

**WHEAT MARKETING BILL
(SECOND READING)
15 September 1921**

Edith Cowan, in giving support to legislation to continue the operation of the Wheat Pool, spoke of the often overlooked hardships faced by women in many rural settings.

Mrs COWAN: (West Perth) [9.43]: It seems to be in the order of things that everyone should speak on the second reading of this measure. Perhaps I might bring under the notice of members the fact that there is a woman's side to this question, and particularly do I wish to bring this under the notice of members of the Country Party. The Leader of the Opposition was very good in the way in which he stated the case, and I feel that he is acting in entirely the right spirit towards this question. However, no one seems to have stressed the fact that there is a tremendous amount of poverty and unemployment prevailing at present, and that the women of the community are finding it very hard to make both ends meet in the matter of providing their children with satisfactory food. I speak advisedly, because I know of more than one case of this kind. The fact of having to pay the present prices for milk, butter, cheese and bread, because of the price of wheat, is a terrible drag on and a very serious matter for those women who have to make the best of their husband's incomes cannot save anything out of their house allowances.

Mr Hickmott: Butter and cheese are fairly cheap just now.

Mrs COWAN: We should support the member for North-East Fremantle in what he said. The principle is a right one, and we should if possible save as a result of this Bill by reducing expenses instead of increasing them. Nothing can be done unless the people are behind it, and the wheat pool cannot be continued without the support of the people. I give my support to the second reading of the Bill as well as to the continuance of the pool. I also appreciate the position of the farmers. I have conversed with many young farmers who have been struggling along and endeavouring to do their best. If these men fall into the hands of local acquiring agents they will not be able to continue their business, and many farms must be shut down. That would be a grave mistake and would not help the community in any way. We should also remember the advice of the Leader of the Opposition with regard to a better control of our food supplies. I only rose to speak because I feel it is not right to let this matter pass without saying something on the women's side of the question. We women have a right to be remembered

sometimes on a matter of this sort. The farmers especially should bear in mind the words of Lowell —

It is not a knowing kind of cattle
That is ketched with mouldy corn.

We have in a sense been kept far too long on mouldy corn, and have not been considered in the way that we should have been considered. I believe the Country Party will realise that there are more sides to this question than merely getting a good price for their wheat.