

Mr. Speaker: That is the ruling.

Hon. G. Taylor: Then I shall discuss it with you at some other stage.

Motion postponed.

House adjourned at 5.56 p.m.

Legislative Assembly,

Thursday, 30th August, 1928.

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

BILL—ELECTRIC LIGHT AND POWER AGREEMENT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th August.

HON SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [4.35]: I do not think there is any reason why we should oppose this small Bill. Undoubtedly there has in recent years been great development in the use of electric current in and around the metropolitan area, and it is not unlikely that this development is due in a great measure to the price at which the Government are able to supply current in bulk to consumers. We know that in the case of the Perth City Council the charge per unit is very small.

The Minister for Railways: We have to get some other outlet for our current at a higher price in order to get round.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I hope the Minister will bear in mind that the areas to be supplied around Bayswater will, for all time, probably, be manufacturing centres. Some regard should be had for the future requirements of the secondary industries that it seems inevitable will grow up there.

The Minister for Railways: There is any amount of scope in that direction.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think there is. Little by little we are manufacturing those things that are required for our own use. Electricity has played a big part in that production. Near Guildford we have Hadfield's works, where electric steel is being made by the conversion of scrap iron into that commodity. I have no objection to passing the Bill, and am glad it has been brought down.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—DRIED FRUITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th August.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) Although I do not represent any section of dried fruit growers, I am strongly disposed to oppose the Bill. Hon. members however, referred to the deplorable condition into which the industry has fallen, to the need for some assistance being given to growers, and to the fact that they are anxiously awaiting this Bill so that growers may improve their positions. But for that, I would be inclined to vote the Bill out on the second reading. It is a bad principle to foster industries year after year at the expense of the consumers. The Bill does not contain a word about protection for the consumers, but only for the producers. These people have been settled on the land, and in the early stages of their industry they were getting enormous sums for their produce. It can well be realised that such prices could not be maintained, although that was the factor which induced many people to embark upon the industry at the time, and settle upon our lands.

Mr. Thomson: They are settled all right.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: It was a most profitable industry at the time, but has turned out disastrously. There are many directions in which industry has been bolstered up by the Federal Government, through bounties

entirely at the expense of the consumer. A paragraph appeared in the paper recently with regard to the sugar industry of Queensland, comparing it with some of the industries in this State, especially that which this Bill seeks to protect. No reasonable man can say that Parliament is justified in fostering an industry over a long period of years at the expense of the consumers. In ordinary circumstances I would, on principle, vote against this Bill, but I do not intend to oppose it owing to the straitened circumstances in which these particular people find themselves. It seems that they are trying to make a living in a precarious manner by producing dried fruits.

MR. STUBBS (Wagin) [4.43]: I intend to oppose the Bill, but not on the grounds advanced by the member for Mount Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor). To-day in one of the big shop windows in Perth I saw dried fruits offered for sale at 1s. 6d. a lb., preserved. We are told that the industry is in a parlous condition, and that the growers are not able to make ends meet because of the unprofitable price they receive for their produce. The Bill designs to restrict any person from dealing in dried fruits unless by the consent of the board which controls the position. It is a remarkable fact that some of the best dried fruits in the world are being produced in the Great Southern district. Although very few of the farmers in my electorate grow a little in the way of dried fruits as a sideline, yet it is an extraordinary thing that these growers, under the Act, are compelled to send their products to Perth, and the shops in the Great Southern are selling dried fruits grown, not in Western Australia, but in Victoria. There must be a screw loose in legislation which permits large quantities of Victorian currants and raisins to come into Western Australia and be sold here in competition with our own products. In the past dried fruits grown as a side line by farmers in the Great Southern district have been exchanged with the local storekeepers for groceries and drapery. It is extraordinary to see cases of Mildura currants and raisins exhibited for sale in our country stores while local growers of the same products, but better in quality, are compelled to send their goods away to be treated. During the debate it has been stated that

about one-half of the sultanas consumed in Western Australia are imported because this State does not produce sufficient. Yet the very best quality of sultanas is grown here. We are compelled to send those sultanas oversea, while Mildura and other Eastern States districts are enabled—

Mr. Lindsay: Not a pound of Western Australian sultanas has ever been exported.

Mr. STUBBS: In my own district I can show my friend sultanas and currants which, according to the brands on the cases, have been grown in Mildura. Yet growers in my electorate are prohibited from selling their products to the local storekeepers, and are compelled to send them to be sold in the hon. member's district.

Mr. Thomson: The products are controlled by the board.

Mr. Lindsay: Not a pound of sultanas has ever been exported.

Mr. STUBBS: Does the same remark apply to currants?

Mr. Lindsay: No. There is over-production in currants.

Mr. STUBBS: The Act we are asked to amend is a rotten Act, in that it compels Western Australian growers to send whatever they grow, currants or sultanas, to some board in Perth, it being left to the board to decide whether the fruit shall be exported or not. The grower has no say in the matter, and neither has the consumer residing in the same district as the grower.

Hon. G. Taylor: The whole principle of the Bill is bad.

Mr. STUBBS: I agree with the hon. member.

Mr. Thomson: It is rendered necessary by the parlous position of the industry.

Mr. STUBBS: The member for Mt. Margaret (Hon. G. Taylor) says the bolstering up of industries of that kind is not in the best interests of the consumer. To carry the hon. member's argument to its logical conclusion, we would have to do away with the butter bonus, the sugar bonus—

Hon. G. Taylor: I would do away with the sugar bonus with wonderful rapidity if I had my way.

Mr. STUBBS: If the hon. member advocated its abolition on any Queensland or northern New South Wales platform he would be lucky to get away with his clothes on. If he advocated such abolition while standing for Parliament in Queensland or

New South Wales, he would lose his deposit. At the same time, the point he has raised is a good one. Still, the fiscal policy of Australia is to assist industries by high protection. High protection, however, does not enter into the Bill. I ask the Minister not to rush the measure through, but, after the passing of the second reading, to defer going into Committee until certain evidence which will be interesting to hon. members, and which is now in course of preparation, becomes available. I have written to several of the leading growers in my electorate asking them to let me have their views on the Bill. Time has not yet permitted of my receiving the replies. I urge the Minister to be careful in adding to the measure now on the statute-book until all phases of the question have been thrashed out and are thoroughly known to himself and to hon. members generally. I shall not oppose the second reading if the Minister, in replying, gives an assurance that he will allow time for the evidence I have indicated to be submitted to the Chamber before he takes the Bill into Committee. There is evidence available that in the interests of the industry some clauses of this measure should be enacted. I have yet to learn, however, that the Act has tended in the direction desired by its framers.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [4.53]: Like the two previous speakers, I certainly do not care for the Bill. I do not care for its principle. To ask Parliament to agree to the principle of preventing a producer from selling his produce where he best can is wrong. It may extend to other commodities besides dried fruits. If the operation of the principle were to extend, we might find a poultryman being told by the law that he and his family must eat only 20 out of every 100 eggs his poultry farm produces, so that a fellow poultryman may come along and supply the rest of the family's demands. I suggest that the Dried Fruits Board, the Minister, and the Government generally might give more attention to the discovery of further markets for dried fruits. I am by no means satisfied that all the avenues for marketing dried fruits in Western Australia have been exploited. Last month I had the pleasure of meeting a Sydney merchant who was passing through Western Australia, having just completed a long tour of the world, largely in the way of holiday. Evidently, however, the mer-

chant is a man who takes note of all that he sees and makes inquiries as to what markets are available for Australian produce. I have proved this by subsequent inquiries in Sydney. While in Perth he told me that when travelling through Europe, and especially through Germany, he was constantly met with the inquiry from merchants, "Why do not you Australians send us your fruits, your fresh fruits as well as your dried fruits?" He pointed out that in many instances the prices were unpayable to the producers: but he was told that if the right class of fruit were obtainable, adequate prices would readily be paid. He gathered that the whole of Europe is clamouring for our fruits, dried as well as fresh, and cannot get them. Only very small supplies of our fresh fruit, I understand, are now going to Germany. I was so interested in what he had to say that I took him to the Agricultural Department and there introduced him to the officer in charge of dried fruits. The merchant and the officer were just beginning to have a most interesting conversation when a messenger came to say that the officer was wanted by the Minister. That was unfortunate. The officer said to me, "This is as good as a command; the Minister wants me." Then he left. My friend then said, "Evidently they are not very interested: I will not waste more time with them." However, he promised that he would bring the matter before the Minister of his own State, and the effect of that will, I think, be reflected upon our fruit industry. Our Agricultural Department will obtain the same information through the other State. After all, this is not purely a Western Australian matter. My friend promised me faithfully that he would bring his information to the notice of the proper Minister in his own State. His time on that day was very limited, as he had to get away from the city as quickly as possible. He could only promise me a few minutes, and it was most unfortunate that the officer of the Agricultural Department had to leave shortly after the conversation began. However, that is as regards export. I am of opinion that the local market for dried fruits can also be exploited to a considerable extent. Two or three years ago we heard that the Victorian dried fruit industry was in a bad way. The Victorian Government thereupon got the various departments to help. In particular the Commissioner of Railways, Mr. Clapp, threw himself energetically into the matter of giving relief. All over Vic-

toria at that time great placards were to be seen, "Eat more dried fruits! Eat our raisin bread!" And so on. I am told on good authority that as a result of this activity the sale of dried fruits in Victoria was almost doubled within a few months. Something of a similar nature might be tried here. I am told that raisin bread is obtainable in Perth, but our raisin bread is far different from that of Victoria and New South Wales.

Mr. Stubbs: One raisin to a loaf!

Mr. ANGELO: A bugler is needed to call the raisins together. To supply such an article is not the way to help the industry. I feel perfectly certain that if we had proper methods of advertising and dealing with our dried fruits, we could sell twice as much locally as we are now doing. A few days ago I noticed a new product placed on the market—Davis's gelatine. The product was not merely put up in a package for sale, but there was available to every housekeeper coming into the shop a nice little pamphlet, well illustrated, containing recipes for the use of the gelatine. If our dried fruit growers would only take an example from that and produce an effective little pamphlet giving various recipes—

Hon. G. Taylor: It would help people to swallow the dried fruits.

Mr. ANGELO: On the contrary, we are told that dried fruits are a very healthy food indeed. I am surprised that the member for Claremont (Mr. North) did not mention them last night.

Mr. North: I left that to you.

Mr. ANGELO: If the dried fruit growers would only show a little more enterprise, if they would prevail on our Parliamentary caterer to have raisin bread put on the table occasionally instead of the dry bread we have to eat—

Hon. G. Taylor: You do not look too bad on it, any way!

Mr. ANGELO: That is a proof of what I say. I do not use the refreshment room here, but at home I have raisin bread that is properly made, with plenty of raisins in it. That is probably why I look so well. I would advise our dried-fruit growers to get a move on and to do some advertising. They should get out a decent pamphlet with proper illustrations and replete with recipes. They should make it attractive to the people generally, and broadcast the pamphlet throughout the State.

Mr. Stubbs: Why are raisins so much per pound?

Mr. ANGELO: I do not know why the price is so high. I am certain our local market could be exploited with advantage and probably the present consumption could be doubled. So far as the export trade is concerned, I suggest that the Minister should get in touch with the Agent-General with a view to seeing what can be done to push our dried fruits in the European markets, especially in Germany where, so I am told, they are clamouring for our products. By that means, we ought to be able to secure a greater export trade. That would be better than passing legislation of this description.

