to them. Both the Honorary Minister and Mr. Gray have referred to cases in which registry office keepers have wilfully sent persons out to situations for which they were not suitable, and adopted all kinds of subterfuges to induce them to go. Section 25 deals with that and reads—

Every employment broker who knowingly, by any false statement or representation, induces any servant to enter into an engagement, shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding £50, or to imprisonment, with or without hard labour, for not exceeding six months.

Section 26 says—

Complaints of offences against, or of failure to comply with any provision of this Act shall be heard and determined in a summary way before any two justices of the peace in petty sessions.

Why has the department not taken advantage of the Act if these cases have existed? Mr. Gray will not gain anything by traducing that section of the community which makes it possible for each and all of us to thrive in this country, because of the revenue it is producing. I refer to the farmers. There may be some who have not done the right thing.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There are too many of them.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I know very few farmers who have done other than treat their servants well and pay them well. An overwhelming percentage of farmers are only too pleased to get good farm hands, and to keep them as long as they will remain. The trouble is that a good class of farm servant, no matter what pay is offering, is not available to-day, because such men are in the positions they have occupied

for many years. Mr. Gray spoke of farmers ill-treating their men. I know of hundreds of cases in which incompetent hands have been employed, and have had to be kept on the farm because there was no one else available. The farmers have had to pay a high rate to persons who could not earn half their wages. I have had a lot of experience of private brokers. I have employed men since I was 19, and always go to one or two particular brokers when I want men. The Labour Bureau officers are diligent and do their utmost for one, but people cannot get the same satisfaction from a Government institution as they can from a private office. When an employer approaches a private office, his wants are attended to personally, and there is no obligation upon him unless he is suited. The employment broker will go to a lot of trouble to get the employee that is required, and makes very few mistakes. I do not blame the officers of the State bureau. It is the system that is wrong and that makes it difficult to get satisfaction. If private offices are done away with I do not know what advantage there will be unless it brings about preference to unionists, as appears to be the object. This would be of no advantage to the country.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There are safeguards in the Bill.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I know all about that. As to the question of preference to unionists it is said that there is no danger from that standpoint. If that be so, why do the present Government debar Italians from taking clearing contracts? If they can do that, they can, under the Bill, bring about what they desire to achieve and prevent a large section of men from obtaining work. I have studied the principal Act and I am satisfied that the only wise course to adopt is to defeat the measure. At one stage I felt inclined to vote for the second reading, but on further consideration I have decided not to do so. It cannot be expected that the private employment brokers will pay their license fees and keep registers and books and so on without remuneration.

Hon. J. Cornell: The employer should pay that: he wants the man.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: That is so, but will the employer get the man that he wants? I know a number of cases of men having failed to put in an appearance, after having been engaged to go to positions and the employers having paid half the expense. There

are hundreds of such cases, and if the employers are to undertake such expense and receive no satisfaction, what position does that place them in? Unless the employee has to bear some of the expense the position will not be rectified.

Hon. J. Cornell: He could go where he will not have to pay.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: But I am talking about the employers. There are hundreds of employers like myself who get more satisfaction from the private employment brokers than from the State Labour Bureau.

Hon. E. H. Gray: No fee is charged by the State Labour Bureau.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER: I would sooner pay half the fees to a private employment broker than go to the State Labour Bureau, because I know I will get more satisfaction from the private people. No employer would mind paying the fees if he knew he would be sure of getting service. On the other hand, in the great majority of cases, the men sent out do not go to the positions at all. I have advanced fares for men that I knew were good workers but who failed to arrive. It is not satisfactory to pay fares for men who take positions with other employers. The only wise course for us to adopt is to vote for the amendment that the Bill be read this day six months. It is one that I do not subscribe to as a rule, but on this occasion I do so because I think that action will be of benefit to the State. I have studied the Bill closely and I have heard the arguments advanced in favour of it. Notwithstanding that, I can see no reason why we should agree to the Bill, even if Clause 9, which is the whole Bill, were struck out. If we did strike that clause out, the Government would probably drop the Bill.

HON. V. HAMERSLEY (East) [8.20]: I do not wish to delay the House but I must take exception to the remarks of Mr. Gray regarding the charges he levelled against farmers and their treatment of their employees.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I have had an unfortunate experience, for I have seen a lot of it.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: You have?

Hon. E. H. Gray: Yes.

Hon. C. F. Baxter: I did not think you were one of the "won't works."

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: There are probably two sides to the question. It has been my experience that farmers have to treat

their employees in the way that the employees treat the farmers. I can only add that cases of that sort must have been the ones that came within the experience of Mr. Gray.

Hon. E. H. Gray: I never speak without authority.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: It strikes me as extraordinary that the Government should openly acknowledge, through the Bill, their absolute failure to stand up against the private employment agencies. The Government are now endeavouring to create a monopoly in the employment of labour, otherwise they would not have introduced the Bill. They cannot stand up against open competition. We know that it is only when they wipe out opposition, that the State is able to function in any of these business undertakings. I have come into contact with a good many employers, and I know that their reason for going to the private employment agencies is as indicated by Mr. Baxter, Mr. Willmott, and others. The employers get greater satisfaction from the private employment brokers, and better service from the people employed through those agencies. I have made inquiries from some employees why they did not go to the State Labour Bureau but preferred to go to private employment agencies and pay for the services rendered to them. Those workers told me frankly that they would not be seen at the State Labour Bureau; they did not care to go there to secure employment. In fact they took exception to it being thought that they would be associated with the State Labour Bureau.

Hon. E. H. Gray: It was quite beneath their dignity!

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I do not blame those men. I presume they were honest people and preferred to pay for the services rendered to them.

Hon. E. H. Gray: Do you suggest that the others were dishonest?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: They did not like going to the State Bureau and getting something done for them for nothing. I support them in that view. In going to a private employment broker, it has to be remembered that those people take an interest in the work, look into the credentials of those applying to them for positions, and generally speaking, take a greater interest in the requirements of both the employer and the employee. They do not send

men out indiscriminately from one place to another. On the other hand, the employer likes to avail himself of the service of these private employment agencies because he recognises that they will not send out men who are unsuitable for the positions available. Thus it is that both employee and employer receive better consideration at the hands of the private businesses than from the State Labour Bureau. I cannot understand the Government desiring to take away the businesses and the rights that have been built up over years by the private employment brokers. The Bill seeks to take their rights away from them.

Hon. E. H. Gray: There are only 11 people affected.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Those 11 people have their rights, and they should receive compensation for the loss of their businesses. They should be compensated on account of the interest they have built up in establishing their undertakings and on account of the confidence that is imposed in them from one end of the State to the other. It is not in the interests of the private employment brokers to send out men who have proved failures. They are not interested in supplying mistakes. They desire to build up a sound business, knowing that if they send out men who are not satisfactory, employers will not avail themselves of their services again. To take the businesses away from these people is altogether too drastic. It is extraordinary to find a Government making such a suggestion. The private employment agencies are established in the country areas as well as in the metropolitan areas. I am satisfied from the experience we have had regarding State hotels, that the State will only establish employment agencies in favourable centres, such as the metropolitan area. That will mean that we will not have in the country areas, private employment agencies anxious to help both the employer and the employee. The Bill is merely one more of those instances indicating an endeavour to force people into one centre to secure employment, thus bringing them under the thumb of the unions. There is another aspect: Not only do the Government desire to force these people into unions, but they ask the House to agree to relieve the employee from paying any fees. They will take good care that the men will have to pay much higher fees, however, and those fees will be to the unions they

will have to join. That is where they will have to pay for their employment at a higher rate than at present. The greatest trouble to-day is that so many people sent out to jobs in the country hold them for only a short time before returning to the city. Again, many deserving employees become very friendly with their employers. This class of legislation is aimed at that feeling, is based on class hatred, which is being engineered all the time. It is most unfortunate, for there is nothing finer than to see the employers taking an interest in their employees, and the employees reciprocating.

The Honorary Minister: How will this stop that?