MR. BROWN (Pingelly) [5.2]: In my opinion the Bill is essential if our dried-fruits industry is to flourish. I realise that in some instances it may impose hardships upon small growers, particularly in the country districts. I can give one instance in my own electorate. A grower there produced four or five tons annually from the vineyard that was attached to his farm. The property changed hands and a South Australian farmer took it over. He did not know the position under our legislation, and he endeavoured to sell his products in the local market. It was found that his packing shed had not been registered, and he was fined for that offence under the Act. He had to send the whole of his products to the association in Perth. At the time, he thought he had been harshly treated. The former owner of the vineyard had been in a position to sell the whole of his products to the local storekeepers at 5½d. a lb. I was informed by the South Australian grower, who took over the property subsequently, that after sending the whole of his products to the association in Perth, he had realised 3d. or 3½d. per lb. for his dried fruits. Of course, I know that something must be done to protect the small growers. The market is over-supplied, and in consequence, under existing conditions, the industry will not pay. If a farmer went in for wheat and found that the price of his commodity fell to 1s. per bushel, how long would he last as a wheat farmer? He would very quickly turn his attention to something else. That is what is happening with our vineyards. I well remember a few years ago when our soldiers were being repatriated, that it was then said a soldier who had a few acres in the Swan Valley could make a good living out of currants and sultanas. For a while those men did make a good living, but it was soon discovered that the market was over supplied. When the demand is not

equal to the supply, what must happen? Assuredly prices must come down. I do not think that prices will be fixed under the legislation now before us.

Mr. Sleeman: Will it make dried fruits dearer?

Mr. BROWN: I do not think so. It has to be realised that the growers cannot hold their dried fruits for an indefinite period. It is only a matter of time and the products must be placed on the market. If the surplus is exported, we have to compete in the markets of the world. I do not think that we can compete in the London or European markets with the commodities supplied by Greece or Asia Minor, where the industry is on such a large scale and where the growers have the advantage of cheap labour.

Mr. Thomson: That competition is the unfortunate feature of the export business.

Mr. BROWN: We have to face that competition. We have too many vineyards in Western Australia at present. At the same time, I was pleased to hear from the member for Moore (Mr. Ferguson) that we have not overtaken the local demand for sultanas. He informs me that not one pound of local sultanas has been exported. That emphasises the fact that the whole trouble rests with the currants. We can turn to Mildura for an object lesson. Years ago currants there were worth so much. What are they worth there to-day? The position was so unsatisfactory that the men could not make their vineyards pay. In consequence, the growers went in for distillation. In view of the over-supplied market here, the local growers could well turn their attention to distillation.

Mr. Thomson: The trouble is that we cannot sell our local wines.

Mr. BROWN: The growers might consider turning their products into spirits. I do not know whether we produce sufficient grapes to make distilling pay, but I know that in Mildura growers who were bankrupt are now flourishing because they turned their attention to distilling. The association has undertaken a good work in grading the currants up to certain standards. They grade them up to five crowns and the consumer knows, when he purchases a line of currants, exactly what quality he is getting. If the Bill will help to relieve the growers we should pass it, although I have my doubts as to the results that will follow. It may be a step in the right direction and may enable the Government to help people

who are trying to make a living out of currants and sultanas exclusively. In my district the growers are not entirely dependent upon the production of dried fruits. They regard that part of their operations as a sideline. In the past, so one man told me, he was able to make upwards of £300 a year from the sale of his currants and raisins, which he disposed of at from 5½d. to 6d. per lb. To-day the position is very different, and that particular man told me that he was afraid he would have to go out of the industry altogether. I do not think that is to the advantage of this State, but we cannot help ourselves. The same thing applies in other directions and no matter what we go in for, the profits seem to disappear. Certainly we cannot make an industry pay by means of an Act of Parliament.

Hon. G. Taylor: Is it a sound principle to bolster up an industry?

Mr. BROWN: As with wheat production, so it is with dried fruits. The farmers pooled their wheat in order to stabilise prices and to release a certain quantity of wheat each year to be put on the market. It is only by means of a pool that anything of that description can be achieved. When we come to the dried fruits industry, however, we are in the unfortunate position of having over-production and in consequence we have to rely on exporting the surplus. Unfortunately, prices have dropped so low that the growers are in a precarious position and something must be done to relieve them. The Bill may do something in that direction and for that reason I shall support it.

MR. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.9]: I am at a loss to follow some of the arguments that have been advanced. In one breath some members say that growers are compelled to send their currants and sultanas from Wagin, Pingelly and other centres to Perth to be graded and sold. They inform us that the growers cannot sell them in the local markets, but have to despatch their products to the city from which centre they are sent back to Wagin and Pingelly for sale. On top of that they say that this business will not have the effect of raising the price the consumer will have to pay. I cannot follow that argument at all. I should think that, with all the extra handling that will be necessary under this legislation, prices must be increased. While I am not anxious to impose any hardship

upon the growers, the consumer should also be protected.

Hon. G. Taylor: There is not a word about the consumer in the Bill.

Mr. SLEEMAN: I hope the Minister, when he replies, will deal with that aspect.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Lutey in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of principal Act, Section 3:

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Will the Minister explain why he seeks the amendments indicated in the clause? The definition of a dealer is to be altered by striking out the words, "not being a grower within the meaning of this Act," and also by providing for the inclusion of the buyer as well as the seller. It also seeks to reduce the maximum quantity to be sold by an unregistered person from two tons to one ton. We want people to buy and sell our dried fruits, and we want to make the distribution as easy as possible, not as difficult as possible. The Act was passed to relieve a difficult position created by over-production, and to enable our local growers to get from the local consumers a much higher price than would have been obtained for their dried fruits had they been exported. Had that not been the deliberate intention of the Act, it would not have been introduced. We cannot make the purchaser overseas pay more for our dried fruits.

Hon. G. Taylor: We can penalise our local people only.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not think anyone will object to paying a reasonable price within the State in order to keep the industry going.

Mr. Sleeman: Then the argument is that the prices formerly were not reasonable?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If it were found that the board fixed prices that were higher than were reasonable, Parliament would rescind the Act without hesitation. In my opinion, the prices fixed last year were too high, and I am told that they retarded sales. It also allowed growers in the Eastern States to send their goods here and undersell our own people.

Mr. Sleeman: Will the Bill not have the effect of increasing prices?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not if the board refrains from unduly exploiting the local market. If the board should endeavour to do so, it would be an easy matter for Parliament to handle the problem. No body objects to paying a reasonable price for our dried fruit, which is better than that which we import from overseas. However, I should like to hear from the Minister why he proposes to alter this definition.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is proposed to strike out these words because it has been found that many growers are also dealers, buying from their neighbours and selling again. It is unreasonable that those people should be debarred from carrying out their ordinary vocation. These amendments are required by the board, whose duty it is to see that no particular individual is permitted to take advantage of the control law. The purpose of the board is that all should have an equal burden, and none should get an advantage over another. The board has the approval of those in the industry.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The only complaint against them is that they make the Katanning grower send his fruit all the way up here, instead of its being sold locally. It is a ridiculous thing to do.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The grower cannot be permitted to hawk his fruit. It may be that further packing sheds are warranted. But it is a pretty expensive matter to establish a packing shed, of which at present there are seven. I admit that at present the Katanning growers are under the disability of having to send their stuff a long distance to the processing plant. However, we can deal with that later. As for the amendment now before the Committee, it has been devised to assist the board in ensuring that the fruit is bought and sold in a manner that they can control. It is vitally necessary that the board shall have sufficient control over the actions of buyers and sellers alike. In the opinion of the board, the amendment will be very useful.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But this covers the quantity sold by a storekeeper.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, this has to do with the dealer. In the past, attempts have been made to evade this section of the Act by splitting up two-ton

lots into lots of one ton each. The amendment will prevent that.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the storekeeper has to buy his fruit.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This will not affect the storekeeper.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The dealer is a man who sells or buys more than one ton. If the storekeeper handles more than one ton, he becomes a dealer.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is one of the difficulties the board are up against. The amendment will enable them to put into force what was originally intended.

Mr. Mann: You have not explained how it will do that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, I have given the reasons. A dealer shall be one who buys and sells.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: But the storekeeper buys; you do not wish to bring him under this.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. It is unreasonable to prohibit people from carrying on their means of livelihood by preventing the grower from buying. The amendment will overcome that difficulty.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Seemingly the Bill has been suggested by the Dried Fruits' Board. The Minister has pointed out that the essential feature of the amendment is to enable the board to control dried fruit and keep an account of where it has gone and how it has been sold. If that is going to play a part in helping the producer, it seems to me a peculiar way to help him. It appears the board cannot control dried fruit grown in the Pingelly, the Toodyay, the Katanning and other districts that have no packing sheds, and so the fruit has to be sent hundreds of miles by railway to a packing shed and back again, which means greatly increased cost to the consumer without any direct advantage to the producer. What does it matter to the producer at what price his fruit is retailed, so long as he gets a fair return for that fruit? Virtually drafted by the board, the Bill is designed to give the board complete control of dried fruit, irrespective of the cost of having it railed hundreds of miles to a packing shed and then railed back to the locality in which it was grown! It is an utterly absurd proposal. The Bill is rotten in principle. And when we hear the Minister's explanation, we see that the Bill will be bad also in its

effect. The principle is bad, and the reasons for bringing it up are still worse. It will not ensure the small producer, because he is producing dried fruit merely as a sideline. The Bill may be all right for those that, exclusively producing dried fruit, have a packing shed close to othem. But the people at Katanning are not to get much advantage out of it.

Mr. Thomson: They are quite satisfied with the control.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: What about the consumers at Katanning, who have to pay all the added cost of sending the fruit hundreds of miles to the packing shed and having it brought back again? Those growing dried fruit as a sideline are not considered in the Bill. When we have a bad principle and try to bolster it up, it is like telling lies: you tell one, and you have to tell many more. We are bolstering up a bad principle at the expense of the consumer and doing it in a most unbusinesslike way.

Mr. Lindsay: That is a matter of administration.

Mr. THOMSON: The producers in my district are satisfied that it is essential to have some system of control.

Mr. Mann: Your criticism the other night was against the Bill.

Mr. THOMSON: My criticism was levelled against the administration of the board and possibly, as a result, the administration will be more beneficial in future.

Hon. G. Taylor: The Bill will give the board more power.

Mr. THOMSON: The main reason for the Bill is to bring your law into conformity with that of the Eastern States.

Mr. Mann: That was not the explanation the Minister gave.

Mr. THOMSON: I understand that is the intention.

Mr. Kenneally: That is stated in the memorandum to the Bill.

Mr. THOMSON: While I appreciate the assistance of the member for Mt. Margaret I do not wish him to be under any misapprehension as to the attitude of producers in my district.

Mr. STUBBS: I have yet to learn that the Bill is necessary.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member had better deal with the clause.

Mr. STUBBS: Other members have been allowed considerable latitude, and I ask the

same privilege. Where is the necessity for rushing the Bill through to-night?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must connect his remarks with the clause.

Mr. STUBBS: Surely I am justified in asking for fair play for producers in my electorate! I have not had sufficient time to determine whether the measure is warranted and, if I stand alone, I shall divide the Committee to prevent the Bill being put through to-night.

Hon. G. Taylor: Move to report progress.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member wishes to divide the Committee, he will have an opportunity when the clause is put.

Mr. STUBBS: Then I move—

That progress be reported.

The Premier: You cannot move to report progress after having made a speech.

Motion passed; progress reported.