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: Because, under the Bill, all labour will have to go through the State Labour Bureau, which, unfortunately, not infrequently sends unsuitable men to jobs in the country. The private employment broker is better acquainted with the conditions of farm work and knows exactly the class of man to send out. Again, some private brokers, although knowing nothing of actual farm work, know exactly the sort of assistance the farmer's wife requires. The employers very soon discover which agent suits them best, and they go back to him again and again, thus setting up pleasant business associations. The Bill will put a stop to the good services rendered by those private employment brokers for years past. Why should not employers and employees alike be allowed to pick and choose and decide for themselves which agency to visit for their requirements? It is often said that workers should have the right to work. I would add to that that it is a great pity we cannot instil into many more of them the will to work. So many of them go to the State Labour Bureau, and when they proceed to their engagements there does not seem to be amongst them the spirit we used to find in those who, having the will to work, tried to make a success of their services. I wish more would recognise the nobility of giving satisfactory service. When the employee prefers to go to a private employment agency and pay a fee, it is clear that he intends to stay on his job; whereas those going to the State Labour Bureau, having nothing to pay, are content to secure a job and a railway pass, and do not worry so much about proceeding to the job secured. It is quite

a common thing for the police to be hunting the country for men to whom free railway passes have been given but who have not reached their ostensible destinations.

The Honorary Minister: How much is lost in that way?

Hon. H. J. Yelland: The financial loss is no criterion of the actual loss.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I have had inquiries from the State Labour Bureau as to whether men have reached me, and I have had to write back and say that, at great inconvenience to me, the men selected have not turned up.

The Honorary Minister: They have collected on some other job.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY: I know it represents a substantial loss to the State every year, to say nothing of the inconvenience to employers. I will support the amendment.

On motion by Hon. H. J. Yelland, debate adjourned.

BILL—PRIMARY PRODUCTS MARKETING.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Drew—Central) [8.41] in moving the second reading said: For some time past the necessity for a measure of this character has been impressed upon the Government by representatives of a large body of fruit-growers. Deputations voicing the views of that section of industry have waited upon the Minister for Agriculture and pleaded with him to introduce legislation supplying machinery to enable them to market their products efficiently, and, to use their own words, to secure a living wage from the industry. The Minister was sympathetic, and when he was fully convinced that they were serious, he promised to accede to their request. Hence the Bill. Legislation of a similar nature has been in operation in Queensland and has proved a great help to the fruitgrowers. So well has it succeeded that, whilst it has ensured to the producer a reasonable return for his labours, it has not unfairly operated against the consumer. In other words, without injury to others, it is giving the producer what he asked for and what he is entitled to, namely, a living wage for his industry. As it is with the worker, so it is with the fruitgrower. He cannot expect to gain adequate recompense for his toil

without organisation. The fruitgrowers have attempted that organisation, but there has been no unity of effort, no cohesion, no identity of aim, while lack of support from a small section of those engaged in the industry has resulted in rendering the various schemes propounded little more than a pretence of what they should be. I have said the Bill is somewhat similar to the Queensland Act. In one respect, however, it is quite distinct, and that in a direction that should commend itself to the House. This Chamber has often deplored the direct association of the Government with industrial activities. In Queensland the operation of the marketing legislation is to a large extent under the domination of the Ministry, but under the Bill the responsibility for its administration is placed on the producers themselves. How the Queensland scheme has fared is a matter of some concern in connection with the consideration of the Bill. The Act came into operation on the 1st January, 1924, less than two years ago. The financing of the fruit marketing board has so far been undertaken without any contributed capital and without any Government guarantee. Savings effected in marketing and transportation costs have enabled large funds to be built up. Out of the savings, £16,000 has been passed on direct to the growers, and during the year 1924 the board amassed a reserve fund of about £10,000 without any direct charge having been made on the fruitgrowers of Queensland. The gross value of the increased prices received for pineapples is estimated at £30,000 for the year 1924. This figure is the increment only resulting from organisation. It is hard to estimate, from the investigations I have made, the value of the stability achieved for banana growers, but it is regarded as being greatly in excess of the pineapple figures. Everyone who reads the newspapers is acquainted with the career and reputation of the "Brisbane Courier." It is not a Labour paper; it is a paper antagonistic to Labour.

Hon. J. Duffell: What reason have you for saying it is antagonistic to Labour?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not know why it should be antagonistic to Labour. I do not know why the "West Australian" is antagonistic to Labour.

Hon. A. Lovekin: But it is not.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: When I used to read the "Brisbane Courier" it was antagonistic to Labour.

Hon. A. J. H. Saw: Anyhow, you have a friend in the "Daily News."

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Although the "Courier" had been in opposition to Labour at one time, it is coming over to Labour views now. I am given to understand that at the initiation of the fruit marketing scheme in Queensland, the "Courier" was strongly antagonistic to it.

Hon. J. Duffell: There is not a fairer paper published in Australia.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: After the 30th June, 1925, when the Queensland scheme had been in operation for 18 months, and when the board submitted their report and balance sheet to the public, the "Brisbane Courier" commented on it in these terms:—

Nothing tests the value of an organisation so effectively as results, and judged by that standard the committee of direction of fruit marketing has certainly justified its existence.

That is pretty strong, coming as it does from a paper that formerly was antagonistic to the scheme.

Hon. J. Duffell: That bears out the truth of my interjection.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The "Courier" article continues:—

Now the really interesting fact is that the committee, although it had to find a market for a very vast increase in production, has secured considerably higher prices than obtained before the control was instituted. Hitherto, in the three or four weeks of glut, the pineapple grower was at the mercy of the fluctuating markets, and had to accept whatever price he could get. As far back as 1923, or much earlier than that, it was stated that the limit of production had been exceeded and that heavy slumps were inevitable. But the report shows that a vastly bigger output is being marketed now at a considerably increased price, approximately an improvement of 3s. a case. With nearly twice the supply marketed, and a general average improvement of 3s. a case in price, there is some ground for the assertion that the pineapple industry has benefited to the extent of nearly £60,000 by careful organisation. The section of the report relating to bananas is even more interesting. Supplies have increased by considerably more than 100 per cent. The actual figures show that the consignments to the southern markets for the season of 1925 were 122 per cent. greater than those of the 1923 season and 103 per cent. greater than those of the 1924 season. In other words Sydney and Melbourne took 189,488 cases in the first six months of 1923, 207,111 cases for the same period of 1924 and 450,554 cases for the corresponding period of 1925. Despite all that the market was not only maintained but allowing for fluctuations, an increased price was

obtained. From time to time we are told that competition has decreased because of the methods of the committee, but that statement cannot be substantiated in face of the increased supplies that have been marketed. The big broad fact that concerns all of us is that organisation is essential to enable the growers to market their increasing supplies. In the banana industry especially supplies are increasing enormously, and unless some agency undertakes the distribution and seeks new markets disaster lies ahead. . . . Herein lies the great advantage of such an organisation as the committee of direction of fruit marketing. Those who are opposed to the operations or the committee might object that its methods are dictatorial, that its expenses are heavy, or that the compulsory principle is not democratic. After all those are details. The really big thing is that our fruit supplies are increasing rapidly and that ruination stares the producers in the face unless there is efficient organisation, and unless it is somebody's business to study farm economics, and to find new markets. . . . There may be many causes for a good deal of the discontent that appears to prevail in some of the districts; the committee might not be as tactful as it may be; it might not suffer objections gladly; or it might not co-operate as extensively as some growers would like with the agents. The really big fact, however, is that co-operation alone can save the industry in periods of glut, and that better distribution, better marketing, and a better knowledge of export conditions are essential if the growers are to market their fruit.

Hon. J. Duffell: And that is the report in a paper which you say is antagonistic to Labour.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It is the report in a paper which was once strongly opposed to Labour, but which I am pleased to learn is turning over to our side.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That has nothing at all to do with Labour.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, but the paper gives credit to the scheme on the success it has achieved.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Let us now have what the "Queenslander" says about it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am merely pointing out that it is an unprejudiced article.