BILL—FERTILISERS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th August.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.37]: Like the measure we have just been considering, this Bill also brings in the dealer, and when we come to consider the definition of the word in Committee, we shall want some explanation from the Minister as to why it is necessary. When the Minister moved the second reading, I understood that there would be an annual registration of dealers. I find that the people who sell, not the manufacturer and importer alone, but all people who sell the standard fertiliser will have to register as dealers. That is unnecessary. I do not know why the Government should think it is a pleasure for people to have to register their businesses, apply for the right to trade, go to the department, fill in a form, pay a fee and repeat the process each year. No wonder we have unemployment! All the troubles thus occasioned to people do no good; they deter the enterprising with the result that we have stagnation of trade. We are always imposing some fee, some tax or some disadvantage. Practically the whole of the legislation on the notice paper is of that kind. In none of it is there any hope or comfort for the unfortunate people

who are out of work. We ought to be considering means for getting them back to work, but instead of that we are spending our time on this sort of legislation. We already have a Fertilisers Act, and there is no urgent need for this measure. Certainly the Government should have more important legislation to bring down at this stage of the session.

The Minister for Agriculture: This is important to a good many people.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No; we already have a Fertilisers Act.

The Minister for Agriculture: The man who says the question of fertilisers is not important has a very poor conception of Western Australia. It is one of the industries that must be protected.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister would have us believe that he has fallen from the heavens and has immediately set to work to protect the users of fertilisers. We have had a law on the subject for years and this measure merely separates it from feeding stuffs.

The Minister for Agriculture: And regulates the sale.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister is not a protector of the farmer any more than is anyone else. This Bill is not at all urgent. There should be more important legislation to bring before us. Under the measure we shall not have any closer supervision over fertilisers than we have had in the past, but we shall be making trouble for a great many people and putting them to some small expense. There will be a registration fee; I do not know whether it will be a guinea or 10s., because that will be fixed subsequently by regulation. Let me point out to the Minister that all Governments should avoid causing people trouble that does not result in some good. The man who makes fertiliser must register, and the department has control over him. The department must see that he sends out the fertiliser at the value declared. That is quite right, and it has been done for many years.

The Minister for Agriculture: This Bill provides for that.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No; it continues that provision.

The Minister for Agriculture: The Bill provides for annual registration.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: All fertiliser, whether imported or manufactured locally, is sold according to a declared stand-

ard. If we buy any fertiliser to-day, the invoice must disclose the value of the fertiliser. This Bill stipulates that that shall continue. It is not an original idea; the Bill merely continues that requirement. If the Minister sought to abolish the provision, he would soon hear about it. The Bill, however, goes a bit further than the present Act by providing that the registration must be yearly. If a man is registered and is selling according to his registration, that is all we want, but the Minister says he must register every year. That, however, will mean nothing. If a manufacturer alters his standard he has to make a fresh registration under the existing law, but so long as the standard of his output is maintained, his registration stands. Similarly with the importer. The Minister told us there are many registrations that are more or less bogus, that fertiliser is registered and never goes on the market. I should have thought there were means to wipe out such a registration, but what the Minister is going to do is to make more trouble for the genuine man who is selling his fertiliser and doing his duty by the country. Every year he will have to come along and register. The Minister seeks to go further than register the fertiliser of manufacturers; he wishes to make dealers register.

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

Hon Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Bill says so.

The Minister for Agriculture: No, you make the one responsible in the State.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Not at all; the Bill requires all dealers to be registered.

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

Mr. Thomson: It does.

The Minister for Agriculture: That would mean vendors.

Mr. Thomson: "Dealer" is defined as including any vendor of or dealer in fertilisers for the purposes of trade.

Mr. Panton: Every grocery shop sells fertiliser.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The grocery shop is provided for because the measure is not to apply to sellers of small quantities, but every dealer will have to register, and that is entirely wrong.

Mr. Panton: What is a small quantity?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If a man sells under 1 cwt., he has not to register.

Mr. Panton: You can buy a ton of fertiliser at Boan's.

Mr. Clydesdale: I myself bought a ton from them last year.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: A man who sells small parcels not exceeding 1 cwt. at a time will not have to register, but a man who sells more than 1 cwt. will have to register as a dealer. That is entirely wrong. All we need do is to see that the manufacturers and importers sell according to standard; we do not need to alter that; we can continue that. I hope the House will not agree to the proposal that everybody who sells fertiliser manufactured by someone else must register. Surely the Minister will not stand by that proposal. But for this, there need not be much objection taken to the Bill. The intention to separate fertilisers from foodstuffs is a good idea and can be supported. Before we reach the Committee stage, however, I hope the Minister will consult the Parliamentary draftsman and make certain that all the people who sell fertiliser will not be obliged to register. I think the Minister will find that every bag will have to be branded in a manner that should be quite unnecessary. We should not add to the cost by insisting upon the thousands of bags that go out having to be marked in the way provided by the Bill. Probably there has been a mistake in the drafting of the Bill; if so, we can alter it. When an inspector goes round to take samples, he will ascertain what those samples contain, and he will have no difficulty in seeing that the Act is properly administered. Generally, I have no objection to the Bill, but I hope people will not be put to unnecessary trouble which will be of no advantage to anybody, except perhaps to the Government in the collection of registration fees. So long as we can safeguard the buyer that is all we need do.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [5.47] : I feel sure it is not intended that registration shall apply to all those who sell the manure. If that is the intention of the Government, I hope the provision will not pass the Committee stage. It is not right that every storekeeper in the country, or agent selling fertiliser, should have to pay a license fee. Surely that is not the position.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is not.

Hon. G. Taylor: Are you sure it is not the intention of the Bill?

The Minister for Agriculture: It is the fertiliser that has to be registered by the responsible person.

Mr. THOMSON: According to the definition clause, "dealer" means any person who carries on business as a manufacturer, importer, indenter, or vendor of or dealer in fertilisers. However, we have the assurance of the Minister that that is not the intention. The Bill is necessary, particularly in view of the fact, that we propose to expend large sums of money in developing our 3,000 farms scheme. It is also necessary that for the producers there should be a guarantee that the manure sold to them is true to standard, and to the analysis. It would be a deplorable thing if we had no control over it, and if the farmers, after having purchased the fertiliser in all good faith, and having planted their crop, discovered that the manure was not good. Therefore I congratulate the Government on introducing the Bill. It has long been the desire of the Director of Agriculture to secure legislation of this description. The Bill is a step in the right direction, because it is important that all manures sold shall be up to standard, and that those who purchase them will be sure of getting good results. I hope the Minister will make some inquiries about the definition of "dealer." It may not be intended to levy a charge, but if the Bill goes through as it is, I am convinced that a charge will be made upon all the storekeepers and agents who sell fertiliser. However, we hope to have further information on this point when we reach the Committee stage.

MR. ANGELO (Gascoyne) [5.50]: I do not see much use in holding conferences of Ministers of Agriculture unless we give effect to the recommendations made at those conferences. The Minister for Agriculture deserves the thanks of the House on the introduction of the Bill. If a section of the community needs to be protected, it is the farming section who live out of town and who are not able to see for themselves what they are buying. The Bill will give the farmers that assurance that they need in respect of the right kind of fertiliser. The point raised by the Leader of the Opposition can be dealt with in Committee. I intend to vote for the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th August.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [5.55]: This is more or less an old friend. By some mischance the Minister appears to have overlooked the fact that already there is an Act in existence which provides for the preparation of joint rolls. If we pass the Bill now before us, we shall have two means by which we shall be able to prepare joint rolls. But we cannot have two measures to deal with the same subject. Section 31 of the Electoral Act, 1907, provides that the Governor may arrange with the Governor General for the preparation, alteration and revision of the Assembly rolls, in any manner consistent with the provision of the Act, jointly by the State and the Commonwealth, to the intent that the rolls may be used for Commonwealth as well as State elections. Thus we shall provide for the same thing in two ways. I admit we are pretty careless about legislation, but we cannot be expected to agree to this sort of proposal.

The Minister for Justice: You do not mean to say that joint rolls can be prepared under that section that you read?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I admit it does not go so far as the Bill we are now considering, but it ought to be possible under that section to do pretty well everything that is provided in the Bill.

The Minister for Justice: I am advised it is necessary to introduce the Bill we now have before us.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know that the Bill provides for joint rolls and nothing else.

The Minister for Justice: Practically nothing else.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The qualification of a voter will be the same as it is now in both the State and the Commonwealth. But that is not a material amendment. We are arranging that the names on the Federal rolls shall be the names that will appear on our roll. I object to handing over anything to the Commonwealth. In a matter of this sort we should insist on preparing the roll because their Minister is 2,000 miles away. Ours is on the spot. It is better that the State should do work of this description.

The Minister for Justice: They would have to alter their Constitution by refer-

endum; we do not require a referendum to alter ours.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The people trust to the honour of this Parliament to do what is right in the way of providing proper representation and proper boundaries. The great advantage to be derived from a joint roll, it seems to me, is that the Commonwealth have the machinery by which they can keep in touch with the movements of the people. Our electoral officers have merely an office in which to sit and they have no chance of making any sort of a canvass or a check.

The Minister for Justice: The theory of our Electoral Act is that it is compulsory on the individual to do the necessary work.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It has never been administered in that way.

The Minister for Justice: Not in the true sense. We have had a few prosecutions.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Of course we have; but the Act has never formally been administered or fully carried out by any Government.

The Minister for Justice: I know.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It has, therefore, become a dead letter. Our electoral people have no chance of learning who is coming into a district or leaving it, except by accident. We do not provide for that by any means. In my town, Northam, which is a considerable place, we have reached the stage of numbering the houses in the streets. The electoral office cannot add the number of the house to the address on the roll. That is most important. On all claim cards the number of the house must be stated, where that exists. Unless the Minister finds the necessary funds for a canvass, it will take 20 years or so to add the numbers of the houses to the addresses of the electors.

The Minister for Justice: Under the Commonwealth Act there is what is termed the habitation provision.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Federal authorities have the use of the services of postal officials, which we have not.

The Minister for Justice: That does not cost them anything. It is the post office staff.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think a very small fee is paid.

The Minister for Justice: A matter of a halfpenny.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: To that extent some advantage is to be gained.

The Minister for Justice: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We should have compulsory enrolments in force in this State. It would be better if the control of our Electoral Department were altogether free from Ministerial authority.

The Minister for Justice: It practically is, you know. I do not think the Electoral officer can say that anyone has ever interfered with him in the course of his duty. The Minister certainly has to approve the appointment of postal vote officers, etc., but only in accordance with the Act.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There are ways of doing things and of controlling the Electoral Office. We all know that the Chief Electoral Officer is not the head of the department.

The Minister for Justice: He practically is the head of the department. He comes in direct to me when he wants to see me about anything. He does not have to report first to the Under Secretary, so that that officer may tell me.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: There has been no change since I was in office, and I therefore know the position. In all electoral matters, the head of the department should be free from Ministerial influence. I am sorry I did not make the alteration when I had the opportunity to do so.

Hon. G. Taylor: You did not see the necessity for it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No. The other 49 members here did not see the necessity for it at the time either.

The Minister for Justice: There has been no necessity yet for it.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think so.

The Minister for Justice: We will discuss that later.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is not wise to have the Electoral Department under the control of anyone else but the Chief Electoral Officer.

The Minister for Justice: He should not be allowed to incur whatever expenditure he likes. There must be reason in all things.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Nor should the Minister say, "I have permitted the canvass of this or that electorate, but not of some other particular electorate." Where any canvassing is required, in connection with the State rolls in general, the cost should be borne by the Government, but if a private individual wants any canvassing done, he must bear the cost of it.