Hon. J. Nicholson: I think you will find that the "Courier" is always a fair paper.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The article I have quoted is interesting from the fact that it appeared in a paper which I understand opposed the scheme at its inception. Now, that paper is satisfied with the success of the scheme.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Have you any cuttings from the "Queenslander"?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: It is a pity you have not; they would counterbalance that statement.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The growers of Western Australia asked for legislation similar to the Queensland measure. There have been persistent demands for an Act to enable our growers to control their products. The Government arranged with Mr. McGregor, the Director of the Council of Agriculture in Queensland, to come to Western Australia and discuss the matter. The State Fruit Advisory Board, which represented the whole of the fruitgrowers of the State, after having heard the views of that officer on the operation of the Queensland Act, unanimously passed a motion affirming the advisableness of placing a similar Act on our statute-book. It was then decided by the Government to introduce legislation. However, it was considered that it would be wise not to follow the Queensland Act too closely, that it would be better to recognise the principle of self-determination and that the responsibility of creating an organisation and administering it should rest directly upon those who were intimately concerned. This Bill provides the machinery to bring into existence a compulsory pool to handle primary products as defined in the measure. The definition of primary product is fruit, grain, cereals, vegetables, or other produce of the soil of this State or dairy produce or eggs, and "includes any article of commerce prepared otherwise than by process of manufacture from any primary product.

Hon. J. Nicholson: That will bring the wheat grower in, will it not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: It will bring no one in; growers must come in of their own accord.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: It gives them the chance to come in.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, but there is no compulsion until a certain proportion of the growers agree to come in.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Until they all wake up.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The product is to be controlled absolutely by the growers themselves through boards appointed by them. The first step to be taken to create a pool is the registration of the growers with the Department of Agriculture. If, after registration, a petition is signed by two-thirds of the growers, the Governor may declare any product to be a controlled product,

and it will then be administered by the board appointed by the growers. But an interval must elapse before this can be done. There may be opposition to the proposal, and in order to give possible dissentients an opportunity to present a counter petition, a month must be allowed to elapse before the Governor attempts to make the declaration. The minority is well protected. If one-fourth of the growers sign a counter petition, the product does not become a controlled product. Hence, 25 per cent. of the producers may successfully object to what the 75 per cent. desire to do. The whole position will be controlled by 25 per cent. of the registered producers.

Hon. A. Burvill: The particular area that each grower possesses will be no factor in the voting?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I shall come to that. There is a possibility that producers, in the enthusiasm of the moment, may rush into the scheme and afterwards regret their action.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: They bite you already if you talk about it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Such a contingency has not been overlooked, but is provided for in the Bill. An Order-in-Council declaring any controlled product will continue in force for only such period not exceeding two years as the Minister may determine. In the second year of control a poll of registered growers must be taken to decide whether control shall continue. If the poll is for discontinuance, the constituted board will be permitted to remain in existence only sufficiently long for the winding-up of their affairs. And not only that, but a majority of 66 per cent. of the votes must be recorded in favour of the pool; otherwise the pool comes to an end. It will be seen that such a thing as forcing the scheme on the producers is entirely out of the question. The benefits resulting from a compulsory pool must be fresh in the minds of members. In the war period, during the year 1915, a compulsory wheat pool was created throughout the Commonwealth. Under that pool all wheat-growers were forced to send their wheat to the boards formed in the various States. The amount charged by the acquiring agents for handling the wheat was 3d. per bushel. For seven years this organisation operated, and it is generally acknowledged that but for the existence of the organisation the farm-

ers of Australia would have suffered, and that possibly many of them would have been ruined. The board administering the wheat pool made financial arrangements with the banks, and under a well-planned scheme disposed of the wheat in such a manner as to ensure good prices to the farmers. There were, of course, delays in obtaining full payment, the money being received in instalments. However, this was inevitable in view of the war and its aftermath disorganising the world. Since the termination of the compulsory pool, voluntary pools have been created in some of the States. In Western Australia the voluntary pool of last year obtained 15,000,000 bushels out of a total yield of 23,000,000 bushels. The administration charges worked out at 2½d. per bushel. The quantity of wheat received abundantly proves that in a large degree the farmers recognised the advantage of having their wheat handled through a pool rather than selling the product to an individual who was out to make a profit from the transaction. There is a necessity for a produce pool. Only 20 per cent. of the actual output of dried fruits in Western Australia is consumed locally, and for the balance a market must be found overseas. An organisation is needed to regulate the quantity to be exported, to say where it should be exported to, and also to see that the quality is up to standard. The volume of our exports, I think, justifies an organised system to grapple with this question. Last year we exported 403,283 cases, and these were shipped from the ports of Albany, Bunbury and Fremantle. Our vineyards and orchards are making great progress. The figures for 1924-25 are not yet available, but in 1923-24 there were 18,781 acres of orchard land under cultivation, and they produced fruit to the value of £563,458. We had 5,235 acres producing grapes to the value of £107,864. Anything that can be done should be done to safeguard and encourage such an important industry. As regards fresh fruit, the market is at times glutted and the product sold at a price which often means a sacrifice to the producer; and later, when the glut is over, the fruit is sold at a price beyond the reach of the consumer. It is the object of the Bill to endeavour to prevent gluts, and by a process of organisation to ensure that fruit is sold at a figure fair to the producer and the consumer alike. The differences between the Queensland Act and this Bill may be briefly stated. Under the Queens-

land Act, instead of the product being controlled by a board representative of the growers, it is controlled by the Council of Agriculture, composed of not more than 25 members. The Queensland Primary Producers Organising Act provides that the whole of the primary products of the State shall be controlled by the Council of Agriculture. A maximum of one-fourth of the council are appointed by the Government, and the remaining members are elected. The council is under the presidency of the Minister for Agriculture, with a permanent director appointed by the Governor-in-Council. The council has also a secretary and a clerical staff. Under the Queensland Fruit Marketing Act the fruitgrowers are formed into associations which are grouped into electorates representing the growers of bananas, citrons, pineapples, deciduous and other fruits. The growers of the respective classes of fruit annually elect their representatives to what are known as sectional group committees. The sectional group committee elect representatives on the Committee of Direction. The Committee of Direction is composed of ten representatives—two each of bananas, citrus, pineapple, and deciduous, and one representative of other fruits, and also a representative of the Council of Agriculture. This committee controls the marketing and sale of all fruits; that is, banana and pineapple growers sit on a committee that decides how deciduous and other fruits shall be disposed of. The whole control of the products in Queensland is in the hands of the Committee of Direction, which is associated with the Council of Agriculture. This is a complicated system, and the Government, through their representatives, and the Council of Agriculture, have a big influence on the administration. But under this Bill the growers themselves will have control. At the same time a power of veto is given to the Minister. He can prohibit any action which he considers would be detrimental to the public interests. It must be remembered that great powers are given to the board under this Bill, and that it would be possible for them to do something injurious to the community at large. There must be some responsibility retained by Parliament, and with this provision Parliament holds the Minister responsible for the protection of the public. I will now explain the clauses of the Bill. Clause 3 gives the Governor power to classify all or any primary products. "Primary products" include

dried fruit, but does not include any article such as jam, which is a manufactured product. Clause 3 also provides that the State may be divided into districts, or gives power to establish any part of the State as a district, and authorises the Minister to keep a register of growers of classified products. Clause 4 enables the Governor by Order-in-Council to declare any product, but such order shall not be issued until one month after a petition has been received from two-thirds of the registered growers. This order shall, however, not be issued if a counter petition is received from one-quarter of the registered growers. Receipt of a petition must be duly advertised. The order may be limited as to districts, and may be rescinded by any subsequent Order-in-Council. The order is to continue in force for such period, not exceeding two years, as the Minister may determine. A poll of registered growers shall be taken in the second year of control on the question of the renewal of the Order-in-Council. If a renewal is not granted, the order shall remain in force long enough to allow of the business of the board being finalised. Clause 5 provides for the election of a marketing board by registered growers. This board is to be a body corporate, and will be paid out of the funds of the board such remuneration as the Minister may determine.