The Minister for Justice: That which was done on the last occasion exactly followed the procedure adopted by your Government.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I know there was never any complaint about it.

The Minister for Justice: It was done so well that I would not alter the procedure.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I doubt if it was done during my time.

The Minister for Justice: The hon. member can accept my word for it. If he can prove I am wrong I shall have to take it back, but I am sure he cannot do so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Whether or not it was done, it was not right that it should have been done except for some special reason. In the electorate of the member for Menzies (Mr. Pantou) there was no reason for it, as the job could not have occupied more than five minutes.

Mr. Pantou: You could not ride over my electorate in a motor car in five days, let alone in five minutes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: On occasions there have been transfers of large numbers of people from one electorate to another. It is unfortunate when people decide to leave an electorate, but it sometimes happens that they do.

The Minister for Justice: Theoretically we ought to prosecute everyone who does not comply with the provisions of the Act.

Hon. G. Taylor: It is a pity we cannot do it.

The Minister for Justice: We can do it if we like.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: People certainly make mistakes, and strong measures are not needed when reasonable excuse is afforded for the making of the mistake. All that is required to be done is that the Electoral officers do not let people off when they have transgressed the law, and that they institute proceedings against them.

The Minister for Justice: They do not go round canvassing to find out who should or should not be on the roll.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The law should be enforced. Suppose a man became 21 on a certain date, and did not for six weeks apply to be enrolled?

The Minister for Justice: Seven weeks!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Such a man, under the law, could be prosecuted for not having enrolled himself a fortnight before.

Mr. Heron: What would you do to a departmental officer who, without any justification, struck people off the roll?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That would depend on the circumstances. He might have struck the hon. member's name off the roll.

Hon. G. Taylor: We have had the spectacle of postal vote officers taking the votes of people who are not in the State.

Mr. Heron: Do not fly off the handle.

Hon. G. Taylor: Why do you not talk sense?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If we do amalgamate these rolls, there will be no need for the State to take proceedings, because the Federal Government already attend to that.

The Minister for Justice: They do not launch prosecutions to any great extent.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The officials do. They have a pleasant way of imposing a fine without taking people into court. If defaulters pay 10s. that amounts to a fine and it ends the matter.

The Minister for Justice: It is 5s.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I thought it was 10s.

The Minister for Justice: If you object to the registrar dealing with the matter, you can go to the court.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And if a man goes to the court he is fined £1.

The Minister for Justice: But if he agrees to the decision of the registrar, he can get off with the fine of a dollar.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister has had more experience than I have had. We do not hear of those cases which do not get into court. I believe the Federal authorities do enforce their Act to a wider extent than we do. They do this because the postal officials can inform them of the changes of address, etc. In a measure they do know when people leave a district. Our own electoral officers are not afforded that opportunity. Nevertheless, the work of our electoral office is well done. If there be any shortcomings, they arise because it has no means of getting the necessary information.

The Minister for Justice: That is right, unless you deliberately set out to spend a lot of money in doing what the Commonwealth do.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes. I do not know how the work can be done without a suitable expenditure.

The Minister for Justice: By canvassing.

Mr. Pantou: Too many stickybeaks are trying to take people off the rolls in this State.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And a great many stickybeaks are trying to put them on the rolls when they should be kept off.

Mr. Pantou: Many more are trying to take them off.

Hon. G. Taylor: A lot of that was going on in the early part of last January in the case of the road workers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The man who endeavours to get names taken off the roll which should be on it, ought to be prosecuted. It is an offence punishable under the Act.

The Minister for Justice: All he does is to forfeit his 2s. 6d. He can object to anyone.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No fear.

Mr. Chesson: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But if he makes a false statement!

The Minister for Justice: He does not necessarily make a false statement. All he does is to make the statement that so-and-so should not be on the roll, and lodge a fee of 2s. 6d.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: If a man makes a false statement with the object of getting a name off the roll, he should be punished. Similarly, if he makes a false statement to get a name put on the roll, he should be punished.

The Minister for Justice: Of course!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: He does not lose his 2s. 6d.; he is applauded.

The Minister for Justice: By whom?

Mr. Pantou: By the Opposition.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is the duty of everyone to see that everything connected with electoral matters is absolutely clean and straight.

The Minister for Justice: I am as strong on that point as is the hon. member.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: When people get on the roll without the necessary qualifications they should be punished. If they get on the roll, as they have done, knowing full well they have no right to be there, and they then vote, they are liable to prosecution and should be dealt with according to the proper penalty, which under the Act is imprisonment.

Mr. Pantou: It is jolly hard to know what the qualifications are for the Upper House.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In this case I am talking of the important House, the House that the hon. member is most interested in.

Mr. Pantou: I am also interested in another place.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The hon. member was there for a long time.

Hon. G. Taylor: You could not get back a second time. You were left at the barrier.

Mr. Pantou: I am nevertheless interested in it because of its effect on the legislation emanating from this Chamber.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: In all these matters we should have proper control under a joint roll.

The Minister for Justice: We should.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Our own registrars are to be continued in their position. Apart from the Federal rolls, there will be no printing of rolls.

The Minister for Justice: Only, as I have explained, unless it is before an election and there are two subdivisions to be provided for.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That would mean a supplementary roll.

The Minister for Justice: We shall not be printing the rolls ourselves.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No. We shall be saved half the cost of that at any rate, for the other half will be paid by the Commonwealth Government. In that way we shall save something. In this matter it is not a question of saving money. The proper control of elections should not be interfered with in any way on the score of expense. The proper representation of the people is too important a matter for that.

Hon. G. Taylor: The people do not think so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think the people are beginning to awake on that question.

Hon. G. Taylor: I do not think so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: What will happen now if we have the one roll? We shall sign the one claim card, and that will be an advantage. The Minister for Justice has not yet told us how many persons will be on the roll under the Federal Act, and how many will be there under our own Act. No doubt he will be able to get the information from the department.

The Minister for Justice: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I think there are a good many more people on our

rolls than are to be found on the Federal rolls. That is no reflection upon our officials when we say that the Federal rolls ought to be more up to date than the State rolls.

Mr. Panton: The Federal people have at command many more conveniences for that work than we have.

Mr. Griffiths: Do they not pay a fee in order to get the information?

Mr. Panton: The postal officials do all the work.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Through the post office the Federal authorities have means whereby they can approach everyone.

Mr. Panton: And very good means, too.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That is a particular reason for giving consideration to this Bill. If the Commonwealth people prepare our rolls as well as they have prepared their own, all will be well, for we are not in a position to do it. We should, however, retain our registrars in order that they may watch the State rolls, just as they do now.

Mr. Thomson: It is not intended to abolish them, is it?

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They cannot be abolished, because the Upper House elections are held every two years. Someone will have to watch the interests of the State.

The Minister for Justice: The Chief Electoral Officer will have that power.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is provided for in the agreement that has been submitted.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: At the tea adjournment I was expressing the hope that everybody would do all possible to make the rolls perfect, to see that the names of all persons entitled to vote were on the rolls and that the names of persons not entitled to vote were purged from the rolls. Certainly there are difficulties in keeping our rolls in order. My belief is that under the system of joint rolls we shall have better rolls, because not only shall we have the work done by the Federal registrars, but our own Chief Electoral Officer and his registrars will be retained, and they will be able to devote themselves to the work of enrolment and to that of purging the rolls. It is most important that a measure of this kind should be carefully drafted; we ought to

see that all the clauses are so drafted that they can be understood. Many returning officers serve only on one day in every three years so far as this House is concerned, and naturally they do not gain either much experience or a full knowledge of the Electoral Act.

The Minister for Justice: There is nothing in this Bill as to returning officers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But the Chief Electoral Officer has control of them.

The Minister for Justice: But there is nothing in the Bill about returning officers; its only object is to get the rolls in order.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The registrars are certainly concerned with the elections.

The Minister for Justice: But not the returning officers.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am glad that the hour of closing enrolments has been fixed. Last year the rolls were kept open until midnight. There was a special reason for that.

The Minister for Justice: We could do nothing else.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But we always did do something else before. There was a special reason for it.

The Minister for Justice: The Solicitor General was asked what was the latest time for receiving claims, and he replied, "You must receive a claim any time up till midnight."

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Time was the essence of the contract there. As a matter of fact, the electoral officers were not asked to stay in their offices until twelve o'clock at night. The letterbox was the instrument, and there was no one to see whether the claim card was put in at 12 o'clock at night or at 6 o'clock the next morning.

The Minister for Justice: Yes. Arrangements were made for the officers to go at 12 o'clock to see what was there.

Hon. G. Taylor: They did not go.

The Minister for Justice: Yes, they did, so far as I know.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I understood that they were not expected to be in their offices. That was highly unsatisfactory. Now it will be necessary for the officers to remain in their offices until 6 p.m.

The Minister for Justice: Yes. There will be a definite closing time, which is more satisfactory.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: A more convenient time would probably be mid-day. We have here the agreement entered into between the Commonwealth and the Victorian Governments, and our Bill is based on the Victorian Act.

The Minister for Justice: And our agreement with the Commonwealth will be based on the Victorian agreement. Our agreement will be practically the same.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Parliament is giving the Government the right to make an agreement. This Victorian agreement is not submitted as the agreement which will be made by Western Australia with the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Justice: Oh no!

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: This Victorian agreement is merely for our guidance.

The Minister for Justice: That is so.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It refers to what was done between the Commonwealth and the State of Victoria.

The Minister for Justice: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It has been in operation since 1924. The South Australian Act is practically the same as the Victorian Act, I understand. I have not compared the Acts with this Bill.

The Minister for Justice: South Australia has a slightly different agreement, not quite so good from the State's point of view. Therefore we shall adopt the Victoria agreement.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Does the Minister mean, not quite so good as regards money?

The Minister for Justice: I mean, generally. I refer to the way in which the agreement is carried out.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: As I said previously, it does not matter just as to a little money. What we want is to get clean rolls, with the work properly done by everybody concerned, registrars, postal vote officers, and so on. Registrars ought to be careful in recommending the appointment of postal vote officers. We should retain control of the registrars for that purpose, anyhow.

The Minister for Justice: Everything connected with an election will still be done by State officials.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The registrar is retained. I noticed in the "West Australian" a protest from Kalgoorlie concerning the appointment of electoral officers. I was very sorry to see it, because the inference to be drawn from it is that postal vote officers who happen to be Nationalists are not to be trusted. The Minister ought to resent that suggestion. These people are appointed to do the work voluntarily, and a considerable inconvenience to themselves and they should be protected against slanderous charges such as have been made by at least one member of another place. The tone of the letters to which I refer is most objectionable. One letter said that the unionists insisted upon certain appointments. That ought to be resented. I thought the Minister would take the opportunity to defend the postal vote officers. Speaking generally, we know that wrong things have been done, things that are punishable. The perpetrator of an offence should be punished.

The Minister for Justice: As a matter of fact, I was out of the State then.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am not referring to just one instance. We know that postal vote officers have gone to camps and have insisted upon recording the votes there really publicly. All these matters should be dealt with at the time because the knowledge of them is more or less common property. When a man is appointed to be a postal vote officer, he should have some place that he uses as an office, because the postal votes of people who are not sick should only be taken at his residence.

The Minister for Justice: I would not mind cutting out postal voting altogether. It is a matter that is subject to abuse, irrespective of what precautions are taken.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is better to do as I suggest than to have the present happenings, which tend to weaken the respect for Parliament. The wretched part is that those people always go scot free. It is necessary to have the signature of a man who records a postal vote. I am afraid that in some cases the signature has been a forgery—a very serious offence.

The Minister for Justice: It is not right to make allegations of such things until one has sufficient evidence to prove them. The Electoral Department will investigate the charges, if made. That is all I can say. If a man

cares to be unscrupulous, it is a simple matter.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is a simple matter to prove a case. The penalty should be severe. I do not know that people generally realise that for most of the offences under the Electoral Act the punishment is a fine of £100 with imprisonment up to two years.

The Minister for Justice: Parliament has always taken a very serious view of any interference with elections, and of any unscrupulous doings in connection with them.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And rightly, too. My own belief is that really we have been extremely lax. There is a penalty of imprisonment up to two years, but there have been no prosecutions.

The Minister for Justice: I can only say that such matters have not been brought under my notice.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am sure they have been brought under the notice of the Government, though I do not know that they have come under the notice of the Minister. I am not referring to any one case specially, but to the wrong use made of the sections which provide for postal voting.

The Minister for Justice: The Government did try a couple of years ago to amend the Electoral Act in regard to postal voting, but that amendment was responsible for the defeat of the Bill. Accordingly we omitted it this time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I did think it would be well if we could place the administration of the Electoral Act in the hands of an independent body, which would mean that they would have to prosecute wherever they thought there was cause.

The Minister for Justice: I think the reason is that the Electoral Department do not know and that there is no organisation to enable them to hear.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: That may be, but it is easy to know what happens. When the votes of 20 or 30 or 40 people are taken in the most public fashion, it cannot be done without a great many persons knowing of it. It would be impossible not to get a conviction. I do not know if the registrar would be entitled to prosecute.

The Minister for Justice: But he would be entitled to pass on the information to the Electoral Department whose duty it would be to prosecute.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I am glad to hear that. It would have a very beneficial effect if it were generally known that people

who transgress the law in any degree will be prosecuted.

The Minister for Justice: I will be glad to give that assurance to the House—if it will get any publicity.

Hon. G. Taylor: It will get a lot of publicity this evening!

The Minister for Justice: At any rate, I can give that assurance.

Hon. G. Taylor: Publicity cannot be given to that fact, because there is no one in the Press gallery at all!

Mr. Panton: It will get just as much publicity as at any other time!

Mr. North: At any rate, we are free at last.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It will have a good effect if it is known that offenders will be prosecuted. There have been good cases brought under the notice of the department. I presented some particulars myself, but that case was settled by effluxion of time.

The Minister for Justice: I went as far as I could. I put the detectives on to the case.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: They took a statement from the man who was the chief offender—the witness—but after that, nothing happened. The individual concerned was working on my farm and I was aware that he knew he had done wrong. If the elector did not know he was wrong then, he knew it before the election, and was aware that he had no right to vote. He made use of the nomad form and he was wrong there, too. In all, there were three offences. I know it is useless going on with that matter. The man got off scot free, and apparently he can do the same thing again.

The Minister for Justice: Perhaps we will be a bit hotter on the trail next time.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I thought I was hot on the trail at the time. I published the facts at the moment I knew of them, and that was before the election. I gave the facts to the Electoral Department and I brought the matter before the notice of Parliament in order to place the details before the Minister. Despite that, nothing happened, and we were told that it was too late because action should have been taken within six months, and that period had elapsed. While I do not like joining the Federal Government in the way proposed in the Bill, regarding this or any other matter, it may be that we shall get better rolls and we shall save some money. I think it would be better to prepare the rolls ourselves if it were not for the fact that the Federal au-

thorities, through the various post offices, can keep the rolls more up to date than is possible with the machinery at the disposal of the State Electoral Department. All that we can do will be done by the Federal people, perhaps a little better. I do not like the arrangement that permits an electoral registrar to include names on the roll at the last moment. I do not know the reason for that provision. I take it that all claim cards in future will have to be submitted to the Federal Electoral Officer and to him alone. By that official the claim cards will be handed on to our official at the last moment in order that the supplementary roll may be published. Is that the idea?

The Minister for Justice: Yes.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know whether it will be possible for our official to receive claim cards, regardless of the Federal official.

The Minister for Justice: The only man who will be able to receive the claim cards will be the Federal Registrar.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I do not know that we need object to the alteration that requires an elector who comes from the Eastern States to be resident here for three months before he is entitled to be enrolled. I should say that period is ample. In the past the period was six months. An elector will have to be in Australia for six months and in this State for three months before he can be enrolled here.

The Minister for Justice: That is what the amendment means.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: And that is proposed in order to make our law conform to the provisions of the Federal Electoral Act. I do not think that matters very much. We are receiving a fair number of people from the Eastern States now, and in the future we shall probably get more. I will not oppose the second reading of the Bill. I believe it will be of advantage if we can make arrangements with the Federal authorities on terms that are satisfactory to us.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [7.50]: We are all desirous of obtaining uniformity by means of joint electoral rolls. I followed the Minister as closely as I could when he was explaining the Bill to the House, but I regret I have not a copy of his speech before me. Speaking from memory, I think he pointed out that it was intended the boundaries of the State elec-

torates should be made co-terminal with those of the Federal subdivisions.

The Minister for Justice: No; the other way round. The boundaries of the Commonwealth subdivisions will be made co-terminal with the boundaries of the State electoral districts. We cannot alter our boundaries as they can. An agreement will be entered into with the Commonwealth that when we have a redistribution of seats, cognisance will be taken of our new electoral boundaries.

Mr. THOMSON: The point I wish to make is that the Commonwealth take a census of the whole of Australia every ten years. Until then, the Federal Electoral Department will not proceed to amend the boundaries of their various divisions.

The Minister for Justice: After the census, the boundaries will be altered to accord with the progress of population in the various divisions.

Mr. THOMSON: In view of the progress we shall make in Western Australia during the next ten years, hon. members will probably be justified in saying that within that ten-year period, we shall most likely have two redistributions of seats. If the country progresses as those who are such keen opponents of the Financial Agreement would have us believe, it seems to me that the arrangement should be the other way about. We should have our boundaries fixed and the Federal Government should alter their divisional boundaries to bring them into conformity with ours, because it would be much easier. The Federal authorities have a margin of 8,000 upon which to work.

The Minister for Justice: That is provided for in the agreement. The Federal Government will take cognisance of our boundaries in the event of a redistribution of seats taking place.

Mr. THOMSON: The Federal Government will alter their divisional boundaries once in ten years only, but we may be in such a position that, in order to mete out justice to the electors of the State, a redistribution of seats will have to be made in a much shorter period.

The Minister for Justice: The Federal authorities have only five divisions, and we can approach their boundaries fairly closely.

Mr. THOMSON: I would prefer the boundaries of the Federal divisions to be co-terminal with ours.

The Minister for Justice: That is provided for in the agreement.

Mr. THOMSON: It seems to me that it could be argued logically, in view of the fact that the Commonwealth will not be making any adjustment to the boundaries in this State till 1932, that there would be no justification for a redistribution of seats in Western Australia until such time as the Commonwealth had fixed their electoral boundaries.

The Minister for Justice: We could make our boundaries fit in.

Mr. THOMSON: In view of the fact that the Federal authorities have a larger quota to work on, and also the fact that the Federal boundaries will be altered once in ten years only, I think we should aim at achieving the opposite to what the Minister has indicated is intended under the Bill.

The Minister for Justice: No. Both parties agree whenever a redistribution of seats is undertaken, to endeavour to make the boundaries co-terminal.

Mr. THOMSON: I am wondering just how that will affect enrolments. I hope it is the intention of the Government and of the State Electoral Department that we shall co-operate in the preparation of the electoral rolls and that we shall work along the same lines as are adopted in connection with Federal and State taxation, by having a joint card.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There will be one claim card only.

The Minister for Justice: Yes: that is the position.

Mr. THOMSON: Under the Federal law, if an elector moves from one division to a subdivision, he has to give notice of removal within one week in order that he may be transferred to the subdivision.

The Minister for Justice: Not a week: he has four weeks if he moves, and then he has three weeks within which to notify the department. That is the Commonwealth law.

Mr. THOMSON: That is right; I am sorry I misstated the position. If an elector from the Eastern States comes to Perth, the law provides that he must reside here for six months before he can be enrolled.

The Minister for Justice: And we intend to amend that by making the period three months.

Mr. THOMSON: Quite so, but what I want to know is this. Under the Federal Act an elector must reside in the Commonwealth for six months and in this State for three months before he can be enrolled

here. How are we going to reconcile the two positions? Because, according to the Federal Act, if the elector is here for one month he must be enrolled and will be entitled to vote!

The Minister for Justice: No. On the roll there will be a foot-note indicating that such a man is not eligible to vote at a State election until a certain date.

Mr. THOMSON: That may be so.

The Minister for Justice: That will distinguish that elector from the other electors on the roll.

Mr. THOMSON: There will be a tremendous number of foot-notes if that is to be the position.

The Minister for Justice: When the date is reached when the elector is eligible to vote at a State election, the foot-note will be struck out.

Mr. THOMSON: If an election is pending and the roll shows that the man is eligible to vote at a Commonwealth election within one month, but the foot-note indicates that he is entitled to vote at a State election in three months' time, what will be the position? It is true that the foot-note will be there. But I am apprehensive of the way in which it may act.

The Minister for Justice: Unless the claim has matured by the time the writ is issued, he will not go on the roll.

Mr. THOMSON: But the object of the Bill is to have only one set of rolls printed.

The Minister for Justice: There must be supplementary rolls issued for each election.

Mr. THOMSON: Then actually there will not be any saving in that respect. We shall be in the same position as we are to-day. It is a possible difficulty, and may lead to some dissatisfaction. When in Committee I will move to extend the period of one month to three months. My reason is that until a man has been residing in a new district continuously for three months, it is fair and reasonable that he be permitted to record his vote in the district from which he came. It would render impossible what occurred prior to the last elections, when large numbers of men were transferred to various country electorates, and in accordance with the Act proceeded to put in their claim cards. The amendment would not do any injustice to residents of the State. It would not disfranchise them in any way. It would put them

on a par with those men who come over from the Eastern States. If it is fair that a man coming from the Eastern States should be here for three months before he is eligible to vote, the same period should obtain in respect of a man coming from, say, Katanning to Perth. Any man travelling from one electorate to another should be entitled to remain on the roll for the electorate he has left, until he has residence qualification for his new electorate. We are all desirous of making the electoral laws of such a character as to render it impossible for any undue influence to be used.

The Minister for Justice: But that amendment would be in conflict with other provisions of the Act.

Mr. THOMSON: I do not think so.

The Minister for Justice: Yes, for when you go to a new district you must proceed to get your name on the roll.

Mr. THOMSON: Well, it would be advisable to alter those provisions of the Act with which the proposed amendment would be in conflict. There should be a probationary period of three months before a man is qualified to get his name on the roll for a new district and exercise his vote. There may be conflicting influences at work in the various electorates. Some of us think that a result of the road workers being sent into country electorates prior to the last elections was to influence some of the election returns. If those men had not been sent out to those country electorates—men without any responsibility in those electorates, for their calling was purely of a nomadic character—the election results might have been somewhat different. The interests of a district can be overwhelmed by an influx of nomadic voters.

The Minister for Works: Do you object to men being sent out into the country making roads now?

Mr. THOMSON: No.