Hon. A. Burvill: Where will those funds come from?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Out of the pockets of the producers.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Oh, do not say that! The Queensland crowd say the scheme has not cost the producers a penny. The Queensland Act has been so wonderful that the producers have made a profit. How did they do it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Out of savings in cost of transportation, and through receiving higher prices for their fruit, thanks to the scheme. The scheme is not even guaranteed by the Queensland Government.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: I know how it is done.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The Queensland fruit marketing scheme, unlike other Queensland marketing schemes, has never been guaranteed or assisted by the Government in any direction. Clause 5 further provides that the marketing board shall not represent the Crown. Regulations will prescribe the number of persons comprising the board, the method of election, tenure of

office, the method of filling vacancies, the method of appointing the chairman, and generally the conduct of the board's business.

Hon. A. Burvill: The Government control all those things.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Clause 6 empowers the board to sell, or arrange for the sale of, any controlled product; to appoint servants, agents, officers, etc.; to impose levies or commissions, and to use amounts received in payment of the board's expenses; to arrange financial accommodation; to make the necessary quantity of the controlled product available for State consumption; to arrange sales for export to other countries; to purchase land or property; to provide buildings or plant; and to sell any property belonging to the board. This clause, however, also provides, as I have previously indicated, that the Minister may veto any action on the part of the board that he considers detrimental to the public interest. Under Clause 7 the whole of the controlled products must be delivered to the board, and there is a penalty of £500 for the sale or purchase of controlled products otherwise than through the board.

Hon. F. E. S. Willmott: Clause 7 is a beauty!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The same clause gives power to declare void any contracts made in contravention of this particular provision, and it exempts from the operations of the Act certain growers and sales, as may be prescribed. It is also provided that any person selling any quantity of controlled product to another State of the Commonwealth will be exempted from the operations of the Bill. Clause 8 provides that all products are to be delivered to the board in the name of the grower and the board may require a certificate of quality from a grading officer. Clause 9 sets out that the tendering of a controlled product to an authorised agent is evidence of intention to deliver such product to be disposed of by the board. Clause 10 stipulates that the board shall accept any of the controlled products if they conform to the standard of quality, and that the growers shall be paid an amount equal to that obtaining for the same standard of product sold by the board during the same period. The board's decision as to the quality and the price is to be final. Products that may be damaged during transit to the board, through no fault of the grower, are to be paid for. Clause 11

provides for the issue of certificates to growers by the Board or withholding them if notice of lien or mortgage has been received. It also provides for the issue of separate certificates to share farmers. Clause 12 permits the board to make advances on account of products delivered to it. Clause 13 enables the Treasurer to guarantee a bank overdraft. Clause 14 gives authority to the board to declare contracts void if such are not bona fide interstate contracts. Clause 15 permits the Commissioner of Railways or other carriers to refuse, at the request of the board, to carry controlled products without incurring liability. Clause 16 compels growers to furnish returns showing the quantity of controlled products held at any specified time. Clause 17 sets out that every person holding any encumbrance over a controlled product shall give notice of it to the board. Any person who fails to give such notice shall not be entitled to take action against the board or claim damages. Clause 18 provides that the issue of certificates by the board to any person who has delivered a controlled product, discharges the board from all liability to other persons. All payments made in good faith by the board to the holder of a certificate shall discharge the board from all claims, excepting those about which the board has received written notice prior to the issue of the certificate. It provides also that the person entitled to encumbrances shall not have any right that a grower cannot avail himself of. Clause 19 permits the board to withhold payment until a dispute as to any encumbrance is determined by law. Clause 20 declares that every grower of a controlled product which is subject to encumbrance must, upon delivery of a product to the board, give notice in writing, of any encumbrance. Clause 21 defines the word "encumbrance" to mean any mortgage, lien, etc. Clause 22 ensures that no loss or damage can be successfully claimed by anyone by reason of the passing of the Act. The next clause provides that the board shall cause accounts to be kept of all sums of money received and paid and shall publish particulars in accordance with the regulations. Clause 24 makes all claims against the board and all expenditure by the board a charge upon the proceeds of the marketed product. Clause 25 provides that the cost of the election of members and of polls shall be payable out of the board's funds. Clause 26 deals with