The Minister for Works: But you want it stopped when an election is approaching? You think it is done for election purposes. You have made that statement so often that presently you will come to believe it.

Mr. THOMSON: I am prepared to debate that question with the Minister.

Mr. Heron: You couldn't debate it.

The Minister for Works: I have contradicted that statement so often that I am getting tired of it.

Mr. THOMSON: There is no need for the Minister for Works to get heated over my simple amendment. If the Minister is so sure that what we imagine happened did not happen, what can be his objection to my proposed amendment?

The Minister for Justice: My objection is that it would be in conflict with the existing law.

Mr. THOMSON: But the whole Bill is altering the existing law.

The Minister for Justice: No, I meant the Federal law.

Mr. THOMSON: Well, the Federal law states that when a man has been here for one month he shall be entitled to vote. We are proposing that he shall be here for three months before he is entitled to vote. So in that respect we are conflicting with the Federal law.

The Minister for Justice: I am trying to make it all uniform.

Mr. THOMSON: Then take the qualifications. Those for the Commonwealth do not always square with those for the State. So there again we are in conflict with the Federal law. It is worth the consideration of the House that we should prevent the possibility of reflections being cast on any Government when men are sent out into the country.

Mr. Kenneally: Hon. members will cast their reflections upon whom they think fit.

Mr. THOMSON: If the hon. member wishes to discuss that, I am prepared to deal with it fully. At present I am dealing only with this Bill to amend the Electoral Act. I am zealously endeavouring to guard the reputation of Parliament and of the Governments of Western Australia in an honest endeavour to see that such a thing as has happened shall not be permitted to happen again.

Hon. G. Taylor: Wherever the parent Act fails, you wish to rectify it in the Bill?

Mr. THOMSON: Yes, and to prevent a recurrence of what occurred prior to the last general election.

The Minister for Works: Rubbish.

Mr. THOMSON: It is of no use the Minister saying it did not happen.

The Minister for Works: I do say it did not happen.

Mr. THOMSON: Well, if it did not happen, it was a most remarkable coincidence. Let me draw the attention of the Minister for Works—he has been absent for some time—to the Auditor General's report, wherein it is stated that £53,000 was disallowed by the Federal Government.

The Minister for Works: What has that to do with it?

Mr. THOMSON: Quite a lot. It clearly demonstrates that the State Government sent men out into the country on day work when they had no authority to do so.

The Minister for Works: The previous Government did it for years without any exception being taken to it.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Who made the agreement?

The Minister for Works: You did. And you sent men out into the country.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to confine himself to the subject matter of the Bill.

Mr. THOMSON: I am endeavouring to give reasons why I consider it would be wise, in the interests of the country and of the electoral laws of Western Australia, that when we arrive at a certain clause we should amend the period from one month to three months. It would be in the interests of the State to have that amendment made. I have intimated to the House that I intend to move that amendment when we reach the Committee stage.

The Minister for Justice: Put it on the Notice Paper.

Mr. THOMSON: I will do so. We are all desirous of eliminating what might be called dual control, and I am hopeful that if the Bill be passed it will have the result we are aiming at, that it will do away with a great deal of the disappointment experienced by many electors who in good faith have filled in their claim cards for the Federal Parliament, and then been quite satisfied that they were on the State roll also. To my mind that is the one possible advantage to be expected of the Bill. But I want an assurance from the Minister that it is not going to be only an electoral card for the Federal House that has to be filled, and that we are simply to ask them to examine that card. I want to see a dual card, somewhat on the lines of those we have in respect of taxation.

Mr. Davy: Oh, do not let us follow the methods of the Taxation Department.

Mr. THOMSON: Surely it is quite reasonable, when a man fills in his card, to fill in his name—and there is the State and there is the Commonwealth. It is very simple and it would be in the interests of the electors and certainly of the Electoral Department to have the dual card. It is our duty to safeguard the interests of our own Electoral Department. I wish it to be clearly understood that while I favour the joint roll, I do not wish to hand over to the Federal authorities the duty of compiling our rolls as a whole. I take it from the Minister's remarks that that is not intended, but that we shall retain our Chief Electoral Officer and the electoral officers we have in the country at present.

The Minister for Justice: No, we shall not have the officers in the country doing electoral work.

Mr. THOMSON: Do I understand from the Minister's interjection that it is intended, say in the Katanning district, that the Federal registrar will have entire charge of the rolls and that our officer, the Clerk of Courts, who has been doing the work for a considerable time, will have nothing to do with the rolls?

The Minister for Justice: He will have nothing to do with the Assembly rolls.

Mr. THOMSON: Then we shall be handing the rolls over entirely to the Commonwealth.

The Minister for Justice: Yes, that is right.

Mr. THOMSON: The Commonwealth authorities will compile the rolls and we will have to take them as compiled.

The Minister for Justice: No, they will compile the rolls, but the Chief Electoral Officer of the State will have to satisfy himself through his officers regarding any name on the roll.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Our officers could not take a name off the roll.

Mr. THOMSON: I feel doubtful whether the arrangement will prove to be the advantage we thought it would. The Minister has told us that the interests of the State with respect to the three months and the one month will be safeguarded by the supplementary roll. It is not intended to deal with postal voting, although the Minister said that, if he had his way, he would abolish postal voting. If that is ever attempted by the Electoral Department or by the Government, I hope reasonable provision will be made for residents in the country to record their votes.

Mr. Heron: More returning officers will be needed.

Mr. THOMSON: In the metropolitan area and in the towns generally, a majority of the people could walk to the poll without any difficulty.

The Minister for Justice: If they would.

Mr. THOMSON: I am not discussing that phase; I merely say they could. They might have to walk half a mile or a mile.

Hon. G. Taylor: Well, that means a lot of exercise these times.

Mr. THOMSON: But there are people in the country districts who sometimes have to travel as far as 30 miles to record their votes because there are not sufficient electors in their particular localities to entitle them to the facilities. If the Government are considering abolishing the postal vote, I hope they will substitute something better. The postal vote is a great boon to country residents.

Hon. G. Taylor: I think it does a great deal more damage than any other part of the Act.

The Minister for Justice: It is open to abuse.

Mr. THOMSON: There may be a certain amount of abuse associated with it.

Hon. G. Taylor: You ought to read the volume of "Hansard" that I have before me.

Mr. THOMSON: No vote of mine will ever be cast to deny country residents the privilege of postal voting, at any rate, not until a better method is adopted. I do not oppose the second reading of the Bill, because it is our policy, as well as the policy of every party, to eliminate the duplication of expense as regards Federal and State activities. If we can achieve what the Minister hopes, under this measure, we shall have reason to be satisfied with the change. When we reach the Committee stage, I hope the Government will favourably consider the amendment I have indicated. If it is then necessary to debate it further, I shall have an opportunity to do so.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption of the debate from the 28th August.

Point of Order.

Hon. G. Taylor: Before we proceed further with the debate on the second reading of the Bill, I rise to a point of order. According to page 20 of the Votes and Proceedings of the 16th August, the Minister moved for leave to introduce a Bill for an Act to amend the Abattoirs Act, 1909. The Bill before the House is for an Act to amend the Abattoirs Act, 1909, but in sub-clause 1 (c.2) of Clause 1 the following appears, which I think is irrelevant to the title of the Bill—

Prohibiting the sale of stock in any district except in a saleyard established under this Act, or with the license in writing of the Minister.

There is nothing in the Abattoirs Act dealing with the licensing of saleyards or of people to sell stock, and I do not know whether it comes within the order of leave. To my mind, it is wholly irrelevant to the Bill before the House to institute licenses to sell stock. The definition of stock will include cattle, bovine animals, swine, goats and other things. If a person desired to sell his stock, he could not do so unless he took them to a licensed saleyard or got a license or a written order from the Minister beforehand.

Mr. Davy: Sheep are included, also.

Hon. G. Taylor: Yes, or anything named in the interpretation clause. I think we are going a long way beyond the order of leave. No one would ever dream that the Abattoirs Act included such matters as the registration of saleyards or of persons before they could sell their stock.

Hon. Sir James Michell: It has nothing to do with slaughtering.

Hon. G. Taylor: That is so. I realize that we have saleyards attached to the Kalgoorlie and Midland Junction abattoirs but thousands of people with stock on the farms could not dispose of a single sheep or pig without having first getting permission in writing from the Minister or taking the animal to a registered saleyard. That is irrelevant to the Bill and is beyond the order of leave given by this House.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot quite concur with the hon. member on the point he has raised because in my opinion the amendments to the Bill for which leave has been granted will be covered by the title of the parent Act.

Hon. G. Taylor: What is the title of the parent Act?

Mr. Speaker: No. 31 of 1909, "an Act to provide for the establishment of public abattoirs and for other purposes incidental thereto."

Hon. G. Taylor: You would erect a gallows to hang a man.

Mr. Speaker: The words "for other purposes incidental thereto" cover the amendments in the Bill and I rule that the Bill is properly before the House.

Mr. Davy: Do I understand that your ruling amounts to this, that to make regulations for prohibiting the sale of sheep or lambs, except in a public saleyard licensed, is relevant to the title of the principal Act on the ground that it is for a purpose incidental to the establishment of public abattoirs? As I understand it, a public abattoir is a place where animals are slaughtered—nothing else. If I understand your ruling correctly, you suggest that a purpose incidental to the establishment of a public slaughter-house is that the sale of sheep, except in public saleyards, should be prohibited. I submit that is stretching the meaning of the term "public abattoirs" a little far.

Mr. Panton: The Speaker did not say that. He ruled that "other purposes" included this purpose.

Mr. Davy: Other purposes incidental thereto.

Mr. Panton: You cannot slaughter sheep unless you have sheep.

Mr. Davy: Of course, you cannot slaughter the shadow of a sheep, but what has that to do with making it an offence against the law to sell sheep other than in a public saleyard?

Mr. Panton: We have not said that yet.

Mr. Davy: But it is proposed that Smith shall not sell his three sheep or one pet lamb to Brown because he does not do it in a public saleyard.

Mr. Panton: Do you disagree with the Speaker's ruling?

Mr. Speaker: That is what I want to know. If the hon. member proposes to disagree—

Mr. Davy: With the greatest respect I disagree.

Mr. Speaker: Then the hon. member will move accordingly.

Mr. Davy: I move—

That the House dissents from Mr. Speaker's ruling.

I do not want to carry the argument very much further. It is a surprise to me to learn that the power to pass a regulation making it an offence for one farmer to sell sheep to another, except in a public saleyard, is incidental to the establishment of public abattoirs.

Hon. G. Taylor: The whole thing seems patent to anyone who tries to connect the sale of sheep 10, 15 or 40 miles away from abattoirs, with an abattoir. I am referring to Subclause 2 of Clause 4. The Bill claims to amend the Abattoirs Act, 1909. The Government desire to prohibit the sale of stock in any district except in saleyards established "under this Act," or without a license in writing from the Minister. If that is not an absurd clause to put into an abattoirs Bill, I do not know what is. Clause 3 of the Bill says, "Section 4 of the principal Act is amended by inserting after the words 'slaughtering stock' the words 'and saleyards for stock.'" Section 4 of the parent Act reads, "The Governor may in any district establish, maintain and manage abattoirs for slaughtering stock, and may permit the use of the same by any person under the payment of the fees, and observing the conditions prescribed by the regulations." The further we go the more apparent it becomes that the Bill should be withdrawn and a new one substituted, if the Government desire to license saleyards. If the Minister is satisfied that he cannot do what he desires under this Bill, I am confident he will withdraw it and bring down another next week.