penalties and Clause 27 provides for the making of regulations. The last clause sets out that if any part of the Act shall be found to be inconsistent with the Commonwealth constitution, such part shall be severable from the rest of the Act. I commend the Bill to the favourable consideration of hon. members. It has been asked for by the Fruit Advisory Board which represents the whole of the fruitgrowers of the State. Let me repeat, the placing of the Bill on the statute-book does not mean that it can be enforced by the Minister. It can only be enforced by the registered growers themselves, and after 66⅓ per cent. of them are in favour of it. Even then it can be vetoed, and vetoed by a small majority. If 25 per cent. of the registered growers are against it, it will be impossible to bring it into operation. Never were the principles of self-determination hedged round with such safeguards. There are objections to the measure. That there should be is only what could be expected. There are conservative minds who view every attempt at reform with suspicion and fear. When any Bill is presented to Parliament introducing some innovation, there are sure to arise critics who see in it the germs of trouble, if not of disaster. The great and successful compulsory wheat pool of the Commonwealth could only have been launched at a time of crisis when the farmers were glad to clutch at any straw. Even then it was portended by some pessimists that it would make confusion worse confounded. The farmers had to enter that scheme whether they liked it or not. The principle of this Bill is quite different. Only a vast majority of producers can decide to bring this measure into operation and make it apply to the particular product with which they are concerned.

Hon. A. Lovekin: Will you tell us how this Bill fits in with the Commonwealth Constitution?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: There is no prohibition against intercourse between States. Clause 28 of the Bill reads—

This Act shall be read and construed subject to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia and all laws made under the authority thereof, and if this Act shall be found to be in any way inconsistent with such Constitution or laws, the inconsistent part shall be deemed to be severable from the rest of the Act, which shall have effect subject

only to any modification which may be necessary to remove the inconsistency.

Hon. A. Lovekin: That shows that the draftsman has some doubt about it.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. H. J. Yelland, debate adjourned.

BILL—MUNICIPALITY OF FREMANTLE.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

House adjourned at 9.25 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 22nd October, 1925.

	PAGE
Questions: Art Union Sweeps	1518
Road making, Federal Grant	1518
Auditor General's and Taxation Commissioner's Reports	1518
Bills: Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, Report	1519
Municipality of Fremantle, 3r.	1519
Land Act Amendment, 3r.	1519
Eight Hours, 2r.	1519
Newcastle Suburban Lot 58, 2r., Com. Report	1531
Vermitt Act Amendment, 2r.	1532

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

QUESTION—ART UNION SWEEPS.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH asked the Minister for Justice: 1, What conditions apply to the granting of permission for the conduct of art union sweeps? 2, For what reason was permission recently withheld from the Al-

bany Season Committee to conduct an art union sweep?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied: 1, Objection is not taken to art unions which have for their object the raising of funds for charitable or other worthy purposes. 2, That it did not come within the scope laid down.

QUESTION—ROAD MAKING, FEDERAL GRANT.

Mr. A. WANSBROUGH asked the Minister for Works: 1, Is the Press report correct regarding the distribution of the £48,000 allotted by the Commonwealth Government for the strengthening and reconditioning of main roads? 2, On whose recommendation was the distribution made? 3, Were the claims of other main roads taken into consideration before the allotment was made? 4, What reasons were given for selecting the roads named?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, If reference is made to the report furnished by me to the Press, the answer is "Yes." 2, The Acting Engineer in Chief recommended, and Mr. Hill, Engineer for Works and Railways (Commonwealth), approved, during his recent visit to the State. 3, Yes. 4, The roads referred to constitute the main outlets to the country areas, and having in mind the relative volumes of traffic they are, by reason of their present condition, the least fitted to carry it. The condition of the grant was that work of a permanent nature should be undertaken, and to attempt to meet all the needs of the various districts with a limited amount of £48,000 would certainly result in inefficiency and loss.

QUESTION—ANNUAL REPORTS.

Auditor General and Commissioner of Taxation.

Mr. THOMSON (without notice) asked the Premier: When will the annual report of the Commissioner of Taxation for the year ended 30th June, 1925, be made available, as well as the report of the Auditor General for the same period?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (for the Premier) replied: I will draw the attention of the Auditor General and the Commissioner of Taxation to the question.