The Minister for Agriculture: I claim that the wide powers referred to by the member for Mt. Margaret do not exist. Section 3 of the Act limits its scope, and the amending Bill does not go any further. The hon. member suggests that we are going to interfere with the sale of stock in saleyards 40 miles from an abattoir.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Of course you are.

Mr. Davy: The Bill will give you power to do that.

The Minister for Agriculture: Section 3 says, "This Act shall be enforced only in such portions of the State as the Governor may from time to time by proclamation declare to be districts for the purposes of this Act." This means any abattoirs district.

Hon. G. Taylor: It does not mean that. It means "wherever the Governor likes."

The Minister for Agriculture: There is such a thing as declaring an abattoirs district. Only in those districts will the amendment be applied.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: What is a district?

The Minister for Agriculture: That which is proclaimed as an abattoirs district. There is one within a radius of 12 miles of the Midland Junction abattoirs. There is another at Fremantle and one at Kalgoorlie, and I think one at Geraldton. Until a district is declared to be an abattoirs district, this will not apply. There is no suggestion that this will automatically impose State-wide restrictions.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: That does not follow.

The Minister for Agriculture: The only difference is that this shall hold good in the case of saleyards attached to abattoirs.

Hon. G. Taylor: No.

The Minister for Agriculture: In an abattoirs district.

Hon. G. Taylor: You have the power to declare the whole State an abattoirs district.

The Minister for Agriculture: Then I want to know why, under the existing Act, we have not proclaimed the whole State an abattoirs district?

Hon. G. Taylor: You seem to desire to do so.

The Minister for Agriculture: We adopt the principle of subdivision in this matter. There is no such thing as a State-wide application of the Act. When a district has been proclaimed in the past, this has been done on receipt of an application from the district. In any case, no greater powers are granted in the matter of saleyards than there would be in respect of the establishment of abattoirs. There would have to be good reasons for the declaration of an abattoirs district, and when it is declared we desire that the saleyards shall be complementary to the abattoirs.

Hon. G. Taylor: Not necessarily.

The Minister for Agriculture: It cannot be said that because at Midland Junction we control the abattoirs, someone else should control the saleyards.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: You do not want to control the saleyards. You own them.

The Minister for Agriculture: We control them to a great extent, but we have no power under the Act to levy fees for the use of saleyards.

Hon. G. Taylor: But you levy them all the same.

The Minister for Agriculture: Is it suggested we should do that illegally?

Mr. Davy: That is not the argument. The question is whether this Bill is in order or not.

The Minister for Agriculture: The member for Mt. Margaret suggests we are going to do something ridiculous by applying the provisions of this Bill to the whole State. The argument would hold good if we were to declare abattoirs willy-nilly. That has not been done in the past. He also suggests we are going to prohibit the sale of stock in a saleyard. That was the argument put forward by the hon. member when he endeavoured to give a fantastic interpretation to a very simple and necessary amendment. Section 3 of the Act distinctly states that it shall only be enforced in such portions of the State as are proclaimed to be districts for the purposes of the Act. This amendment would apply in those districts.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: The Minister ought to be reasonable. Saleyards have no connection with abattoirs. One is a place where stock is slaughtered, and the other a place where stock is kept alive. This Bill relates to abattoirs or to anything incidental to abattoirs.

The Minister for Railways: Saleyards are incidental to abattoirs.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: There could be abattoirs without saleyards. There is no connection between the two. Stock need not be sold by auction because it goes to some abattoirs. Saleyards are for the convenience of stock sellers. Those at Midland Junction have been in existence for many years.

The Minister for Agriculture: The system would be inefficient without saleyards.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: It cannot be contended that saleyards at Geraldton are necessary to abattoirs at Midland Junction. It is no use the Minister saying this Bill will apply only to districts that are declared to be abattoir districts. He can declare the whole State an abattoir district. There is no definition in the parent Act of "district." It would be wrong, under an abattoirs Act, to control and license saleyards. If a person wishes to sell stock on his farm, he will have to go to the Minister for a license. That is a ridiculous provision and ought not to find a place in any Act. It is as foreign to the parent Act as the sale of racehorses at Kirk's Bazaar

in Melbourne would be. I hope the House will support us.

Mr. Dayy: Have I the right of reply?

Mr. Speaker: There is no particular right of reply. I take it the hon. member has said all he has to say.

Mr. Davy: I should not rise in my place if I had done so. This Bill gives the Government power to prohibit the sale of stock in any district except in saleyards that are licensed under it. It would be straining the title of the principal Act to say that the prohibition of the sale of stock, except in a sale yard established under the Act, was a purpose incidental to the establishment of public abattoirs.

Mr. Speaker: I think the point of order would have been more applicable, and more justly in place, in Committee. I submit that under the parent Act large powers of discretion in the making of regulations are granted to the Governor, and in relation to points that do not altogether seem to fit in with the business purely of conducting abattoirs, as for instance under Section 4, Subsection 1. Paragraph (f) of that subsection provides that regulations may be made for the carriage—that is not slaughter—the storage—that is not slaughter—and the treatment of meat, and the carriage and treatment of stock generally. At the first glance one might say that those things are altogether foreign to the business of abattoirs. Paragraph (h) gives power to make regulations with respect to—

The inspection of places, things and vehicles used or intended to be used for the storage or carriage of stock, and the cleansing and disinfection of the same.

That is very far from merely the business of killing. To quote only one more instance, the concluding paragraph, (q), says—

All other matters and things necessary for the efficient administration of this Act.

I take it that the amendments in the Bill are things necessary for the efficient working of the parent Act. Therefore I am quite ready to take the vote of the House.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Well, we will take it, Sir.

Motion put, and negatived on the voices.

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: I think we will divide, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. member call for a division?

Hon. Sir James Mitchell: Yes.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	..	..	..	..	9
Noes	..	..	..	..	20

Majority against .. 11

AYES.

Mr. Barnard	Mr. Richardson
Mr. Davy	Mr. Taylor
Mr. Lindsay	Mr. Thomson
Mr. Maon	Mr. North
Sir James Mitchell	(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Angelo	Mr. McCallum
Mr. Clydesdale	Mr. Millington
Mr. Gorbo	Mr. Rowe
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Ferguson	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Heron	Mr. Troy
Miss Holman	Mr. A. Wansbrough
Mr. Kenneally	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Lutey	Mr. Withers
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Pahton
	(Teller.)

Motion thus negatived.

Debate resumed.

HON. SIR JAMES MITCHELL (Northam) [8.53]: The Minister says this Bill is needed so that he may impose a charge on stock sold at the Government saleyards at Midland Junction. Those saleyards have been used for many years, and fees have been charged over many years, and I suppose no one ever objected to paying them. The Bill is one of the measures which we find the Government frequently bringing down. On the Notice Paper there are half a dozen Bills brought down with the same object, to give the Government the right to impose fees. If this measure is carried, the Government will be able to prohibit the sale of stock in any district except at saleyards established under the measure, or by licenses under it granted by the Minister. Further, the Minister will be able to prohibit the sale of stock on a farm; the farmer would first have to get the Minister's permission, of course on payment of a fee. For the life of me I cannot see that the Minister needs all these powers. If he merely wants power to charge fees at the Government saleyards, built long ago, we can agree to that. It is perfectly reasonable that a charge should be made for the use of a saleyard. But when the Minister goes further and asks for powers of the nature I have described, we should hesitate. In

fact, we should reject the Bill. I would remind my friends from the mining fields, which are now also stock-carrying areas, that if the Bill passes it will be possible to prevent the holding of sales of stock except by the permission of the Government.

Mr. Marshall: That is scarcely correct. It will only be so in proclaimed districts.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: No; this Bill gives absolute power to the Government. Under it they will have power by proclamation to declare the whole State, if they like. I do not think it wise to give unnecessary power. Why should not stock be sold on a farm without the permission of the Government?

The Minister for Railways: The farm would not be in an abattoirs district.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It may be in one now.

The Minister for Railways: Any district to which the measure applies would have to be a district by proclamation.

Mr. Davy: Well!

The Minister for Railways: We would not declare a district 20 miles from a town an abattoirs district.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Or 10 miles?

The Minister for Railways: Or even 10 miles.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Minister might proclaim the district of Geraldton.

The Minister for Railways: No.

The Minister for Agriculture: I said, within a 12-mile radius.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: The Government will have power, if the Bill passes, to proclaim a district and say that within the district stock shall not be sold except at Government saleyards; and they will have power to impose license fees and inspection fees. I hope the House will not agree to give such powers. After great pains and trouble we passed an Abattoirs Act which we believed, and still believe, to be necessary. We made stringent provisions, and many abattoirs which had been established for years were closed down and not allowed to be used further. The Minister will say that he has no intention of doing some of the things I have suggested, but that is not the point.

The Minister for Agriculture: What would happen if we took advantage of the

existing law and did all those ridiculous things? It would upset the whole State.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: We are asked to amend an Act which was passed when the Minister was a member of another place. It was passed after a great deal of trouble. The Minister now says, "Let that be the law until the Minister otherwise decides." The Minister asks us to say that he may grant a permit to kill any kind of stock wherever he pleases. He has mentioned that some pig-keepers want to kill pigs on their own properties. No one objects to that; that is done now.

The Minister for Agriculture: Very decided views are taken as to that under different conditions.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: It is done now. The Minister asks us to give him power to grant permits to slaughter any stock anywhere. I do not suppose he would grant a permit to slaughter in the metropolitan area—certainly not cattle or sheep—except at abattoirs.

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: But he asks the power to do it. This measure will probably live long after the Minister has left Parliament. Even if we could trust the Minister to do the right thing, we cannot trust anybody coming after him. If he does want limited power as to killing pigs, he can put up an amendment of the Act enabling him to grant a permit for that purpose, and for that purpose alone. Under the clause the Minister could issue a license to permit the use of a de-licensed abattoir, should he so desire. I do not say for one moment that he would do so, but the power is contained in the clause. The Bill is not at all desirable, and should not receive the approval of the House. I shall vote against the second reading and I hope members will reject it. We should be willing to give the Minister all the power necessary to administer the Act and to charge fees for the use of the saleyards under certain conditions, but we would not be justified in giving him the wide powers that he desires. It would be ridiculous to do so. It has to be remembered that once we grant such extended powers, they will be at the disposal of the Minister or any future Minister, and Parliament will have no say in the matter.

The Minister for Agriculture: Then you would not give the Minister power to authorise the killing of certain specified stock.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: Yes, I would, and I would also give him power to charge fees. But I am not prepared to agree to the clause I refer to as it is worded now. Neither am I prepared to agree to the clause dealing with saleyards.

The Minister for Agriculture: Then you agree practically to everything.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I disagree entirely.

The Minister for Agriculture: You agree with reference to the saleyards and the permission to kill certain stock outside abattoirs within the area.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have already said that if it be necessary to grant a permit to kill certain pigs away from an abattoir, and the Minister is convinced that it is necessary, I would be prepared to give him that power. On the other hand, the Minister desires power to permit the killing of sheep, cattle or other stock anywhere he may please. In fact, he will be able to re-establish an abattoir already closed for years, should he so desire. I know the Minister has no intention of doing that, but if we pass the clause as it stands, the power will be there for succeeding Ministers to exercise. We would not be justified in granting that power. I am prepared to give the Minister authority to charge fees in saleyards established by the Government, but I am not prepared to go further and give him power to insist upon all stock being brought to a Government saleyard. I am not prepared to agree that he should have the right to say that stock shall not be sold on a farm or anywhere else. One effect of the Bill will be the appointment of a large army of officers who will go about the country engaged upon unnecessary inspections. I hope the House will vote against the second reading of the Bill.

The Minister for Agriculture: There is no danger of an army of officers, because there will be no additional officers appointed. They will not be necessary.

Hon. Sir JAMES MITCHELL: I have heard that said before. Under the Bill the Minister takes special powers to collect fees and levy charges and defray expenses. In fact, the Minister is more of rank than usual in specifying so many things. I object to fees being charged unnecessarily.

MR. LINDSAY (Toodyay) [9.5]: The Minister has asked for too much power under the provisions of the Bill. It is the duty of a Minister to set out in a Bill what is actually required. There are two classes to which I particularly object. They may interfere with the occupations of many people in Western Australia. One portion of the Bill I take exception to is paragraph (c2) of Clause 4. That paragraph embodies an amendment to Section 6 of the principal Act, which deals with regulations. Under it the Minister may prohibit "the sale of stock in any district except in a saleyard established under the Act or with the license in writing of the Minister." The Minister has told us that that will have effect only in an abattoir area. On the other hand, he has indicated that the Midland Junction area, for instance, has a radius of 12 miles. Under that provision the sale of stock in any district would be prohibited except in a saleyard established under the Abattoirs Act. A farmer may desire to sell stock to another farmer, but under this provision he will not be able to sell—

Mr. Davy: If the Government do not permit him to sell.

Mr. LINDSAY: The farmer will have to get the permission of the Minister, because there is no Government saleyard on his farm. The paragraph will mean that no man will be able to sell stock to another except in a State saleyard. When in Committee I propose to move two amendments that may make the provision more workable.

Mr. Mann: You cannot make a bad thing good.

Mr. LINDSAY: It may not make the clause a good one, but it may make it more workable.

Mr. Marshall: If regulations were made in accordance with the paragraph, it would apply to any part of the State.

Mr. LINDSAY: The Minister has indicated that there are certain abattoir areas and that he can proclaim them in any part of the State. In order to get over the difficulty, I intend to move amendments to provide that the sale by auction in any proclaimed district shall be provided for and the paragraph would then read—

Prohibiting the sale by auction of stock in any proclaimed district except in a saleyard established under this Act, or with the license in writing of the Minister.

Member: That is not much of an improvement.

Mr. LINDSAY: It may not be much of an improvement, but it would make the paragraph more clear. As it is, we will not have power to sell stock to one another in a proclaimed area.

The Minister for Agriculture: I think you will find that under the Act, "district" means a proclaimed district under the Act.

Mr. LINDSAY: At any rate, my amendment will make the paragraph more clear.

The Minister for Agriculture: I think it will be redundant.

Mr. LINDSAY: I do not think so.

MR. MANN (Perth) [9.10]: If I understand the meaning of the clause correctly, it will inflict considerable hardship upon farmers. That will be so particularly in instances where a farmer conducts a sale on his farm within a proclaimed area. The Bill will prevent him from selling his stock. He may auction his household furniture and machinery, but will not be able to dispose of stock. In the country areas farmers frequently send a few head of stock to a neighbour's place where a sale is to be conducted. It would not pay them to send a small number of head to market and take advantage of their neighbour's sale to dispose of their few head of stock.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would remind hon. members that the Committee stage is the one at which they may discuss clauses. I have already allowed considerable latitude.

Mr. MANN: I wish to point to the weakness I see in the Bill. It will have a harmful effect on the small growers in proclaimed districts. It would be impossible for a farmer who is holding a sale on his property to dispose of his stock in a proclaimed area, without the permission of the Minister. Can any justification be advanced for prohibiting a farmer, with two or three head of stock for sale, from disposing of them at a neighbour's sale? That sort of thing has been going on for years. The Minister has not told us why that practice should be discontinued.

The Minister for Agriculture: Because it will not be discontinued.

Mr. MANN: It will be, if the Bill is passed.

The Minister for Agriculture: No.

Mr. MANN: It is all very well for the Minister to shake his head and say "No," but the Bill will have that effect. I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

HON. G. TAYLOR (Mount Margaret) [9.13]: It is the accepted custom that members, dealing with a Bill at the second reading stage, shall discuss the Bill and its effect without dealing with clauses and details, which are left for the Committee stage. The Bill seeks to extend powers to the Government that will impose restrictions upon people in a way that Parliament should not tolerate. It has been argued that it will affect people in certain areas only, and those areas will be such as are proclaimed under the Abattoirs Act. The Minister has told us that abattoir areas are already proclaimed and I think those areas extend within a 12-mile radius of abattoirs.

The Minister for Agriculture: That does not always apply.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: That is the position, roughly. Whatever the radius may be, no one within that area can dispose of stock without taking it to a Government saleyard. And there may be a sale on a farm two or three miles the other side of that area, as suggested by the member for Perth (Mr. Mann). It would be more convenient for an adjoining farmer to drive his cattle across to the sale, for they are not cattle subject to abattoir treatment. And if they were store cattle, put up for sale in public yards close to fat stock, their value would be depreciated. Being on a private farm, where there are no prime stock being offered for sale, they would not look so conspicuously poverty-stricken. But the Bill provides that they must be taken to the abattoir saleyards, unless the owner comes to Perth, or alternatively writes to the Minister, and secures permission to have them offered at the private sale. The Minister in charge of the Bill says, without blushing and without a winking of the eyelid, "Oh, we will not take that power." Well, why does the Minister want the power if he is not going to exercise it?

Mr. Thomson: It is not the Minister; it is the departmental officers.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: Yes, very likely the Minister will be away inspecting some State farm or the Muresk College, and the heads of the department will hit the unfortunate farmer right and left before the Minister gets back.

The Minister for Agriculture: The departmental officers would show him every consideration.

Hon. G. TAYLOR: The department that would extract fees without authority from the people—I am not prepared to trust them too far. The Minister has told us to-night that the department, without authority, have extracted fees from people selling their stock at the abattoir saleyards. They have been illegally taking money from the people. Of course they are doing no more than has been done under other Governments. It has been going on all along the line. The present Minister, probably, has not known anything about it until quite recently, when this Bill was put before him. Now the Minister asks us to believe that the department will not use this requested power. But I know the department take enormous powers, which if taken by anybody else would land somebody in Fremantle. The House should not give this power, should not pass any of these proposed provisions. I will oppose the second reading and will have a good deal more to say if the Bill reaches the Committee stage. I want to emphasise my protest, so that the Minister may be able to discuss these things with the heads of his department, who know all about the alleged necessity for this measure. Then, perhaps, the Minister may bring down something more in keeping with what would make for smooth working under the Abattoirs Act.

MR. THOMSON (Katanning) [9.20]: I am somewhat apprehensive as to the ultimate result of the Bill if it be passed. I do not doubt for a moment the statement made by the Minister that it is not his intention to levy fees on other saleyards than those run in conjunction with the abattoirs. It has come as an amazing acknowledgment that the department apparently has been illegally charging fees for the use of the saleyards at Midland Junction.

The Minister for Justice: Any landlord can charge what he likes on his own property.

Mr. THOMSON: Very well. The Minister for Justice has given exactly the reply I was desirous of obtaining. If what he says be true, where is the necessity for the Bill? If the Government can legally levy the fees they are imposing on those who use the saleyards at Midland Junction, why should we have the Bill? The Minister for Justice has shown that there is no necessity for the Bill. I am also apprehensive as to what the appli-

cation of the Bill might mean. In Katanning we have three private abattoirs. It is the intention of the local authority to have a public abattoir provided, if they can raise the funds. But we have no fewer than four private saleyards in Katanning owned by the various firms who hold regular monthly sales. I take it that under the Bill the department are going to levy a charge on those saleyards before permitting the sale of stock. The Minister may say that is not the intention. Still, it can be read into the Bill. For when we get a public abattoir at Katanning, then according to the intention of the Bill the four private saleyards will be charged fees. In view of the fact that those yards have been erected by private firms, it is only reasonable to say it would not be fair to impose fees upon them. Still, if the Bill be passed, the department will be entitled to impose fees on the owners of those yards. Then I can see the difficulties pointed out by the members for Toodyay (Mr. Lindsay) and for Perth (Mr. Mann) regarding the conditions that can be made to apply to sales held on farms. The Minister may say it is not his intention to do anything of the sort. But how are his officers going to interpret the Act? Take the Taxation Department. I have gone to the Commissioner of Taxation and said to him, "That was not the intention of Parliament when we passed that particular section of the Act." Invariably his reply has been, "I cannot help that. That is how the Act reads, and I am here to carry out the Act." So it is my intention to vote against the second reading, for I can see no necessity for the Bill, particularly in view of the reply given by way of interjection by the Minister for Justice, who said there was no need for the Bill.

The Minister for Justice: I did not say that.

Mr. THOMSON: You said the landlord had a right to levy charges.

The Minister for Justice: You said it was illegal to levy those charges, and I said it was not.

Mr. THOMSON: If you can levy charges for the use of the saleyards at Midland Junction, where is the necessity for the Bill? Moreover, I view every one of these taxing Bills with suspicion. Each Bill for levying charges means the imposition of additional costs on the producer and the consumer. We were told when we passed the Scaffolding

Act that it was not going to cost very much. But considerable fees are being collected in country districts for buildings where, perhaps, the inspector may call once, merely to see that the Act is being carried out. It is a means of raising fees, and so is an additional impost on the people. I will vote against the second reading.

On motion by Mr. Pantou, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.25 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Tuesday, 4th September, 1928.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Financial Agreement Bill.

BILL—PERMANENT RESERVE (KING'S PARK.)

Introduced by Hon. A. Lovekin and read a first time.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Pearling Act Amendment.
 - 2, Municipal Council of Collie Validation.
- Transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—EDUCATION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th August.

HON. A. LOVEKIN (Metropolitan [4.37]): I propose to say only a few words on this Bill, because it involves no new principle, but there are a number of matters that I think need amending, and the place to put the amendments forward is in Committee. I shall place upon the notice paper the amendments I intend to propose. Let me say I think the Chief Secretary deserves the thanks of this House for the efforts he is making in the cause of education. I speak feelingly, because I am one of those unfortunate who from time to time have to administer part of the Education Act through the Children's Court. At present there are ten or eleven Acts in force, and it has proved very difficult to piece them together from time to time. Thanks to the efforts of the Chief Secretary, those Acts are now to be embodied in one measure, and that will make the work easier. The Chief Secretary also informed us that the regulations would be recast. I think that must follow the passing of a consolidating measure, because the regulations to-day—I say it without offence to anybody—are in a chaotic state. Officers go to the court with so-called regulations and there are more pieces of paper stuck into the regulations than there are pages in the regulations themselves, and it is very difficult to be sure which are in force and which have been repealed. Consequently the revised regulations, following the passing of this consolidating measure, together with necessary amendments, will also prove a boon. This is not the only matter on which we should congratulate the Chief Secretary. There is education in another direction in which he has taken an interest, and which I think will prove to be of great value in the course of time. I refer to prison reform. I know that that has nothing to do with this Bill, but as I did not speak on the Address-in-reply debate I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister upon his efforts to secure prison reform. Dealing with the Bill generally, what I wish to see is a greater consolidation that the measure itself aims at. There are a number of Acts interwoven with this Bill. The Interpretation Act, the Justices Act and the Child Welfare Act all come within the ambit of this measure, and I wish to ensure, in Committee, that all those Acts are reconciled in order that we